

Land East of Lutterworth Road Blaby

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

Client: Davidsons Developments Limited

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA) has been carried out by Golby + Luck Landscape Architects following instruction by Davidsons Developments Limited to assess, in landscape and visual terms, the land to the east of Lutterworth Road, Blaby (the site); see **GL2232 01** and **02**.
- 1.2 The following assessment has been carried out in accordance the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment - Third Edition (2013), published by the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (GLVIA). An assessment methodology is set out in **Appendix 1**.
- 1.3 This assessment is supported by a series of drawings that identify:
- Site location and context;
 - Local setting of landform;
 - Landscape planning context;
 - Landscape character; and
 - Landscape capacity and sensitivity.
- 1.4 This assessment also includes a series of representative views that have been taken from publicly accessible locations including the public highway, public rights of way, and public access land. Site work was carried out in October 2023 with full leaf cover. Professional judgement has been used to assesses the likely increase in visual effect during winter months with limited leaf cover.
- 1.5 In the production of this appraisal reference has been made to the following documents and information:
- Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government - National Planning Policy Framework - 2023 (the NPPF);
 - Blaby District Council – Blaby District Local Plan (Core Strategy) Development Plan Document 2013 (the Core Strategy);
 - Blaby District Council – Blaby District Local Plan (Delivery) Development Plan Document 2013 (the DPD);
 - Natural England - National Character Area Profiles for NCA 94 – Leicestershire Vales (NCA 94);



- Blaby District Council – Blaby Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment – Final Report prepared by LUC 2020 (the BLSCA);
- Blaby District Council – Strategic Green Wedge Assessment 2016 (the SGWA);
- Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment – Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment – Third Edition – 2013 (the GLVIA);
- Landscape Institute – Technical Guidance Note 02/21 – Assessing landscape value outside national designations 2021 (the TGN 02/21);
- The National Heritage List – Historic England
- Leicestershire County Council public rights of way (online mapping);
- DEFRA Magic Database;
- Ordnance Survey information Explorer 1:20,000 and Street Plus 1:10,000;
- Google Earth aerial photography; and
- The Old Maps online historic mapping archive (www.old-maps.co.uk)



2 SITE CONTEXT AND DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The site is located at the southern settlement edge of Blaby, one of the outlying large settlements at the southern fringe of Leicester City within Blaby District; see **GL2232 01** and **02**.
- 2.2 The site comprises an area of redundant allotments previously accessed from Lutterworth Road to the west, and a small part of the golf course at Blady Golf Centre. The site is bound to the north by modern settlement at Litchfield Drive, to the north-east by the recently constructed housing development at Tarry Close, to the west by Lutterworth Road with further recent housing development at Westfield Close and the Leicester Lions Rugby Football Club beyond. To the south is the wider setting of the golf course with associated clubhouse and parking. Beyond the golf course is a modern commercial development and caravan storage site accessed from Lutterworth Road just to the north of the A426 roundabout.
- 2.3 The wider setting to the north comprises the urban setting of Balby, and to the west the urban setting of Whetstone. These settlements are separated by the A426 and the adjoining areas of open space, sports pitches and allotments. To the south the golf course extends between Lutterworth Road to the west and Winchester Road to the east. Willow Farm and its associated driveway define the southern boundary to the golf course beyond which there is an open setting of farmland that extends south between Whetstone and the A426 to the west and Countesthorpe and Winchester Road to the east. To the east beyond Winchester Road, there is an extensive setting of farmland that extends between Blaby, Countesthorpe and South Wigston.
- 2.4 In terms of settlement, the local setting is defined by the large settlements and southern fringes of Leicester City. Settlements are large and often modern in character with their historic core set well within the main urban area. The immediate setting of the site is defined by the settlements of Balby to the north, Whetstone to the west, and Countesthorpe to the south-east.
- 2.5 In terms of infrastructure, the site is set within a defined network of highway that includes Lutterworth Road and the A426 to the west, and Winchester Road to the east. Further to the west of the M1 motorway.
- 2.6 In terms of land use, the site comprises abandoned allotments and part of a golf course. The wider setting to the south and east, beyond the golf course, comprises a mixed



farmland setting of arable and pasture of geometrically shaped medium size fields. To the west and north, extending between Blaby and Whetstone, there are a number of playing fields and sports pitches, and a large allotment site at Enderby Road. To the south, there are again numerous playing fields set within the pattern of farmed fields that includes the Whetstone Juniors Football club to the east of the A426, and the extensive playing fields to the west of the Countesthorpe Academy.

- 2.7 In terms of vegetation cover, the site comprises the redundant setting of the allotments with a patchwork of self-set scrub and tree cover adjacent to the former access track. The southern half of the site is typical of a golf course setting with trees and semi-mature vegetation lining the close-cut amenity grass associated with the fairways and greens. The vegetation cover of the site is typical of an abandoned and unmanaged landscape and that of a golf course. In terms of the wider setting of farmland, vegetation cover comprises typical trimmed native field boundary hedgerows dominated by Hawthorn. Intermittent tree cover typically included Oak and Ash. There is a large area of maturing woodland to the east associated with Ash Spinney and the Blaby Oaks Woodland Trust that extends between Hospital Lane to the north and the open space off Hofler Close at the northern edge of Countesthorpe.
- 2.8 Beyond the typical vegetation cover of the wider farmland setting, notable variations include the riparian setting of Whetstone Brook extending south of Whetstone, and the strong linear woodland setting associated with the former Midland Railway line that strikes through the landscape between the M1 motorway and Countesthorpe.
- 2.9 In terms of landform, the site is located at the edge of the Leicester Vales with the low-lying setting of the Sence Valley to the north; see **GL2232 04**. The site sits between 80m above ordnance datum (AOD) close to its western boundary and 75m AOD close to its northern boundary. The landform falls from the higher ground to the west, where Countesthorpe strikes across of local ridgeline at approximately 95m AOD, falling north and east into the valley setting of the River Sence and Whetstone Brook respectively.
- 2.10 In terms of access and recreation, the site is maintained as private land. A public footpath crossed the site (PROW Z56) between Lutterworth Road to the west and Winchester Road to the east; see **GL2232 01**. The land associated with the golf course in the southern half of the site forms part of an established sports and leisure resource. Beyond the immediate setting of the site, there is a typical network of public rights of way that provide access from the settlement into the wider setting of countryside. On the ridge to the east there is an accessible network of open space and woodland associated with Ash Spinney.



- 2.11 To the west of the site is an established rugby football club, and to the north-west and south of the site numerous playing fields and sport facilities pepper-potted throughout the landscape.
- 2.12 In terms of designation, the site is located in the Green Wedge that extends between the settlements of Blaby, Whetstone and Countesthorpe; see **GL2232 02**. The primary function of the Green Wedge is to maintain separation between these settlements. In addition to this the Green Wedge seeks to guide development, protect green lungs extending into the urban area, and safeguard and enhance the access and recreation function of its landscapes. This is a functional planning designation and does not reflect the value or sensitivity of the landscapes within it. The site is not covered by any landscape, heritage or nature conservation designation that would suggest an increased value or sensitivity, and is not covered by any designation/policy (including the Green Wedge policy) that would prohibit its development for residential purposes.



3 LANDSCAPE PLANNING CONTEXT

The site is located within the jurisdiction of Blaby District Council (the Local Authority) with the relevant landscape policies set out in the Core Strategy and DPD.

National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (NPPF)

- 3.1 The Department for Communities and Local Government issued the most recent update to the National Planning Policy Framework in September 2023. The Framework sets out the national planning policy for achieving sustainable development that includes the economic, social and environmental objectives. This assessment is primarily concerned with the policies relating to the environmental objective set out under paragraph 8(c) that states:

“an environmental objective - 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 Paragraph 10 of the NPPF sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development stating:

*“So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a **presumption in favour of sustainable development** (paragraph 11).”*

- 3.3 Paragraph 11 of the NPPF sets out the application of decision making:

“Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

*For **plan-making** this means that:*

- a) all plans should promote a sustainable pattern of development that seeks to: meet the development needs of their area; align growth and infrastructure; improve the environment; mitigate climate change (including by making effective use of land in urban areas) and adapt to its effects;*
- b) strategic policies should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses, as well as any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas⁶, unless:*



- i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the plan area7; or*
- ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.*

For **decision-taking** this means:

- c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or*
- d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:
 - i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or*
 - ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.”**

3.4 Footnote 7 of the NPPF sets out a list of identified areas or assets of particular importance that includes habitat sites as listed under paragraph 181 of the NPPF, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Green Belt, Local Green Space, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), National Parks (NP), Heritage Coast (HC), irreplaceable habitats, designated heritage assets including assets listed under footnote 68 of the NPPF, and areas at risk of flooding and coastal change.

3.5 The site is not located within or adjoining any such designation.

3.6 Section 12 of the NPPF sets out policy in relation to achieving well-designed places. Paragraph 130 states that planning 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 users⁴⁹; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience."*

3.7 Section 15 of the NPPF is concerned with conserving and enhancing the natural environment. Paragraph 174 of the NPPF states that planning decision should contribute to and enhance the natural environment by:

- a) *"protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);*
- b) *recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;*
- c) *maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;*
- d) *minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;*
- e) *preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever*



possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and

f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.”

3.8 The following assessment will consider the value of features and assets associated with the site and its local setting alongside and assessment of its susceptibility to the development proposal. This will provide an understanding of landscape sensitivity that will inform the overall assessment of landscape effects.

3.9 Paragraph 175 of the NPPF states:

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

3.10 The site is not covered by any international, national, or local landscape designation.

3.11 Paragraph 176 of the NPPF identifies the landscapes with the highest status of protection stating:

“Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads. The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.”

3.12 The site is not located within or near any such designations.

Blaby District Local Plan (Core Strategy) Development Plan Document 2013



3.13 Policy CS16 of the Core Strategy identifies the GW within the District. The site falls within the GW that extends between Whetstone Blaby and Countesthorpe. Policy CS16 of the CS identifies the following functions of the GW:

- *“Prevent the merging of settlements;*
- *Guide development form;*
- *Provide a green lung into the urban areas; and*
- *Provide a recreation resource;”*

3.14 The policy continues by setting out appropriate land uses within the GW. This does not include vehicle storage, but the policy continues to state:

“In circumstances where the development would not be harmful to the functions of Green Wedges, the following uses will be allowed: wind turbines (and other renewable energy facilities that are not within buildings); park and ride schemes; transport infrastructure (including new roads); and mineral extraction.

