Land Off Rampton Road, Cottenham

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

June 2015
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This document has been prepared and checked in accordance with ISO 9001:2008
1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

1.1.1 This report has been prepared on behalf of Gladman Developments Ltd (GDL) in support of an outline planning application for the residential development of land off Rampton Road, Cottenham. This application is a resubmission of application S/1818/15/OL, which was refused by the Planning Committee on the 11th May 2016.

1.1.2 LDA Design was commissioned in March 2015 to carry out a landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA) of the original proposed residential development on land off Rampton Road, Cottenham. In light of the resubmission, this document has been reviewed to reflect the alterations to the proposed scheme.

1.1.3 This assessment defines the existing landscape and visual baseline environments; assesses their sensitivity to change; describes the key landscape and visual related aspects of the proposed development; describes the nature of the anticipated change upon both the landscape and visual environments; assesses the effects during construction, the period following completion prior to the maturing of mitigation planting (short to medium term) and once the mitigation planting is mature (long term).

1.2 The Site and Proposals

1.2.1 Figure 1 places the proposed development within its local context. The site is situated on the south western edge of the existing settlement of Cottenham, a village located approximately 6km north of Cambridge.

1.2.2 The site comprises of part of a single large field set within an agricultural landscape, encompassing a total area of 14.16ha. The northern boundary of the site is delineated by a combination of Rampton Road and the rear gardens of the residential properties along it. The eastern boundary is marked by the extent of small fields and large gardens that extend from Oakington Road. The southern boundary is currently open and is not delineated on the ground. The western boundary is formed by an intermittent hedgerow, which extends south west from Rampton Road.

1.2.3 The site occupies an area of land upon a low lying ridge (Fen Island) in association with the settlement of Cottenham within a broadly level landscape, associated with the Fens. The Site comprises two distinct variations in landform; sloping and flat. The former is found in the north-west and falls by approximately 5m over a distance of 150m (1:30) in a westerly direction from 17m AOD to 12m AOD. The landform continues to fall beyond the western boundary towards Smithey Fen Engine Drain, which sits at approximately 4m AOD. The flatter land is located on the highest part of the Site, along the localised ridgeline, starting at the break in slope generally in line with existing development along Rampton Road at between 12 to 13m AOD, making up approximately two thirds of its overall area.

1.2.4 The proposal is for a residential development of up to 200 dwellings, up to 70 apartments with care (C2), and associated public open space.
1.3. **The Study Area**

1.3.1. It is accepted practice within landscape and visual assessment work that the extent of the study area for a development proposal is broadly defined by the visual envelope of the proposed development site and the anticipated extent of the Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) arising from the development itself.

1.3.2. In this case, an initial study area of 5km was considered appropriate to cover all potentially material landscape and visual impacts.
2.0 Methodology

2.1 Overview

2.1.1 “Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment is a tool used to identify and assess the significance of and the effects of change resulting from development on both the landscape as an environmental resource in its own right and people’s views and visual amenity.” (GLVIA, 3rd Edition, 2013, para 1.1).

2.1.2 Sections 2.20-2.22 of the same guidance indicate that the two components (assessment of landscape effects, and assessment of visual effects) are “related but very different considerations”.

2.2 Introduction

2.2.1 The assessment method draws upon the established Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd edition (LI & IEMA, 2013) and An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment (Natural England, 2014) and other recognised guidelines.

2.2.2 The methodology has three key stages, which are described in more detail in subsequent sections, as follows:

- Baseline - includes the gathering of documented information; agreement of the scope of the assessment with the client and local planning authority; site visits and initial reports to client of issues that may need to be addressed within the design.
- Design - input into the design / review of initial design / layout / options and mitigation options.
- Assessment - includes an assessment of the landscape and visual effects of the scheme, requiring site based work and the completion of a full report and supporting graphics.

2.2.3 A cumulative assessment was not considered necessary for this assessment as no applicable schemes where identified within the study area.

2.2.4 These stages are described in greater detail in Appendix 3.

Assessment Terminology and Judgements

2.2.5 A full glossary is provided in Appendix 1. The key terms used within assessments are:

- Susceptibility and Value - which contribute to Sensitivity;
- Scale, Duration and Extent - which contribute to the Magnitude of effect; and
- Significance.

2.2.6 Susceptibility is assessed for both landscape receptors such as designated areas and landscape character areas, and for visual receptors (people). It indicates the ability of a defined landscape or visual receptor to accommodate the proposed development "without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the
achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies." (GLVIA, 3rd version, para 5.40). A description of how susceptibility is evaluated for each receptor type is included below. It is rated on the following scale:

- High - undue consequences are likely to arise from the proposed development.
- Medium - undue consequences may arise from the proposed development.
- Low - undue consequences are unlikely to arise from the proposed development.

2.2.7. Susceptibility of landscape character areas is influenced by their characteristics and is frequently considered (though often recorded as 'sensitivity' rather than susceptibility) within documented landscape character assessments and capacity studies.

2.2.8. Susceptibility of designated landscapes is influenced by the nature of the special qualities and purposes of designation and/or the valued elements, qualities or characteristics, indicating the degree to which these may be unduly affected by the development proposed.

2.2.9. Susceptibility of accessible or recreational landscapes is influenced by the nature of the landscape involved; the likely activities and expectations of people within that landscape and the degree to which those activities and expectations may be unduly affected by the development proposed.

2.2.10. Susceptibility of visual receptors is primarily a function of the expectations and occupation or activity of the receptors (GLVIA 3rd version, para 6.32).

2.2.11. **Landscape Value** is "the relative value that is attached to different landscapes by society" (GLVIA, 3rd version, page 157). It is rated on the following scale:

- National/International - Designated landscapes which are nationally or internationally designated for their landscape value - including National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, World Heritage sites; Heritage Coast and National Scenic Areas.
- Local/District - Locally or regionally designated landscapes (e.g. Area of High Landscape Value, Regional Scenic Areas); also areas which local evidence (such as tourism guides, landscape character assessments or other documentary information) indicates as being more valued than the surrounding area.
- Community - ‘everyday’ landscape which is appreciated by the local community but has little or no wider recognition of its value.
- Limited - despoiled or degraded landscape with little or no evidence of being valued by the community.

2.2.12. **Sensitivity** is rated within the range of High-Medium-Low-Negligible and is assessed by combining the considerations of susceptibility and value described above. Table 1a below illustrates the judgement process for landscape receptors, and Table 1b for visual receptors.
Table 1a: Landscape Sensitivity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Susceptibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National/International</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local/District</td>
<td>High-Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1b: Visual Sensitivity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Susceptibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National/International</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local/District</td>
<td>High-Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>High-Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.2.13. The two tables above are different to each other reflecting a slightly greater emphasis on value in terms of the sensitivity of landscape receptors, and a slightly greater emphasis on susceptibility in terms of the sensitivity of visual receptors.

2.2.14. For visual receptors; judgements of susceptibility and value are closely interlinked considerations; for example the most valued views are likely to be those which people go and visit because of the available view - and it is at those viewpoints that their expectations will be highest. The value attributed to visual receptors also relates to the value of the view - for example a National Trail is nationally valued for its access, not necessarily for its views. Views will be treated as valued where there is documentary evidence of that value - such as recommendations to visitors; or reference within special qualities of designated areas. The sensitivity of visual receptors is generally rated as follows:

- National value and High susceptibility - visitors to valued viewpoints or routes which people might visit purely to experience the view, e.g. promoted or well-known viewpoints, routes from which views that form part of the special qualities of a designated landscape can be well appreciated; key designed views; panoramic viewpoints marked on maps.
- Local value and High susceptibility - people in locations where they are likely to pause to appreciate the view, such as from local waypoints such as benches; or at key views to/from local landmarks. Visitors to local attractions, heritage
assets or public parks where views are an important contributor to the experience, or key views into/out of Conservation Areas would also fall into this category.

- Community value and High susceptibility - people in the streets around their home, or using public rights of way, navigable waterways or accessible open space (public parks, open access land).
- Limited value and High susceptibility - people in their own homes.
- National value and Medium susceptibility - users of promoted scenic rail routes.
- Local value and Medium susceptibility - users of promoted scenic local road routes.
- Community value and Medium susceptibility - users of cycle routes, local roads and railways.
- Limited value and Medium susceptibility - outdoor workers.
- National or Local value and Low susceptibility - users of A-roads which are promoted scenic routes.
- Community value and Low susceptibility - users of sports facilities such as cricket grounds and golf courses.
- Limited value and Low susceptibility - users of Motorways and A-roads; shoppers at retail parks, people at their (indoor) places of work.

2.2.15. **Scale** of effect is assessed for all landscape and visual receptors and identifies the degree of change which would arise from the development. It is rated on the following scale:

- Large - Total or major alteration to key elements, features, qualities or characteristics, such that post development the baseline situation will be fundamentally changed.
- Medium - Partial alteration to key elements, features, qualities or characteristics, such that post development the baseline situation will be noticeably changed.
- Small - Minor alteration to key elements, features, qualities or characteristics, such that post development the baseline situation will be largely unchanged despite discernible differences.
- Negligible - Very minor alteration to key elements, features, qualities or characteristics, such that post development the baseline situation will be fundamentally unchanged with barely perceptible differences.

2.2.16. **Duration** of effect is assessed for all landscape and visual receptors and identifies the time period over which the change to the receptor as a result of the development would arise. It is rated on the following scale:

- Permanent - the change is expected to be permanent and there is no intention for it to be reversed.
- Long-term - the change is expected to be in place for 10-25 years and will be reversed, fully mitigated or no longer occurring beyond that timeframe.
- Medium-term - the change is expected to be in place for 2-10 years and will be reversed, fully mitigated or no longer occurring beyond that timeframe.
- Short-term - the change is expected to be in place for 0-2 years and will be reversed, fully mitigated or no longer occurring beyond that timeframe.

2.2.17. Most effects will be Long term or Permanent; however Medium or Short term effects may be identified where mitigation planting is proposed or local factors will result in a reduced duration of effect (for example where maturing woodland will screen views in future). The effects arising from the construction of the development will usually be Short term.

2.2.18. The Extent of effects is assessed for all receptors and indicates the geographic area over which the effects will be felt. This is rated as follows:
- Limited - site, or part of site, or small part of a receptor area (< approx. 10%).
- Localised - site and surroundings up to 2km, or part of receptor area (up to approx. 25%).
- Intermediate - up to approx. 2-4km, or around half of receptor area.
- Wide - beyond 4km, or more than half of receptor.

Use of viewpoints in assessing scale, duration and magnitude of effects on visual receptors

2.2.19. The representative viewpoints are used as ‘samples’ on which to base judgements of the scale of effects on visual receptors. As these viewpoints represent a range of different types of visual receptors, duration and extent are not judged at representative viewpoint locations. Thus, the scale of effect is assessed at representative viewpoints, but duration and extent is judged only when assessing impacts on the visual receptors.

2.2.20. For specific viewpoints (chosen because they are key and sometimes promoted viewpoints within the landscape), duration and extent are assessed, with extent reflecting the extent to which the development affects the valued qualities of the view from the specific viewpoint. For example a very distant development would typically be judged to have a Limited extent of effect on a 360 degree panoramic view; but might be judged to have a greater extent if it appeared within the focal area of a channelled or designed view.

The Magnitude of effect is rated within the range of High-Medium-Low-Negligible and is informed by combining the scale, duration and extent of effect. The diagram below illustrates the judgement process:
Diagram 1: Magnitude
2.2.21. Where the Scale of effect is judged to be Negligible the Magnitude is also assumed to be Negligible and no further judgement is required.

