

Land at Goodman Fold Farm

Blackrod, Bolton

LANDSCAPE & VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

December 2023



Report Control Sheet

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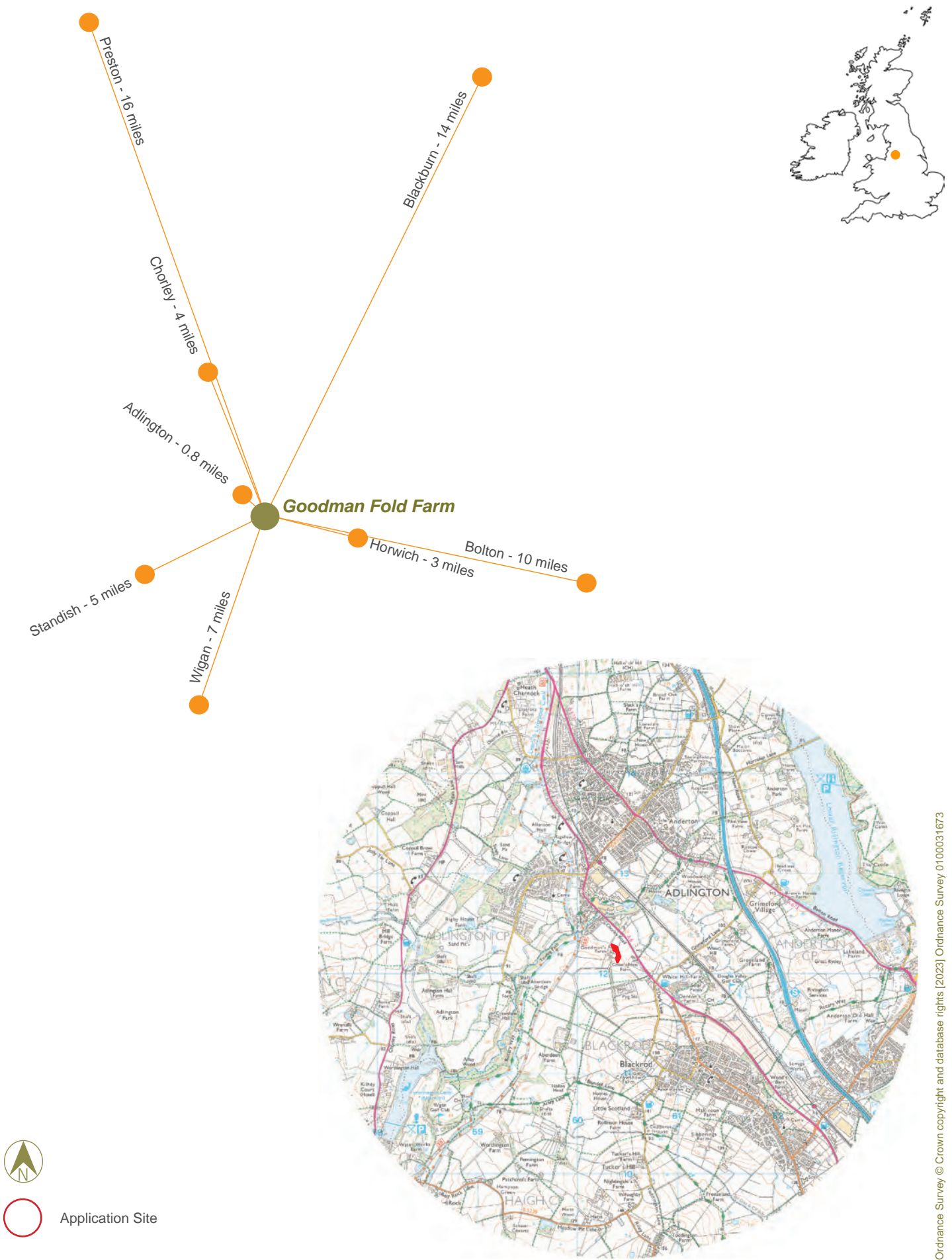
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Figure 1: Application Site Location.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 SCOPE & PURPOSE

1.1.1 Collington Winter Ltd was commissioned by Mr J Dickinson to prepare a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) to support a retrospective application at Goodman Fold Farm (the application site), to Bolton Council, for a replacement storage building associated with domestic / hobby purposes. The LVIA will assess the landscape which surrounds the application site and will establish a landscape and visual baseline context.

1.1.2 *Aims of Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*

- Consider the **landscape character** of the application site, within the wider landscape setting and the likely effects of the proposal upon landscape character;
- Assess the **visual sensitivities** of the application site, from key public receptors and identify the potential for visual effects upon landscape character and visual amenity;
- Assess the potential for the scale and nature of the proposal to be successfully accommodated within the landscape and
- Establish **mitigation** of **landscape** and **visual impacts**, to aid the overall scheme proposals, where necessary.

1.1.3 This LVIA was undertaken through desktop review of landscape character and relevant planning policy, combined with an assessment of landscape and visual sensitivities. The field assessment was carried out by a Landscape Architect CMLI, on the 25th November 2023, in dry and bright weather conditions.

1.1.4 The LVIA is designed to be read in conjunction with other supporting plans and technical reports and provides a proportionate overview of the current landscape and visual baseline for the application site.

1.1.5 It is understood that the application site was formally occupied by an old steel barn, partially enclosed to the east and south by a raised grassed mound. Following the completion of the conversion of Goodman Fold Barn to a Farmhouse, the old steel barn was demolished and the new building for storage was constructed, occupying a smaller footprint to the south east of the application site (See Google Earth images below).



2009 Google Earth Image



2023 Google Earth Image

1.1.6 It is usual practice to prepare an LVIA at an early stage in the development of proposals for an application and make an assessment of the predicted impacts of a proposal during the construction phase, upon completion of construction and at 15 years post construction. However in this instance as the new storage building has already been constructed and a retrospective application for consent is being sought, this LVIA will therefore

assess the verified impacts of the storage building upon landscape character and visual amenity, as seen in November 2023, using a comparison of Google Earth images from 2009, between the original and new storage building and an assessment following the completion of the recommended planting scheme, developed to support this retrospective application.

- 1.1.7 There are no images of the original barn as seen from the wider landscape, however the screen shot of the Google Street View image from 2009 below illustrates the character and massing of the original barn, as seen from Waterhouse Nook.



2009 Google Street View Image

- 1.1.8 Following a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment and a site assessment, a scheme of soft landscape planting is proposed, to further assimilate the storage building into the landscape and to provide a positive net gain for biodiversity. (See CW258-D-001).

1.2 LOCATION

- 1.2.1 The application site is located to the south of Adlington and to the north west of Blackrod, off the A6 Chorley Road. See *Figure 1: Application Site Location*.

2.0 LANDSCAPE BASELINE

2.1 WHAT IS LANDSCAPE?

2.1.1 The landscape is a resource in its own right. The European Landscape Convention (ELC), designed to achieve improved approaches to the planning, management and protection of landscapes throughout Europe, defines landscape as:

'an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors'. (Council of Europe, 2000).

2.1.2 This definition was expanded in 2002 to illustrate how all landscapes are special and valuable, even if they are not recognised with a statutory designation.

"Landscape is about the relationship between people and place. It provides the setting for our day-to-day lives. The term does not mean just special or designated landscapes and it does not only apply to the countryside. Landscape can mean a small patch of urban wasteland as much as a mountain range, and an urban park as much as an expanse of lowland plain. It results from the way that different components of our environment – both natural (the influences of geology, soils, climate, flora and fauna) and cultural (the historic and current impact of land use, settlement, enclosure and other human interventions) – interact together and perceived by us. People's perceptions turn land into the concept of landscape."(Swanwick,C and Land Use Consultants (2002) Landscape Character Assessment Guidance. Countryside Agency & Scottish Natural Heritage).

2.2 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

2.2.1 Landscape Character is assessed at different scales, from the national and regional, down to the county, district and site specific.

2.2.2 NATIONAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER - The region is classified in the 'Character of England Map', as defined by Natural England, as located within National Character Area (NCA) 56: Lancashire Coal Measures. The key characteristics typical of this NCA 56 which are considered relevant to this study include:

- *Fragmented landscape created by a complex pattern of mining and industrial activity intermixed with housing; this is a densely populated area with a scattered settlement pattern;*
- *Gentle hills and valleys run from the north-west to the south-east, creating a soft but varied topography;*
- *The area is underlain by Coal Measures, which are buried under a patchy layer of glacial deposits, subsequently affected by a long history of mineral working;*
- *Woodland cover is limited across most of the area (covering 9 per cent), except to the north-west of Wigan. Community woodlands have been established on many post-industrial sites, and bring multiple benefits, including for public access and nature conservation;*
- *Some large tracts and isolated pockets of agricultural land remain within the urban fabric, principally used for permanent grassland or cereal production, although horse grazing and stabling are also common;*
- *Field patterns are predominantly medium to large and rectangular, mostly resulting from 18th-century and later change, with field boundaries defined by poorly managed hedges or post-and-wire fencing;*
- *Widespread ground subsidence, caused by coal mining activities, has resulted in the formation of subsidence flashes. These have created many areas of open water and wetlands, while scattered ponds and fragmented pockets of semi-natural habitat remain elsewhere;*
- *The area has an increasingly recognised strong cultural and industrial heritage, associated with heavy industry and mineral extraction – particularly south of Wigan – while the majority of the pits, spoil heaps and open cast sites have now been reclaimed and landscaped; and*
- *The area is significantly influenced by transport and utilities infrastructure, with motorways, major roads and rail lines criss-crossing the landscape.*

2.2.3 The NCA 56 profile suggests ‘Statements of Environmental Opportunity’ (SEOs) which offer guidance on the issues faced by the landscape and aim to achieve sustainable growth and a more secure environmental future. Those relevant to this assessment include:

- SEO 1: *Safeguard, manage and expand the mosaic of wetland habitats, including lowland raised bogs, reedbeds, wet pastures, watercourses, subsidence flashes and ponds – to protect and enhance their ecological value, to increase their contribution to the landscape, to manage flood risk, to improve water quality, and to increase the resilience to climate change of these habitats and associated species;*
- SEO 2: *Conserve and manage the Lancashire Coal Measures’ geological features and historic environment, to safeguard the strong cultural identity and mining heritage of the area, with its distinctive sense of place and history. Engage local communities with their past through the restoration and enhancement of key features and sites, and by improving understanding, interpretation and access;*
- SEO 3: *Manage and support the agricultural landscape through conserving, enhancing, linking and expanding the habitat network (including grasslands, woodlands, ponds, hedges and field margins) – to increase connectivity and resilience to climate change, and reduce soil erosion and diffuse pollution, while conserving the qualities of the farmed landscape and improving opportunities for enjoyment of the open countrys; and*
- SEO 4: *Expand and link green infrastructure through restoring and enhancing post-industrial sites and creating new habitat mosaics that raise the overall quality, design and location of new development, bringing multiple environmental benefits including functioning networks for wildlife and access and recreational amenities for people to enjoy.*

2.2.4 The study area comprises the landscape of three administrative areas; Bolton, Chorley and Wigan. For the purposes of this LVIA, the Bolton Landscape Character Assessment provides sufficient background context for the wider landscape character.

2.2.5 BOLTON LANDSCAPE CHARACTER - The Bolton Landscape Character Assessment was written in October 2001 to “*assess the character, distinctiveness and qualities of the Borough’s open countryside to enable us to find ways of protecting and enhancing the quality of the whole countryside and not just designated areas*” (*A Landscape Character Appraisal of Bolton*, October 2001).

2.2.6 The landscape of the Borough was characterised into seven distinct character types and the application site is located within the Agricultural Coal Measures Landscape Character Type (LCT) and the Blackrod/Hulton Ridge Landscape Character Area (LCA). The landscape is described as a “*gentle rolling ridge to the south of the Borough rising up from the lowland agricultural areas adjacent to the urban areas*”. The Key characteristics typical of landscape area include:

- *Undulating topography with hills and valleys falling to the Mersey basin in the south;*
- *Low grade agricultural land with ponds and flash areas;*
- *Structure provided by broadleaved woodland;*
- *Fragmented landscape with scattered settlements and dissecting transport links; and*
- *Lack of historical continuity and variety in landscape quality*

2.2.7 The Agricultural Coal Measures profile recommends a number of opportunities to enhance the character of the Borough, which include the following which are of relevance to this LVIA:

- *Large tracts of deteriorating farmland present an opportunity for landscape enhancement and/or restoration through the planning system. South of the area there is potential for further woodland establishment or otherwise managed for conservation without serious detriment to the landscape character.....;*
- *Secure the maintenance and management of the existing woodland resource. Where possible, link*

woodland sites to form larger, more cohesive units, as long as this would not reduce the area or interest of other valuable habitats. Management should seek to enable natural woodland processes to take place, so that woodlands develop a natural and diverse structure with appropriate ground flora and understorey layers, in addition to the canopy of dominant tree species;

- Seek to influence the management of land, in particular, by encouraging countryside stewardship applications. Where hobby farms and horse paddocks predominate, the aim should be to enhance the landscape framework created by hedgerows and ponds and encourage/maintain species rich pastures;
- Restrict the extension of the urban edge out into the rural fringes. The clear distinction between the urban fringe and the rural areas should be maintained and reinforced by natural strong defensible boundaries where possible. Where appropriate, this should include block woodland planting to create a visual screen to dominant and unsightly urban fringe uses;
- Where new development is permitted, ensure that landscape screening of industrial areas and farm structures strengthens and enhances the landscape character;
- Secure the retention, enhancement and management of the existing 'pondscape' to maintain its contribution to landscape character in addition to its importance as a wildlife haven; and
- Ensure any built development or changes in land use respect the overall character, in particular, by complimenting traditional design, in terms of scale, grouping, massing, materials and landscape treatment including hard/soft landscaping and boundary treatment.