Land use or development in Green Wedges should:

- a) “retain the open and undeveloped character of the Green Wedge;*
- b) retain and create green networks between the countryside and open spaces within the urban areas; and*
- c) retain and enhance public access to the Green Wedge, especially for recreation.”*

3.15 The subtext of the Policy makes the following qualifications about GW:

“They are not a landscape designation, but seek to influence the form and direction of urban development. The primary functions are to prevent coalescence of distinct settlements and provide potential as an important recreation resource in areas that are often mainly ‘built up’.

To consider a Green Wedge to be functioning effectively, it needs to be fulfilling one or more of the functions set out in the policy.”

3.16 The test relevant to this application is whether or not the proposal compromises the GW inhibiting its ability to perform the desired and identified function.

3.17 Policy CS18 relates to the designation of Countryside and is only relevant to this application through its clarification that:



“Land will be designated as Countryside where it is outside the limits to built development and outside designated Green Wedges and Areas of Separation.”

- 3.18 Given the GW location of the site it is therefore not part of the Countryside as defined under Policy CS18.

Blaby District Local (Delivery) Development Plan Document

- 3.19 Development Management Policy 2 (DM2) of the DPD set out delivery policy in relation to development in the Countryside. DM2 is clear that that where development will not be harmful to the function of the Green Wedge this policy will apply.
- 3.20 DM2 states that within the Countryside development consistent with Policy CS18 of the Core Strategy will be supported where they meet the following criteria:

- a) *“The development is in keeping with the appearance and character of the existing landscape, development form and buildings. Decisions in respect of impact on landscape character and appearance will be informed by the Blaby Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment, Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Landscape Characterisation Study, National Character Areas and any subsequent pieces of evidence; and,*
- b) *The development provides a satisfactory relationship with nearby uses that would not be significantly detrimental to the amenities enjoyed by the existing or new occupiers, including but not limited to, consideration of: i. overdevelopment of the site due to factors including footprint, scale and mass; ii. privacy, light, noise, disturbance and overbearing effect; and, iii. vibration, emissions, hours of working, vehicular activity.*
- c) *The development will not undermine the vitality and viability of existing town, district and local centres.”*

- 3.21 This assessment identifies the likely landscape and visual effects arising from this development proposal taking account of the publication identified in paragraph (a) and should be used to inform the overall planning balance when considering its acceptability.



4 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL BASELINE

4.1 The following section of this assessment considers the baseline landscape setting of the site covering issues relating to character and appearance. When considering character, published landscape character documents have been referenced alongside a more detailed consideration of the site and its local setting.

4.2 When considering the appearance of the site a number of representative views have been identified through field work that provide an accurate representation of its visual setting. Views have been taken from publicly accessible locations, and for each the likely receptors have been identified.

Landscape Character

4.3 At a National level Natural England has divided England into 159 character areas. The site and its local setting are located within National Character Area 94: Leicestershire Vales (NCA 94). The key characteristics of NCA 94 are:

- *“An open landscape of gentle clay ridges and valleys underlain by Mercia Mudstone and Lias groups bedrock but with an extensive cover of superficial deposits occasionally giving rise to moderately steep scarp slopes. There is an overall visual uniformity to the landscape and settlement pattern.*
- *Land use characterised by a mixture of pasture and arable agriculture that has developed on the neutral clay soils*
- *Distinctive river valley of the Soar and Swift, with flat flood plains and gravel terraces together with tributaries including the Sence. Riverside meadows and waterside trees and shrubs are common, along with waterbodies resulting from gravel extraction.*
- *Woodland character derived largely from spinneys and copses on the ridges and the more undulating land and from waterside and hedgerow trees and hedgerows. The density, height and pattern of hedgerows varies throughout.*
- *Diverse levels of tranquillity associated with contrasts between busy urban areas and some deeply rural parts. Large settlements dominate the open character of the landscape. Leicester, Lutterworth, Hinckley and Market Harborough and related infrastructure, including major roads, are often visually dominant.*



- *Frequent small towns and large villages often characterised by red brick buildings and attractive stone buildings in older village centres and eastern towns and villages. Frequent, imposing spired churches are also characteristic, together with fine examples of individual historic buildings.*
- *Rich and varied historic landscape, with the nationally important Bosworth Battlefield near Sutton Cheney, prominent historic parklands and country houses, ridge-and-furrow earthworks and important medieval settlement remains, for example at Wistow Hall, Gumley, Knaptoft and Peatling Magna.”*

4.4 NCA94 is broad when considered against the relatively small scale of the site. Features such as the mixed pastoral and arable agriculture, distinctive river valley of the Sence and Soar, woodland cover in the form of spinneys and copses, diverse levels of tranquillity, and the frequent towns and villages are present in the landscapes of the site and its local setting.

4.5 At a local level the BLSCA identifies the site as being located within the Blaby, Countesthorpe and Whetstone Fringe landscape character area (LCA); see **GL2232 03**. This LCA is assessed as being of low to moderate sensitivity to residential development, moderate sensitivity to small scale commercial development, and moderate to high sensitivity to large scale commercial development.

4.6 The BLSCA sets out the following summary of landscape condition relative to this LCA:

“The landscape is a largely agricultural and with fields enclosed by well-managed hedgerows and woodland strips. The landscape has retained much of its rural character, despite development pressures from surrounding settlements. Mature hedgerows and shelterbelts often screen the urban edges, although there are areas where intervisibility detracts from perceptions of tranquillity and emits light pollution into the landscape. Some marginal areas of degraded or neglected farmland are falling out of traditional use. Alternative land uses such as horse keeping, playing fields and golf courses have a suburbanising effect on the landscape. The presence of major infrastructure routes has led to fragmentation and compartmentalisation of the area which results in an overall lack of cohesion and continuity. The densely populated surrounding area introduces urban-fringe issues including litter and fly tipping, which reduce the landscape’s visual appeal.”



4.7 The BLSCA identifies the role of this landscape in providing separation between the settlements as one of its key sensitivities. This is acknowledged through its definition as GW.

4.8 The BLSCA sets out the following guidance and opportunities to be considered in conjunction with future development:

- *“Protect the character of the open and undeveloped nature of the land within the character area. This is important in maintaining distinctiveness between the villages and also to distinguish this part of Blaby District from the suburbs of Leicester to the north.*
- *Soften urban edges and filter views of infrastructure development with increased woodland cover.*
- *Restore fragmented hedgerows and improve the hedgerow condition particularly in urban fringe areas. This should be achieved through new and infill planting which should include native hedgerow trees.*
- *Conserve existing hedgerow trees and woodlands. There is evidence of ageing trees with dead branches in some areas. In these locations new planting and management of trees should be undertaken, thus ensuring the retention of wooded character.*
- *Enhance connectivity between woodlands through planting of new woodland and hedgerows to retain linear woodland as landscape features and create wildlife corridors.*
- *Make use of the disused railway line as public rights of way such as cycle routes, in order to provide better interconnectivity between settlements and reduce traffic pressures on roads. Improve the network of public rights of way between settlements.”*

4.9 The BLCSA includes a settlement assessment for Blaby that identifies the following key settlement characteristics:

- *“The historic Conservation Area, with narrow walled streets and a high concentration of listed buildings, including artisan cottages, thatched buildings and some buildings of granite rubble.*
- *A modern commercial centre characterised by flat roofed 2-3 storey buildings and small paved precincts.*



- *Residential areas characterised by semi-detached buildings often set within mature landscape surroundings.*
- *A mixed building vernacular with a high proportion of red and tan brick buildings and a mix of flat and pitched roofs.*
- *Lack of defined entrances into the settlement and a limited sense of separation from other surrounding settlements.*
- *Bouskell Park is a historic parkland located along the eastern boundary, containing medieval ridge and furrow and estate planting.*
- *A relatively verdant settlement, particularly in more residential areas, with front gardens, mature vegetation and several large parks."*

4.10 When considering the capacity for change along the settlement edged of Blaby the assessment makes the following comments in relation to the southern edge:

"Continued expansion to the south of the settlements and the recreational use of the land as a golf course reduce the feeling of separation of Blaby from Countesthorpe and Whetstone, diluting their individual identities. The south eastern edge of the settlement is more urban in character. However, Blaby Oaks provides screening of this edge in views from the wider countryside."

4.11 In addition to this the BGWA identifies the site at the southern edge of Blaby as an area of Green Wedge that should be subject to review following the development of land for residential purposes at Westfield Close to the west of the site, and Barrowcliffe Way to the east.

4.12 In addition to the published assessments that form part of the Local Authorities evidence base it is important to provide an independent assessment of value and sensitivity as part of the baseline assessment. The factors set out under Box 5.1 of the GLVIA provide a basis for determining landscape value and has recently been supplemented by Technical Guidance Note 02/21 – Assessing landscape value outside national designations.