2.2.22. **Significance** indicates the importance or gravity of the effect. The process of forming a judgement as to the degree of significance of the effect is based upon the assessments of magnitude of effects and sensitivity of the receptor to come to a professional judgement of how important this effect is. This judgement is illustrated by the diagram below:

**Diagram 2: Significance**

(based on EIA significance evaluation matrix, IEMA Special report 2011)

2.2.23. The significance ratings indicate a 'sliding scale' of the relative importance of the effect, with Major being the most important and Minimal being the least. Effects that are towards the higher level of the scale (Major) are those judged to be most important, whilst those towards the bottom of the scale are "of lesser concern" (GLVIA, 3rd edition, para 3.35).

2.2.24. Where intermediate ratings are given, e.g. "Moderate-Slight", this indicates an effect that is both less than Moderate and more than Slight, rather than one which varies across the range. In such cases, the higher rating will always be given first; this does not mean that the impact is closer to that higher rating, but is done to facilitate the
identification of the more significant effects within tables. Intermediate judgements may also be used for judgements of Magnitude.

**Positive/Adverse/Neutral**

2.2.25. Effects are defined as adverse, neutral or positive. Neutral effects are those which overall are neither adverse nor positive, but may incorporate a combination of both.

2.2.26. The decision regarding the significance of effect and the decision regarding whether an effect is beneficial or adverse are entirely separate. For example, a rating of Major and Positive would indicate an effect that was of great significance and on balance positive, but not necessarily that the proposals would be extremely beneficial.

2.2.27. Whether an effect is Positive, Neutral or Adverse is identified based on professional judgement. GLVIA 3rd edition indicates at paragraph 2.15 that this is a “particularly challenging” aspect of assessment, particularly in the context of a changing landscape.

**Landscape Character**

2.2.28. Further detail regarding the considerations in respect of the susceptibility of landscape character to effects from development are provided within Appendix 3, and briefly summarised below. The susceptibility of landscape character areas is judged based on both the attributes of the receiving environment and the characteristics of the proposed development as described at section 2.2.1 above.

2.2.29. It is noted within *An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment* (Natural England, 2014) (page 51) that “Key characteristics are particularly important in the development of planning and management policies. They are important for monitoring change and can provide a useful reference point against which landscape change can be assessed.”

2.2.30. It follows from the above that in order to assess whether landscape character is affected by a development, it should be determined how each of the key characteristics would be affected. The judgement of magnitude therefore reflects the degree to which the key characteristics and elements which form those characteristics would be altered by the proposals. The size of the development, the nature and susceptibility of the receiving landscape, as well as local ‘barriers’ in the landscape (such as breaks of topography, woodlands, settlements, and roads or rivers) will determine the exact extent of effects for each development.

**Landscape Designations**

2.2.31. In considering the effects on designated areas, a number of factors need to be considered. The effects on the component landscape character areas and the effects on views from within and towards the designated area need to be understood. These effects are then considered in light of the documented “special qualities”, valued elements or characteristics, and the purposes of the designation in order to arrive at a judgement of the effects on the designated landscape or landscape element.

**Site**

2.2.32. The effects of physical changes to the site are assessed in terms of the effects on the physical fabric.
Viewpoints and Visual Receptors

2.2.33. A wide variety of visual receptors can reasonably be anticipated to be affected by the proposed development. Within the baseline assessment, the ZTV study and site visits are used to determine which visual receptors are likely to be most affected and therefore merit detailed assessment. In line with guidance (GLVIA, 3rd Edition, 2013), both representative and specific viewpoints may be identified to inform the assessment. In general, the majority of viewpoints will be representative - representing the visual receptors at the distance and direction in which they are located and of the type(s) that would be present at that location. The representative viewpoints have generally been selected in locations where the greatest effects would be anticipated; though some may be selected outside of that zone - either to demonstrate the reduction of effects with distance; or to specifically ensure the representation of a particularly sensitive receptor.

2.2.34. The types of visual receptors likely to be included with the assessment are:

- Users of walking routes or accessible landscapes within 2 km of the proposed development (including Public Rights of Way, National and Regional Trails and other long distance routes, Common Land, Open Access Land, permissive paths, land held in trust (e.g. Woodland Trust, National Trust) offering free public access, and other regularly used, permitted walking routes;
- Visitors to and residents of settlements within 2 km of the proposed development;
- Visitors to specific valued viewpoints;
- Visitors to attractions or heritage assets for which landscape and views contribute to the experience - typically within 2 km of the proposed development; and
- Users of roads or identified scenic routes within 2 km.

2.2.35. With the exception of specific viewpoints, each route, settlement or location will encompass a range of possible views, which might vary from no view of the development to very clear, close views. Therefore, effects are described in such a way as to identify where views towards the development are likely to arise and what the scale, duration and extent of those views are likely to be. In some cases this will be further informed by a nearby viewpoint and in others it will be informed with reference to the ZTV, aerial photography and site visits. Each of these individual effects are then considered together in order to reach a judgement of the effects on the visual receptors along that route, or in that place.

2.2.36. The assessment of effects on settlements focuses primarily on the visual amenity of public spaces, though views from groups of dwellings will also be noted in the descriptions. Effects on private residential amenity are a separate matter, as set out below.

Residential Amenity

2.2.37. Paragraph 6.17 of GLVIA, 3rd edition notes that:
2.2.38. "In some instances it may also be appropriate to consider private viewpoints, mainly from residential properties.... Effects of development in private property are frequently dealt with mainly through 'residential amenity assessments'. These are separate from LVIA although visual effects assessment may sometimes be carried out as part of a residential amenity assessment, in which case this will supplement and form part of the LVIA for a project. Some of the principles set out here for dealing with visual effects may help in such assessments but there are specific requirements in residential amenity assessment”

2.2.39. When dealing with effects on residential properties, the outlook from a private property is essentially a private matter. The difference between that private interest and what should be protected in the public interest has been the subject of particular focus at Public Inquiries in relation to wind farm cases and the lessons learnt from Inspector’s decisions have informed how effects on views from residential properties influence a planning decision. This is fully described and set out in paragraphs 209-211 of the decision regarding Spring Farm Ridge wind farm (APP/Z2830/A/11/2165035 - December 2014), which sets out the approach that in considering effects on private residential amenity - whether effects are visually significant is not relevant - effects which fall below the threshold of being “so unpleasant, overwhelming and oppressive that this would become an unattractive place to live” (known as the Lavender Test) “would not feature in the planning balance, irrespective of how many dwellings were so affected”. The Inspector’s report also makes clear that this is a separate exercise to “weighing in the balance, as a component of the character and appearance issue, the effects on the locality generally that would derive from visual effects on resident receptors”, as they travel within public spaces along roads, public rights of way and around settlements - provided for by the assessment of the significance of visual effects within the LVIA.

2.2.40. The Spring Farm ridge Inspector’s decision is for a wind farm but makes it clear that “the level of impact or threshold at which the public interest would be so engaged should be no different for wind turbines than would be the threshold applicable to other types of development.” Wind farms are much taller developments than residential development with a greater chance that they could have such an effect. For a residential development to cause effects of such a high magnitude to render a property an unattractive place in which to live it would have to be very close to the property and occupy a large proportion of views.

2.2.41. Residential properties closest to the site have been viewed on site and from aerial photography. The proposed residential development would be visible from some residential properties along Rampton Road, but no properties would be affected to the degree that they would become an unattractive place in which to live. Therefore, a detailed residential amenity assessment has not been undertaken.

2.2.42. Effects on the residential amenity of existing dwellings caused by new residential development are not assessed because it is quite normal and acceptable to have views of residential development from houses and gardens.
2.3. Distances

2.3.1. Where distances are given in the assessment, these are approximate distances between the nearest part of the site and the nearest part of the receptor in question, unless explicitly stated otherwise.

2.3.2. Distances to residential properties are given to the dwelling (not the garden) and rounded to the nearest 10m.
3.0 Planning Policy

3.1 National Planning Policy

3.1.1 Relevant national planning policy is set out in Appendix 4.

3.2 Local Planning Policy

3.2.1 The following local authorities are located within the 5km study area, as shown on Figure 1:

- South Cambridgeshire District
- East Cambridgeshire District

3.2.2 Current local planning policy relating to the site is described in the following documents:

- New South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2011 - 2031 (Undergoing Examination and not Adopted)
- South Cambridgeshire Core Strategy DPD (Adopted January 2007)
- South Cambridgeshire Development Control Policies DPD (Adopted July 2007)
- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 - saved policies
- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2011-2031: Proposed Submission Local Plan (July 2013)

3.2.3 The emerging South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2011 - 2031 was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in March 2014, although the Examination Hearings are presently suspended. The Inspector published a letter on 20th May 2015 to South Cambridgeshire District Council with interim findings identifying preliminary concerns and conclusions, subsequently suspending the Examination Hearings. This is so South Cambridgeshire District Council are able undertake further work on matters related to the Development Strategy, Green Belt, Transport and Housing Delivery to address the initial concerns of the Inspector. As this plan is at an advanced stage of development, it can be afforded weight in the decision-making process. For this reason, the policies of the emerging plan are considered, in addition to those of the adopted South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework.

3.2.4 The following policies are relevant to this LVIA:

3.2.5 Policy HQ/1: Design Principles states:

3.2.6 All new development must be of high quality design, with a clear vision as to the positive contribution the development will make to its local and wider context. As appropriate to the scale and nature of the development, proposals must:

3.2.7 "a. Preserve or enhance the character of the local urban and rural area and respond to its context in the wider landscape ..."
3.2.8. **Policy NH/2: Protecting and Enhancing Landscape Character** states:

3.2.9. “Development will only be permitted where it respects and retains, or enhances the local character and distinctiveness of the local landscape and of the individual National Character Area in which it is located.”

3.2.10. Supplementary notes add:

3.2.11. “6.11 To assist in retaining the distinctive nature of the South Cambridgeshire landscape the Council provides more detailed guidance about landscape character areas in the District Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and the Landscape in New Developments SPD to ensure that development respects both the distinctiveness of these National Character Areas and the more detailed local landscapes. Within the lifetime of the Local Plan these SPDs will be reviewed to include the more detailed East of England Landscape Typology published by Landscape East further refining the landscape character areas within the district.”

**South Cambridgeshire Core Strategy DPD (Adopted January 2007)**

3.2.12. The current Core Strategy was adopted in January 2007, and forms part of the Local Development Framework for South Cambridgeshire. It sets out the overall approach to development in the district, outlining the policies and proposals for the development and use of land.

3.2.13. There are no policies relevant to this LVIA.

**South Cambridgeshire Development Control Policies DPD (Adopted July 2007)**

3.2.14. The Development Control Policies DPD was adopted in July 2007, and forms part of the Local Development Framework for South Cambridgeshire. Its purpose is to guide decisions on planning application within the district, covering a wide range of topics that include housing, jobs, service and facilities, travel, the natural environment and the Green Belt.

3.2.15. The policies of relevance to this LVIA are outlined below:

3.2.16. **Policy DP/2 Design of New Development** states that:

1) “All new development must be of high quality design and, as appropriate to the scale and nature of the development, should:

   a) Preserve or enhance the character of the local area;

   b) Conserve or enhance important environmental assets of the site;

   c) ...

   d) ...

   e) ...

   f) Be compatible with its location and appropriate in terms of scale, mass, form, siting, design, proportion, materials, texture and colour in relation to the surrounding area;

   g) ...
j) Include high quality landscaping compatible with the scale and character of the development and its surroundings.”

3.2.17. **Policy NE/4 Landscape Character Areas** states that:

3.2.18. “Development will only be permitted where it respects and retains or enhances the local character and distinctiveness of the individual Landscape Character Area in which is it located.”