2.2.8 The Agricultural Coal Measures profile places a strong emphasis on the “*planting of locally native species which are suitable to local soil types. Planting schemes must seek to ensure that new woods reflect the existing native woodland types, soils and other aspects of the landscape and ecology of the area*”.

2.3 THE APPLICATION SITE & LOCAL LANDSCAPE SETTING

2.3.1 Located to the north west of the Bolton District, the application site lies between the settlements of Blackrod to the south and Adlington, in the Chorley District to the north.

2.3.2 Topography: The study area has an undulating landform which gently dips to the east and ranges in height from approximately 160m AOD at Pennington Hill, to the south east of Blackrod and at the telecommunications tower to the east of the application site above Roscoe Lowe, approximately 155m AOD at Tucker's Hill, to the south of Blackrod, approximately 140m AOD to the east of the Castle at Rivington Reservoir and gently dipping to approximately 60m AOD to the south west of the application site at Worthington Lakes. The application site gently dips to the north from approximately 105m AOD to 90m AOD.

2.3.3 Land Use & Vegetation: The study area varies in land use from urban and urban edge built form to a gently rolling pastoral landscape where a variety of field sizes and shapes are defined by mature and largely well managed native hedgerows. Where hedgerows have been removed or have been badly maintained, post and wire fences are the characteristic boundary feature.

2.3.4 Hedgerow trees appear to be a prolific feature within the study area and there are areas where broadleaved woodland shelterbelts have been planted along old field boundaries, alongside the River Douglas and surrounding farmsteads, giving rise to a largely well wooded landscape. Where fields have been amalgamated as farming has intensified, often hedgerow boundaries have been lost and remnant hedgerow trees now stand as isolated monoliths within the farmed landscape.

2.3.5 Settlement: The village of Blackrod occupies rising ground to the south of the application site and has development, as have many settlements in the area, as a linear ribbon development along local roads. As the settlement grew, there has been an expansion however the village is largely associated with growth during the industrial revolution as a coal mining village. Similar settlements occur throughout the study area.

- 2.3.6 A number of isolated vernacular farmsteads occupy the rolling rural landscape of the study area, some of which have been converted into residential properties. To the north east of the application site and within the Chorley District is a commercial development of mostly contemporary units centred on Huyton Road. The village of Adlington developed alongside the textile and coal mining industries. A small residential development, Waterhouse Nook, was built in c2002 to the north east of the application site, occupying a narrow strip of land between the pastoral landscape and the River Douglas. Beyond Chorley Road to the east are a two larger residential properties, standing within substantial gardens.
- 2.3.7 Access: The study area is dissected by a mosaic of transport routes, including the M61 Motorway which runs north - south to the east of the application site, the A673 Bolton Road which runs on higher ground to the north east and the A6 Chorley Road, also to the east of the application site. A number of 'B' roads and minor roads also dissect the study area.
- 2.3.8 Public rights of way form a well used network of well used footpaths and bridleways, traversing the gently rolling farmland and affording long distance views across and beyond the District. There are no public rights of way which cross the application site.
- 2.3.9 The Application Site: The application site forms the eastern edge of the curtilage of Goodman Fold Farm and is separated to the east from the A6 Chorley Road by a medium sized, irregular shaped field which, at the time of site assessment, is grazed by sheep and cattle. The field is defined to the east by a mature native hedgerow. The southern and eastern boundary of the application site is formed by a post and wire fence to the outer edge of a grass mound, planted with broadleaved trees.
- 2.3.10 The storage building sits within and is enclosed by the grassed mound to the north, east and south. The mound has a number of mature and semi mature broadleaved trees and the gardens beyond to the west have a well developed wooded character. To the north and west is an area of hard standing, loosely surfaced with hardcore.
- 2.3.11 The building, which is used for storage associated with domestic / hobby purposes replaced an earlier steel framed barn, which occupied a larger footprint and was clad from light coloured, corrugated steel sheets. The new storage building is also a steel construction, however the entire building is an olive green, which assimilates with the surrounding vegetation.

2.4 LANDSCAPE DESIGNATIONS

- 2.4.1 The statutory designations relevant to the landscape surrounding the application site are illustrated at *Figure 2*.
- 2.4.2 LISTED BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES - Listed buildings of all grades I, II* and II are defined as being of national importance. The listed buildings found within the study area are illustrated at *Figure 2*. The site assessment verified that there are no listed buildings which have intervisibility with the application site.
- 2.4.3 SCHEDULED MONUMENTS - Under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 (1) the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport is required to keep a Schedule of Monuments. The Schedule is administered by Historic England. A Scheduled Monument is a nationally important historic site or monument which is given legal protection by being placed on a list, or 'schedule'. Scheduling is the only legal protection specifically for archaeological sites. The site assessment verified that there are no Scheduled Monument, or the landscape setting of the monuments, which have intervisibility with the application site.
- 2.4.4 REGISTERED PARKS AND GARDENS OF SPECIAL HISTORIC INTEREST (RPG) - Heritage assets, including historic buildings, possessing statutory designations, are subject to protection or the anticipation of conservation. Registered Parks are a 'material consideration' in determining planning applications. They are also clearly recognised as 'designated heritage assets' in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). In

the NPPF Registered Parks are placed on a similar level to other assets and while, in law, there is no clear definition of protection (Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990) there is a much greater appreciation of conservation by default. The grade II Lever Park is located to the east of the application site, beyond the M61 Motorway and Lower Rivington Reservoir. The site assessment confirmed that there is no intervisibility between the registered park and the application site.

2.4.6 SITE OF BIOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE (SBI) - The SBI system in Greater Manchester was established in the early 1980's and was based primarily on the Ratcliffe criteria (1977). The Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU) operates the SBI Register for and on behalf of the Local Authorities that comprise Greater Manchester. This system has operated effectively across the 10 Districts of Greater Manchester since its inception, with GMEU providing an overview of the system in the County context, coordinating data sets and maintaining a strategic input. There are currently 531 (2014). sites on the SBI Register. SBIs are selected mainly on the basis of their ecological value (for example, if they represent a particularly good example of a habitat type, or contain a large number of species or particularly rare species). The appeal of sites to people and the extent to which they enable people to learn about and appreciate nature can also contribute to sites being selected as sites of biological importance. There are a number of SBIs to the south west of the application site, however the site assessment confirmed that there is no intervisibility.

2.4.8 GREEN BELT - The fundamental aim of green belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of green belts are their openness and their permanence (NPPF Feb 2019). The Green Belt has five purposes:

- to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict & other urban land.

2.4.9 The Greater Manchester Green Belt Assessment was prepared by LUC in July 2016 to assess the extent to which the land within the Greater Manchester Green Belt performs against the purposes of Green Belts, as set out in paragraph 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF February 2019). The *broad extent of the Green Belt in Greater Manchester was established in the 1981 Greater Manchester Structure Plan and detailed boundaries were introduced in the Greater Manchester Green Belt Local Plan which was adopted in 1984 (Greater Manchester Green Belt Assessment, LUC, July 2016)*. The report considered the first four purposes of the Green Belt upon strategic areas within the Bolton District and concluded:

Green Belt Purpose	Rating	Conclusions
1 To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	Moderate	<i>Green Belt parcels along the urban edge generally play the strongest role in preventing further urban sprawl. Parcels making up corridors of open land between urban areas were judged to play a strong or moderate role in relation to this aim.</i>
2 To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	Moderate	<i>Almost all of the Green Belt in Bolton plays a strong role in preventing neighbouring towns from merging with one another..... The principal exceptions are parcels and broad areas lying to the north and north west of Bolton which general make a moderate, weak or no contribution to this purpose.</i>
3 To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Moderate - Strong	<i>Much of Bolton's Green Belt plays an important role in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. Areas which perform most strongly in relation to this purpose include the Pennine fringes to the north west and north east of Bolton</i>
4 To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	Strong	<i>Green Belt parcels to the north east and north west of Bolton play a strong role in preserving the setting and special character of towns. The rising ground of the Pennine Fringes provides the backdrop to much of northern Bolton.</i>
Source: https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/media/1807/greater-manchester-green-belt-assessment.pdf		

- 2.4.10 PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY (PRoW) - PRoW are highways that allow the public a legal right of passage. The highway authorities keep definitive maps of public rights of way. They provide conclusive evidence of the existence of a public right of way. Public rights of way within 3km of the site are shown at *Figure 4: Viewpoint Locations, Public Rights of Way and Access*.
- 2.4.11 Footpaths and highways within the study area, which have the potential for visibility of the application site, were walked. The potential for intervisibility with the site was verified. Views No.1 to 6 (page 33 to 35) illustrate the potential visibility of the application site from public rights of way. Where there was no view, a photograph was not taken.

3.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

3.0.1 The following section provides a brief overview of planning policy which is considered to be relevant to this LVIA.

3.1 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

3.1.1 The revised National Planning Policy Framework was updated on September 2023 and sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The NPPF sets out the Government's economic, social and environmental planning policy. The main theme of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development which should be viewed as "*a golden thread running through both plan making and decision-taking*". The NPPF is a material consideration in planning decisions. The NPPF sets out the three dimensions for underpinning sustainable development: economic, social and environmental considerations, which "*contributes to the protection and enhancement of our natural, built and historic environment...*", with the requirement for high quality design, which respects and enhances local character, reappearing throughout the core planning principles. Key considerations of relevance to landscape and visual matters include:

3.1.2 MAKING EFFECTIVE USE OF LAND

Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. Strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously-developed or 'brownfield' land (Footnote: Except where this would conflict with other policies in this Framework, including causing harm to designated sites of importance for biodiversity).(Paragraph 119).

3.1.3 *Planning policies and decisions should:*

a) encourage multiple benefits from both urban and rural land, including through mixed use schemes and taking opportunities to achieve net environmental gains – such as developments that would enable new habitat creation or improve public access to the countryside; (Paragraph 120).

3.1.4 PROTECTING THE GREEN BELT

The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence (Paragraph 137).

3.1.5 *Green Belt serves five purposes:*

a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;

b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;

c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;

d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and

e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land (Paragraph 138).

3.1.6 *A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this are:*

d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces; (Paragraph 149).

3.1.7 CONSERVING AND ENHANCING THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local 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)

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; (Paragraph 174).

3.1.8 HABITATS AND BIODIVERSITY

To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:

a) Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation;

b) promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity (Paragraph 179).

3.1.9 *When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:*

d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity (Paragraph 180).

3.2 LOCAL PLANNING POLICY - BOLTON LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

3.2.1 The Core Strategy, adopted in March 2011, sets out the policies for the Bolton District's future development up to 2026. The Core Strategy is the key document of the Local Plan. The Local Plan provides development guidance for the District, helping to set out a plan for the long term growth of the District and is the main consideration in deciding planning applications. Key policies in the Core Strategy which are relevant to this LVIA include:

3.2.2 Policy CG1 - CLEANER AND GREENER BOLTON

The council and its partners will:

1. Safeguard and enhance the rural areas of the borough from development that would adversely affect its biodiversity including trees, woodland and hedgerows, geodiversity, landscape character, recreational or agricultural value; or its contribution to green infrastructure, reducing flood risk and combating climate change.

2. Safeguard and enhance biodiversity in the borough by protecting sites of urban biodiversity including trees, woodland and hedgerows from adverse development, and improving the quality and interconnectivity of wildlife corridors and habitats (Page 41).

3.2.3 Policy CG2 - SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

The council and its partners will:

1. Ensure that all development proposals contribute to the delivery of sustainable development, being located and designed so as to mitigate any adverse effects of the development and adapt to climate change by incorporating high standards of sustainable design and construction principles (Page 44).