Table 1 – Assessment of Landscape Value

Contributing Factor	Evaluation	Local Value	Site Value
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Natural heritage	There is little evidence of notable wildlife habitats within the site and surrounding golf course, or semi-natural habitats or notable landscape features. The wider setting of farmland beyond the golf course has a slightly increased natural heritage value but remaining limited.	Medium to Low	Low
Cultural heritage	There are no feature of notable cultural heritage value associated with the site or local landscape setting. There are no designated assets close to the site, with the closets being the collection of Grade II Listed Buildings off The Drive to the west of Countesthorpe Academy.	Medium to Low	Low
Landscape Condition	The condition of the landscape associated with the site is relatively poor, comprising an abandoned allotment and a small part of a manicured setting of a golf course. The wider setting beyond the site comprises a variety of land uses that combine to create a typical urban fringe landscape setting. To the east there is a more structure setting of farmland, typical of the rural Leicestershire landscapes.	Medium to Low	Low
Associations	There are no known cultural or historical associations with the site.	Low	Low
Distinctiveness	The character of the site is varied and given the abandoned state of the allotments somewhat undefined and lacking in strength of character and a sense of place. The wider farmland setting is more typical of the farmland setting that surrounds many of the settlements beyond the southern edge of Leicester City providing them with a more rural character and setting.	Medium	Low
Recreational	The site comprises an abandoned allotments that does not provide any access or recreation function. The southern half of the site forms part of a hole of the adjoining golf club which is an established recreational resource for the local community. The site is also crossed by a public footpath providing access between Lutterworth Road and Winchester Road. The wider setting of the local landscape has numerous sports clubs and playing fields that provide a recreational resource to the local communities.	Medium	Medium
Perceptual (Scenic)	The site is not a particularly attractive landscape with the abandoned allotments presenting is a state of disrepair. The golf course has a scenic quality typical of this type of facility with enclosed fairway and close-cut fairways and green. Whilst reasonably	Medium	Medium to Low



	attractive it is not a landscape that is representative of any value local qualities. The wider setting of farmland has a more representative scenic quality that can be attributed an increased value.		
Perceptual (Wilderness and tranquillity)	Given the urban setting of the site, and the urban fringe setting of the local landscape there is not a sense of wilderness or heightened tranquillities in this landscape. In the wider landscape setting there are sections of rights of way that provide a more remote and tranquil quality and rest bite from the bust urban areas.	Medium to Low	Low
Functional	The allotments within the site are abandoned and no longer provide a function. The southern half the site forms part of one of the holes at the adjoining golf course providing a leisure and recreation function. The local landscape setting (including the site) forms part of the Green Wedge allocation that has a primary function of maintaining settlement separation, albeit the contribution the site makes to this function has been depleted following the development of the land to the east and west for residential purposes.	Medium	Medium to Low

4.13 In summary, the assessment of value set out in Table 1 indicates that the site is generally considered to be of low landscape value, increasing to medium to low value in relation to its recreational, scenic and functional role. This slight increase in value generally relates to the southern half of the site and associated scenic, recreation and functional aspects of the golf course. In terms of the wider local setting this assessment has identified this landscape to be of a more consistent medium to low value. This finding broadly accords with the findings of the BLCSA that assessed this landscape to be of low to moderate sensitivity.

Visual Setting

4.14 The following section of this assessment considers the appearance of the site and wider setting referencing a number of representative views. A summary of each view is set out with an assessment of value that is determined with reference to:

- Planning designations specific to each view;



- Views that are important to the special qualities of a designated landscape, or recorded in published documentation;
- Views recorded as being important to cultural heritage assets;
- Views recorded in guidebooks or on maps, and/or where special provision has been made in the landscape for the appreciation of a view; and
- Judgements made on site as to the specific quality of a view.

4.15 The potential visual envelope of the site can be summarised as:

- Open and filtered views from Lutterworth Road and adjoining properties;
- Filtered views from the grounds of the Leicester Lions Rugby Football Club;
- Open and filtered views from the Blaby Golf Centre clubhouse and the wider setting of the golf course;
- Open views from public footpath Z56 passing through the site;
- Open and filtered views from the properties backing onto the site at Litchfield Drive; and
- Filtered views from the open space and properties fronting Tarry Close;

4.16 The following table summarises each representative view making an assessment of value; see **GL2232 05 to 08**. View locations are identified on the site location plan; see **GL2232 01**.



Table 2 – Summary of representative and assessment of sensitivity

View	Distance	Description	Value	Receptors and Susceptibility	Visual Sensitivity
1	15m	Taken from Lutterworth Road opposite the entrance to Busy Bees day nursery looking south-east across the western boundary of the site. From this location there is an open appreciation of the landscape setting at the western boundary of the site. The forecourt setting to the day nursery is open with the access to footpath Z56 visible that continues into the site running along the back of the close-boarded fence that defines the parking forecourt to the day nursery. In the wider extent of the view to the south there is an open appreciation of the highway and the new residential development at Westfield Close.	Low	Receptor groups include users of the local highways and users of the public rights of way that are considered to be of medium to low susceptibility to the change.	Medium to Low
2	80m	Taken from Lutterworth Road opposite the access to the Balby Golf Centre looking north-east across the highway and car park to the golf centre towards the site. From this location there is an open appreciation of the immediate highway with views into an across the car park at the golf centre towards the golf course and the first hole that falls within the site. There is wider appreciation of the sport pitch at the Leicester Lions Rugby Football Club to the west of the highway with associated fencing and infrastructure, and a view of the modern housing development to the north at Westfield Close	low	Receptor groups include users of the highway and visitors to the rugby club that are considered to be medium to low susceptibility.	Medium to Low
3	35m	Taken from the car park at the Blaby Golf Centre looking north across the immediate setting of the car park towards the wooded setting at the western boundary of the site, and north-east across the more open setting of the golf course that includes the immediate setting of the 9 th hole and filtered views of the 1 st hole that is within the site. To the east there are open views of the golf centre clubhouse that includes outdoor seating areas.	Medium to Low	Receptor groups include visitors the golf centre and users of the golf course that are considered to be of medium to low susceptibility.	Medium to Low
4	55m	Taken from the public open space at Tarry Close looking east across the immediate open foreground setting of the play area towards the vegetation cover at the eastern boundary of the site. The foreground setting of the view is defined by the public open space, play area, modern highways and fronting modern housing development. The immediate boundaries of the residential site are contained with views into the site	Medium	Receptor groups include users of the open space that are considered to be of medium susceptibility.	Medium



		screened by intervening vegetation, but filtered views are likely to develop in winter months.			
5 & 6	290m & 400m	These views are taken from public footpath Z56 crossing the 8 th and 3 rd fairway of the Blaby Golf Centre golf course respectively. From both location there is an open appreciation of the golf course landscape with views of the wider landscape contained by the boundary vegetation cover and tree cover associated with each fairway. Views of the site are substantially screened and whilst limited leaf cover in winter months is likely to marginally increase visibility it is unlikely views into the site will develop.	Medium	Receptor groups include users of the golf course that are considered to be medium susceptibility to the change	Medium
7	1.22km	Taken from Casby Road looking north from an elevated section of the highway across the wider setting of low-lying land. From this location there are views towards the southern edge of Whetstone and the open setting of farmland leading up towards the ridgeline and Countesthorpe. From this location the nature of intervening tree cover screens any view of the site. However, heavily filtered views may develop in winter months with limited leaf cover.	Medium	Receptor groups include users of the highway that are considered to be medium to low susceptibility.	Medium to Low
A	15m	This private residential receptor group includes properties at Westfield Close fronting Lutterworth Road with open views across the highway from property windows on the ground and first floor towards the western boundary of the site.	Low	Receptor groups include private residents that are considered to be high susceptibility.	Medium
B	18m	This private residential receptor group includes properties at Lutterworth Road backing onto the site with open and filtered views from ground and first floor windows across vegetated rear garden towards the western boundary of the site.	Medium	Receptor groups include private residents that are considered to be high susceptibility.	Medium to High
C	40m to 50m	This private residential receptor group includes properties at Westfield Close backing onto the site with open and filtered views from ground and first floor windows across long vegetated rear gardens towards the northern boundary of the site.	Medium	Receptor groups include private residents that are considered to be high susceptibility.	Medium to High
D	20m	This private residential receptor group includes properties at Tarry Close fronting the highway and open space with open ground and first floor views towards the vegetated eastern boundary of the site.	Medium	Receptor groups include private residents that are considered to be high susceptibility.	Medium to High



5 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

5.1 This application is made in outline with a development proposal set out illustratively on the supporting Feasibility Layout prepared by Nineteen47; see **Appendix 2**.

Description of Proposal

5.2 A single highway access is proposed from Lutterworth Road at the centre of the western boundary of the site. An attenuation pond is proposed on northern side of the access road with 5no. properties on the south side with three fronting Lutterworth Road access from a private driveway, and two facing the access road. The first plot is dual-aspect with active frontages to both highways.

5.3 The access roads meanders into the site traversing from the southern boundary northwards with development backing onto the northern boundary of the site, and a perimeter housing block to the south that presents to the highway, the diverted section of public footpath at the southern boundary of the site (and golf course beyond), and the retained section of public footpath at the eastern boundary.

5.4 The proposal comprises approximately 53 dwellings laid out at an average density of xx dwellings per hectare. Within this mix 75% are proposed as open market dwellings and 25% affordable houses that have been sited in two pockets of development at the north-west and north-east corner of the site.

Proposed Landscape Framework

5.5 The proposed landscape framework comprises the following elements:

- The provision of a generous setback to Lutterworth Road that can accommodate the retention of the best existing trees at the site frontage, and provision of new planting measures that will mature to complement the development over time. Space has been provided for the planting of a new native hedgerow boundary to act as a continuation of the golf centre frontage to the south;
- The provision of open space to the north side of the entrance allows for the retention of the best quality trees identified in the supporting arboricultural assessment. These will be complemented with new tree planting measures, the creation of species rich grassland, and an area of permanent water within the balance pond that will support emergent/aquatic vegetation as part of a biologically more diverse environment;



- A linear space has been provided across the southern boundary of the site. This will accommodate a new native hedgerow to better defined the site, and new native tree planting to soften the appearance of the new housing in views from the golf course and secure a landscaped transitions complementing the treed character of the course; and
- The new residential setting will be attractively landscaped in keeping with the wider areas of housing development, incorporating new tree planting, hedgerows, and shrub planting to the frontages of the houses.

Green Wedge

- 5.6 Given the nature of modern development to the east and west of the site, the loss of land within the Green Wedge to accommodate this proposal will not see a marked extension to the urban area beyond the existing and well-defined framework. This in turn is likely to have a negligible effect on the separate character and identity of Blaby and the neighbouring settlement of Whetstone, and not effect on the separation between Balby and Countesthorpe. It is also therefore true to say that the immediate setting of the Green Wedge and aligning urban area has guided the scale and form of development within the site.
- 5.7 The proposal will not impact on any green lung function. The closest green lung function to the site is arguable the narrow gap to the west of Balby that extends between Balby and Whetstone. This will not be impacted by this proposal.
- 5.8 The proposed seeks the redevelopment of an abandoned allotment site and the 1st hole of the Blaby Golf Centre. The proposal retains the existing level of public access to the site, although through a proposal diversion from the existing route of public footpath Z56, ensuring that any harm to the access function of the Green Wedge remains neutral. The golf course will be impacted through the loss of a hole, but its overall sport and recreation function will remain and continue to provide for the level of recreational golf its cater for.