3.2.19. Supplementary notes add:

3.2.20. “7.16 The District Council will prepare a district-wide Design Guide, to be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document, which will include more detailed guidance to ensure that development respects the local distinctiveness of these landscape character areas. The District Council will carry out Village Landscape Character Assessments of the landscapes in the district, the results of which will be included in the Design Guide.”

**South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (2004)**

3.2.21. The current adopted South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 only ‘saves’ one policy - CNF6 Expansion of Existing Sites. This is unrelated to the LVIA assessment, so is therefore not considered further.

3.3. **Local Guidance**

3.3.1. In addition to the policy documents identified above, there are local guidance documents as follows:

- Cambridgeshire Landscape Guidelines (1991)
- District Design Guide: High Quality and Sustainable Development in South Cambridgeshire (March 2010)
- Cottenham Village Design Statement Supplementary Planning Document (March 2007)

3.3.2. These form part of the documented baseline and are reviewed in section 4, with accompanying commentary on the implications for the development siting and design and the assessment methodology, as appropriate.
4.0 Baseline

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 An overview of the baseline study results is provided in this section with the full baseline description of the individual landscape and visual receptors being provided alongside the assessment in section 6 for ease of reference.

4.1.2 This section provides a review of the key local guidance documents and identifies those landscape and visual receptors which merit detailed consideration in the assessment of effects, and those which are ‘scoped out’ from further assessment as effects “have been judged unlikely to occur or so insignificant that it is not essential to consider them further” (GLVIA, 3rd edition, para 3.19).

4.1.3 Both this baseline section and the effects section describe landscape character and visual receptors before considering designated landscape. It is common for designations to encompass both character and visual considerations within their special qualities or purposes of designation. It therefore makes a more natural reading sequence to draw together those aspects of character and views, which relate to the designation if they have been described earlier in the chapter.

4.2 Key Local Document

Cambridgeshire Landscape Guidelines (1991)

4.2.1 The site and study area lie within the coverage of the Cambridgeshire Landscape Guidelines. This county scale review of landscape character identifies nine landscape character areas; providing a brief description on the context and the key characteristics. It also outlines the general principles for landscape improvement and management.

4.2.2 Given the age of the document, it is likely that some changes have occurred within the landscape since the original assessment was undertaken. However, it is the most relevant assessment of landscape available for the district of South Cambridgeshire. Therefore, the Cambridgeshire Landscape Guidelines will be used in conjunction with the East of England Landscape Typology and District Design Guide, forming the basis for the assessment within section 6.

Cottenham Village Design Statement Supplementary Planning Document (March 2007)

4.2.3 The Village Design Statement describes the present attributes and qualities that the local residents of Cottenham value about the settlement’s character. Based on local knowledge, views and ideas, it aims to contribute and ensure that further development and change, based on a considered understanding of the village’s past and present, will contribute positively to the future of Cottenham and protect and enhance its character. This document provides an insight that will inform the assessment, although it will not be assessed individually but referred where appropriate.
4.2.4. The South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) District Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) forms part of the South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework (LDF). It is referred to within the Development Control Policies Development Plan Document (DPD) under Policy NE/4 Landscape Character Areas, section 7.16, and includes:

4.2.5. ...[a] more detailed guidance to ensure that development respects the local distinctiveness of these landscape character areas.

4.2.6. Given its more recent publication, this document will provide further insight to inform the assessment alongside the Cambridgeshire Landscape Guidelines in section 6.

4.3. ZTV Study

4.3.1. A Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) study was generated, based on the proposed design. This is shown on Figure 2 (drawing 4364_102), and indicates areas of potential visibility for the highest parts of the development. Residential buildings are modelled at 8.5m and ‘apartments with care’ are modelled at 12.5m. The analysis was carried out using a topographic model and including settlements and woodlands (with heights derived from NEXTMAP 25 surface mapping data) as visual barriers in order to provide a more realistic indication of potential visibility.

4.3.2. The ZTV study was used to aid the identification of those receptors that are likely to be most affected by the proposed development and those that may be scoped out. However, areas shown as having potential visibility may have visibility of the development screened by local features such as trees, hedgerows, embankments or buildings.

Extent of Theoretical Visibility

4.3.3. As can be seen from the ZTV study on Figure 2, the theoretical visibility of the proposed scheme covers the majority the 4km study area, extending beyond its boundary in all directions. It indicates that due to the flat topography and open landscape surrounding the site, long distance views would be possible. The built form of the surrounding settlements within the study area and small areas of woodland would limit some views, but theoretical visibility would remain extensive throughout the study area.

Extent of Actual Visibility

4.3.4. As discussed above, the ZTV study indicates that there would be widespread theoretical visibility of the proposed development throughout the study area. However, site observations have confirmed that localised vegetation within the wider landscape significantly reduces the extent of visibility towards the Site. Across the study area, vegetation is more extensive than indicated by the ZTV, consisting of field boundaries that are typically tall, mature hedgerow; some tree belts along field boundaries; and extensive tree cover surrounding settlements.
4.3.5. Realistically, views of the proposed development would generally be confined to the more open fields to the north and south of the Site, up to approximately 2km from the site boundaries. The extent of actual visibility is shown on Figure 2, and includes the area to the south of Iram House to the North; the western edge of Cottenham; Oakington Road to the south; Cuckoo Lane to the south west and the southern edge of Rampton to the north west. The anticipated main area of visibility, based on site observations, is annotated on the ZTV study as the ‘Zone of Visual Influence’.

4.3.6. For this site, a 2km radius from the site is judged to be appropriate as the main focus for assessment.

4.4. Landscape Character

4.4.1. Paragraphs 5.13-5.15 of GLVIA, 3rd edition indicate that landscape character studies at the national or regional level are best used to “set the scene” and understand the landscape context. It indicates that Local Authority Assessments provide more detail and that these should be used to form the basis of the assessment of effects on landscape character - with (appropriately justified) adaptation, refinement and interpretation where required.

4.4.2. Only those character areas within 2km of the site are included in this assessment, as character areas beyond 2km are unlikely to experience more than Negligible effects as discussed above in section 4.3. Thus, relevant assessments are:

- National Character Areas
- Cambridgeshire Landscape Guidelines (1991)
- District Design Guide: High Quality and Sustainable Development in South Cambridgeshire (March 2010)

4.4.3. Copies of relevant maps and character assessment descriptions of areas taken forward for assessment in section 6 are included in Appendix 5.

National and Regional Landscape Character

National Landscape Character Profiles

4.4.4. This site is situated within National Character Area (NCA) 88: Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands. NCA 88 is described as a predominantly open, arable landscape of planned and regular fields bounded by open ditches and trimmed, often species-poor hedgerows, which contrast with those fields that are irregular and piecemeal. Settlements cluster around major road and rail corridors, with smaller towns, villages and linear settlements widely dispersed throughout, giving a more rural feel. Small villages are usually nucleated around a church or village green, while fen-edge villages are often in a linear form along roads.

4.4.5. The site and surrounding area is generally reflective of the NCA, although to the north of the study area, the landscape begins to transition into the adjacent The Fens NCA 46.
4.4.6. Given the scale of the national character areas, and the presence of more detailed character areas at a local level, effects on national character areas are not assessed in detail.

**East of England Landscape Framework (2010)**

4.4.7. The East of England Landscape Framework provides a broad scale understanding of the landscape within the region and includes a Landscape Typology, an Urban Landscape Typology, Integrated Landscape Character Objectives and Guidance on assessing the sensitivity of the landscape of the East of England.

4.4.8. There are two Landscape Character Types within 2km study area: Lowland Village Farmlands and Planned Peat Fen. The Site lies within the Lowland Village Farmlands Landscape Type, which covers the majority of the 2km study area, within a band of land that stretch across the central and southern extents. Planned Peat Fen covers a small proportion of the 2km study area within the northern extent of the 2km study area.

4.4.9. These regional character types provide the context for understanding the landscape within the study area, and provide a slightly more detailed and up to date assessment than the Cambridgeshire Landscape Guidelines; although they are a high-level, regional assessment based on the identification of landscape types and supported by limited description. Relevant aspects of this assessment are reviewed alongside the local landscape character assessment in section 6 of this report.

**Local Landscape Character**

**Cambridgeshire Landscape Guidelines (1991)**

4.4.10. Figure 6 shows the local landscape character areas, as defined in the Cambridgeshire Landscape guidelines (1991). Figure 6 shows that there is one landscape character area within 2km of the study area: 3 Western Claylands. Effects on this area are assessed in section 6 of this report.

**District Design Guide: High Quality and Sustainable Development in South Cambridgeshire (March 2010)**

4.4.11. This document provides an overview of the landscape character of South Cambridgeshire and how new development should respond to the surrounding landscape characteristics of existing local settlements. Within the 2km study area, the character area of The Fen Edge has been identified. Copies of relevant maps and character assessment descriptions for this landscape character are included in Appendix 5 for reference. Effects on the Fen Edge character area are not assessed independently in section 6, but used to inform the assessment of effects on the character areas identified in the Cambridgeshire Landscape Guidelines.

**4.5. Visual Receptors**

4.5.1. Visual receptors are "the different groups of people who may experience views of the development" (GLVIA, 3rd edition, para 6.3). In order to identify those groups who may be significantly affected the ZTV study and baseline desk study and site visits have been used.
4.5.2. The different types of groups assessed within this report encompass residents within settlements; people using key routes such as roads; cycle ways or long distance paths; people within accessible or recreational landscapes; people using Public Rights of Way; or people visiting key viewpoints. In dealing with Public Rights of Way and local roads, receptors are grouped into areas where effects might be expected to be broadly similar, or areas which share particular factors in common (e.g. routes within an area of designated landscape). The ZTV studies, baseline desk study and site visits have been utilised to identify those groups that may be significantly affected by the proposed development.

4.5.3. As discussed and stated section 4.3 above, site observations indicate that significant visual effects are unlikely to occur beyond 2km from the site. This is due to the limited visibility of the proposed development, and only those receptors within this distance of 2km are identified below.

Visual Environment of Existing Site

4.5.4. As shown on Figure 1, the site is located to the west of Cottenham. Aerial photography, as illustrated on Figure 5, shows that the site forms part of a large arable field, abutting the western edge of the existing settlement. The wider setting of Cottenham is formed by a shallow ridge within a rural landscape that is flat and open, with few farmsteads, notable tree groups or landmarks. The approach from the east towards the site and the western edge of Cottenham provides views of a contained settlement defined by trees, with roadside and field boundary hedgerows that consist of British native species such as Hawthorn and Blackthorn. Formal lines of poplars form some distinctive features against the skyline on the edge of Cottenham, outside of the site’s boundaries.

4.5.5. The site occupies an area of land upon a low lying ridge (Fen Island) in association with the settlement of Cottenham within a broadly level landscape, associated with the Fens. The Site comprises two distinct variations in landform; sloping and flat. The former is found in the north-west and falls by approximately 5m over a distance of 150m (1:30) in a westerly direction from 17m AOD to 12m AOD. The landform continues to fall beyond the western boundary towards Smithey Fen Engine Drain, which sits at approximately 4m AOD. The flatter land is located on the highest part of the Site, along the localised ridgeline, starting at the break in slope generally in line with existing development along Rampton Road at between 12 to 13m AOD, making up approximately two thirds of its overall area.