3.2.4 Policy CG3 - THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The council and its partners will:

1.
2. *Conserve and enhance local distinctiveness, ensuring development has regard to the overall built character and landscape quality of the area.*
3. *Require development to be compatible with the surrounding area, in terms of scale, massing, grain, form, architecture, street enclosure, local materials and landscape treatment including hard and soft landscaping and boundary treatment. Historical associations should be retained where possible.*
4. *Conserve and enhance the heritage significance of heritage assets and heritage areas, recognising the importance of sites, areas and buildings of archaeological, historic, cultural and architectural interest and their settings.*
5.
6. *Encourage the incorporation of design measures into new developments that allow adaptation and resilience to the impacts of climate change and extreme weather events and also to reduce the threat of fuel poverty, through the careful selection of aspect, layout and massing, and by making buildings increasingly energy efficient.*
7. *Maintain and respect the landscape character of the surrounding countryside and its distinctiveness. Any soft landscaping and landscape enhancement schemes should enhance biodiversity and be compatible with the nearby landscape character types identified by the Landscape Character Assessment (Page 47).*

3.2.5 Policy CG4 - COMPATIBLE USES

The council and its partners will:

1. *Ensure that new development is compatible with surrounding land uses and occupiers, protecting amenity, privacy, safety and security.*
2. *Development should not generate unacceptable nuisance, odours, fumes, noise or light pollution, nor cause detrimental impacts upon water, ground or air quality (Page 48).*

4.0 VISUAL BASELINE

4.1 ASSESSMENT CONTEXT

- 4.1.1 The visual assessment considers the potential for visibility of the application site from the surrounding public visual receptors and considers any potential for landscape and visual effects arising from the construction of the storage building at the application site. This section provides an overview of general visibility of the application site, identifies the nature and extent of views, as well as identifying the potential key public visual receptors to whom the storage building would most notably affect.
- 4.1.2 A visual assessment has been carried out according to guidance set out in *Appendix A*. All viewpoints are restricted to publicly accessible locations, however views from privately owned properties, where there is a likelihood of a view, have been considered within the scope of this report. *“An assessment of visual effects deals with the effects of change on views available to people and their visual amenity. The concern here is with assessing how the surroundings of individuals or groups of people may be **specifically affected by changes in the content and character of views as a result of the change or loss of existing elements of the landscape and/or introduction of new elements.**”* (*Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*, Landscape Institute (LI) & Institute of Environmental Management and Awareness (IEMA), Third Edition, 2013) (GLVIA3).
- 4.1.3 Photograph/s have been taken using a DSLR with a 50mm focal length standard lens. The camera was set with the centre of the camera lens 1.65m above ground level, upon a tripod. Where viewpoints consisted of more than one image, Adobe Photoshop CC 2023 was used to merge the images together. These viewpoints are representative of views afforded towards the application site. This assessment acknowledges that there may be other views afforded of the application site, within proximity to these receptors, however for the purpose of this LVIA, the following views are considered to best represent the baseline visual context. It should be noted that the site assessment was carried out in November 2023, when the broadleaved trees were still partially in leaf. In accordance with guidance, it is good practice to undertake visual assessments during the winter months, when the trees are predominantly bare. This is because leaves and vegetation filter views, and winter views therefore present a ‘worst case scenario’ for visual effects. It is acknowledged therefore that there may be other winter time views afforded towards the application site, that have not been identified within the scope of this LVIA.

4.2 VISUAL ENVELOPE

- 4.2.1 The visual envelope for the application site was established using topography information and a Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) map was produced, which sets out all locations that may afford a view of the application site. ZTV maps can be useful in suggesting areas where there may be visibility of the site and enable field assessment to concentrate on areas within the study zone where views are most likely. The ZTV assessment uses 2022 National Lidar DSM at 1m resolution, which includes the screening effects of buildings and vegetation in the study area, however it is important to note that such a tool gives a ‘worst case scenario’ and that the ZTV is likely to encompass visual receptors from where the site would be screened from view by localised features. These assessments of potential visibility assist in establishing the potential visual envelope of an application site, with the actual visibility verified on the ground during the site assessment. See *Figure 3: Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)*.

4.3 VISUAL CONTEXT

- 4.3.1 The visual assessment confirmed that views looking towards the application site, from the wider landscape, are largely afforded from within 1km due to the rolling landform of the study area, combined with a well wooded landscape.
- 4.3.2 Long distance views are afforded from elevated locations within the study area, however the wooded character of the landscape surrounding the application site largely restricts intervisibility. For example Footpath FP0904008,

which connects the A673 Bolton Road to Grimeford Lane to the east of the application site, affords views which are wide scale and panoramic views across the rising ground to the west of the study area, however the lower level landscape of the River Douglas Valley is largely concealed within a mature treescape.

- 4.3.3 Similarly, views from footpaths leading south west from Bolton Road in Anderton, such as FP0901008 which affords views across the valley and FP0904011 Rotary Way, which itself is largely concealed within a wooded valley are restricted by the mature treescape. In both instances, there are no views of the application site or storage building.
- 4.3.4 Footpaths to the south west, beyond 1km, on rising ground offer excellent panoramic views across the study area, however there are no clear views looking towards the application site or the storage building. Footpaths within 1km offer slightly better visibility, however views are strictly limited to isolated locations where a gap in the tree cover affords a clear view of the storage building. On the whole, the entire application site is not visible from any public rights of way.
- 4.3.5 During the site assessment, other public rights of way within the wider study area, with the potential for views of the application site, were walked and visibility was verified. Due to the mature wooded nature of the wider study area, combined with a rolling landform and the built form associated with the villages within the study area, this LVIA concluded that there is minimal visibility of the application site. It should be noted that there may be limited and partial visibility afforded throughout the winter months, when broadleaved trees are bare of leaves. Any views however, would be seen through overlapping stems and branches of the broadleaved trees, which would reduce visual effects.
- 4.3.6 There is a mosaic of roads which dissect the study area. Many of the minor roads which follow the undulating contours of the landscape are set within high hedge banks, which enclose the road and restrict intervisibility with the landscape. The ZTV suggest that Dark Lane, to the south east of the application site will have good visibility however this narrow lane is set low within the surrounding contours and views north west are limited.
- 4.3.7 The A6 Chorley Road is the main route through the River Douglas Valley. Views looking towards the application site are largely restricted by a high native hedgerow, however occasional glimpsed views do occur where gaps in the hedgerow occur. At times of year when the hedge has been cut, view are anticipated to be afforded for users in higher vehicles, such as public transport.
- 4.3.8 Residential receptors within the study area have been considered within the scope of this LVIA. The ZTV suggests that properties standing to the north western edge of Blackrod may have a view of the application site, however the site assessment verified that the view is restricted by a mature treescape surrounding the application site. Similarly, properties standing to the south western edge of Anderton have a view of the wooded River Douglas Valley, with not verified views of the application site or storage building.
- 4.3.9 Residential properties standing to the south eastern edge at Waterhouse Nook, to the north west of the application site, have an open and direct view of the application site and storage building. Views are partially restricted by a mature hedgerow which defines the boundary with the adjacent field, however where the hedgerow is gappy, a view from the garden curtilage is afforded. The site assessment noted that views from the windows of these properties will be oblique and largely afforded from upper floor windows rather than from principal living rooms.

4.4 VISUAL ASSESSMENT

- 4.4.1 A visual assessment has been carried out according to the methodology set out at *Appendix A*. Following the desktop research and ZTV analysis together with the site assessment, representative viewpoints, where receptors may have a view towards the application site, were identified. The following views, which are located within close proximity to the application site, are considered to best represent the visual context.

- Viewpoint No.1: Looking south west from Footpath BLA 070. This is a medium range view looking south west across three intervening fields, hedgerows and mature broadleaved trees towards the application site. There is a rural character to the view. The full extent of the storage building is not visible from this location, as the raised grass mound to the east of the storage building conceals much of the eastern and northern elevation. The skyline is wooded, which creates an enclosed character for the view.
- Viewpoint No.2: Looking south east from the edge of residential properties at Waterhouse Nook. This is a close range, open and direct view of the application site and storage building. The storage building is largely enclosed by mature wooded vegetation and the skyline view is provided by the rising ground towards Blackrod. Crow's Nest Farm, with its outbuildings can be seen to the left of the view. In this view, the northern elevation is visible and the western elevation partially visible, however mature trees enclose the building within the landscape.
- Viewpoint No.3: Looking south west from the Bus Stop (towards Blackrod) on the A6 Chorley Road. This is an open and direct, close range view looking towards the northern elevation of the storage building. The eastern elevation is only partially visible. The storage building is largely set within mature woodland vegetation and the grassed mounds to the east of the storage building can be clearly seen beyond the grass field in the foreground. Goodman Fold Farmhouse can be seen to the right of the view.
- Viewpoint No.4: Looking south from Footpath BLA 063. This is a close range view looking north west towards the application site. The roof and eastern elevation of the storage building is partially visible above the grassed mound. The southern elevation is mostly concealed beyond trees. Intervening mature native hedgerows had been cut when the site assessment was carried out, however when these hedgerows are fully grown, it is anticipated that this view will be filtered by vegetation. Houses at Waterhouse Nook and adjacent to Chorley Road can be seen to the right of the view, with the settlement edge of Adlington beyond.
- Viewpoint No.5: Looking north east from the junction of Footpath BLA 046 and BLA 071. There is a medium range view afforded from an elevated location on footpath BLA046, looking across open farmland as it joins footpath BLA 071. This view is dominated by settlement of Adlington and the commercial development to the north east of the application site. The pumping station located to the south east of the application site is an intervening element of built form, set within a mature wooded valley. Views of the application site and storage building are strictly limited from this location, with only a glimpse of the southern elevation of the storage building visible within a gap in the trees.
- Viewpoint No.6: Looking north west from Footpath BLA 071. There is a medium range, partial view looking north west from the junction of Footpath BLA071 and Dark Lane. The view is once gain dominated by built form; the residential properties standing at Anderton on rising ground to the right of the view just below the skyline, light commercial units on the A6 Chorley Road to the near right of the view and the pumping station to the left of the view. The commercial units to the north east of the application site are visible in the background, beyond a glimpsed view of the application site and eastern elevation of the storage building, which is partially visible within the trees.

5.0 LANDSCAPE & VISUAL EFFECTS

5.1 LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

5.1.1 The potential extent to which any proposal is likely to affect the sensitivity of the existing landscape character on both a site-specific and wider landscape scale, depends on the capacity of the existing landscape to accommodate the footprint, massing and character of the development, whilst the physical effects of the development on the landscape fabric will largely be restricted to the site itself. Professional judgement is used to provide a balanced assessment of landscape value and susceptibility, to establish landscape sensitivity.

5.1.2 Potential landscape effects include:

- The extent to which the proposal will change, enhance or detract from the existing local landscape context, including any cumulative effects of the proposal in addition to other existing, consented or planned development within the immediate study area;
- The extent to which the proposal will complement, enhance or detract from the existing vernacular of the study area; and
- The extent to which the proposal, will contrast with the existing appearance of the application site and establish a new landscape character.

5.2 VISUAL EFFECTS

5.2.1 The potential effects which may occur upon visual amenity, in relation to any proposal at an application site are discussed below. The sensitivity of a visual receptor is defined as being high/medium/low, where high is the most sensitive.

5.2.2 The sensitivity of visual receptors will depend on three key factors:

- The receptor's activity whilst exposed to the view (work, recreational activities, resident);
- Degree of exposure to view; and,
- Period of exposure to view.

5.2.3 *"An assessment of visual effects deals with the effects of change on views available to people and their visual amenity. The concern here is with assessing how the surroundings of individuals or groups of people may be specifically affected by changes in the content and character of views as a result of the change or loss of existing elements of the landscape and/or introduction of new elements."* (*Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*⁸, Landscape Institute (LI) & Institute of Environmental Management and Awareness (IEMA), Third Edition, 2013) (GLVIA3).

5.2.4 Potential visual effects are the extent to which the development will change the perceptual qualities and visual amenity of views, including changes to the skyline, from within the study area. Change to landscape & visual amenity can be positive or negative and can be temporary in nature i.e. experienced throughout the construction phase of development or a permanent change as a direct result of the completed proposal.

5.2.5 An assessment is generally made of the construction phase, completion of construction at year 1 and 15 years post completion of construction as the landscape has begun to mature. In this instance, as the storage building has been constructed, this LVIA will use professional judgement to assess the verified impacts of the storage building, upon landscape character and visual amenity, as seen in November 2023, using a comparison of Google Earth images from 2009 as a baseline, between the original and new storage building and an assessment following the completion of the recommended planting scheme, developed to support this retrospective application.