6 ASSESSMENT OF LIKELY LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS

Landscape Effects

- 6.1 The following table considers the susceptibility of the receiving landscape to the proposed changes taking into consideration its individual elements and overall appearance and condition. Judgements of susceptibility are then combined with value as identified in the baseline assessment to identify an overall sensitivity.
- 6.2 A judgement is then made as to the likely magnitude of effect. This includes the consideration of the features and elements of the site to be affected; the size or scale of those effects; the geographic extent of the effects; and the duration and reversibility of the effect.
- 6.3 The sensitivity of the receiving landscape is then considered against the likely magnitude of effect to make an overall judgement of significance. The effects highlighted in blue are those considered to be of particular relevance to the planning decision making process.



Table 3 – Assessment of likely landscape effects

Character Area/Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude of effect	Short-term effect (Year 1)	Long-term effect (Year 15)
The site	<p>The site comprises area of abandoned allotments and small part of a recreational pay and play golf course, set within a wider framework of varied urban, sport and leisure land uses that combined to create a relatively typical urban fringe setting. The immediate setting of the site is of moderate to poor condition and given the nature and variation in land uses does not possess a string or defined character. The site is considered to be of medium to low susceptibility to the proposed change, and in overall terms medium to low landscape sensitivity.</p>	<p>Short-term: In the short-term the development of the site will result in the transformation of the existing allotments and the 1st hole of the golf course into a modern housing development with associated highway access, drainage features, open space and landscaping. Within the site this will result in a high magnitude of change. However, when considering the site in its immediate setting of modern housing and varied land uses the proposed change will not introduce a new or discordant element into this landscape, rather adjust the existing elements through an extension of modern housing across the site. When considered in this context and given the relatively small-scale of the site in the context of its urban fringe setting, the likely magnitude change will be medium. The nature of the change will be direct, permanent, and adverse.</p> <p>Long-term: In the long-term the proposed planting measures will have matured at the boundaries of the site to provide some softening to the appearance of the new housing, helping to assimilate it within its urban fringe setting. Over time the likely magnitude of change will reduce to low, but the nature of change will remain direct, permanent, and adverse.</p>	Moderate adverse	Moderate to Minor adverse



<p>The local setting to the south of site extending between Blakby, Whetstone and Countesthorpe</p>	<p>In terms of the wider local setting to the south, this a relatively mixed landscape that comprises farmland, sport facilities, and commercial uses, bound by the urban fringes of Balby, Whetstone and Countesthorpe. The condition and strength of character is varied but generally considered to be medium and a medium susceptibility to the proposed change. In overall terms, the wider local setting is considered to be of medium to low landscape sensitivity.</p>	<p>Short-term: In the short-term the development proposal will result in a small extension to the existing urban area removing an abandoned allotment site and small part of the existing golf course landscape. This will result in the loss of landscape features, but this will be limited to unmanaged and regenerative vegetation associated with the urban fringe, and not the structured setting of woodland, field boundary hedgerows and tree cover that are key characteristics of the wider setting of farmland. The proposed change is small in scale and contained within the urban area and wider setting of the golf course landscape. This is likely to result in a low magnitude of change. The nature of the change will be direct, permanent, and adverse.</p> <p>Long-term: In the long-term the planting proposal will have matured to secure a structured landscape setting to the site. However, given the relatively small scale of the proposal this is unlikely to material alter the over magnitude of change that will remain low, moving towards negligible.</p>	<p>Minor adverse</p>	<p>Minor to Minimal adverse</p>
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Effects highlighted in blue are those considered to be of significance to the planning decision making process.



Visual Effects

- 6.4 The following tables considers the magnitude of effect the development is likely to have on each of the identified representative views that includes the consideration of the features and elements of the site to be affected; the size or scale of those effects; the geographic extent of the effects; and the duration and reversibility of the effect.
- 6.5 The sensitivity of the visual receptor is then considered against the likely magnitude of effect to make an overall judgement of significance.



Table 5 – Assessment of likely visual effects

View	Magnitude of effect	Short-term effect (Year 1)	Long-term effect (Year 15)
1	<p>Short-term: In the short-term the development proposal will result in the removal of some of the frontage vegetation cover opening up views from Lutterworth Road towards the north housing development. The new highway access arrangement will be openly visible and there will be views into the site and proposed housing along the new highway. This is likely to result in a relatively high magnitude of change to road users passing the immediate frontage of the site.</p> <p>Long-term: In the long-term the landscape measures site frontage will have matured to secure an attractive setting at the site frontage filtering and softening views of the new housing. This is likely to reduce the magnitude of change to medium.</p>	Moderate to Major adverse	Moderate to Minor adverse
2	<p>Short-term: In the short-term there are likely to be open views of the new housing development fronting Lutterworth Road and a combination of open and filtered views of the new housing fronting the golf course at the southern boundary of the site. This is likely to result in a relatively high magnitude of change to road users passing the immediate frontage of the site and visitors to the rugby club.</p> <p>Long-term: In the long-term the landscape measures site frontage will have matured to secure an attractive setting at the site frontage filtering and softening views of the new housing, and new tree and hedgerow planting at the southern boundary will have matured to secure an attractive setting to the wider golf course. This is likely to reduce the magnitude of change to medium.</p>	Moderate to Major adverse	Moderate to Minor adverse
3	<p>Short-term: In the short-term there will be open views of the new housing development within the site from the immediate setting of the clubhouse and its associated outdoor space, and from the immediate setting of the golf course. This is likely to result in a relatively high magnitude of change to visitors and users of the golf club.</p> <p>Long-term: In the long-term the landscape measures at the southern boundary of the site comprising new tree and hedgerow planting will have matured to secure an attractive setting to the wider golf course but the housing will remain apparent in views from the immediate setting of the golf course. This is likely to reduce the magnitude of change to medium.</p>	Moderate to Major adverse	Moderate
4	<p>Short-term: In the short-term there are likely to be filtered views of the development roofscape and in wintertime silhouette views of the new housing within the site. Given the established residential context of the open space and its contained setting the likely magnitude of change to views and receptors groups will be relatively low.</p>	Moderate to Minor adverse	Moderate to Minor adverse



	<p>Long-term: In the long-term the vegetation cover at the eastern boundary of the site will have been retained, reinforced and brought under effective management, but given the proximity of views the likely magnitude change will remain low.</p>		
5 & 6	<p>Short-term: In the short-term from both location visibility of the site and the new housing development will be restricted by the level of intervening vegetation cover, even in winter month with limited leaf cover. There may be very restricted and filtered views of small parts of the development roofscape likely to result in a negligible magnitude of change.</p> <p>Long-term: In the long-term any magnitude of change will remain negligible in these views.</p>	Minimal adverse	Minimal adverse
6	<p>Short-term: In the short-term the development will be visible within the site albeit partially screened by the vegetation cover associated with the MMR bridge crossing at Barkby Lane. The development will be seen as an extension to the existing urban area with the wider area of farmland retained between the site and this location. In addition, the baseline setting includes the construction of a link road over the MMR at the northern boundary of the site. The likely height of this piece of highway infrastructure will undoubtedly detract from the development within the site creating a more prominent and discordant visual element in this view. However, this element may not be delivered for some time and is therefore considered in the assessment of long-term effects. In the short-term the development is likely to result in a low magnitude of effect.</p> <p>Long-term: In the long-term the development will have been delivered most likely in combination with the elevated link road associated with the SUE. This piece of infrastructure will undoubtedly overwhelm this view and any effect of the development within the site that will become a secondary component. The likely magnitude of change will be negligible.</p>	Moderate to Minor adverse	Minimal adverse
7	<p>Short & Long-term: In both the short and long-term any alteration in distant elevated views from the surrounding higher ground will be barely perceptible given the scale and nature of the proposal, the extensive backdrop of the existing urban area, and the level of vegetation cover in the immediate setting of the site and wider landscape. From this location, even in winter months the proposal is likely to remain screened by the intervening vegetation cover.</p>	No Change	No Change
A	<p>Short-term: The development will be openly visible in views from the properties fronting Litterworth Road to the west of the site. In the short-term this is likely to result in a high magnitude of change.</p> <p>Long-term: In the long-term new planting measures will soften the appearance of the new housing reducing the overall magnitude of effect to medium.</p>	Major to Moderate	Moderate adverse
B	<p>Short-term: These properties will have filtered views from ground flood and first floor windows across their rear garden setting towards the new housing at the western boundary of the site, seen in the context of the wider urban setting. In the short-term this is likely to result in a high magnitude of effect to the visual setting at the rear of these properties.</p>	Major to Moderate	Moderate adverse



	<p>Long-term: In the long-term new planting measures will soften the appearance of the new housing reducing the overall magnitude of effect to medium to medium.</p>		
C	<p>Short-term: These properties benefit from long and narrow rear garden with a relatively high level of vegetation cover. In the short-term there will be open and filtered views of the new housing development within the site resulting in a medium to low magnitude of change to these views.</p> <p>Long-term: In the long-term due to the relationship between the new housing with rear gardens backing onto the northern boundary there is limited opportunity for new planting meaning that the likely magnitude of effect will remain medium.</p>	Moderate adverse	Moderate adverse
D	<p>Short-term: There are likely to be a combination of open and filtered views from these properties towards the new housing development within the, but given the established setting of vegetation cover at the eastern boundary of the site the likely magnitude of change in the short-term will be medium.</p> <p>Long-term: In the long-term the vegetation cover at the eastern boundary of the site will have been retained, reinforced and brought under effective management, reducing the likely magnitude change to low.</p>	Major to Moderate	Moderate adverse

Effects highlighted in blue are those considered to be of significance to the planning decision making process.