4.5.6. The site is well screened along its northern boundary by mature hedgerows and existing buildings situated along Rampton Road. All other boundaries around the site comprise of little to no vegetation. Beyond the eastern boundary, existing buildings, mature trees and a roadside hedgerow along Oakington Road limited direct visibility towards the site. From the south and west, more open vistas of the site are possible across the gently rising landform towards Cottenham that is seen upon the raised ridge. Views towards the existing village permit visibility of the All Saints Church and the Water Tower above the tops of existing residential properties and vegetation.
Settlements

4.5.7. Figure 4 shows the pattern of settlements within the study area. The following settlements lie within 2km of the site:
- Cottenham (0m, east)
- Rampton (800m, west)

4.5.8. The ZTV study indicates that both of these settlements would potentially experience extensive visibility from the proposed development. Therefore, they are both assessed in section 6.

Roads and Rail

Key Routes

4.5.9. There are no key routes within 2km of the proposed development.

Local Roads

4.5.10. The following roads pass within 2km of the site:
- Rampton Road (0m, north)
- Oakington Road (240m, south east)
- B1049 (615m, south east)
- Church End (710m, north west)

4.5.11. The ZTV study indicates that there would be potential visibility from all of these routes. Therefore, all routes are assessed in detail in section 6.

Summary

4.5.12. In summary, effects on the following road and rail routes are considered in section 6:
- Rampton Road (0m, north)
- Oakington Road (240m, south east)
- B1049 (615m, south east)
- Church End (710m, north west)

Recreational Routes

Long Distance Walking Routes

4.5.13. There are no long distances walking route within 2km of the site.

National and Regional Cycle Routes

4.5.14. There are no national and regional cycle routes within 2km of the site.

Public Rights of Way

4.5.15. Public Rights of Way (PROW) within 2km of the site are shown on Figure 4, and are as follows:
- PROW along New Cut (Drain), south of Rampton Road (680m, west)
• PROW along New Cut (Drain), north of Rampton Road (770m, north west)
• Rampton Drift (Track) (1.65km, south west)
• Cuckoo Lane (Track) (1.65km, south west)

4.5.16. The ZTV study indicates that all of these PROWs would potentially experience some visibility of the proposed site. Therefore, all of the PROWs listed above are assessed in section 6.

Accessible and Recreational Landscapes

4.5.17. Within the 2 km study area there are no areas of Common Land or areas of Open Access Land.

4.5.18. There is a community woodland within 2km of the site, Les Kings Wood, which is situated approximately 110m north of the site as shown on Figure 4. Public access is permitted to the community woodland, with a number of maintained pathways through and around its vicinity and information boards provided for visitors. It is also listed within the Cottenham Village Design Statement SPD. The ZTV study and site observations suggest that there would be some visibility of the proposed development from the southern edge of this woodland. Therefore, Les Kings Wood is assessed in section 6.

Specific Viewpoints

4.5.19. No specific viewpoints have been identified from Ordnance Survey Mapping.

4.6. Landscape Designations and Value

Designated Landscapes

4.6.1. There are no designated landscapes within the study area.

Local Landscape Value

4.6.2. Within the 2km study area, there are a variety of features that contribute to the value of the local landscape. These include community and recreational landscapes and PROW. However, none of these features are assessed to increase the value of the landscape beyond Community Value.
5.0 The Proposed Development

5.1. The Proposal

5.1.1. The proposed development will comprise the following elements as described in more detail in the Design and Access Statement (DAS) and illustrated on the Development Framework which forms the basis of this assessment:

- Up to 200 residential dwellings (up to 2 storeys) and up to 70 apartments with care (C2) (up to 2 storeys). Western edge of development planted with semi-mature trees upon break in slope on completion to help soften appearance of housing facades.
- Public open spaces aligned along Site boundaries, utility easements and key views, accommodating informal footpaths, a trim trail and play areas with drainage features located to the north, at the lowest point of the Site. The Archaeological Protection Area will provide a large open space in the southern corner of the Site.
- Primary access passes through attractive open green gateway before reaching development area. This in turn maintains views towards All Saints Church from the wider landscape.
- The secondary access off Rampton Road along with the existing pedestrian/cycle access further east provides additional links to the village centre and local facilities.
- Proposed woodland to north and western boundary to complement the existing green edge to the village and screen the proposed development. Planting will be implemented upon completion of built development.
- New community orchard to Site’s south eastern boundary to reflect local character, provide ecological benefits and complement existing productive community land use.
- Agricultural access maintained through Site to agricultural fields north-west of the Site.

5.2. Site Fabric

5.2.1. A number of landscape features, comprising parts of the site’s physical fabric, would be modified or removed, as follows:

- Arable farmland of low ecological value and narrow field margins of improved grassland of low diversity;
- Removal of approx. 20m length of hedgerow along Rampton Road to accommodate proposed primary access west of existing field access.
- All trees will be retained and one may have its root zones affected by the construction of the proposed footpath adjacent to the northern boundary of the site. Therefore it is proposed that ‘no-dig’ construction is used within the root zone of affected tree to ensure the long-term health of this landscape feature.
5.3. Design Response to Cottenham Village Design Statement SPD:

5.3.1. As noted in section 4, the Cottenham Village Design Statement SPD provides guidance, 'Landscape and Wildlife Guidelines', to be considered for development within and to the edge of Cottenham, forming part of South Cambridgeshire’s District Council Local Development Framework. The table below outlines the guideline relevant to this assessment and the proposed development:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Landscape and Wildlife Guidelines</th>
<th>LVIA Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>L/2</strong>: Essential elements of the parish’s distinctive Fen Edge landscape character should be protected.</td>
<td>The residential area of the proposed development would be located upon the local ridgeline, maintaining the present extent of Cottenham on the elevated landform, or ‘Fen Island’. It would not encroach on the descending slope that surrounds the settlement. Proposed planting is sympathetic to the existing wooded characteristics along the settlement edges, which would be created over time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New developments should minimise the impact on existing landscape qualities and features.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**L/7**: Protect vistas that contribute to the character and attractiveness of Cottenham.

The following vistas are designated as meriting special protection:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Protect backgrounds that give a context to landmarks. Opportunities exist for sculpting the skyline, but other tall structures should not detract from the prominence of existing structures</th>
<th>The proposed development will consist entirely of two storey buildings, being consistent with the height of residential buildings currently found at this location. The development would therefore not affect views towards surrounding local landmarks. Views from the north and east will be largely unaffected due to the intervening vegetation and built infrastructure of Cottenham.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The west flank of the village between the Parish Church and the Water Tower along the Cottenham Lode footpath from Rampton to Broad Lane, especially after passing beneath the electricity transmission lines</td>
<td>The proposed development will not prevent any keys views that would detrimentally affect the character of Cottenham due to its location on the south western edge of the village.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Prevent undue damage to the view either by blocking, or unacceptably imposing on, a landmark or by creating an intrusive element in**

| | The proposed development will consist entirely of two storey buildings and would not affect views towards surrounding local |
| the view’s foreground or middle ground | landmarks.  
Views from the north and east will be largely unaffected due to intervening vegetation and built infrastructure of Cottenham.  
The proposed development has been designed to permit views through the proposed planting to maintain important vistas towards local landmarks such the Water Tower and All Saints Church. |
6.0 Landscape and Visual Effects

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1. This section sets out the effects that the proposed development would have on both landscape and visual receptors.

6.1.2. Effects are assessed during construction, with construction activity affecting only localised areas at any given time. Key potential impacts during the construction phase might include the visual effect of site vehicles and construction traffic, within the application site and in surrounding areas; other components typical of construction activities, including workers' accommodation, stockpiles of materials, lighting of specific areas, such as construction compounds; and gradual modification of landscape character as part of a phased programme of works. Effects during construction would be Short term and temporary and, therefore, limited.

6.1.3. Effects are assessed during the period following completion, when construction is complete but before mitigation planting is fully mature. During this period, the effects will gradually reduce as planting along site boundaries and within the development matures. During the early part of this period effects are likely to be at their greatest.

6.1.4. As additional planting is proposed as part of the scheme, effects, once the vegetation has matured, are also assessed. Up to this point, effects are described as Medium Term, thereafter they are considered to be Permanent.

6.2 Effects on Landscape Character

6.2.1. The site is situated within a large arable field, abutting the western edge of existing housing of Cottenham. The majority of the site sits upon the shallow ridge that characterises the landscape within which Cottenham is sited, with a small proportion of the northern extent of the site descending towards the wider surrounding landscape. The wider landscape is characterised by a flat and open rural landscape, agricultural in function, with few farmsteads, trees or other notable landmarks. The pattern of landscape comprises of man-made elements, such as lodes, droves and field boundaries that run in straight lines.

6.2.2. In respect of the proposed development particular considerations that arise in relation to landscape character are:

- Physical changes to the landscape fabric of the site;
- Integration of the development with the surrounding landscape patterns, structure and townscape of Cottenham;
- The degree to which opportunities are taken to enhance character where condition is poor, or preserve character where condition is good.

6.2.3. The development would involve the permanent loss of part of an arable field, and the creation of a residential development with public open space/ parkland. As a result, the existing land use of this part of the field would change. Existing vegetation would be retained and improved where possible, along field boundaries.
Further planting would be provided around the periphery. Notably, this would include a relatively extensive new wooded perimeter to the southern and western parts of the proposed development, replicating the existing perceived wooded edge of Cottenham.

6.2.4. The only other effects would be the impacts on views from areas of landscape outside the site. From close distances, individual elements of the residential development would be clearly visible, although not completely out of character with the existing surrounding residential area of Cottenham. Over time (beyond the Medium-term), proposed planting around the perimeter of the development would reduce these indirect effects and integrate the proposal into the landscape to a greater extent.

6.2.5. From further afield, it is likely that the proposed development would be visible up to approximately 800m north of the site, 1.7km south west and 700m west of the site. Beyond this area, the residential development would not be discernible or of a scale that would fundamentally change the nature of views.

6.2.6. Large scale effects would be experienced within the site itself where built development is proposed, up to and beyond the Medium-term. Although the majority of landscape features such as hedgerows and trees would be retained, existing hedgerows along Rampton Road would be planted up and enhanced, and additional woodland planting to the south and west would be undertaken, there would be a significant change from the present arable land use to residential development. These changes would be Permanent, and Adverse.

6.2.7. Medium scale changes to the character of the landscape would be experienced in the third of the site towards the south west, beyond the extent of the proposed housing; within the adjacent field to the south east of Rampton; and from the larger field within which the site is situated up to North Fen Farm and Set Broad Farm in the west and south-west.

6.2.8. Direct effects of the proposal would reduce over time as the proposed planting upon the ridgeline and descending slope within the north western third of the site matures. The proposed area of public open space is judged not to be a fundamental change from the existing farmland; and therefore direct effects on this area of the site beyond the medium-term would be Permanent and Neutral.

6.2.9. Indirect effects would be experienced on the adjacent fields to the south east of Rampton and the north eastern half of the larger field within which the site is situated. The proposed development would form a noticeable change upon the local ridgeline upon completion, extending the present urban edge of Cottenham. However, as proposed planting matures over time, the proposed development would generally be screened and filtered. It is judged that indirect effects upon completion and up to the medium term, before the proposed planting fully matures, would be Adverse. Upon establishment of the planting, indirect effects would be Permanent, and reduce to Neutral as the planting would replicate similar wooded characteristics to those seen presently on the edges of Cottenham. Changes to the character of the landscape outside of the site itself and the area described above, would be Small scale to the immediate north of the Rampton Road around Les King Wood; the area south of New Cut (Drain); and the south western half of the larger field within
which the site is situated. Once the proposed planting matures, the existing wooded character of Cottenham’s settlement edge would be replicated, with the important vista towards the landmarks of All Saints Church and the Water Tower maintained. On balance, these effects would be experienced in this area up to the Medium-term and Adverse, reducing to a scale of Small-Negligible once the proposed planting has matured. At this point, it would be of Permanent duration, and on balance, be Neutral.