5.3 EFFECTS ON LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

- 5.3.1 Effects on existing landscape character, at various scales, can be defined as:
- 5.3.2 56: Lancashire Coal Measures – Due to the scale of the NCA 56 landscape and the size of the application site within the NCA, it is considered that the proposal will have no change to the overall character and composition of the NCA landscape, would not affect the scale, landform or pattern of the NCA landscape and would maintain the existing character and quality.
- 5.3.3 The NCA 56 profile is described as a *“fragmented landscape.... dominated by its industrial heritage, long associated with mining activity. The resulting landscape is a complex mosaic of farmland, scattered urban centres, industry, active mineral sites and derelict or reclaimed workings, giving this area a strong and distinctive identity.... Within the urban fabric there are some large tracts of agricultural land and isolated pockets of former farmland. Agricultural land use is predominantly split between arable farming and permanent grassland for livestock”*.
- 5.3.4 This wide-scale, national character area is considered to have a low susceptibility to change, as there is a greater ability within a broad character area to accommodate any change in landscape character, from a proposal at an application site, without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation within the wider NCA. Beyond the urbanising influences of the settlements and major transport networks, this landscape is highly distinctive and cohesive, with high value characteristics.
- 5.3.5 In terms of landscape value, NCA 56 is considered to have a high value. Whilst there are no International or European nature designations, such as Special Protection Areas (SPA) or Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), there are seven Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), covering a total of 202ha and 256 locally designated sites, covering a total of 2,673ha. Therefore, the NCA offers a variety of ecological habitats of great significance.
- 5.3.6 There is a strong heritage value and a rich time depth throughout the NCA with 29 Scheduled Monuments, 5 Registered Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest and 743 Listed Buildings. *“The density of scattered settlement, and the expansion of the towns and villages in the Lancashire Coal Measures, reflects the development of industry between the 17th and 19th centuries..... The introduction of the railways to the area in the 19th century massively increased the exploitation of the South Lancashire Coalfield, which continued to develop with fewer but deeper mines. This period saw expansion in industrial manufacturing and a major extension of the urban fabric, with large numbers of terraced properties and larger houses being built.*
- 5.3.7 With 2,506 ha classified as being publicly accessible, there are 805 km of public rights of way. Where settlement is less dense, levels of tranquillity are highest, such as Harrock Hill. *“Other areas within this NCA have much lower levels of tranquillity due to the high density of industry, housing, and transport routes”*. Nonetheless the NCA is highly valued for recreational opportunities.
- 5.3.8 With a low susceptibility to change and a high value, the overall assessment of the sensitivity of the NCA 56 landscape to change from the proposal is medium. The storage building does not result in the loss of landscape character of the wide-scale NCA landscape. There is reduction in the character or quality of the NCA as a whole, as the storage building at the application site is seen as a minor component in the overall character of the NCA, with no effect upon the scale, landform or pattern of the NCA. The storage building therefore has a negligible magnitude of landscape effect upon NCA. The resultant landscape impact upon NCA 56 would be neutral.
- 5.3.9 THE BOLTON LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT - At the Borough scale, the application site lies within the Agricultural Coal Measures Landscape Character Type (LCT) and the Blackrod/Hulton Ridge Landscape

Character Area (LCA). The landscape is described by the published LCA as a “gentle rolling ridge to the south of the Borough rising up from the lowland agricultural areas adjacent to the urban areas... The farmland is predominantly used for grazing livestock and is characterised by relatively small field sizes bordered by relict hedgerows”.

- 5.3.10 The Agricultural Coal Measures/Blackrod/Hulton Ridge landscape is considered to have a medium susceptibility to change, as the landscape demonstrates common landscape characteristics and is in reasonable condition, with some detracting or visually intrusive elements, such as the neglect and loss of hedgerows. In general, this landscape has some capacity to accommodate change due to certain types of development without significantly effecting the overall landscape integrity.
- 5.3.11 In terms of landscape value, the urban influences of the close proximity of urban settlement, major motorway and highway routes detract from landscape character. The LCA profile notes that “*The area is characterised by poor grade farmland, which has suffered under-investment. This has led to deterioration and neglect, including the loss of hedgerows and their replacement with post and wire fencing... The pattern of settlement within this area, which includes Blackrod and Westhoughton, has created a very linear landscape. It is further characterised by degraded agricultural land dissected by ribbons of development, which closely mirror the road network. Despite this, some of the largest remaining areas of open rural land in Bolton are located within this zone*”. The published LCA notes that the “*landscape is of variable quality and there is some potential for change within this character area*”. There are, however, a number of highly valued ecological habitats designations across the landscape, such as a network of Sites of Biological Importance (SBI) and a well wooded character, which creates a strong landscape pattern and makes a significant contribute to biodiversity value. With a medium susceptibility to change and a medium value, the overall assessment of the sensitivity of the Agricultural Coal Measures/Blackrod/Hulton Ridge landscape to change from the proposed development is medium.
- 5.3.12 Due to the scale of the Agricultural Coal Measures/Blackrod/Hulton Ridge landscape and the size, scale and character of the storage building at the application site, this LVIA concludes that the storage building has no effect on the overall character of the Agricultural Coal Measures/Blackrod/Hulton Ridge landscape. The storage building does not affect the overall scale, landform or pattern of the Agricultural Coal Measures/Blackrod/Hulton Ridge landscape, nor does it change the landscape character at a very localised scale. This LVIA therefore concludes that the storage building has resulted in negligible change in landscape character at the Borough LCA scale and the resulting landscape impact is assessed as neutral.
- 5.3.13 THE LANDSCAPE SCHEME - Following a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment and site visit, a Landscape Scheme (See CW0258-D-001) is proposed to enhance the existing vegetation at the application site by planting 5no. individual oak trees to the north of the storage building, atop and at the side of the grassed mound. A further planting of native trees and shrubs will be undertaken, atop the grassed mound to enhance the existing screening effects of vegetation to the south and east. The grassed mound itself will be overseeded as necessary with a herb-rich mix to create a wildflower neutral grassland. It is this scheme that will be used to assess the anticipated impacts upon landscape character and visual amenity, 15 years post planting.
- 5.3.14 THE APPLICATION SITE - comprising the eastern edge of the curtilage of Goodman Farm, the application site comprises a grassed mound with semi mature and mature broadleaved trees, covered with a well maintained amenity grass. The storage building, which is semi-enclosed by the mound to the south and east, is of a steel construction, coloured in an olive green, which assimilates with the surrounding vegetation. The storage building replaces an older structure, which occupied a larger footprint. Beyond the storage building, an area of hardstanding is located to the north, with a pond and further areas of amenity grass and trees. The landscape of the application site accommodates the storage building, semi-enclosed within the grassed mound and broadleaved trees, without effecting its overall integrity and is assessed as having a low susceptibility to change.

- 5.3.15 In terms of landscape value, there are no statutory landscape designations associated with the application site. There are no public rights of way which cross the application site and no nature designations within or within close proximity, however the Green Belt washes across the landscape of the study area. The application site is therefore considered to have a low value. With a low susceptibility to change and a low value, the overall assessment of the sensitivity of the application site to change from the storage building is low.
- 5.3.16 Prior to construction of the storage building and following completion of the conversion of Goodman Fold Farmhouse, the old existing corrugated steel barn, which had a dilapidated appearance, was demolished and the new storage building erected, occupying a smaller footprint. There has been no additional building and the new storage building has improved the overall appearance of the application site. The construction of the storage building presents a visible and recognisable new feature in the landscape, however the structure does not dominate the landscape scene, nor is it a dominant structure in relation to other buildings at Goodman Fold Farm. The magnitude of change in the landscape, between the old corrugated steel barn and the new storage building is assessed as medium, with a beneficial nature of impact, where the key characteristics of the landscape have been improved and strengthened by the storage building. The storage building appears as a characteristic feature within the landscape and has a similar appearance to other barns within the study area. The grassed mound wraps around the storage building to the south and east, enclosing and helping to assimilate it with the wider, agricultural landscape of the immediate study area.
- 5.3.17 Considering the proposed Landscape Scheme, additional trees will be planted atop the grassed mound and 5no. individual oak trees will be planted atop and at the side of the mound, creating a more extensive habitat within the application site, connecting existing linear habitats beyond the application site and resulting in a positive gain for biodiversity and strengthening landscape character. Anticipated impacts upon landscape character at the application site, 15 years post planting are assessed as a moderate to major beneficial, where the new planting assimilates with the existing landscape and improves the quality and appearance of the application site.

5.4 VISUAL EFFECTS

- 5.4.1 The following section describes the potential visual effects for the proposal upon the visual resource. The following views, which are located within 1km from the application site, are considered to best represent the visual context. This assessment of impacts does however acknowledge that there may be other views, within close proximity of these identified, where a glimpsed or keyhole view of the application site is afforded. The site assessment found that there were no open and direct views of the entire application site from any one viewpoint.
- 5.4.2 The tables below consider the sensitivity of the identified visual receptors to the type of change resulting from the proposal to construct an acoustic and visual mound and considers the magnitude of effect and significance of effect upon visual amenity during the construction phase, upon completion of the construction phase, when the landscape is immature and 15 years post construction.

View No.1	Grid Reference: SD 60719 12512	Looking south west from Footpath BLA 070	
Receptor: The user of a public right of way with a restricted view, where there is significant intervening vegetation.			
Sensitivity: Users of Public rights of way with a restricted view are considered to have a MEDIUM sensitivity.			
November 2023		15 Years post Landscape Scheme Planting	
Magnitude of Effect	Significance of Effect	Magnitude of Effect	Significance of Effect
LOW	MINOR NEUTRAL	NEGLIGIBLE	NEUTRAL
<p>The magnitude of change seen within the landscape with the addition of the new storage building is assessed as low, where the storage building forms a minor component of the wider scale view, from this location and due to the colour of the storage building and surrounding enclosing vegetation, the structure may not be apparent to the footpath user. The presence of the storage building does not have a marked effect upon the quality of character of this landscape scene.</p> <p>The resulting nature of the landscape impact is assessed as minor neutral.</p>		<p>15 years post Landscape Scheme planting, any views of the storage building from this location will be filtered by the maturing vegetation of 5no. individual oak trees which will be planted atop and to the north west of the grassed mound to the north east of the storage building. These trees will form a filtering screen between the footpath user at this location and the storage building, ensuring that the magnitude of change seen within this landscape scene is negligible, where the storage building will be largely indiscernible to be appreciated from this location.</p> <p>The resulting nature of the landscape impact is assessed as neutral.</p>	

View No.2	Grid Reference: SD 60193 12458	Looking south east from the edge of residential properties at Waterhouse Nook.	
Receptor: Residential properties with a predominantly open view from windows, garden or curtilage. Views are normally from principal living rooms, and from windows in use throughout the day. Also residential properties with a predominantly oblique view from ground floor widows or garden/curtilage.			
Sensitivity: MEDIUM to HIGH			
November 2023		15 Years post Landscape Scheme Planting	
Magnitude of Effect	Significance of Effect	Magnitude of Effect	Significance of Effect
MEDIUM	MODERATE NEUTRAL	LOW	MINOR BENEFICIAL
<p>Using the screen shots of the Google Street View and Google Earth images from 2009, it is possible to see that the original storage building at the application site had a larger footprint and extended closer to the viewer at View No.2. The precedent for man made built form at the application site, as seen from this location is already established. The new storage building can be partially seen within the context of the adjacent buildings and the buildings at Crow's Nest Farm, however the full extent of the application site is not visible. The magnitude of change seen within this view, with the addition of the new storage building is assessed as Medium. The storage building is not considered to be a dominant feature within this view, however it is visible and recognisable as a new building replacing an earlier structure.</p> <p>The resulting nature of the landscape impact is assessed as moderate neutral, where the key characteristics of the view are neither weakened or strengthened by the storage building.</p>		<p>15 years post Landscape Scheme planting, any views of the storage building from this location, for residential receptors, will be filtered by the maturing vegetation of 1 no. oak tree planted in the lawn area to the north of the storage building (seen directly in front of the northern elevation of the storage building from this viewpoint).</p> <p>The magnitude of change seen within this landscape scene, 15 years post Landscape Scheme planting is therefore assessed as low, where the storage building is visible however it may not be immediately apparent and is not a dominant feature of the landscape scene.</p> <p>The resulting nature of the landscape impact is assessed as minor beneficial, where there is an improvement to the landscape scene as the maturing treescape assimilates with the wooded character of the immediate study area.</p>	

View No.3	Grid Reference: SD 60408 12437	Looking south west from the Bus Stop (towards Blackrod) on the A6 Chorley Road.	
Receptor: This view is representative of motorised, pedestrian or leisure users of the A6 Chorley Road, or a passenger on public transport waiting at the bus stop.			
Sensitivity: Users of main roads or passengers on public transport are considered to have a LOW sensitivity.			
November 2023		15 Years post Landscape Scheme Planting	
Magnitude of Effect	Significance of Effect	Magnitude of Effect	Significance of Effect
NEGLIGIBLE to LOW	MINOR NEUTRAL	NEGLIGIBLE to LOW	MINOR to MODERATE BENEFICIAL
<p>For motorised users of the A6 Chorley Road, views looking towards the storage building will be seen within a fast moving and transient context, where attention is largely focused upon the road ahead. In this instance, the magnitude of change in the view between the old barn and the new storage building is assessed as being negligible, where the storage building is largely indiscernible to the motorised road user. For pedestrian and leisure users or passengers of public transport waiting at the bus stop, the context of the view is more considered, where the storage building can be observed at a slower pace. In this instance, the magnitude of change in the view between the old barn and the new storage building is assessed as being low, where the storage building constitutes a minor component of the view and is seen within the context of the collection of buildings at Goodman Fold Farm.</p> <p>The resulting nature of the landscape impact is assessed as minor neutral.</p>		<p>15 years post Landscape Scheme planting, any views of the storage building from this location, for users of the A6 Chorley Road, will be filtered by the maturing vegetation of 5 no. oak trees planted atop the grassed mound and adjacent grassed area. Tree planting to the foreground of the application site will help blend with the wooded skyline</p> <p>15 years post Landscape Scheme planting, the storage building is visible however it may not be immediately apparent to road users and is not a dominant feature of the landscape scene.</p> <p>The resulting nature of the landscape impact is assessed as minor to moderate beneficial, where there is an improvement to the landscape scene, as the maturing treescape assimilates with the wooded character of the immediate study area.</p>	