7 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

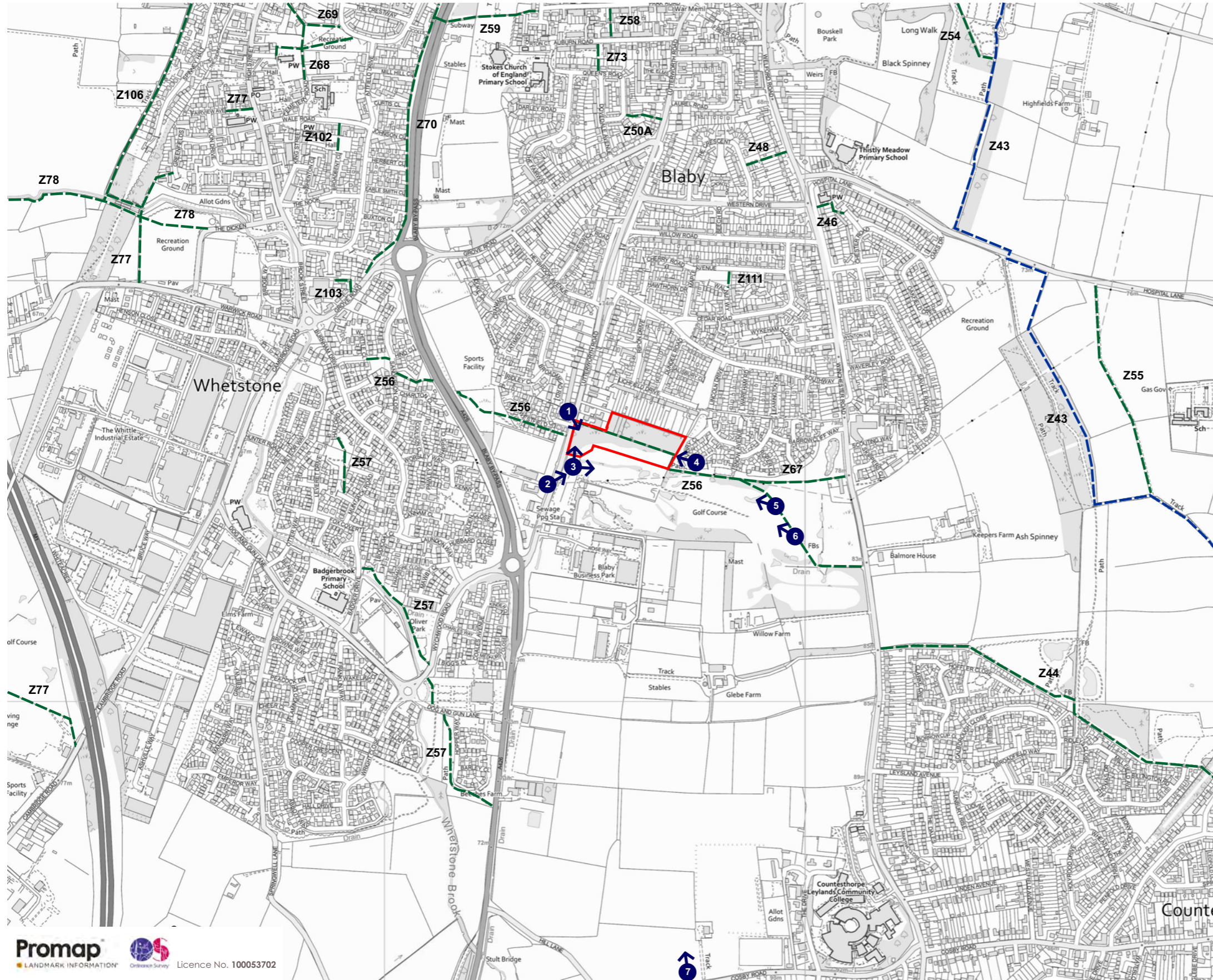
- 7.1 In summary this landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA) has set out a clear and transparent assessment of the baseline resource applicable to the site, and an assessment of the likely landscape and visual effects of the development proposals.
- 7.2 The site benefits from an established urban setting and comprises and areas of abandoned allotments and golf course that have relatively few features of value. The site is not covered by any landscape designation that would suggest an increased value or sensitivity to change, and it is not covered by any statutory or non-statutory designation that would preclude its development for residential purposes.
- 7.3 Likewise, the site is not covered by any wildlife or nature conservation designation, and does not contain or sit in close proximity to any designated heritage assets.
- 7.4 The site has been assessed in landscape terms in the Local Authorities evidence base as forming part of the Blaby, Countesthorpe and Whetstone Fringe landscape character area. This LCA is assessed as being of low to moderate sensitivity to residential development, a finding that has been upheld in this assessment.
- 7.5 The site does form part of the designated Green Wedge between Blaby, Whetstone and Countesthorpe, but is identified in the latest Green Wedge Review prepared by the Local Authority as an area of review given the recent changes to its setting following the completion of modern housing development to the east and west of the site. As set out in the assessment, any impact in the function of the Green Wedge through the development of this site is likely to be negligible.
- 7.6 In terms of likely landscape effects, this assessment has identified a short-term effect of moderate significance at an immediate site level that results from the proposed transformation of an open setting of farmland to a housing development. This level of effect has been recorded due to the established urban setting of the site, its immediate and varied land uses and the lack of any harm to the key characteristics of the wider farmland setting of the Blaby, Countesthorpe and Whetstone Fringe landscape character area.
- 7.7 At a local level the likely landscape effect has been recorded as minor in the short-term, reducing to minor to minimal in the long-term. This level of effect is relatively low due to the relatively small scale of the proposal, the scale and nature of the established urban edge, and the varied setting of land uses that contain the site. This level of effect is considered to be of limited significance to the planning decision making process.







- 7.8 In terms of visual effects, this proposal has recorded major to moderate adverse short-term effects associated with local receptors groups at the immediate boundaries, or close to the immediate boundaries of the site. This level of effect is not considered unusual and is a combination of the proximity of the receptor and the nature of the proposed change that will result in the transformation of a green field site to housing development. Beyond the immediate boundaries of the site the likely visual effects reduce to moderate, minor and minimal adverse, and from numerous locations no change has been recorded where the proposal will in the long-term be substantially screened by a combination of land form and intervening vegetation cover.
- 7.9 In conclusion, the level of landscape and visual effects record in this assessment are as expected given the nature of the site, its local context and the type and number of local receptor groups. These effects are considered to be typical and acceptable in landscape and visual terms.



Figures



Key

-  Application boundary
-  Photographic view locations
-  Public footpath
-  Public bridleway

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north

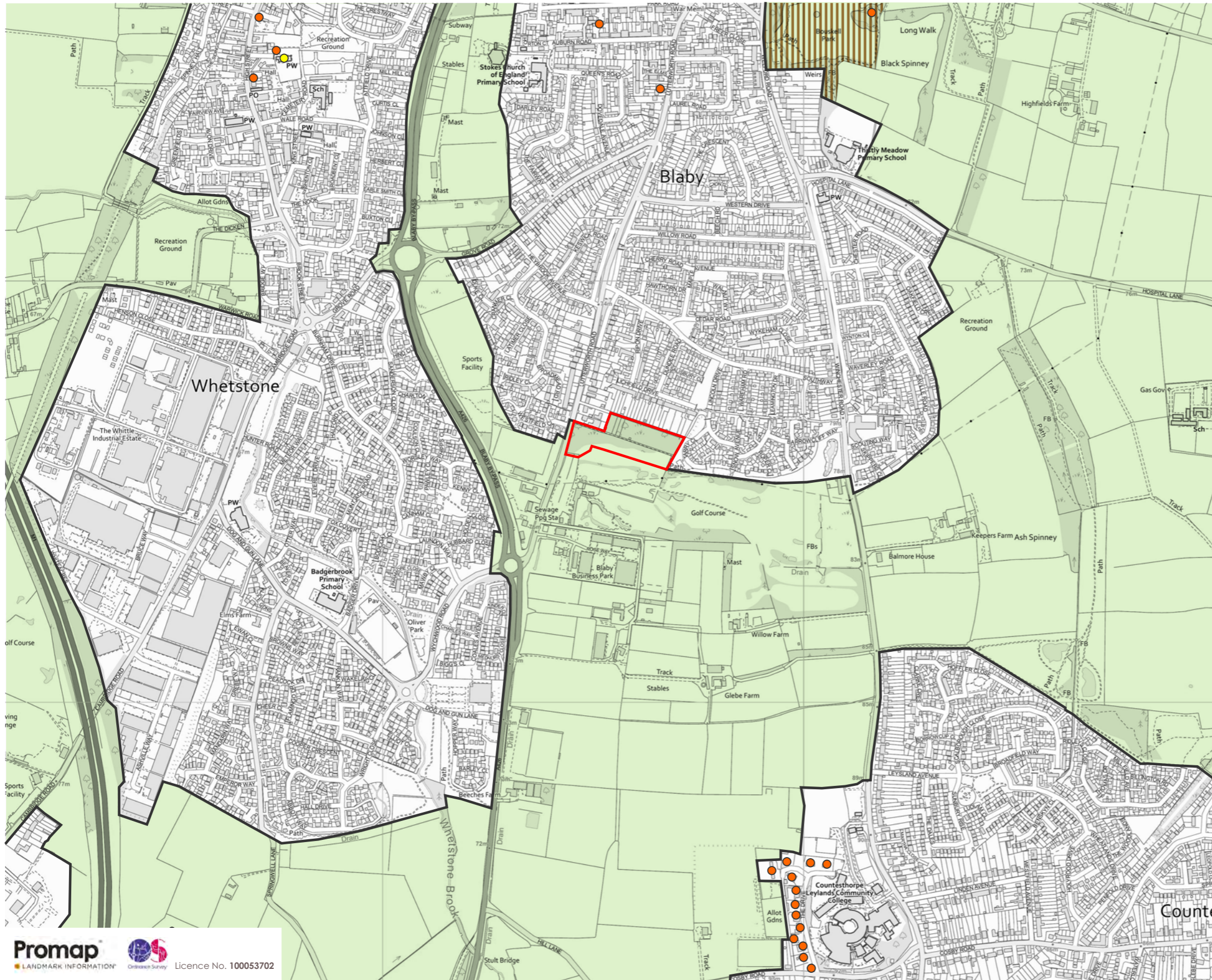
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


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Date
05/10/2023
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SG