6.2.10. Beyond the areas described above, a combination of landscape features such as vegetation and neighbouring settlements would filter and screen views towards the proposed developments. This would reduce any discernible changes that may occur from the new addition of residential properties on existing arable farmland.

6.2.11. Figure 6 illustrates the scale and extent of the landscape effects described above.

6.2.12. Descriptions for each of the assessed landscape character areas are briefly summarised below, along with further observations from site based work.

Cambridgeshire Landscape Guidelines (1991)

6.2.13. The Cambridgeshire Landscape Guidelines date from 1991 and provide a county scale review of the Cambridgeshire’s landscape character up to that time. Given the age of this document, relevant aspects of the East of England Landscape Framework and the District Design Guide: High Quality and Sustainable Development in South Cambridgeshire (DDG), are reviewed alongside the local landscape character assessment to provide a more up-to-date understanding and further details of the current landscape character. Both landscape character types for the Cambridgeshire Landscape Guidelines and the East of England Framework are shown on Figure 6, with the East of England Framework overlaid to show the relationship between the two assessments. Relevant aspects of both assessments and the DDG are also included in Appendix 5 for information.

Areas 3: Western Claylands

6.2.14. This landscape character area covers the entire 2km study area, and is attributed to a large area of the landscape beyond this extent, to the east, south, west and slightly to the north of Cottenham, where is meets the adjacent Fen character area. All viewpoints are located within this character area.

6.2.15. The Cambridgeshire Landscape Guidelines describes this character area:

6.2.16. “This gentle undulating landscape [...] consists of large-scale arable farmland with open fields, sparse trimmed hedgerows and watercourses often cleared of bankside vegetation. There are scattered woodlands and approximately half of these are ancient semi-natural woodlands of considerable importance in the County context. [...] Elsewhere individual woods are of importance in visual and nature conservation terms, but they tend to be isolated incidents in an area dominated by arable farmland. The landscape of this part of Cambridgeshire has been greatly affected by modern agricultural practices. Increased mechanisation has led to the removal of hedgerows and amalgamation of fields. Many of the remaining hedges are ‘gappy’ and trimmed almost out of existence by regular cutting.”

6.2.17. The immediate surroundings of the proposed development reflect this description, particularly to the south. The East of England Framework’s description of the
Lowlands Village Fenland LCT supports the majority of the key characteristics described above, sharing aspects within its description such as:

- A generally low lying, gently rolling topography, although some areas adjacent to lower lying levels can appear elevated.
- Medium/large scale, regular field pattern, defined by well trimmed hedgerows. Field systems include a mix of rectilinear & sinuous patterns, reflecting the process of planned surveyor enclosure from common fields.
- Arable land use predominates with some areas of pasture and orchards.
- Groups of trees, often around farmsteads and occasional small plantations.
- Sparse woodland cover giving rise to open character and extensive views.
- Away from major transport routes this landscape has a greater sense of tranquillity although intensive farming activity and a high density settlement pattern mean that many areas retain a busy feel.

6.2.18. The DDG further supports both of these assessments, adding additional information about the typical settlement character that further contributes to the understanding of the landscape’s character:

6.2.19. “The villages on the low fen islands are characterised by their strong linear form, often having developed outwards from crossroads along approach roads. The historic linear form is retained despite the modern estate developments that have occurred in many of the villages. Some village edges, such as at Cottenham, have a well wooded character, with hedgerows and mature trees concealing buildings, while others, such as Fen Drayton, have more open edges”

6.2.20. Therefore, it is judged that that the majority of the description of Area 3: Western Claylands remains relevant to the present typical landscape characteristics.

6.2.21. However, to the north of the site, beyond Rampton Road and Cottenham, site observations have shown that the landscape character begins a gradual transition between this landscape character area and the adjacent one of Area 8: Fenlands, reflecting a mixture of the typical characteristics found in each. The East of England Framework indicates that the typical characteristics of the landscape change to the north of New Cut (Drain) from Lowland Village Fenland to Planned Peat Fen, as shown on Figure 6. The key characteristics of the Planned Peat Fen LCT are as follows:

- A flat, low lying and sparsely populated landscape characterised by dark peaty soils, a grid like pattern of large arable fields bounded by drainage ditches and wide views to distant, often dramatic skies.
- An expansive, low-lying (often below sea level), landscape with a distinctively flat landform.
- Almost no tree cover - restricted to infrequent patches of secondary woodland/scrub and discrete conifer belts around farmsteads.
- Planned geometric landscape with large fields defined by straight ditches. There is little apparent structural difference between the early and recent episodes of field creation
- A quiet, remote landscape where the sky plays a particularly dominant role in creating mood and interest.
- The flat horizontal nature of the landscape can give vertical features (e.g. church towers and more recently wind farms) unusual prominence.

6.2.22. Characteristics such as ‘low laying landscape’; ‘large arable fields’; and ‘quiet and remote landscape’ are shared between the two LCTs, although there are some marked changes between the two character areas/ types.

6.2.23. For this assessment, site observations have shown that it is unlikely that any effects would be experienced from the Planned Peat Fen LCT. It is judged that, although East of England Landscape Framework provides some variation to the description of Area 3: Western Claylands, the Planned Peat Fen LCT would be unlikely to experience any effects. This assessment therefore focuses on Area 3: Western Claylands only, with the support of the descriptions of Lowlands Village Fen and the key settlements characteristics provided by the East of England Landscape Framework and the DDG.

6.2.24. The site itself exhibits the arable farmland characteristics of the wider area, but also forms the transitional area into the urban area. Given the influence of Cottenham and other adjacent settlements on the site and its immediate surroundings, development would not be an entirely new feature in the landscape. Therefore, the Western Claylands are judge to be of Medium susceptibility.

6.2.25. There are a limited number of localised feature of landscape value within the Western Claylands. It is judged that these are appreciated by the local community but have limited wider recognition of their value. Therefore, the Western Claylands character area within the study area is judged to be of Community value.

6.2.26. Combining susceptibility and landscape value for the Western Claylands character area within the study area is judged to be of Medium sensitivity to residential development.

6.2.27. Direct effects on this character area would entail the loss of parts or all of the open arable fields and replacement with residential development and associated open space, as described in section 6.2 above. The only other effects would be impacts on views from areas of landscape outside the site.

6.2.28. The new development would be seen in the context of the existing urban edge of Cottenham, as well as the wooded edge of the residential properties that abut the site.

6.2.29. Changes to the landscape character within the site itself, where housing is proposed, would be of Large scale, would be of a Permanent duration and Limited extent. Combining the scale, duration and extent of effect for the character of the site, results in effects of Medium magnitude. These effects would be Moderate and, on balance, Adverse because of the loss of a rural part of the character area that would become part of a settlement.

6.2.30. Prior to the maturing of the proposed woodland, changes to the character of the landscape outside the immediate vicinity of the proposed housing would be
Medium scale during construction and the period following completion up to the edge of the site’s north western boundary. These effects would only extend to the public footpath to the south east of Rampton and from the north eastern half of the larger field within which the site is situated. The character of the landscape in this area is already influenced by the existing settlement edge of Cottenham.

6.2.31. During construction, effects would be of Short term and Localised extent, being within 2km of the site. Combining the scale, duration and extent of effect for the character outside the site’s immediate vicinity, results in effects of Low magnitude. These effects would, on balance, be Slight and Adverse.

6.2.32. Prior to the maturing of the proposed woodland, effects would be of Medium term and Localised extent being within 2km of the site. Combining the scale, duration and extent of effect for the character outside the site’s immediate vicinity, results in effects of Medium magnitude. These effects would, on balance, be Moderate and Adverse.

6.2.33. Following the maturing of the proposed woodland planting along the ridgeline and southern edge of the proposed housing, the scale of effect from the landscape areas as described above would reduce to a Medium-Small scale. This is due to the majority of the proposed development being filtered by the proposed periphery planting, that would also replicate the wooded edge character currently found along Cottenham’s urban edge. The changes would be of Permanent duration and Localised extent, being within 2km of the site. Combining the scale, duration and extent of effect, results in effects that are judged to be of Medium-Low magnitude. These effects would, reduce to Moderate-Slight significance, and on balance, be Neutral.

6.2.34. Small scale changes to the landscape character would occur in areas to the immediate north from just beyond Rampton Road; and the fields south west of North Fen Farm; and the south western half of the larger field within the site is situated up to Rampton Drift. From these locations, some views of the proposed development would be possible upon completion, but would be seen in the context of the built form of Cottenham and filtered by intervening vegetation. On completion, effects would be of Low magnitude, Slight, and Neutral. Upon maturation of the proposed planting, effects would reduce to a Negligible scale and magnitude.

6.2.35. Further afield, the proposals would not fundamentally change the character of the landscape, particularly given the context of the existing built form of Cottenham. Cottenham would screen views from the north and east of the site; and existing and proposed vegetation would filter views of the new development from the south, west and north west.

6.2.36. Overall effects on the character of the whole character type would be of Negligible magnitude and, on balance, would be Minimal neutral on completion and at year 15.
6.3. **Summary**

6.3.1. Effects on landscape character resulting from the development would generally be confined to within the site itself and a localised area immediately to the south, west and north west of the site. Effects on the site itself would be **Moderate** and **Adverse**. Beyond the site boundary, Medium scale effects would be **Moderate** and **Adverse** upon completion where views of the proposed development were available upon the ridgeline. As proposed periphery planting matures, effects would reduce to **Moderate Slight**, and on balance, be **Neutral**. Beyond this area, effects would be **Negligible** to the north of Rampton Road where visibility of the development would be filtered and screen by existing and proposed vegetation.

6.4. **Visual Effects**

**Visual Aids**

6.4.1. Photographs are shown on figures supporting this LVIA. The viewpoint description, description of effects and scale of effect for each viewpoint (see Figure 2 for locations) is set out on the relevant photograph. The scale of effect at each viewpoint is summarised below:

**Summary of scale of effects on viewpoints**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Viewpoint</th>
<th>Distance, direction</th>
<th>Scale of effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Year 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VP1 – Southern edge of Les King Wood</td>
<td>NW, 125m</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VP2 – Oakington Road</td>
<td>SE, 245m</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VP3 – Oakington Road, near Further Or Farm Field</td>
<td>SE, 800m</td>
<td>Medium-Small</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VP4 – Rampton Drift (Track)</td>
<td>SW, 1.7km</td>
<td>Small</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VP5 – Public Footpath near Rampton</td>
<td>W, 690m</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VP6 – Public Footpath along Near Cut (Drain)</td>
<td>NW, 980m</td>
<td>Negligible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VP7 – Public Footpath along New Cut (Drain)</td>
<td>NW, 800m</td>
<td>Small</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VP8 – B1049</td>
<td>SE, 865m</td>
<td>Negligible</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.4.2. Each of the viewpoints is a ‘sample’ of the potential effects, representing a wide range of receptors - including not only those actually at the viewpoint, but also those nearby, at a similar distance and/or direction.
6.4.3. From these viewpoints, it can be seen that:
6.4.4. The extent of Large scale visual effects, where the proposed development would form a major alteration to key elements, features, qualities and characteristics of the view such that the baseline will be fundamentally changed, would generally be limited to locations within or immediately adjacent to the site, where the proposals appear above or through intervening vegetation.