View No.4	Grid Reference: SD 60563 11926	Looking south from Footpath BLA 063.	
Receptor: The user of a public right of way with a restricted view, where there is significant intervening vegetation.			
Sensitivity: Users of Public rights of way with a restricted view are considered to have a MEDIUM sensitivity.			
November 2023		15 Years post Landscape Scheme Planting	
Magnitude of Effect	Significance of Effect	Magnitude of Effect	Significance of Effect
LOW	MINOR NEUTRAL	NEGLIGIBLE	MODERATE BENEFICIAL
<p>The barn is partially visible as an element of built form within this landscape scene. Built form can also be seen to the right of the view, however the character of the view is predominantly rural and pastoral. The barn does not form a dominant feature and may not be visible to the casual observer as it is set below the grassed mound and enclosed by vegetation. The barn does however occupy a smaller footprint than the original barn.</p> <p>The resulting nature of the landscape impact is assessed as minor neutral, where the barn neither weakens or strengthens the landscape scene.</p>		<p>Once the Landscape Scheme has begun to mature, 15 years post planting, there will be beneficial improvements to this view. Native broadleaved trees planted atop the grassed mound will filter views from this location, assimilating with the existing treescape and hedgerow network. It is anticipated that views from this location will therefore be heavily filtered by the overlapping effects of vegetation, even throughout the winter months.</p> <p>The resulting nature of the landscape impact is assessed as minor to moderate beneficial, where there is an improvement to the landscape scene, as the maturing treescape assimilates with the wooded character of the immediate study area.</p>	

View No.5	Grid Reference: SD 60414 11471	Looking north east from the junction of Footpath BLA 046 and BLA 071	
Receptor: The user of a public right of way with a restricted view, where there is significant intervening vegetation.			
Sensitivity: Users of Public rights of way with a restricted view are considered to have a MEDIUM sensitivity.			
November 2023		15 Years post Landscape Scheme Planting	
Magnitude of Effect	Significance of Effect	Magnitude of Effect	Significance of Effect
NEGLIGIBLE	NEUTRAL	NO CHANGE	MINOR to MODERATE BENEFICIAL
<p>There is a wide-scale, panoramic view afforded from this location on the footpath, looking north east. The foreground scene is rural and pastoral in character, however there are few hedgerows defining the fields. The scene to the rear of the view is predominantly urban in character, with the settlements of Adlington, Anderton and beyond towards Chorley prominent on rising ground. The pumping station forms a visible element of built form to the right of the view, beyond which the barn is barely visible within the surrounding vegetation. The view is such that the barn has no effect upon the character or the quality of the landscape scene.</p> <p>The resulting nature of the landscape impact is assessed as neutral.</p>		<p>15 years post Landscape Scheme planting, there will be an increase to the level of tree cover seen from this location and it is anticipated that the barn will no longer be visible.</p> <p>The addition of more tree planting at the application site is seen as a beneficial effect, where there is an improvement to the landscape scene, as the maturing treescape assimilates with the wooded character of the landscape, enhances connective habitat and achieves a positive gain for biodiversity.</p>	

View No.6	Grid Reference: SD 60805 11577	Looking north west from Footpath BLA 071.	
Receptor: The user of a public right of way with a restricted view, where there is significant intervening vegetation.			
Sensitivity: Users of Public rights of way with a restricted view are considered to have a MEDIUM sensitivity.			
November 2023		15 Years post Landscape Scheme Planting	
Magnitude of Effect	Significance of Effect	Magnitude of Effect	Significance of Effect
NEGLIGIBLE	NEUTRAL	NO CHANGE	MINOR to MODERATE BENEFICIAL
<p>There is a wide-scale, panoramic view afforded from this location on the footpath, looking north west. As in view No.5, the foreground scene is rural and pastoral, with gappy hedgerows defining the fields. The scene to the rear of the view, on rising ground, is predominantly urban in character. The pumping station forms a visible element of built form to the left of the view and the barn is barely visible beyond. Buildings on the A6 Chorley Road are visible and dominant to the right of the view. The presence of the barn has no effect upon the character or quality of this landscape scene.</p> <p>The resulting nature of the landscape impact from this location is assessed as neutral, where the barn neither weakens or strengthens the landscape scene.</p>		<p>15 years post Landscape Scheme planting, there will be an increase to the level of tree cover, seen as a minor increase from this location. It is anticipated that the barn will no longer be visible.</p> <p>The addition of more tree planting at the application site is assessed as a beneficial effect, where there is an improvement to the landscape scene, visibly removing elements of built form, including views of the residential properties to the north west of the application site from this view, as the maturing treescape assimilates with the wooded character of the landscape, enhancing and strengthening connective habitat and achieving a positive gain for biodiversity.</p>	

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

6.1.1 This LVIA has been prepared to support a retrospective application at Goodman Fold Farm (the application site), to Bolton Council, for a replacement storage building associated with domestic / hobby purposes. A representative number of viewpoints have been selected, which best describe the potential for visual sensitivities, however this study acknowledges that there may be other views afforded of the application site, within proximity to these receptors, however for the purpose of this LVIA, viewpoints no.1 to 6 are considered to best represent the visual context. In accordance with the stated methodology set out at *Appendix A*, this report has considered existing landscape character and designations and has considered the potential causes of impact, resulting from the storage building at the application site, upon landscape character and visual amenity and concludes the following:

6.2 CONCLUSIONS OF THE LANDSCAPE BASELINE

6.2.1 The local landscape, which washes across the application site, is characteristic of consistent with the published landscape character assessments, at the National and Borough scale. The application site lies in a rolling, rural and pastoral landscape, with urban edge influences.

6.2.2 The Agricultural Coal Measures/Blackrod/Hulton Ridge landscape, as set out in the Bolton Landscape Character Assessment is one of a gently rolling agricultural landscape set between areas of urban settlement. The demolition of the old barn and construction of the new storage building, occupying a smaller footprint, does not affect the overall scale, landform or pattern of the Agricultural Coal Measures/Blackrod/Hulton Ridge landscape, nor does it change the landscape character at the localised scale. This LVIA therefore concludes that the construction of the new storage building has resulted in negligible change in landscape character at the Borough LCA scale and the resulting landscape impact is assessed as neutral.

6.2.3 The application site, comprising the eastern edge of the curtilage of Goodman Fold Farm, comprises a grassed mound with semi mature and mature broadleaved trees, covered with a well maintained amenity grass. The storage building which is being assessed replaces an earlier, corrugated steel clad barn which was in a dilapidated condition, occupying a larger footprint than the new storage building. There has been no additional building and the new storage building has improved the overall appearance of the application site. The construction of the storage building presents a visible and recognisable new feature in the landscape, however the structure does not dominate the landscape scene, not is it a dominant structure in relation to other buildings at Goodman Fold Farm. The magnitude of change in the landscape, between the old corrugated steel barn and the new storage building is assessed as medium, with a beneficial nature of impact, where the key characteristics of the landscape have been improved and strengthened by the new storage building.

6.2.4 Considering the Landscape Scheme, which proposes new native broadleaved tree planting and a neutral, herb rich grass sward atop the mound, this LVIA finds that there will be a moderate to major beneficial, where the new planting assimilates with the existing landscape, improves the quality and appearance of the application site and enhances the landscape setting of the storage building to benefit landscape character.

6.2.5 The Green Belt, a national planning policy aimed at maintaining a protective buffer of countryside around certain urban areas, washes across the landscape of the study area. Certain developments are considered to be appropriate exceptions, if they preserve the Green Belt's 'openness' and do not conflict with the overall purpose of the Green Belt. Whilst 'openness' is not formerly defined in the NPPF, it is accepted as a concept to prevent urban sprawl, by keeping land in the countryside permanently open.

6.2.6 Considering the purposes of the Green Belt and visual amenity, this LVIA considers notes that as the storage building replaces an earlier structure which occupied a larger footprint, the design, character scale and location

of the storage building does not harm the purposes of the Green Belt. The storage building sits within a mature receiving landscape of semi mature and mature native broadleaved trees atop of grassed mound, enclosing the storage building to the east and south. The existing established curtilage of Goodman Fold Farm has not been enlarged from the previous storage building, nor does the building extend beyond that established curtilage into the Green Belt or appear as a prominent structure within the landscape scene. Proposed new planting will add to and enhance the screening effects of vegetation, whilst providing a positive gain for biodiversity.

6.3 CONCLUSIONS OF THE VISUAL BASELINE

6.3.1 Viewpoints No.1 to 6 (page 33 to 35) illustrate the visibility of the storage building at the application site and are considered to best represent the visual context. The site assessment confirmed that the visual envelope is limited to views within 1km of the application site, due to a rolling topography and intervening built form and vegetation.

6.3.2 Views looking towards the storage building are predominantly filtered by mature wooded vegetation. The grassed mound which enclosed the storage building to the south and east, combined with tree planting ensures that there are no views where the full elevation of the storage building is visible. The storage building forms a minor component of the wider scale views from the identified receptors and due to the olive green colour of the storage building, the structure assimilates well with the surrounding enclosing vegetation.

6.3.3 The magnitude of changes experienced in the view, when considering the change from the old corrugated steel barn to the new olive green storage building, for Views No. 1,3,4,5 & 6 is assessed as ranging from negligible to low, where presence of the storage building has no effect upon the visual amenity of the landscape scene at each viewpoint. For View No.2, afforded from residential properties to the north west of the application site at Waterhouse Nook, the magnitude of change in the view is assessed as medium, where the storage building, whilst it is not considered to be a dominant feature within this view, is visible and recognisable as a new building replacing an earlier structure. In all views, the resulting nature of the landscape impact is assessed as neutral, where the storage building neither weakens or strengthens the landscape scene.

6.4 CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

6.4.1 Cumulative Effects are defined within the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' Landscape Institute (LI) & Institute of Environmental Management and Awareness (IEMA), Third Edition, 2013 as *"Cumulative landscape and visual effects result from additional changes to the landscape or visual amenity caused by the proposed development in conjunction with other developments (associated with or separate to it) or actions that occurred in the past, present or are likely to occur in the foreseeable future. They may also affect the way in which the landscape is experienced. Cumulative effects may be positive or negative. Where they comprise a range of benefits, they may be considered to form part of the mitigation measures"*.

6.4.2 Due to the predominantly visually enclosed landscape and the nature of the storage building at Goodman Fold Farm, no cumulative visual effects are predicted, as it is understood that there are currently no other similar schemes within the study area.

6.5 CONCLUSIONS

6.5.1 Following a review of baseline information, together with consideration of the landscape and visual effects arising from the application site and storage building, standing within the established curtilage at Goodman Fold Farm, this LVIA finds that the landscape does successfully accommodate the storage building, in landscape and visual terms, without having an unacceptable effect on landscape character or visual amenity. Further, the proposed Landscape Scheme will bring positive benefits to both landscape character and visual amenity and providing a gain to biodiversity.