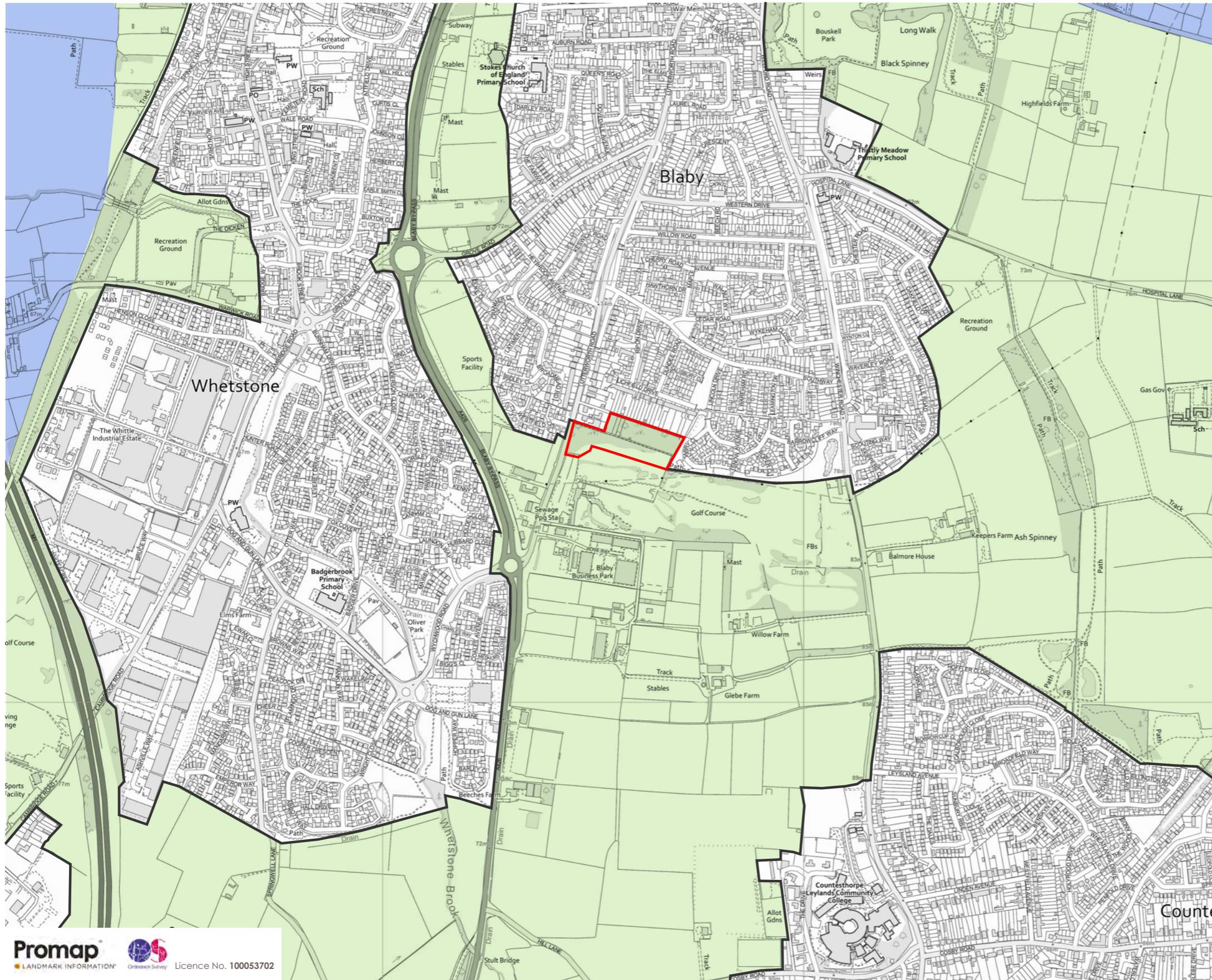
Project
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Blaby
Drawing title
Site Location
Client
Davidsons Developments Limited

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landscape architects







Key

-  Application boundary
-  Settlement boundaries
-  Green Wedge
-  Grade I Listed Building
-  Grade II Listed Building
-  Conservation Area



Key

-  Application boundary
-  Settlement boundary
-  Blaby, Countesthorpe and Whetstone Fringe
-  Sence and Soar Floodplain

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north

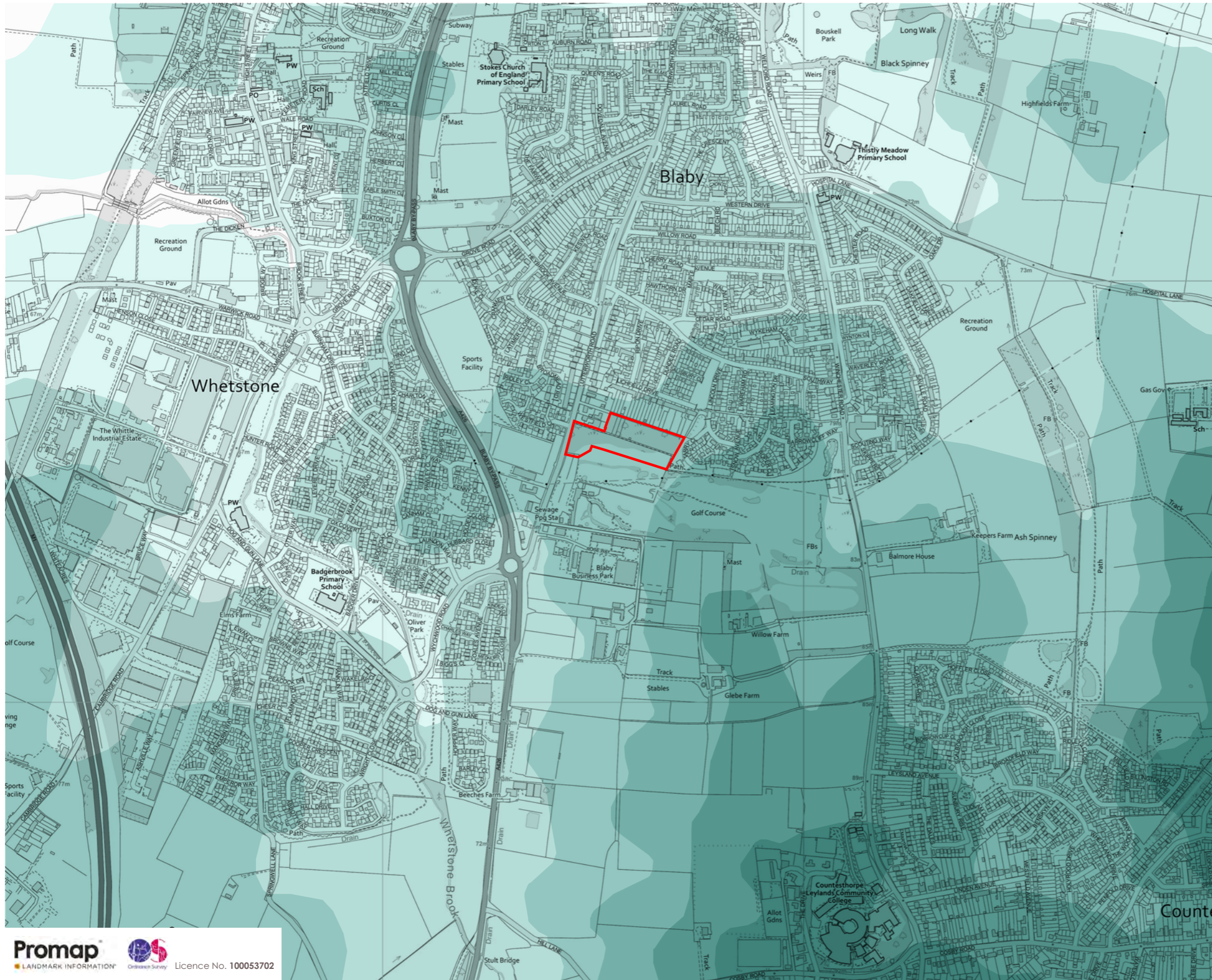
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Date
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SG

Project
Land East of Lutterworth Road
Blaby
Drawing title
Landscape Character
Client
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Key

-  Application boundary
-  60m to 65m AOD
-  65m to 70m AOD
-  70m to 75m AOD
-  75m to 80m AOD
-  80m to 85m AOD
-  85m to 90m AOD
-  90m to 95m AOD

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north

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Number/Figure GL2232 04	Project Land East of Lutterworth Road Blaby
Scale 1:10000@A3	Drawing title Topography
Date 05/10/2023	Client Davidsons Developments Limited
Checked SG	

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Approximate extent of site in view



View 1 - From Lutterworth Road approximately 15m from the site looking south-east

Approximate extent of site in view



View 2 - From Lutterworth Road approximately 80m from the site looking north-east

north

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Date
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SG

Project
Land East of Lutterworth Road
Blaby
Drawing title
**Photographic Views
1 & 2**
Client
Davidsons Developments Limited

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Approximate extent of site in view



View 3 - From the car park at the Blaby Golf Centre approximately 35m from the site looking north

Approximate extent of site in view



View 3 - From the car park at the Blaby Golf Centre approximately 35m from the site looking north-east

north

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GL2232 06	Land East of Lutterworth Road Blaby
Scale	Drawing title
NTS@A3	Photographic View
Date	3
05/10/2023	Client
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SG	

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Approximate extent of site in view



View 4 - From the open space at Tarry Close approximately 55m from the site looking west

Approximate extent of site in view



View 5 - From the 8th fairway at Blaby Golf Centre approximately 290m from the site looking west

north

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Number/Figure
GL2232 07
 Scale
 NTS@A3
 Date
 05/10/2023
 Checked
 SG

Project
 Land East of Lutterworth Road
 Blaby
 Drawing title
**Photographic Views
 4 & 5**
 Client
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Approximate extent of site in view



View 6 - From the 3rd fairway at Blaby Golf Centre approximately 400m from the site looking north-west

Approximate extent of site in view



View 7 - From Cosby Road approximately 1.22km from the site looking north

north

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Scale
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Project
Land East of Lutterworth Road
Blaby
Drawing title
**Photographic Views
6 & 7**
Client
Davidsons Developments Limited

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Appendix 1

Landscape and Visual Appraisal Methodology



8 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

8.1 This assessment methodology is based on the guidance set out in the:

8.2 Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' 2013 published by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (GLVIA), and Technical Guidance Note 02/21 – Assessing landscape value outside national designations 2021 published by the Landscape Institute (TGN 02/21).

8.3 The following terms are used throughout the assessment and are defined in the GLVIA as:

Landscape: An area, as perceived by people, the character of which is the result of the action an interaction of natural and/or human factors.

Landscape Character: A distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different to another, rather than better or worse.

Landscape effects: Effects on the landscape as a resource in its own right.

Landscape Receptors: Defined aspects of the landscape resource that have the potential to be affected by a proposal.