6.4.5. Beyond this area, the extent of Medium scale effects is limited to the west by the edge of woodland surrounding Rampton; and to the south west within the field that meets with Cuckoo Lane/Rampton Lane and Oakington Road. From these areas, the proposed residential development would extend the existing built form of Cottenham along the ridgeline, and be visible across relatively flat landscape, above the intervening vegetation. Taller features of the proposal would also form a noticeable new element, puncturing the skyline within the open vistas towards Cottenham, and potentially compete with other landmarks within the local area.

6.4.6. Small scale effects are likely to be experienced from north of Rampton Road within the area around to Les King Wood, up to the public footpath along New Cut (Drain) where existing vegetation does not screen views beyond Rampton Road.

6.4.7. It is unlikely that beyond the areas described above that effects will be greater than Negligible as a result of the extensive vegetation along the roadsides and the built form of the surrounding settlements.

Settlements

6.4.8. This assessment focuses primarily on effects on the settlement as a whole, and particularly public areas. Residents and visitors within settlements are assessed to be of High-Medium sensitivity.

Cottenham (0m, east)

6.4.9. This relatively large village extends in a linear form to either side of the High Street. It consists of a variety of house types, with a more historic core to its centre, where local amenities are found. Housing that is more modern is located to the edges of the site, extending in line with the High Street, forming a ribbon development. The Village Design Statement notes that, ‘Gaps remain in the line of houses and these allow glimpses out of the village, making a vital visual connection with the open countryside’ (page 7).

6.4.10. The site is located to the rear of the existing residential properties along Rampton Road. There would be open views into the site from the rear of these properties. Glimpsed views of the proposed housing would be available where gaps are present between existing properties along the road. It is unlikely that there would be views into the site from public areas within Cottenham due to the existing built form screening views towards the site.

6.4.11. From properties along Rampton Road and where gaps between these properties permit views in to the site, effects for the Medium-term and Permanent duration would both be Large Scale. Views would however be confined to a Limited extent. This would result in effects of Medium magnitude that are assessed to be Major-
Moderate. As open views of fields would be lost, and replaced by a housing development, these effects would be Adverse.

6.4.12. Elsewhere in the settlement, there would little to no visibility of the proposed development. Therefore, both Medium-term and Permanent effects would be of Negligible magnitude.

Rampton (800m, west)

6.4.13. This small village is situated to the west of the site. It is a linear settlement, which has extended as ribbon development from the confluence of local roads that meet within its centre. The ZTV study indicates that there would be extensive visibility along its eastern edge. However, site observations have shown that this edge of the village is comprised of a dense mix of shrub and woodland vegetation. Therefore, it is unlikely that any visibility of the proposed development would be experienced from this settlement. Effects are judged to be of Negligible scale and magnitude.

Roads and Rail

6.4.14. No rail routes have been identified for assessment within the 2km study area.

Key Routes

6.4.15. No key routes were identified within the 2km study area that require assessment.

Local Roads

6.4.16. Users of local road are judged to be of Medium-Low sensitivity (Community value and Medium susceptibility), as the lower speed of the travels allows views to be more readily appreciated, and these roads will be commonly used for local journeys.

Rampton Road (om, north)

6.4.17. This road runs from the centre of Cottenham and passes to the north of the residential properties north of the site. The ZTV study shows that there would be potential visibility continuously along this route up to the eastern edge of Rampton. In reality, site observations have shown visibility would be limited to the section of road between the edge of Cottenham and Rampton; locations where gaps occur between existing properties on the edge of Cottenham; and at the location of the proposed site entrance. Within this extent, visibility of the proposed development would increase as this route approaches Cottenham, where the ridgeline that forms the edge of the settlement is seen above the existing roadside vegetation. Some hedgerow trees on the lower part of the route near Rampton, and within the intervening fields, would filter views towards the site. A similar level of effects would be experienced where gaps are experience between properties. The proposed site entrance is sited approximately 90m south of the existing field gate and at 117 Rampton Road. A section of hedgerow will need to be removed in association with the former, although it is unlikely that road users would experience a greater level of effect at this point. The dwelling at 117 Rampton Road is proposed to be removed and replaced with an access road to the site. The removal of this building and the construction of a new road will allow road users an extended opportunity to see into the site and the countryside beyond. However, the gap created will be a relatively small change to the street scene and will be perpendicular to the direction of travel.
Within this section of the route, Medium scale effects would be experienced for a Localised extent. In the Medium-term, before the proposed planting matures, effects would be of Medium magnitude, Moderate and Adverse. Upon maturation of the proposed planting, effects would reduce to Small scale, be of Permanent duration and Localised extent. This in turn would reduce to a Low magnitude, Slight and on balance, Neutral.

Outside of this section of the route, site observations have shown that is unlikely that any visibility of the site will be available. It is judged that effects would be of Negligible magnitude.

Oakington Road (240m, south east)

This road is located to the south west of Cottenham, forming one of the connecting routes to Oakington to the south west.

The ZTV study indicates that there would be extensive potential visibility continuously along this route, within the study area. However, site observations have shown that visibility of the proposed development would be limited to the section of Oakington Road between the edge of Cottenham and the plantation at Further Or Farm Field. From this section of the road, visibility would be possible where roadside hedgerows and intervening vegetation such as trees, tree groups and scrub vegetation allow. In reality, it is likely that the most prominent effects along this route would be experienced from locations such as Viewpoint 3, where views are permitted through breaks in the roadside vegetation. At these locations, it is likely the proposed development would be seen extending across the landscape south of the existing urban edge. It is likely that direct views of the southern edge of the proposed development would be available forming a noticeable change during the Medium term before proposed planting matures. Effects would be of Medium-Small scale, to a Limited extent, Low magnitude, Slight and Adverse.

Upon maturation of the proposed planting, Small scale effects would be experienced as it would screen and filter the majority of views of the proposed development, and would be of a Limited extent and Permanent. Combined, resultant effects would be of Negligible magnitude, Minimal, and Neutral.

Outside of the section described above, where Oakington Road enters Cottenham, site observations have confirmed that the built form would restrict visibility, limiting any potential visibility to where gaps between homes and views out to the rural landscape are possible. At these locations, it is likely that intervening vegetation found within the rear gardens of local properties, as seen at Viewpoint 2, would partially screen and filter the lower elevations of the proposed development. During the Medium term, effects from these locations would be of Medium scale, to a Limited extent, Low magnitude, Slight and Adverse. Permanent effects would be considered to be of Medium-Small scale, as it is likely that although proposed planting will provide some screening, visibility of the proposed development would remain against the skyline. Combined together, resultant effects would be Limited in extent, of Low-Negligible magnitude, Slight and Adverse.
6.4.24. However, if the existing immature planting within the field in the foreground to the south east of the site remains and matures, it is likely that views beyond would be further screened, reducing effects to be of Small scale, Limited, Negligible magnitude, Minimal and Neutral, particularly when leaves are on trees.

6.4.25. Beyond the section between Further Or Farm Field and the edge of Cottenham, it is judged that roadside vegetation and the built form of Cottenham would restrict any visibility of the proposed development to a Negligible scale and Magnitude.

**B1049 (615m, south east)**

6.4.26. The B1049 (Cottenham Road) is situated to the south west of Cottenham, forming a connection to Histon.

6.4.27. The ZTV study indicates that there would be extensive visibility along this route within the study area. However, site observations have shown that there would be little to no visibility of the proposed development from the majority of the route due to the mature roadside hedgerow and vegetation. In addition, intervening vegetation and buildings along the more northerly Oakington Road would contribute to the screening and filtering effects from the B1049.

6.4.28. Locations where the proposed development might be visible would be limited to where there are gaps in the roadside vegetation or the buildings situated along this route permit, as illustrated in Viewpoint 8. At these points, the intervening vegetation would screen the majority of the proposed development, and where houses were visible, over time, the proposed planting would filter the built form. Therefore, effects are judged to be of Negligible scale and magnitude.

**Church End (710m, north west)**

6.4.29. Church End is located to the east of Rampton, connecting with Rampton Road to form a local road link between Rampton and Cottenham.

6.4.30. The ZTV study indicates that there would be widespread visibility along this route as it exits the east of Rampton. However, site observations have shown that the extensive vegetation that surrounds Rampton would, in reality, limit visibility towards the site. Therefore, effects would be of Negligible scale and magnitude.

**Recreational Routes**

*Long Distance Walking Routes*

6.4.31. No long distance routes were identified within the 2km study area that required assessment.

*National and Regional Cycle Routes*

6.4.32. No National or Regional Cycle Routes were identified within the 2km study area that required assessment.

**Public Rights of Way**

6.4.33. The Public Rights of Way assessed here are all judged to be of High-Medium sensitivity to the proposed development as views of the surrounding landscape are likely to be an integral part of the user experience.
PROW along New Cut (Drain), south of Rampton Road (680m, west)

6.4.34. This PROW is located to the west of the site, running south from Rampton Road along the edge of Rampton until it meets Cuckoo Lane.

6.4.35. Views of the site would generally be limited to the northern section of the route, north west of the nearby residential property, North Fen Farm. Viewpoint 5 represents the likely views from this public footpath. To the south west of North Fen Farm, it is likely the associated buildings and vegetation of property would screen views towards the development to a negligible effect from this route.

6.4.36. From this northern section of the public footpath, it is likely that the proposed development would be visible upon the ridgeline across the intervening fields. It is unlikely that the proposed planting to the north west of the housing would completely screen the proposed housing from the view, but would provide some filtering effect over time in keeping with the existing urban edge characteristics. It is judged that, in the Medium-term, effects would be of a Medium scale, Intermediate extent, and of a Medium magnitude. Within this section of the PROW, it is judged to be Major-Moderate, and Adverse.

6.4.37. Once the planting has matured, effects would be of Medium-Small scale, Permanent duration and Intermediate extent. From this section of the footpath, effects would reduce slightly due to the filtering effects of the mature vegetation, resulting in effects of a Medium-Low magnitude, Moderate, and on balance, Neutral.

PROW along New Cut (Drain), north of Rampton Road (770m, north west)

6.4.38. This PROW is located to the north west of the site, running north from Rampton Road along the edge of the 'New Cut' drain.

6.4.39. Site observations have indicated that the north western extent of the proposed development would be partially visible above and beyond the existing vegetation that lines Rampton Road. This potential visibility would be available from the western half of the PROW as shown in Viewpoint 7. From this location, the proposed residential properties would form a discernible new element on the ridgeline, although they would be an extension of the existing urban edge also located upon the ridgeline. Proposed planting will be in place on completion, of which the semi-mature trees along the development edge will help to soften the built form on the skyline. Therefore, the Medium term effects would be of Small scale, Localised extent, Negligible magnitude, Minimal and Adverse.

6.4.40. It is likely that over time, the proposed planting on the descending slope will provide some filtering effects, which along with the tree planting located along the immediate development edge would reduce effects and reflect the existing wooded characteristics of Cottenham's edge. Permanent effects would reduce to Small-Negligible, Localised extent, Negligible magnitude, Minimal and Neutral.

6.4.41. Where the footpath circumnavigates to the north of Les Kings Wood, it is likely that over time the screening effect of the community woodland as it matures will increase, eventually rendering views beyond this vicinity of a Negligible scale and magnitude.
Rampton Drift (Track) (1.65km, south west)

6.4.42. This PROW is located to the south west of the site, running north west of Oakington Road, and connects to the north with Cuckoo Lane.

6.4.43. Site observations have shown that beyond the visual shadow of Cuckoo Hill Farm, open vistas towards the southern edge of Cottenham are available. The arable fields located upon the gently rising topography associated with the settlement of Cottenham allows clear and direct views towards the site, unobstructed by intervening vegetation. The proposed development would sit upon the ridgeline seen in the distance, replacing the existing developed edge created by Rampton Road.