6.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

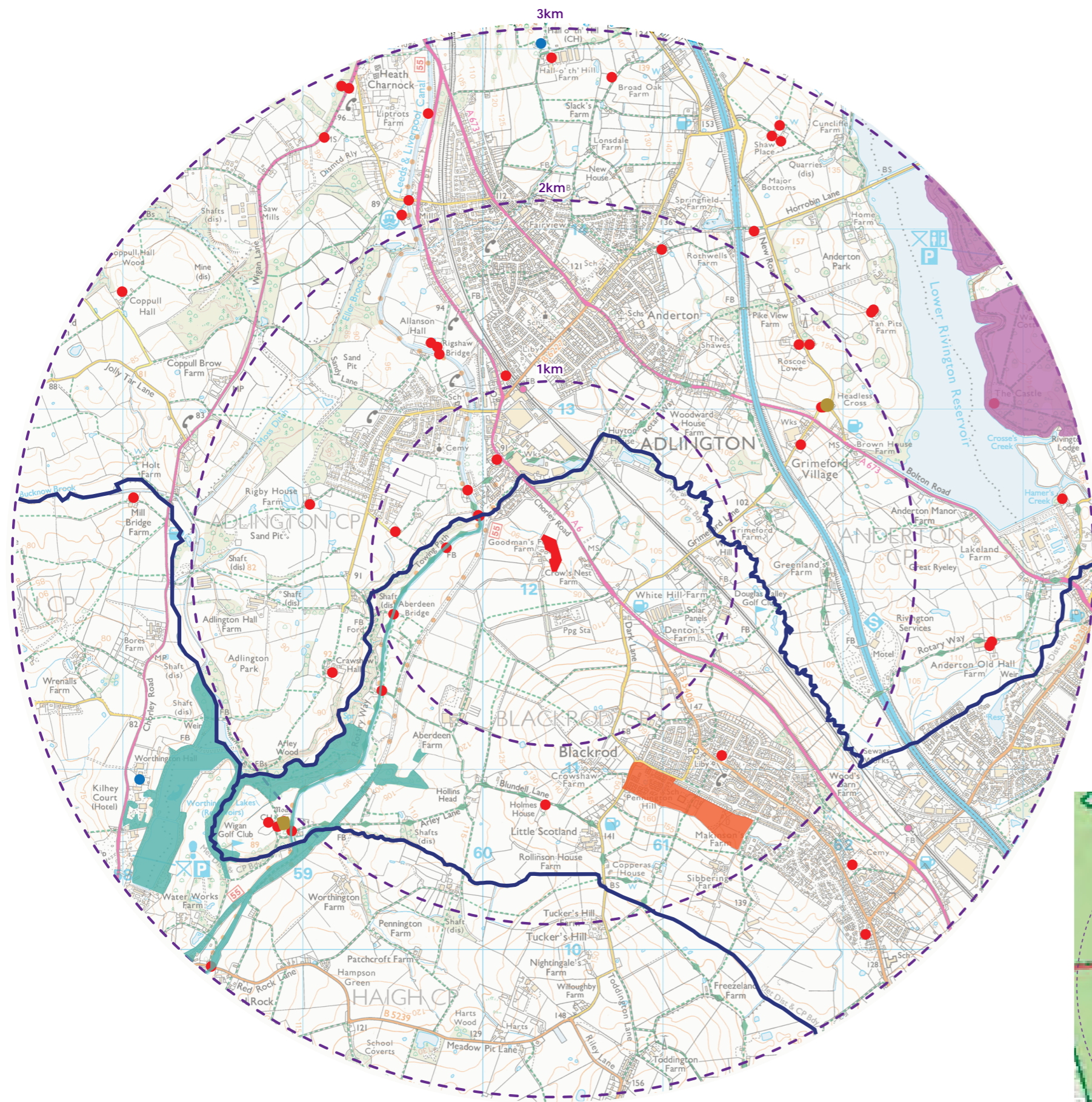
- 6.6.1 Whilst a Landscape Scheme has been proposed within the red line boundary for the application, this LVIA recommends that consideration is given to additional planting beyond the red line boundary, on land within ownership of the applicant.
- 6.6.2 The grass field to the north of the application site is currently well defined by mature native hedgerows, however there are gaps along the fence line which would benefit from a programme of gapping up, to create connective habitat which naturally filters views across the landscape.
- 6.6.3 Recommended species include *Acer campestre*, *Corlyus avellana*, *Cornus sanguinea*, *Crataegus monogyna*, *Ilex aquifolium*, *Maulus sylvestris*, *Prunus spinosa*, *Viburnum opulus*, planted as 2 year old transplants, 40-60mm, bare root whips at 400mm centres, double staggered row 400mm between rows.
- 6.6.4 Maintain the hedgerow at a maximum height of 1.5m, trimming on a two to three-year cycle, between November and February, to ensure maximum flower and berry production for wildlife. Lay or coppice as necessary to maintain good habit and form.













ILLUSTRATIVE MAPS

Figure 2 - Landscape Designations

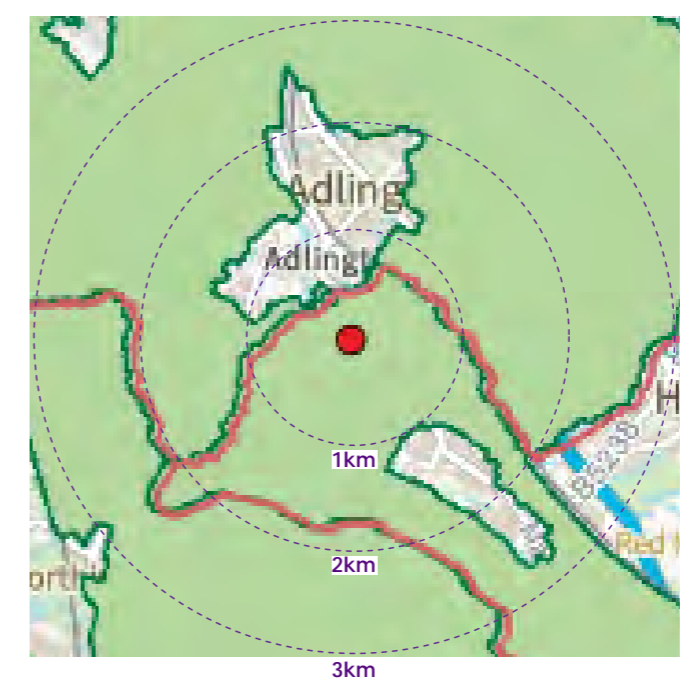
Figure 3 - Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)

Figure 4 - Public Rights of Way & Viewpoint Locations



-  North
-  Application Site
-  Zone of Visibility
-  Administrative Boundary
-  Listed Building - grade I
-  Listed Building - grade II*
-  Listed Building - grade II
-  Scheduled Monument
-  Registered Park & Garden of Special Historic Interest
-  Site of Biological Importance
-  Other Protected Open Land
-  Green Belt

Inset Map (Source: <https://magic.defra.gov.uk>)



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PROJECT
 Land at Goodman Fold Farm
CLIENT
 Mr J Dickinson
DRAWING TITLE
 Landscape Designations
 Drawing No: *Figure 2* Rev:

Date: Nov 2023
 Scale:
 Drawn: JW
 Checked: CW



A theoretical visual impact assessment using 2022 National LIDAR DSM at 1m resolution. Viewer height used 1.65m above ground level. Calculations have been adjusted to account for earth's curvature and the effects of light refraction. The calculation has been made with QGIS 3.14 GRASS software that does not use mathematically approximate methods.

This ZTV includes the screening effects of buildings or vegetation in the study area.

LIDAR is an airborne mapping technique which accurately measures the height of the terrain and surface objects on the ground, through the use of a scanning laser that measures the distance between the aircraft and the ground. Digital Surface Model(s) (DSM) are created from the last or only LIDAR pulse returned to the sensor and contains all ground and surface objects.

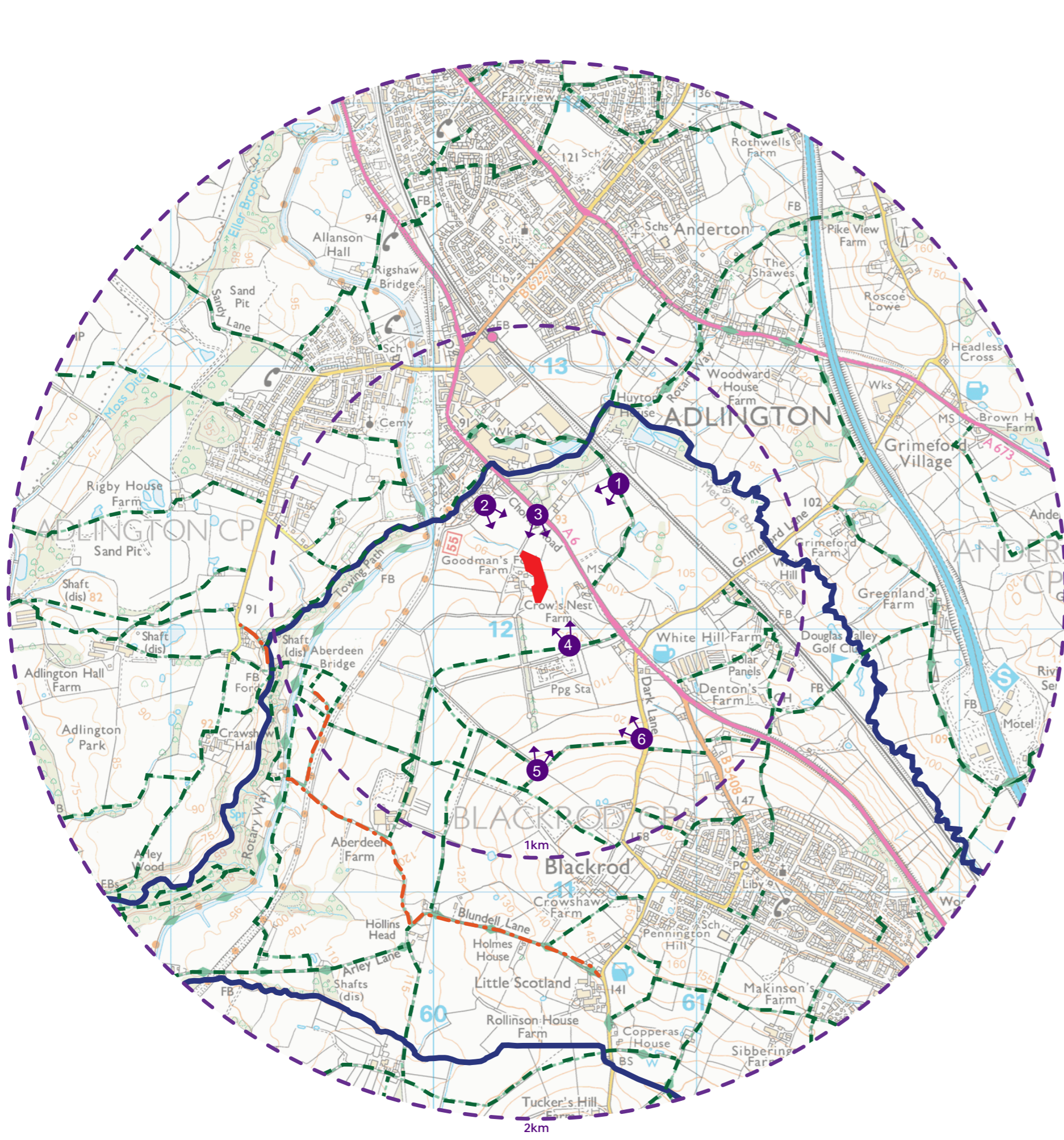




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PROJECT
Land at Goodman Fold Farm
CLIENT
Mr J Dickinson
DRAWING TITLE
Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)
Drawing No: Figure 3
Rev:

Date: Sept 2023
Scale:
Drawn: JW
Checked: CW





-  North
-  Application Site
-  Zone of Visibility
-  Administrative Boundary
-  Public Footpath
-  Public Bridleway
-  Viewpoint Location

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PROJECT
 Land at Goodman Fold Farm
 CLIENT
 Mr J Dickinson
 DRAWING TITLE
Public Rights of Way & Viewpoints
 Drawing No: *Figure 4* Rev:

Date: Nov 2023
 Scale:
 Drawn: JW
 Checked: CW





<p>Viewpoint - No.1 Looking south west from Footpath BLA 070.</p>	<p>Grid Reference - SD 60719 12512</p>	<p>Image - Stitched panorama of multiple photographs</p>
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<p>Viewpoint - No.2 Looking south east from the edge of residential properties at Waterhouse Nook.</p>	<p>Grid Reference - SD 60193 12458</p>	<p>Image - Stitched panorama of multiple photographs</p>
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Viewpoint - No.3 Looking south west from the Bus Stop (towards Blackrod) on the A6 Chorley Road.	Grid Reference - SD 60408 12437	Image - Stitched panorama of multiple photographs
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Viewpoint - No.4 Looking south from Footpath BLA 063.	Grid Reference - SD 60563 11926	Image - Stitched panorama of multiple photographs
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<p>Viewpoint - No.5 Looking north east from the junction of Footpath BLA 046 and BLA 071.</p>	<p>Grid Reference - SD 60414 11471</p>	<p>Image - Stitched panorama of multiple photographs</p>
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<p>Viewpoint - No.6 Looking north west from Footpath BLA 071.</p>	<p>Grid Reference - SD 60805 11577</p>	<p>Image - Stitched panorama of multiple photographs</p>
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A.0 LANDSCAPE & VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

A.0 ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

A.1 INTRODUCTION

A.1.1 This assessment has been conducted in accordance with the principles set out in:

- ‘*Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*’, Landscape Institute (LI) & Institute of Environmental Management and Awareness (IEMA), Third Edition, 2013; and
- ‘*An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment*’, Natural England, 2014.