Landscape Value: The relative value that is attached to different landscapes by society. A landscape may be valued by different stakeholders for a whole variety of reasons.

Magnitude (of effect): A term that combines judgements about the size and scale of the effect, the extent of the area over which it occurs, whether it is reversible or irreversible and whether it is short or long term in duration.

Mitigation: Measures designed to avoid, reduce, remedy or compensate for landscape or visual effects (not taken from GLVIA).

Sensitivity: A term applied to specific receptors, combining judgements of the susceptibility of the receptor to the specific type of change or development proposal and the value related to that receptor.

Significance: A measure of the importance or gravity of the environmental effect, defined by significance criteria specific to the environmental topic. The use of the word significance in this LVIA is a measure of to the importance to be placed on an identified effect in the planning decision making process. This is distinct from the identification of "significant effects" used in the framework of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).



Visual Amenity: The overall pleasantness of the views people enjoy of their surroundings, which provides an attractive visual setting or backdrop for the enjoyment of activities of the people living, working, recreating, visiting or travelling through the area.

Visual effects: Effects on specific views and on the general visual amenity experienced by people.

Visual Receptors: Individuals and/or defined groups of people who have the potential to be affected by the proposal.

Landscape Baseline

8.4 The landscape baseline seeks to establish the value associated with the site, its local landscape setting, and its associated features. To understand value the assessment considered several factors when describing the site context and location that includes:

- Land use;
- Vegetation;
- Topography;
- Water features;
- Public access; and
- Local key characteristics

8.5 Landscape planning designation and published landscape assessments are used to inform the landscape baseline.

8.6 As part of the landscape baseline an assessment of value is made. Box 5.1 in the GLVIA sets out a range of factors that can help in the identification of valued landscape and therefore inform a judgement as to their sensitivity. This has been updated in TNG 02/21 that sets out the following factors and definitions under Table 1:

- **Natural heritage:** Landscape with clear evidence of ecological, geological, geomorphological or physiographic interest which contribute positively to the landscape.
- **Cultural heritage:** Landscape with clear evidence of archaeological, historical or cultural interest which contribute positively to the landscape.



- **Landscape condition:** Landscape which is in a good physical state both with regard to individual elements and overall landscape structure.
- **Associations:** Landscape which is connected with notable people, events and the arts.
- **Distinctiveness:** Landscape that has a strong sense of identity.
- **Recreational:** Landscape offering recreational opportunities where experience of landscape is important.
- **Perceptual (Scenic):** Landscape that appeals to the senses, primarily the visual sense.
- **Perceptual (Wilderness and tranquillity):** Landscape with a strong perceptual value notably wildness, tranquillity and/or dark skies.
- **Functional:** Landscape which performs a clearly identifiable and valuable function, particularly in the healthy functioning of the landscape.

8.7 TGN 02/21 provides the following guidance on the practical application of these factors:

- The factors to be considered are not fixed as they need to be appropriate to the particular project and location. It is recommended that the factors used to assess landscape value in a particular assessment are, where appropriate, discussed with the relevant planning authority or statutory consultees.
- The indicators of value should be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, taking into account what they contribute (positively or negatively) to a specific landscape. The relative importance to be attached to each indicator is likely to vary across different landscapes. Once evidence for each factor has been collated and assessed, it is important to step back and judge the overall 'weight of evidence' in coming to an overall judgement on landscape value.
- There are likely to be overlaps between the factors, as well as overlaps with other specialist studies for example in relation to natural and cultural factors. These overlaps should be acknowledged and considered when presenting conclusions on the overall value of the landscape.
- While condition/intactness of a landscape is one factor that can influence value, poor landscape management should not be a reason to deny a landscape a valued status if other factors indicate value. Deliberately neglecting an area of landscape and allowing its condition to deteriorate should not be allowed to diminish its value in a planning context.



- When assessing landscape value of a site as part of a planning application or appeal it is important to consider not only the site itself and its features/elements/characteristics/qualities, but also their relationship with, and the role they play within, the site's context. Value is best appreciated at the scale at which a landscape is perceived – rarely is this on a field-by-field basis.
- Landscape function can influence value, but the presence of a spatial designation (e.g. Green Belt or Green Gap) is not in itself an indicator of high landscape value.
- The presentation of information about landscape value should be proportionate to the task at hand.
- Landscape value, and the way in which landscapes are valued by people, is a dynamic process, and can change over time. Any value assessment will be a snapshot in time.

8.8 At varying levels communities and individuals will have differing perceptions as to the value of a landscape. However, for the purposes of landscape assessment it is important to set out a reasoned hierarchy of criteria for assessing value. Value is essentially concerned with the importance or rarity of a landscape and its ability to be substituted or replicated. Value can be categorised as follows:

- **Very High Landscape Value** – landscapes of great importance or rarity that would have limited potential for substitution or replication. Such landscapes will include features and characteristics that combine to create areas of outstanding scenic quality with a value that extends beyond a local level. Such landscape may be identified by designation but not exclusively or may be undesignated but provide a critical setting to highly valued features such as heritage or rare geological features, major visitor attractions/destinations, or valuable and rare earth science/nature conservation assets.
- **High Landscape Value** – landscapes of local value that are of good condition and/or strong strength of character with some potential for substitution or replication. This will include landscapes with strong local cultural associations, and landscapes with high concentrations of designated features in close proximity (such as heritage assets) where the landscape between them makes a valuable but not critical contribution to their setting and interrelationship.
- **Medium Landscape Value** – landscapes of moderate value or rarity that have potential for substitution or replication. Such landscapes will have a cohesive character that is well represented. They may provide the wider setting to locally



valued features but will not be important to their special interest. These landscapes may also have detracting elements that are notable but not dominant.

- **Low Landscape Value** – landscapes of limited value or rarity that can be substituted or replicated. Such landscapes are likely to have a moderate to weak strength of character and will be made up of features that are both common and widespread and are of limited quality/condition. These landscapes will have detracting elements and/or will have been eroded/modified.

Visual Baseline

8.9 In establishing the visual baseline, a series of representative views towards the site covering a range of visual receptors will have been identified through field survey work. The selected viewpoints can typically cover three types of views that are described in the GLVIA as:

- **Representative viewpoints** – selected to represent the experience of different types of visual receptor, where large numbers of viewpoints cannot be included individually and where the significant effects are unlikely to differ;
- **Specific viewpoints** – chosen because they are key and sometimes promoted viewpoints within the landscape, including for example specific local visitor attractions, viewpoints in areas of particularly noteworthy visual and/or recreational amenity such as landscape with statutory landscape designations, or viewpoints with particular cultural landscape associations. Specific views include those from recreational spaces, cemeteries, public footpaths, open access land, and promoted trails.
- **Illustrative viewpoints** – chosen specifically to demonstrate a particular effect or specific issues, which might, for example, be the restricted visibility at certain locations.

8.10 Not all of these types of viewpoints will be present or need to be considered in all of the assessment. The majority of viewpoints will be representative but not exclusively. All of the viewpoints considered are taken from publicly accessible locations. The likely effect of the development proposal on private locations, such as houses, is made through professional judgement based on views from publicly accessible locations nearby.

8.11 The representative views are described as part of the visual baseline assessment and consider the following criteria:

- Location of the viewpoint;



- Type of existing view;
- Distance between the observer and the site; and
- Extent and context of the site and/or likely view of development proposal observed.

8.12 With specific regard to the extent of the site/development observed the following descriptions are used:

- Open views – uninterrupted views into the site;
- Filtered views – views partially obstructed by vegetation, landform, built-form or combinations of each; and
- Glimpsed views – fleeting views of the site afforded through a break in vegetation cover, from field access gates, views from a transport route where intervening landform/vegetation cover provide an intermittent appreciation of the site, or from within the urban area where the site is glimpsed between breaks in the intervening built-form.

8.13 As part of the baseline assessment judgements must be made about the value attached to a view. Value may be attached to views that relate to designated landscapes and heritage assets. Value may also be attached through appearance in guidebooks, on maps, and through the provision of facilities specific to the enjoyment of a view such as benches or interpretation boards. Value may also be attached to views associated with heritage assets, these are often identified in heritage assessments and conservation area appraisals. Value can be categorised as:

- **Very High Visual Value** – Promoted views identified on maps, or local walks/guides that are highly valued as a destination to appreciate a particular landscape or feature. This may include views towards or from notable natural features, structures, houses, heritage assets, designed views or exceptional landscapes. These views are considered to be of greater than local value and are likely to be marked by signs, seating, or features that promote the view. This may also include undesignated and promoted views that are of significant local cultural and community value.
- **High Visual Value** – Views from publicised vantage points, or to a landscape of notable importance, or highly popular visitor attractions where the view forms an important part of the experience or has important cultural associations. This may include particularly noteworthy views from identified trials, designated landscapes, and heritage assets. These views are considered to be of greater than local value



and regularly visited. This may also include views that provide a valuable appreciation of a landscape, for instance open and elevated panoramic views that provide a wide appreciation of a landscape that defines a particular area, or conversely a focussed/channelled view of a specific feature or valued asset. Private views may include notable properties specifically designed to take advantage of a particular view;

- **Medium Visual Value** – Locally known or valued viewpoints. Views from promoted public rights of way or clear evidence of regular use and areas of informal open space. Views from regularly used rooms or living spaces. Panoramic views, vistas, or other noteworthy views from active recreation land, or highways. Such views will provide a wider appreciation of the landscape and its character with few detracting elements; and
- **Low Visual Value** – Views that are not published and/or where there is limited evidence of regular use, and/or views that do not provide a wider appreciation of the landscape and its character. Such views will often include modified landscapes and/or detracting elements. Views from secondary windows not forming the main living or working spaces in properties. Views of little noteworthiness from active recreation land, or highways.

Assessment of Landscape Effects

8.14 The initial stage of the assessment of landscape effect is to determine the susceptibility of the receptor to the proposed change, and an overall assessment of landscape sensitivity.

8.15 The following criteria are used to establish landscape susceptibility. Whilst these are typical examples it does not always follow that a site within a specific landscape designation will automatically fit with this categorization. Much will depend on the specific site conditions.