6.4.44. Upon completion, before the proposed tree belt has matured, effects would be in the Medium term of an Intermediate extent, and of Small scale leading to a Low magnitude. Although the proposed development would be visible upon the local plateau, it would be seen in the context of the existing built form and settlement of Cottenham. In addition, given the distance between this receptor and the site, it is likely that the new two storey housing would only form a minor discernible new element within the vista. It is judged that effects will be Moderate-Slight and Adverse due to the effects of the increased prominence of residential development within the view, in front of existing. As the proposed planting along the southern boundary matures, the wooded characteristics of the existing edge of Cottenham would become re-established and screen the majority of the proposed development. Therefore, Permanent effects would reduce to a Small-Negligible scale. In turn, the magnitude would be Low-Negligible, Slight and Neutral.

6.4.45. Site observations have shown the section of Rampton Drift between Oakington Road and the field boundaries south-west of Cuckoo Hill Farm would experience little to no visibility of the proposed development. In reality, farm outbuildings and mature vegetation that line the PROW would screen and filter any potential visibility to a Negligible scale and magnitude.

Cuckoo Lane (Track) (1.65km, west)

6.4.46. This PROW is located to the south west of the site, running south east from the edge of Rampton, connecting to the south with Rampton Drift.

6.4.47. Site observations have indicated that there would be some visibility of the site from parts of this route. Visibility would be available from the section of Cuckoo Lane north of Cuckoo Bridge where gaps in intervening vegetation of tree belts along the pathway are found. Views towards the site would be partially filtered by this vegetation, but still possible seen on the raised plateau in the distance.

6.4.48. Similar to the experience of the receptor at Rampton Drift, the gently rising topography of the arable field allows clear and direct views towards the site, unobstructed by intervening vegetation. The proposed development would sit upon the ridgeline seen on the skyline, replacing the existing developed edge created by Rampton Road.

6.4.49. Upon completion, before the proposed tree belt has matured, effects would be in the Medium term of an Intermediate extent, and of Small scale leading to a Low
magnitude. Although the proposed development would be visible upon the local ridgeline, it would be seen in the context of the existing built form and settlement of Cottenham. In addition, given the distance between this receptor and the site, it is likely that the new two storey housing would only form a minor discernible new element within the vista. It is judged that effects will be Moderate-Slight and Adverse due to the effects of increased prominence of residential development within the view, in front of existing. As the proposed planting along the southern boundary matures, the wooded characteristics of the existing edge of Cottenham would become re-established and screen the majority of proposed development. Therefore, Permanent effects would reduce to a Small-Negligible scale. In turn, the magnitude would be Low-Negligible, Slight and Neutral.

6.4.50. It is likely that there would be little to no visibility from the section of Cuckoo Lane between Reynold Drove, Rampton, and the PROW to the south west of Rampton. In reality, it is likely that field boundary vegetation, New Fen Farm and its associated outbuildings and mature vegetation in the intervening landscape would screen and filter any potential visibility to a Negligible scale and magnitude.

Accessible and Recreational Landscapes

6.4.51. The Accessible Landscapes assessed here are judged to be of High-Medium sensitivity (Local Value and High Susceptibility) to the proposed development as views of the surrounding landscape are likely to be an integral part of the user experience.

Les Kings Wood (120m, north)

6.4.52. This PROW is located to the north west of the site, situated to the south of Catch Water Drain, off Rampton Road.

6.4.53. Site observations have shown that the only visibility of the site is possible from the southern edge of the area, as illustrated in Viewpoint 1. Other locations within and to the north would not experience any visibility of the site and are not assessed.

6.4.54. From the southern edge of the community woodland, the built form of the proposed development would be partially visible above and beyond the existing roadside vegetation along Rampton Road, breaking the skyline to the right of existing development visible along Rampton Road.

6.4.55. The proposed planting (i.e. semi-mature trees on break of slope) on completion is unlikely to provide a notable difference to upper parts of the residential buildings, but will aid to slightly soften the development edge. Woodland planting to the north of the site will not be discernible above the hedgerow along Rampton Road. Therefore, it is judged that in the Medium term, effects would be of Medium scale as the proposed housing would form a noticeable new feature extending across the presently open skyline along the ridgeline. These would be of Limited extent, and Low magnitude, Moderate-Slight, and Adverse.

6.4.56. As the planting matures, effects are likely to reduce as the vegetation filters and partially screen the facades of the new residential buildings, reflecting similar characteristics of the present homes along Rampton Road. Permanent effects would
reduce to Medium-Small scale, Limited extent, Low-Negligible magnitude, Slight and Neutral.

Specific Viewpoints

6.4.57. No specific viewpoints were identified within the 2km study area that required assessment.

Designated landscapes

6.4.58. No designated landscapes were identified within the 2km study area that required assessment.

6.5. Summary of Landscape and Visual Effects

6.5.1. Effects on the receptors assessed above are summarised in the table over page. For receptors where the significance of effects varies, the distribution of effects is summarised. Effects are given during construction, before the mitigation planting has matured and once the mitigation planting has matured unless specifically stated.
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Receptor</th>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Distance/Direction</th>
<th>Sensitivity</th>
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<th>Significance</th>
<th>Positive/Neutral/Adverse</th>
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<td><strong>Landscape Character</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Within site where planting is proposed</td>
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<td>Low</td>
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<td>Between site boundary and approximately 690m west and 1.7km south west</td>
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<td>of the site – Construction</td>
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<td><strong>Settlements</strong></td>
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<td>Cottenham</td>
<td>Residential properties along Rampton Road</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rampton Road</td>
<td>Stretches of Rampton Road where gaps permit in between existing properties; site entrance and between Cottenham and Rampton – Short to Medium term</td>
<td>0m, north</td>
<td>Medium-Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Adverse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Stretches of Rampton Road where gaps permit in between existing properties; site entrance and between Cottenham and Rampton – Permanent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Slight</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Overall effects on route</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Negligible</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oakington Road</td>
<td>Stretch of Oa kington Road to the north of Further Or Farm Field where views are available through breaks in the vegetation – Short to Medium term</td>
<td>240m, south east</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Slight</td>
<td>Adverse</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Receptor</td>
<td>Comments</td>
<td>Distance/Direction</td>
<td>Sensitivity</td>
<td>Magnitude</td>
<td>Significance</td>
<td>Positive/Neutral/Adverse</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Stretch of Oakington Road to the north of Further Or Farm Field where views are available through breaks in the vegetation—Permanent</td>
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<td>Minimal</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stretch of Oakington Road on entry to Cottenham where gaps between properties and vegetation are available – Short to Medium term</td>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Slight</td>
<td>Adverse</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stretch of Oakington Road on entry to Cottenham where gaps between properties and vegetation are available – Permanent</td>
<td></td>
<td>Low-Negligible</td>
<td>Slight</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Overall effects on route</td>
<td>615m, south east</td>
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<td>Minimal</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
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<tr>
<td>B1049</td>
<td>Overall effects on route</td>
<td>615m, south east</td>
<td>Negligible</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church End</td>
<td>Overall effects on route</td>
<td>710, north west</td>
<td>Negligible</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No rail routes were identified within the 2km study that required assessment

No key routes were identified within the 2km study that required assessment

**Recreational Routes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROW along New Cut (Drain), south of Rampton Road</th>
<th>Northern section of the route, north west of the nearby residential property, North Fen Farm – Short to Medium term</th>
<th>680m, west</th>
<th>High-Medium</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Major-moderate</th>
<th>Adverse</th>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Receptor</th>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Distance/Direction</th>
<th>Sensitivity</th>
<th>Magnitude</th>
<th>Significance</th>
<th>Positive/Neutral/Adverse</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Northern section of the route, north west of the nearby residential property, North Fen Farm – Permanent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Medium-Low</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Southern section of route, south west of nearby residential property, North Fen Farm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Negligible</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
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<tr>
<td>PROW along New Cut (Drain), north of Rampton Road</td>
<td>Western section of the route – Short to Medium term</td>
<td>770m, north west</td>
<td>Negligible</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
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<td>Western section of the route - Permanent</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Overall effects on route</td>
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<td>Negligible</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rampton Drift (Track)</td>
<td>Section of route between Cuckoo Hill Farm and Cuckoo Lane – Short to Medium term</td>
<td>1.65km, south west</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Moderate-Slight</td>
<td>Adverse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Section of route between Cuckoo Hill Farm and Cuckoo Lane – Permanent</td>
<td></td>
<td>Low-Negligible</td>
<td>Slight</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Section of route between Cuckoo Hill Farm and Oakington Road</td>
<td>Negligible</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuckoo Lane (Track)</td>
<td>Section of route between New Fen Farm field boundary and Rampton Drift (Track) – Short to Medium Term</td>
<td>1.65km, south west</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Moderate-Slight</td>
<td>Adverse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Section of route between New Fen Farm field boundary and Rampton Drift (Track) – Permanent</td>
<td>Low-Negligible</td>
<td>Slight</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Receptor</td>
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<td>Distance/Direction</td>
<td>Sensitivity</td>
<td>Magnitude</td>
<td>Significance</td>
<td>Positive/Neutral/Adverse</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section of route between Reynold Drove, Rampton, and the PROW to the south west of Rampton</td>
<td></td>
<td>Negligible</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No long distance routes were identified within the 2km study that required assessment.

No National or Regional Cycle Routes were identified within the 2km study that required assessment.

**Accessible and Recreational landscapes**

| Les Kings Wood | Southern edge of community woodland – short-Medium term | 120m, north | High-Medium | Low | Moderate-Slight | Adverse |
| Southern edge of community woodland – Permanent | Negligible | Minimal | Neutral |

*Overall effects on Les Kings Wood*  

**Specific Viewpoints**

No specific viewpoints were identified within the 2km study that required assessment.

**Landscape Designations**

No designated landscapes were identified within the 2km study that required assessment.
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7.0 Summary

7.1.1. This assessment defines the existing landscape and visual baseline environments; assesses their sensitivity to change; describes the key landscape and visual related aspects of the proposed development; describes the nature of the anticipated change upon both the landscape and visual environments; assesses the magnitude and significance of the changes in the medium-term, during construction and before new planting has matured, and permanently once planting has matured.

7.1.2. The proposed development would create a high quality residential extension to Cottenham. The masterplan would introduce built form and infrastructure to the site along with a range of landscape areas comprising primarily of native species. The development would feature areas of publicly accessible open space, SUDs features, tree planting and streetscape tree planting. The assessment finds that the development would be of scale that would generally result in localised effects on the landscape character and visual amenity.

7.1.3. In accordance with Cambridgeshire's Landscape Guidelines (1991), the site lies within Areas 3: Western Claylands. Large scale effects on landscape character are likely to be confined to areas within the site where housing is proposed. Medium scale effects would extend from within the site where Public Open Space is proposed towards the west and south west to the Public Rights of Way along New Cut (Drain) and within the north eastern half of the larger field within which the site is situated. Small scale effects would occur in the fields south west of New Fen Farm; north of the Rampton Road up to the Public Right of Way Along New Cut (Drain); and the south eastern half of the larger field within which the site is located. Beyond these areas, localised vegetation consisting of field boundary, tree belts and roadside hedgerows; and surrounding buildings and settlements would likely restrict any potential visibility. Overall, it is judged that effects on this landscape character area would be of a Negligible magnitude and Minimal significance.

7.1.4. Site observations revealed that in reality, visibility of the site and its proposed scheme would be restricted to a 2km radius from the site. Localised vegetation not taken into account by the dataset available for the ZTV study presented an exaggerated view of the potential visibility of the site. Site visits showed that a combination of field and roadside hedgerows; tree belts, scrub and private property vegetation limited the visibility towards the site, as illustrated by the representative viewpoints 1 to 8.