A.2 ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

A.2.1 To determine whether or not the landscape will be able to successfully accommodate the development this LVIA will:

- Establish the scope of the assessment;
- Establish the nature of the potential change anticipated through an understanding of the nature and form of the proposal. The likely impacts of the Proposed Development are described, enabling specific judgements to be made regarding landscape and visual receptor sensitivity;
- Establish the landscape baseline, in terms of its character, condition, designations and current land use;
- Established a visual baseline, considering likely public receptors;
- Establish the sensitivity of landscape and visual receptors through a balancing of judgments made regarding susceptibility and value;
- Determine the magnitude of impacts through a balancing of judgments made regarding the size / scale, duration and reversibility of the proposal;
- Assess the impacts and likely significance of the effects of the potential changes against the sensitivity of the landscape, through a balanced approach and a description of judgments made regarding sensitivity and magnitude; and
- Assess the impacts of the proposal in combination with other development, during construction, on completion and 15 years after completion.

A.2.2 **Landscape Character** - Landscape character It is defined as:

*“a **distinct**, recognisable and consistent **pattern** of elements, be it **natural** (soil, landform) and/or **human** (for example settlement and development) in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse”.*

A.2.3 Landscapes are not static, they are in a constant state of change, altering in line with management, land use and climate change. Climate change is one of the largest factors that is likely to bring about changes in landscape character. Landscape character should not be seen as the physical elements of the landscape in isolation, but the combination of those elements with perceptual, aesthetic and experiential aspects of the landscape, which makes one place different to another.

A.2.4 Landscape Character is assessed at different scales, from the national and regional, down to the county, district and site specific. Assessment of the landscape can help in:

- Understanding how and why landscapes are important;
- Promoting an appreciation of landscape issues;
- Successfully accommodating new development within the landscape; and
- Guiding and directing landscape change.

A.2.5 **Assessment of Landscape Effects** - Once the baseline information has been collected, the sensitivity of landscape and visual receptors can be determined. This is achieved through a review of the specific nature, scale and type of Proposed Development located within a Site. The potential magnitude of impact upon the landscape, the character of the landscape and upon visual receptors is established and professional judgments are then applied using the sensitivity of the receptor and magnitude of the change, to establish a clear and transparent judgment of significance. The overall professional judgment upon significance is based on the combination of each of the criteria with the rationale and justification for each judgement set out in the detailed analysis.

A.2.6 **Landscape Sensitivity** - The sensitivity of a landscape to a particular type of change, is defined in terms of the interactions between the landscape in its own right, the perceptions of that landscape, in the eyes of people who see it on a regular basis and the nature of the proposal. Landscape sensitivity is defined as relating:

*“to the **stability of character**; the degree to which that character is **robust** enough to continue and to be able to **recuperate** from loss or damage. A landscape with a character of high sensitivity is one that, once lost, would be **difficult to restore**; a character that, if **valued**, must be afforded particular **care and consideration** in order for it to survive”. Bray C (2003) *Unpublished paper on a County Wide Assessment of Landscape Sensitivity*. Worcestershire County Council.*

A.2.7 Landscape sensitivity can be seen as a combination of the susceptibility of the landscape to the type of proposed change, the value that is attributed to that particular landscape. It is important to understand that judgements about the potential for landscapes to accept and accommodate change can alter over time, not only in terms of people’s perception to a particular landscape, but also in terms of people’s attitudes towards the type and extent of that change. Sensitivity has been defined as being high, medium or low, as set out in Table A4, which provides a structure for judgement decisions which are clear and objective. The sensitivity of landscape receptors will depend on three key factors:

- The nature and extent of the change which is proposed;
- The ability of the components that combine to create a particular landscape, and which will be affected by the Proposed Development, to accommodate the nature and extent of the change; and
- The ability of the wider landscape character to accept the proposed change.

A.2.8 Landscapes are complex and are formed through a combination of elements and the interactions of those elements, often subtle and unique. There is always an element of subjectivity in assessing landscapes and no landscape will fit wholly into any one definition or criteria. Therefore, professional judgements are made and described in the assessment.

A.2.9 **Landscape Susceptibility** - The susceptibility to change is the ability of a landscape to accommodate change due to a Proposed Development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation. Susceptibility can be assessed for landscape receptors such as the overall character or condition, or a particular landscape elements or feature. Landscape susceptibility will vary in response to the specific landscape that is being considered, the Proposed Development and to the nature or type of change that may occur. The criteria used to define landscape susceptibility are set out in *Table A.1*.

A.2.10 **Landscape Value** - The value (or quality) of the landscape, as a resource in its own right, can be assessed at a variety of scales and is defined as being of exceptional, high, moderate, poor or very poor value. Landscape value is described as *“the relative value that is attached to different landscapes by society”* (‘Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment’, Landscape Institute (LI) & Institute of Environmental Management

SUSCEPTIBILITY	LANDSCAPE CHARACTER
HIGH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The landscape receptor is a highly distinctive and cohesive landscape. The receptor demonstrates high value characteristics or features. The receptor is essentially intact and in a very good condition. Demonstrates very few detracting intrusive elements. Is likely to have a strong landscape pattern and or texture. The landscape receptor has a limited capacity to accommodate the type of change or Proposed Development without significantly effecting its overall integrity.
MEDIUM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The landscape receptor is distinctive. The receptor demonstrates common landscape characteristics. Is in very reasonable condition with some detracting or visually intrusive elements. Is likely to have a landscape pattern which is mostly intact. The landscape receptor has some capacity to accommodate the type of change or Proposed Development without effecting its overall integrity.
LOW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The landscape receptor is likely to be simple, possibly with a mixed character and or monotonous with indistinct features. Landscape which is generally limited in value. Landscape receptor lacking coherence and includes detracting or visually intrusive elements, with landscape features which may be in poor or improving condition and few which could not be replaced. Illustrates areas of significant alteration, degradation or the erosion of landscape features. Has a minimal variation in landscape pattern. Is robust and has a greater capacity to accommodate the Proposed Development without effecting its overall integrity.

Table A.1: The General Criteria for Defining Landscape Susceptibility.

VALUE	TYPICAL EXAMPLE
HIGH Importance (or Quality) and Rarity. No or extremely limited potential for substitution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designated landscapes (but not limited to) such as World Heritage Site, National Park or AONB. Landscape condition is good, maintained to a high standard and largely intact. The elements which combine to create the landscape are rare or distinctive and features are a key component that contribute to the character of the area. The landscape has an elevated level of scenic quality and tranquillity. Extensive opportunities are available and valued for recreation.
MEDIUM Importance (or Quality) and Rarity. Limited potential for substitution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional or locally designated landscapes or undesignated (value perhaps expressed through non-official publications or demonstrable use) such as green belt, conservation area or designated open space. Reasonable landscape condition, which is relatively well maintained. The elements which combine to create the landscape are a notable component that contribute to the character of the area. Moderate levels of scenic quality and tranquillity. Opportunities are available and valued for recreation.
LOW Importance (or Quality) and Rarity. Potential for substitution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No formal landscape designations, the landscape may be locally relevant and valued. Areas identified as having some redeeming feature or features and possibly identified for improvement. Landscape condition is poor and poorly maintained. The elements which combine to create the landscape are not a notable component that contributes to the character of the area. Limited levels of scenic quality and tranquillity. Few or no opportunities are available and valued for recreation.

Table A.2: The General Criteria for Defining Landscape Value

and Awareness (IEMA), Third Edition, 2013) (GLVIA3). The criteria used to define landscape value are set out in *Table A.2*.

A.2.11 **Defining Overall landscape Sensitivity** - By combining the susceptibility of a landscape receptor to change together with landscape value, an overall assessment of the landscape receptor's sensitivity can be demonstrated. For example, a combination of 'high' landscape susceptibility and 'high' landscape value is likely to demonstrate the highest landscape sensitivity, whereas a 'low' landscape susceptibility and a 'low' landscape value is likely to demonstrate the lowest level of landscape sensitivity. *Table A.3* identifies how susceptibility and value of view can be combined to demonstrate the sensitivity of a landscape receptor.

	HIGH SUSCEPTIBILITY	MEDIUM SUSCEPTIBILITY	LOW SUSCEPTIBILITY
HIGH VALUE	High Sensitivity	High Sensitivity	Medium Sensitivity
MEDIUM VALUE	High Sensitivity	Medium Sensitivity	Low Sensitivity
LOW VALUE	Medium Sensitivity	Low Sensitivity	Low Sensitivity

Table A.3: Matrix for Establishing Landscape Sensitivity

A.2.12 Using the matrix as identified within *Table A.3*, a summary of the defining criteria relating to the different levels of sensitivity associated with a landscape receptor are illustrated in *Table A.4*.

SENSITIVITY	LANDSCAPE CHARACTER
HIGH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong landscape structure. • A combination of elements that are not easily replaced or substituted, such as ancient woodland. • Strong positive character and a strong sense of place. • Good condition. • Visually distinctive and aesthetically pleasing. • Detracting features or major infrastructure is limited or not present. • Distinct features worthy of conservation. • A low capacity to accommodate the type of development proposed due to the interactions of landscape elements.
MEDIUM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognisable landscape structure. • Positive character and a reasonable sense of place. • Moderate condition. • Visually notable. • Aesthetically satisfactory or uninspiring. • Detracting features or major infrastructure is present and noticeable. • Some features of worthy conservation. • A medium capacity to accommodate the type of development proposed due to the interactions of landscape elements.
LOW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weak or degraded landscape structure. • Weak or negative character. • A combination of elements that are easily replaced or substituted, such as brownfield sites. • Poor condition and sense of place. • Visually notable. • Aesthetically unsatisfactory or unpleasant with few or no features of worthy conservation. • Scope for positive enhancement. • A high capacity to accommodate the type of development proposed due to the interactions of landscape elements.

Table A.4: The General Criteria for Establishing Landscape Sensitivity.

A.2.13 **Magnitude of Landscape Effects** - Each effect on landscape receptors is assessed in relation to the size or scale, the geographical extent of the likely change and the duration and the reversibility. The magnitude of landscape effects has been assessed in accordance with the criteria set out in *Table A.5*.

MAGNITUDE	LANDSCAPE CHARACTER
VERY HIGH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The size and scale of change is considered very large due to the extent and proportion of loss of existing landscape elements or the degree of alteration to aesthetic or perceptual aspects. The nature and scale of change to key characteristics which are critical to character are considered to be very large. Where the geographical extent would have a very substantial influence on the landscape at a scale across several landscape character areas/types. Duration of impacts would be considered very long term and where the potential reversal of the impact is not likely and in practical terms would be very difficult to achieve.
HIGH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The size and scale of change will result in a high degree of loss or major alteration to one or more key elements, features or characteristics of the landscape character. Introduction of elements considered to be uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving landscape. Where the geographical extent would have a substantial influence on the landscape at a scale across several landscape character areas/types. Duration of impacts would be considered long term and where the potential reversal of the impact is not likely and in practical terms would be very difficult to achieve.
MEDIUM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The size and scale of change will result in a partial loss or alteration to one or more key elements or features or characteristics of the landscape character. Introduction of elements that may be prominent but not necessarily be considered to be substantially uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving landscape. Where the geographical extent would influence the landscape at a local scale. Duration of impacts would be considered midterm and where the potential reversal of the impact is likely and in practical terms would be difficult to achieve.
LOW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The size and scale of change will result in a minor loss or alteration to one or more key elements or features or characteristics of the landscape character. Introduction of elements may not be uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving landscape. Where the geographical extent would influence the landscape in the immediate setting of the site. Duration of impacts would be considered short term and where the potential reversal of the impact is more likely and in practical terms would easily be achieved
NEGLECTIBLE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The size and scale of change will result in a very minor loss or alteration to one or more key elements or features or characteristics of the landscape character. Introduction of elements are not uncharacteristic with the surrounding landscape. Where the geographical extent would substantially influence the landscape of the site only. Duration of impacts would be considered very short term and where the potential reversal of the impact is very likely or committed and in practical terms would very easily be achieved

Table A.5: The Criteria Used to Define Magnitude of Landscape Effects

A.2.14 **Judging the Overall Significance of Landscape Effects** - In drawing a final conclusion regarding the significance, the judgements about landscape susceptibility and the magnitude of landscape effects are combined to determine a final judgement to be made about how significant the effect of the Proposed Development upon the specific location will be.

A.2.15 **Assessment of Visual Effects** - Visual receptors include a particular person or groups of people likely to be affected at a specific viewpoint or series of viewpoints.

“An assessment of visual effects deals with the effects of change on views available to people and their visual amenity. The concern here is with assessing how the surroundings of individuals or groups of people may be specifically affected by changes in the content and character of views as a result of the change or loss of existing elements of the landscape and/or introduction of new elements.” (‘Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment’, Landscape Institute (LI) & Institute of Environmental Management and Awareness (IEMA), Third Edition, 2013) (GLVIA3).

A.2.16 **Visual Sensitivity** - The sensitivity of visual receptors is determined through balancing judgements on the value attached to a particular view against the receptors susceptibility to change in a view or visual amenity and depends on three key factors:

- The receptor’s activity whilst exposed to the view (work, recreational activities, resident);
- Degree of exposure to view; and
- Period of exposure to view.
-

The criteria used to define visual susceptibility are set out in *Table A.9*.