- **Very High Susceptibility** – A landscape possessing a strong and defined character of notable scenic quality, in good condition with a very low tolerance to the proposed change.
- **High Landscape Susceptibility** - A landscape possessing a defined character of good scenic quality, in good condition with a low tolerance to the proposed change.
- **Medium Landscape Susceptibility** – A landscape possessing a moderate strength character and scenic quality, in moderate condition with a moderate tolerance to the proposed change



- **Low Landscape Susceptibility** – A landscape possessing a weak and undefined character of limited scenic quality, in poor condition with a high tolerance to the proposed change.

8.16 Judgements of value and susceptibility are then combined as an assessment of overall sensitivity:

Table 1 – Matrix of Landscape Sensitivity

		SUSCEPTIBILITY			
		VERY HIGH	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
VALUE	VERY HIGH	Very High	High/Very High	High	Medium
	HIGH	High/Very High	High	Medium/High	Medium/Low
	MEDIUM	High	Medium/High	Medium	Medium/Low
	LOW	Medium	Medium/Low	Low	Low

8.17 This table is a guide with marginal judgements between sensitivity ratings explained in the assessment text.

8.18 The following stage of the assessment process considers the magnitude of change imposed by the proposed development on each landscape receptors. Issues that inform this judgement include:

- **Size or scale:** The amount of change resulting from the proposal to features, or key characteristics and attributes of the landscape type or area.
- **Geographic extent:** Determines the extent to which the landscape type or area will be affected by the proposed development.
- **Duration and reversibility of the landscape effect:** The timeframe, or duration of the effect by the proposed development, and whether the effect is permanent or temporary.

8.19 The likely magnitude of change of the development proposal can be guided by the following criteria:

- **High magnitude of change** – The proposal will result in a total change in the key characteristics of the landscape character, will introduce elements into the



landscape that are totally uncharacteristic to the receiving landscape, and/or will result in the substantial loss, or alteration of key elements/features.

- **Medium magnitude of change** – The proposal will result in a change in the key characteristic of the landscape character, will introduce elements uncharacteristic to the attributes of the receiving landscape, and/or will result in loss, or alteration to key elements/features.
- **Low magnitude of change** – The proposal will result in a partial change to the key characteristics of the landscape character, will introduce elements that are not entirely uncharacteristic to the attributes of the receiving landscape, and/or will result in the minor loss, or alteration to key elements/features.
- **Negligible magnitude of change** – The proposal will result in a very limited changed to the key characteristics of the landscape character, will introduce elements consistent with the attributes of the receiving landscape, and/or will result in an limited loss, or alteration to key elements/features.

8.20 The combined judgements on the nature of the receptor (sensitivity) and the nature of the impact (magnitude) are combined to arrive at a clear and transparent judgement of significance. The significance of landscape effects is described in the assessment text and guided by the matrix set out below:

Table 2 – Matrix of Landscape Significance

		SENSITIVITY			
		VERY HIGH	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE	HIGH	Very Major	Major	Major/Moderate	Moderate
	MEDIUM	Major	Major/Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/Minor
	LOW	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/Minor	Minor
	NEGLIGIBLE	Moderate/Minor	Minor	Minimal	Minimal

8.21 This table is a guide with marginal judgements between sensitivity ratings explained in the assessment text.

8.22 For the purpose of this assessment, effects that are of very major, major, and major-moderate significance (highlighted in blue) are those considered particularly relevant to the planning decision making process. When considering the development of green field sites for residential or commercial development effects of this significance are not



uncommon or unexpected at a site level, and should not make a development unacceptable in landscape terms per se. Moderate effects (highlighted in green) are considered to be less relevant. Moderate/Minor, Minor, and Minimal effects are those considered least relevant to the planning decision making process and are not highlighted.

Assessment of Visual Effects

- 8.23 The initial stage of the assessment of visual effect is to determine the susceptibility of the receptor to the proposed change, and an overall assessment of landscape sensitivity.
- 8.24 GLVIA describes the susceptibility of different visual receptors to changes in views and visual amenity as a function of:
- the occupation or activity of people experiencing the view at particular locations; and
 - the extent to which their attention or interest may therefore be focussed on the views and the visual amenity they experience in particular locations.
- 8.25 The GVLIA goes on to categorise those receptor groups that are likely to be most susceptible to change:
- residents at home;
 - people, whether residents or visitors, who are engaged in outdoor recreation, including people using public rights of way, whose attention or interest is likely to be focussed on the landscape and on particular views;
 - visitors to heritage assets, or to other attractions, where views of the surroundings are an important contributor to the experience;
 - communities where views contribute to the landscape setting enjoyed by the residents in the area.
- 8.26 Whilst this covers a number of potential visual receptors it does not automatically make them all highly susceptible to change. Susceptibility can be categorised as follows:
- **Very High Susceptibility** – Views that provide a key understanding and appreciation of valued landscapes (most notably National Parks and AONB's), notable natural features, or historic structures/properties (such as engineering structures or country houses).
 - **High Visual Susceptibility** - Primary views from residential properties; users of public rights of way, informal footpaths, cycleways and public open space where the



appreciation of the wider landscape setting is critical to its function and enjoyment; visitors to local attractions and heritage/wildlife assets where views of the wider landscape are important to its setting.

- **Medium Visual Susceptibility** - Secondary/restricted views from residential properties; users of public rights of way, informal footpaths, cycleways, lanes and public open space where the appreciation of the wider landscape setting is moderately important to its function and enjoyment; and visitors to local attractions and heritage/wildlife assets where views of the wider landscape make a contribution to its setting but are not critical to its appreciation and enjoyment.
- **Low Visual Susceptibility** - People engaged in outdoor sport and recreation where the appreciation of views is not critical to their enjoyment; people at their workplace where the setting is not important to the quality of working life, and road or footpath users where views of the wider landscape make a limited contribution to its setting.

8.27 In terms of views from residential properties it is important to note that the planning system does not serve to protect private interests. The key issue in considering residential views is not whether an occupier would experience financial or other loss from development but whether such development would unacceptably affect the residential amenity of the property and associated land holding. A number of Local Authorities have adopted residential amenity standards for new development that have been specifically implemented to control the relationship between existing and proposed development. Where such standards exist, these will be relied upon and not replicated through further assessment.

8.28 Judgements of value and susceptibility are then combined as an assessment of overall sensitivity:

Table 3 – Matrix of Visual Sensitivity

		SUSCEPTIBILITY			
		VERY HIGH	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
VALUE	VERY HIGH	Very High	High/Very High	High	Medium/High
	HIGH	High/Very High	High	Medium/High	Medium
	MEDIUM	High	Medium/High	Medium	Medium/Low
	LOW	Medium/High	Medium	Medium/Low	Low



8.29 This table is a guide with marginal judgements between sensitivity ratings explained in the assessment text.

8.30 The following stage of the assessment process considers the magnitude of change imposed by the proposed development on each visual receptor. Issues that inform this judgement include:

- **Size or scale:** This includes the loss of important features to the character and composition of the views, the degree of consistency between the proposals and visual setting of the receiving landscape, and the extent of the view and proportion of that view the proposals in likely to influence or change.
- **Geographic extent:** The extent of the area in which the proposed change will be visible.
- **Duration and reversibility of the visual effect:** The timeframe, or duration of the effect by the proposed development, and whether the effect is permanent or temporary.

8.31 The likely magnitude of change of the development proposal can be guided by the following criteria:

- **High magnitude** - The proposal will cause a dominant or complete change or contrast to the view, resulting in the loss or addition of substantial features in the view, at odds with the existing visual character, and substantially altering the appreciation of the view.
- **Medium magnitude** - The proposal will cause a clearly noticeable change or contrast to the view, which will have an effect on composition through the loss or addition of features, noticeably altering the appreciation of the view.
- **Low magnitude** - The proposal will cause a perceptible change or contrast in the view, but which will not materially affect the composition or the appreciation of the view.
- **Negligible magnitude** - The proposal will cause a barely perceptible change or contrast to the view that will not affect the composition or the appreciation of the view.
- **No change** – no part of the scheme or associated works will be discernible in the view.

8.32 The judgements on the nature of the receptor (sensitivity) and the nature of the impact (magnitude) are combined to arrive at a clear and transparent judgement of



significance. The significance of visual effect is described in the assessment text and is guided by the matrix set out below:

Table 4 – Matrix of Visual Significance

		SENSITIVITY			
		VERY HIGH	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE	HIGH	Very Major	Major	Major-Moderate	Moderate
	MEDIUM	Major	Major-Moderate	Moderate	Minor
	LOW	Major-Moderate	Moderate	Minor	Minimal
	NEGLIGIBLE	Moderate	Minor	Minimal	Minimal

8.33 This table is a guide with marginal judgements between sensitivity ratings explained in the assessment text.

8.34 For the purpose of this assessment, effects that are of major and major-moderate significance (highlighted in blue) are those considered particularly relevant to the planning decision making process. When considering the development of green field sites for residential or commercial development, a relatively common assessment scenario, effects of this significance are not uncommon or unexpected at a site level, and should not make a development unacceptable in landscape terms per se. Moderate effects (highlighted in green) are considered to be less relevant. Minor and Minimal effects are those considered least relevant to the planning decision making process and are not highlighted.

Criteria of Other Factors Assessed

- 8.35 The assessment also considers the following aspects;
- **Directs and indirect effects** – direct effect effects are those directly attributable to the development. These include changes to features, character, and views. Indirect effects are those resulting indirectly from the development. These effects may result as a consequence of direct effects over distance from the site, or a sequence of change over time or distance;
 - **Seasonal variation** – due to the role that vegetation can play in preventing or limiting views, or influencing the character of the landscape, the difference between winter and summer needs to be considered. Assessments completed



during spring and summer months should include a prediction of winter effects with limited leaf cover to ensure the worst-case scenario has been considered.

- **Beneficial, neutral, or adverse effects** - adverse effects are those that would be damaging to the quality, integrity, or key characteristics of the landscape and/or visual resource. Beneficial effects are those that would result in an improvement in the quality, integrity, or key characteristics of the landscape and/or visual resource. Neutral effects are those effect that would maintain, on balance, the existing levels of quality, integrity, or key characteristics of the landscape and/or visual resource.
- **Neutral effects** – where mitigation is effective to the point where any adverse effect is considered neutralised and/or where the development is unlikely to result in any effect on the identified receptor (i.e no change).



Appendix 2

Illustrative Layout (Nineteen47)

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