A.2.17 **Visual Susceptibility** - The susceptibility of a visual receptor is dependant on the following:

- Their susceptibility to changes in the view and visual amenity;
- Their perceived value attached to the view;
- It’s relationship to an activity they are engaged in; and
- The extent to which their attention is focussed on the views and visual amenity at that location.

A.2.18 As such those visual receptors most sensitive to change are likely to include people engaged in outdoor activities where an appreciation of the landscape is the focus or residents in areas where the landscape setting contributes to the setting of the properties. Conversely, those considered least sensitive to change include (but are not restricted to) people engaged in outdoor sports or recreation where there is no focus on the surrounding landscape / views and people at their place of work where their focus is on their work activity. The criteria used to define visual susceptibility are set out in *Table A.6*.

A.2.19 **Value of the View** - In assessing the value of a view, consideration should be made of the following:

- Recognition attached to the value of a particular view experienced by a visual receptor, e.g. in relation to heritage assets or planning designations; and
- Indicators of the value attached to views by others, e.g., in guidebooks, defined viewpoints tourist maps, literary references, art work etc.

A.2.20 An assessment will be made on the value of a view experienced by a receptor and will be informed by the following defining criteria as illustrated in *Table A.7*.

A.2.21 **Defining Overall Visual Sensitivity** - By combining the susceptibility of a landscape receptor to change together with landscape value, an overall assessment of the landscape receptor’s sensitivity can be demonstrated. For example, a combination of ‘high’ landscape susceptibility and ‘high’ landscape value is likely to demonstrate

SUSCEPTIBILITY	VISUAL DESCRIPTION
HIGH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents at home with primary views from ground floor, garden and upper floors. Users of public rights of way and footpaths (either strategic or popular routes) where people are engaged in outdoor recreation and whose attention/interest is likely to be focused on the landscape or particular views. Visitors to heritage assets or other attractions, where views of the surroundings are an important contributor to the experience. Communities where views contribute to the landscape setting enjoyed by residents. Travellers on recognised scenic routes.
MEDIUM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents with secondary views, primarily from first floor level; Travellers on road, rail, or other transport routes where landscape is a focus of the view. Users of local, and less used Public Rights of Way or where the attention is not focused on the landscape. Schools and other institutional buildings and their outdoor areas. Play areas.
LOW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Users of outdoor sport/recreation facilities which does not involve / depend upon appreciation of views of the landscape. Travellers on road, rail or other transport routes not focused on the landscape / particular views e.g. on motorways and "A" road or commuter routes. People at their place of work whose attention may be focused on their work / activity and not their surroundings.

Table A.6: The General Criteria for Defining Visual Susceptibility.

VALUE	TYPICAL EXAMPLE
HIGH Importance (or Quality) and Rarity. No or extremely limited potential for substitution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designated landscapes (but not limited to) such as World Heritage Site, National Park or AONB. Landscape condition is good, maintained to a high standard and largely intact. The elements which combine to create the landscape are rare or distinctive and features are a key component that contribute to the character of the area. The landscape has an elevated level of scenic quality and tranquillity. Extensive opportunities are available and valued for recreation.
MEDIUM Importance (or Quality) and Rarity. Limited potential for substitution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional or locally designated landscapes or undesignated (value perhaps expressed through non-official publications or demonstrable use) such as green belt, conservation area or designated open space. Reasonable landscape condition, which is relatively well maintained. The elements which combine to create the landscape are a notable component that contribute to the character of the area. Moderate levels of scenic quality and tranquillity. Opportunities are available and valued for recreation.
LOW Importance (or Quality) and Rarity. Potential for substitution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No formal landscape designations, the landscape may be locally relevant and valued. Areas identified as having some redeeming feature or features and possibly identified for improvement. Landscape condition is poor and poorly maintained. The elements which combine to create the landscape are not a notable component that contributes to the character of the area. Limited levels of scenic quality and tranquillity. Few or no opportunities are available and valued for recreation.

Table A.7: The General Criteria for Defining Landscape Value

the highest landscape sensitivity, whereas a 'low' landscape susceptibility and a 'low' landscape value is likely to demonstrate the lowest level of landscape sensitivity. *Table A.8* identifies how susceptibility and value of view can be combined to demonstrate the sensitivity of a visual receptor.

	HIGH SUSCEPTIBILITY	MEDIUM SUSCEPTIBILITY	LOW SUSCEPTIBILITY
HIGH VALUE	High Sensitivity	High Sensitivity	Medium Sensitivity
MEDIUM VALUE	High Sensitivity	Medium Sensitivity	Low Sensitivity
LOW VALUE	Medium Sensitivity	Low Sensitivity	Low Sensitivity

Table A.8: Matrix for Establishing Visual Sensitivity

A.2.22 Using the matrix as identified within *Table A.8*, a summary of the defining criteria relating to the different levels of sensitivity associated with a landscape receptor are illustrated in *Table A.9*.

SENSITIVITY	VISUAL RECEPTORS
HIGH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designated or protected views or views from publicly accessible locations in protected or designated landscapes. Residential properties with predominantly open views from windows, garden or curtilage. Views will normally be from principal living rooms and from windows of rooms in use during the day. Users of Public Rights of Way with predominantly open views and of recreational use. Tourists and visitors to heritage assets, or other attractions, where views of the surroundings are an important contributor to the experience and visit. Non-motorised users of minor or unclassified roads in the countryside. Visitors to recognised viewpoints or beauty spots. Users of outdoor recreational facilities with predominantly open views where the purpose of that recreation is enjoyment of the countryside - e.g. Country Parks, National Trust sites etc.
MEDIUM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residential properties with views from windows, garden or curtilage. Views from ground floor windows will be oblique or partially obscured by garden and/or other intervening vegetation. Users of Public Rights of Way with restricted views, in less sensitive areas or where there are significant existing intrusive features. Schools, hotels and institutional buildings, and their outdoor areas. People at work or in educational institutions, where visual amenity is an important contributor to the setting and quality of working life. Motorised users of minor or unclassified roads in the countryside. Where attention is focussed upon often narrow and winding routes.
LOW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People in their place of work where the visual setting is not important to the quality of working life. Users of main roads or passengers on public transport on main routes. Users of engaged in formal and informal sporting activities at outdoor recreational facilities, with restricted views and where the activity is focussed within the area. Occupants of industrial premises. Views from publicly accessible locations in degraded landscapes

Table A.9: The General Criteria for Establishing Visual Sensitivity.

A.2.23 **Magnitude of Visual Impacts** - The magnitude of visual impact is defined as the 'combination of the scale, extent and duration' of the Proposed Development and its impact upon visual receptors. For visual impact this relates to:

- The geographical degree of change to existing views;
- Distance of the receptor from the application site; and
- Whether the impact is permanent or temporary.

A.2.24 The criteria for assessing the magnitude of visual impact is set out in *Table A.10*.

MAGNITUDE	VISUAL AMENITY
HIGH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The size and scale of change is considered substantial, due to the extent of change, the addition or alteration of features, the changes to the composition of the view, including the proportion of the view occupied by the proposal, the degree of contrast and the nature of the experience. • Where the proposals become the only dominant feature in the scene or would form a significant and immediately apparent element which would affect the overall impression of the view. • The duration of likely impacts is considered to be long term and where the potential reversal of the impact is not likely. • Alteration of the view in close proximity. • The geographical extent in relation to the angle, distance and proportion of visibility is considered as extensive.
MEDIUM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The size and scale of change is considered fair, due to the extent of change, the addition or alteration of features, the changes to the composition of the view, including the proportion of the view occupied by the proposal, the degree of contrast and the nature of the experience. • Where the proposals form a visible and recognisable new feature in the scene but may not be immediately apparent or become a dominant feature in the view. • The duration of likely impacts is considered to be medium term and where the potential reversal of the impact is likely.
LOW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The size and scale of change is considered small, due to the extent of change, the addition or alteration of features, the changes to the composition of the view, including the proportion of the view occupied by the proposal, the degree of contrast and the nature of the experience. • Where the proposals constitute only a minor component of the wider view and may not be immediately apparent to the casual observer. Awareness of the proposals would not have a marked effect on the overall quality of the scene. • The duration of likely impacts is considered to be short term and where the potential reversal of the impact is easily achieved. • The geographical extent in relation to the angle, distance and proportion of visibility is considered as limited.
NEGLIGIBLE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The size and scale of change is considered very small, due to the extent of change, the addition or alteration of features, the changes to the composition of the view, including the proportion of the view occupied by the proposal, the degree of contrast and the nature of the experience. • The proposals are largely indiscernible and/or they are at such a distance that they are scarcely appreciated. Consequently, they have little effect on the scene. • The duration of likely impacts is considered to be very short term and where the potential reversal of the impact is easily achieved. • The geographical extent in relation to the angle, distance and proportion of visibility is considered as very limited.
NIL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no view of the proposed development in the view.

Table A.10: The Criteria Used to Define Magnitude of Landscape Effects

A.2.25 **Judging the Overall Significance of Visual Effects** - In drawing a final conclusion regarding the significance of visual effects, the judgements about visual effects and the magnitude of visual impact are combined to determine a final judgement to be made about how significant the effect of the Proposed Development upon the specific location will be.

A.2.26 For both landscape and visual effects, the final conclusion on the significance of an effect is based on the combination of sensitivity of receptor and magnitude of impact. The rationale for the overall judgement on significance is based on the combination of each of the criteria individually leading to the balance and justification of these.

A.2.27 **Significance of Effect** - Effects result from interaction between the magnitude of impact and the susceptibility of the landscape or visual receptor.

'A higher level of significance is generally attached to large-scale effects and effects on sensitive or high-value receptors; thus small effects on highly sensitive sites can be more important than large effects on less sensitive sites. It is therefore important that a balanced and well-reasoned judgment of these two criteria is achieved'. (GLVIA, Landscape Institute (LI) & Institute of Environmental Management and Awareness (IEMA), Third Edition, 2013).

A.2.28 The matrix used for determining significance of effects is presented as *Table A.11*.

	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW	NEGLIGIBLE	NO CHANGE
HIGH	Major	Major	Moderate	Neutral	Neutral
MEDIUM	Major	Moderate	Minor	Neutral	Neutral
LOW	Moderate	Minor	Minor	Neutral	Neutral

Table A.11: Matrix for Defining Significance of Effects

A.2.29 **Nature of Effects** - The determination of the nature of an effect requires a judgment as to whether the introduction of a Proposed Development would be of benefit or detriment to the existing landscape character or view. The impact of a Proposed Development can be adverse, beneficial or neutral, as defined in *Table A.12*

	NATURE OF IMPACT
ADVERSE	The key characteristics of the existing landscape or view would be weakened by the introduction of the proposed development.
NEUTRAL	The key characteristics would neither be weakened or strengthened by the proposed development.
BENEFICIAL	The key characteristics of the existing landscape or view would be strengthened by the introduction of the proposed development.

Table A.1: The Nature of the Impact

A.2.30 **Assessment of Effects** - The effects arising from any given development has been categorised using the terms neutral, minor, moderate or major, with both moderate and major categories being considered as comprising significant effects. These effects have then been qualified according to their nature (i.e. adverse, neutral or beneficial, as set out in *Table A.13*

EFFECT SIGNIFICANCE	LANDSCAPE CHARACTER	VISUAL AMENITY
MAJOR ADVERSE	The proposed scheme would result in effects that are at complete variance with the landform, scale and pattern of the landscape. It would permanently degrade, diminish or destroy the integrity of valued characteristic features, elements and/or their setting. A high quality landscape would be permanently changed and its quality diminished.	The proposals would cause a significant deterioration to an existing view.
MODERATE ADVERSE	The proposed scheme be out of scale with the landscape or at odds with the local pattern and landform and it would leave an adverse impact on the landscape to recognisable quality.	The proposals would cause a noticeable deterioration to an existing view.
MINOR ADVERSE	The proposed scheme would not entirely fit into the landform and scale of the landscape and it would have an effect on the landscape character.	The proposals would cause a barely perceptible deterioration to an existing view from a receptor.
NEUTRAL	The proposed scheme would not effect the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape and would maintain existing landscape quality.	No or negligible discernible deterioration or improvement in the existing view.
MINOR BENEFICIAL	The proposed scheme has the potential to improve the landscape character. It would fit in with the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape and enable the incorporation of the valued characteristic features.	The proposed development would cause a barely perceptible improvement in the existing view.
MODERATE BENEFICIAL	The proposed scheme would have the potential to accord with the landscape character and improve the quality of the landscape through removal of damage caused by existing land uses.	The proposed development would cause a noticeable improvement in the existing view.
MAJOR BENEFICIAL	The proposed scheme would have the potential to accord seamlessly with the landscape character and significantly improve the quality of the landscape through restoration and the removal of damage caused by existing land uses.	The proposed development would cause a significant improvement in the existing view.

Table A.13 The Effects Significance Table

A.2.31 For landscape and visual effects, interim categories of ‘negligible to minor’, ‘minor to moderate’ and ‘moderate to major’ are used where the judgements of an effect are determined to fit across the descriptive criteria for significance banding.

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