7.1.5. Views of the proposed development from the Cottenham would be limited to where gaps appear between existing houses along Rampton Road. Effects from within the village would be limited by the existing built infrastructure. Views from Rampton would be restricted by the mature and dense vegetation that surrounding the village to the east.

7.1.6. Views of the proposed development would be most notable for users of Rampton Road, between the western edge of Cottenham and Rampton. Views would be available on the approach to Cottenham, with housing potentially seen above the roadside and intervening vegetation upon the ridgeline. This section of the route is judged to be of Medium magnitude and Moderate significance in the Medium term,
reducing to a Low magnitude and Slight significant for the Permanent duration as proposed planting matures. Other routes within the study area tend to have views largely screened by roadside vegetation, and are from more distance location. Where visible, views are judged to be no greater than Slight significance.

7.1.7. The proposed development would result in effects in the Short to Medium term of Medium magnitude, Major-Moderate and Adverse on the Public Right of Way along the southern section of New Cut (Drain) to the north of North Fen Farm. As planting matures over time, permanent effects would reduce to a Medium-Low magnitude and Moderate significance, and on balance, be Neutral. From sections of Rampton Drift (Track) and Cuckoo Lane (Track), effects in the Short to Medium term would be Low magnitude, Moderate-Slight and Adverse. Permanent effects would reduce to Low-Negligible magnitude, Slight and Neutral as proposed planting matures and provide screening of the proposed development. Where views from PROWs located outside of this group were available, it was judged that effects were no greater than Slight significance. Les Kings Wood would likely experience no more than Slight visual Permanent effects from the southern edge of the community woodland.
Appendices

Appendix 1: Glossary

7.1.8. **Cumulative effects.** The additional changes caused by a proposed development in conjunction with other similar developments or as the combined effect of a set of developments, taken together. ¹

7.1.9. **Landscape Character Areas.** These are single unique areas which are the discrete geographical areas of a particular landscape type. Each has its own individual character and identity, even though it shares the same generic characteristics with other types. ²

7.1.10. **Landscape character type.** These are distinct types of landscape that are relatively homogeneous in character. They are generic in nature in that they may occur in different areas in different parts of the country, but wherever they occur they share broadly similar combinations of geology, topography, drainage patterns, vegetation, historical land use, and settlement pattern. ²

7.1.11. **Landscape effects.** Effects on the landscape as a resource in its own right. ¹

7.1.12. **Landscape character.** A distinct and recognisable pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse.²

7.1.13. **Landscape quality (or condition).** A measure of the physical state of the landscape. It may include the extent to which typical character is represented in individual areas, the intactness of the landscape and the condition of individual elements. ¹

7.1.14. **Landscape receptor.** Defined aspects of the landscape resource that have the potential to be affected by a proposal. ¹

7.1.15. **Landscape value.** The relative value that is attached to different landscapes by society. A landscape may be valued by different stakeholders for a whole variety of reasons. ¹

7.1.16. **Magnitude (of effect).** A term that combines judgements about the size and scale of the effect, the extent of the area over which it occurs, whether it is reversible or irreversible and whether it is short or long term, in duration. ¹

7.1.17. **Mitigation.** Measures which are proposed to prevent, reduce and where possible offset any significant adverse effects (or to avoid, reduce and if possible remedy identified effects).²

7.1.18. **Sensitivity.** A term applied to specific receptors, combining judgements of the susceptibility of the receptor to the specific type of change or development proposed and the value related to that receptor. ¹

7.1.19. **Susceptibility.** The ability of a defined landscape or visual receptor to accommodate the specific proposed development without undue negative consequences. ¹

7.1.20. **Visual amenity.** The overall pleasantness of the views people enjoy of their surroundings, which provides an attractive visual setting or backdrop for the enjoyment of activities of people living, working, recreating, visiting or travelling through an area. ¹
7.1.21. **Visual effect.** Effects on specific views and on the general visual amenity experienced by people. ¹

7.1.22. **Visual receptor.** Individuals and/or defined groups of people who have the potential to be affected by a proposal. ²

7.1.23. **Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV).** A map, usually digitally produced, showing areas of land within which a development is theoretically visible. ³


Appendix 2: References


4) Landscape Institute Advice Note 01/11 - Photography and photomontage in landscape and visual impact assessment.


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Appendix 3: Methodology

Introduction

This appendix contains additional detail regarding the assessment methodology, supplementing the information provided within the LVIA text.

Baseline

The baseline study establishes the planning policy context, the scope of the assessment and the key receptors. It typically includes the following key activities:

- A desk study of relevant current national and local planning policy, in respect of landscape and visual matters, for the site and surrounding areas.
- A desk study of nationally and locally designated landscapes for the site and surrounding areas.
- A desk study of existing landscape character assessments and capacity and sensitivity studies for the site and surrounding areas.
- A desk study of historic landscape character assessments (where available) and other information sources required to gain an understanding of the contribution of heritage assets to the present day landscape.
- Collation and evaluation of other indicators of local landscape value such as references in landscape character studies or parish plans, tourist information, local walking & cycling guides, references in art and literature.
- The identification of valued character types, landscape elements and features which may be affected by the proposal, including rare landscape types.
- Exchanging information with other consultants working on other assessment topics for the development as required to inform the assessment.
- Draft Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) studies to assist in identifying potential viewpoints and indicate the potential visibility of the proposed development, and therefore scope of receptors likely to be affected. The methodology used in the preparation of ZTV studies is described within Section 7.2.1.
- The identification of and agreement upon, through consultation, the number and location of representative and specific viewpoints within the study area.
- The identification of the range of other visual receptors (e.g. people travelling along routes, or within open access land, settlements and residential properties) within the study area.
- Site visits to become familiar with the site and surrounding landscape; verify documented baseline; and to identify viewpoints and receptors.
- Input to the design process.

The information gathered during the baseline assessment is drawn together and summarised in the baseline section of the report and reasoned judgements are made as to which receptors are likely to be most affected. Only these receptors are then
taken forward for the detailed assessment of effects, with others ‘scoped out’ (ref. GLVIA 3rd edition, 2013, para 3.19).

**Design**

The Landscape Architect plays a leading role in the site design. The design and assessment stages are necessarily iterative, with stages overlapping in parts.

Details of any mitigation measures incorporated within the proposals to help reduce identified potential landscape and visual effects are set out in Section 5 of the LVIA.

**Assessment**

The assessment of effects includes further desk and site based work, covering the following key activities:

- The preparation of a ZTV based on the finalised design for the development.
- An assessment, based on both desk study and site visits, of the sensitivity of receptors to the proposed development.
- An assessment, based on both desk study and site visits, of the magnitude and significance of effects upon the landscape character, designated and recreational landscape and the existing visual environment arising from the proposed development.
- An informed professional judgements as to whether each identified effect is positive, neutral or adverse.
- A clear description of the effects identified, with supporting information setting out the rationale for judgements.

**Preparation and use of Visuals**

The ZTVs are used to inform the field study assessment work, providing additional detail and accuracy to observations made on site. The preparation of the ZTVs (and photomontages where applicable) is informed by the Landscape Institute’s Advice Note 01/11 – ‘Photography and photomontage in landscape and visual impact assessment’ and SNH ‘Visual Representation of Wind Farms Best Practice Guidance’ (both the 2007 and 2014 editions).

The following points should be borne in mind in respect of the ZTV study:

- Areas shown as having potential visibility may have visibility of the development obscured by local features such as trees, hedgerows, embankments or buildings.

A detailed description of the methods by which ZTVs are prepared is included below.

**Methodology for preparation of ZTV and Visualisations**

**ZTV Studies**

ZTV studies are prepared using the ESRI ArcGIS Viewshed routine. This creates a raster image that indicates the visibility (or not) of the points modelled. LDA Design undertake a ZTV study that is designed to include visual barriers from settlements.
and woodlands (with heights derived from NEXTMAP 25 surface mapping data). If significant deviations from these assumed heights are noted during site visits, for example young or felled areas of woodland, the features concerned will be adjusted within the model or the adoption of a digital surface model will be used to obtain actual heights for these barriers. In this instance this has not been required.

The model is also designed to take into account both the curvature of the earth and light refraction, informed by the SNH guidance. LDA Design undertake all ZTV studies with observer heights of 2m.

The ZTV analysis begins at 1m from the observation feature and will work outwards in a grid of the set resolution (on a standard LDA Design assessment this will be at 12.4 sq. m) until it reaches the end of the terrain map for the project.

For all plan production LDA Design will produce a ZTV that has a base and overlay of the 1:50,000 Ordnance Survey Raster mapping or better. The ZTV will be reproduced at a suitable scale on an A3 template to encompass the study area.

**Ground Model Accuracy**

Depending on the project and level of detail required, different height datasets may be used.

Below is listed the different data products and their specifications:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Distance Between Points</th>
<th>Vertical RMSE Error</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LiDAR</td>
<td>50cm – 2m</td>
<td>up to +/- 5cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photogrammetrically Derived Heights</td>
<td>2m – 5m</td>
<td>up to +/- 1.5m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ordnance Survey OS terrain 5</td>
<td>5 m</td>
<td>up to +/- 2.5m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NextMap25 DTM</td>
<td>25 m</td>
<td>+/- 2.06m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ordnance Survey OS terrain 50</td>
<td>50 m</td>
<td>+/- 4m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Site-specific topographical survey data may also be used where available. For most purposes, the NextMap25 data will be used, but on certain more detailed analysis of areas close to the site may be required, in which case, more detailed ZTVs using more detailed surface mapping products such as Photogrammetrically Derived Heights (from Getmapping or Bluesky), or LiDAR may be used. This has not been done for this assessment – as described below.

**Landscape Character Considerations**

The European Landscape Convention (2000) provides the following definition:

“Landscape means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors.”

And notes also in Article 2 that landscape includes “natural, rural, urban and peri-urban areas. It includes land, inland water and marine areas”.


An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment (Natural England, 2014) defines landscape character as:

“a distinct and recognisable pattern of elements, or characteristics, in the landscape that make one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse.”

The susceptibility of landscape character areas is judged based on both the attributes of the receiving environment and the characteristics of the proposed development as discussed under ‘susceptibility’ within the methodology section of the LVIA. Thus, the key characteristics of the landscape character types/areas are considered, along with scale, openness, topography; the absence of, or presence, nature and patterns of development, settlement, landcover, the contribution of heritage assets and historic landscape elements and patterns, and land uses in forming the character. The condition of the receiving landscape, i.e. the intactness of the existing character will also be relevant in determining susceptibility. The likelihood of material effects on the landscape character areas can be judged based on the scale and layout of the proposal and how this relates to the characteristics of the receiving landscape.

The introduction of any development into a landscape adds a new feature which can affect the ‘sense of place’ in its near vicinity, but with distance, the existing characteristics reassert themselves.

The baseline is informed by desk study of published landscape character assessments and field survey. It is specifically noted within An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment (Natural England, 2014) that:

“Our landscapes have evolved over time and they will continue to evolve – change is a constant but outcomes vary. The management of change is essential to ensure that we achieve sustainable outcomes – social, environmental and economic. Decision makers need to understand the baseline and the implications of their decisions for that baseline.”

At page 51 it describes the function of Key Characteristics in landscape assessment, as follows:

“Key characteristics are those combinations of elements which help to give an area its distinctive sense of place. If these characteristics change, or are lost, there would be significant consequences for the current character of the landscape. Key characteristics are particularly important in the development of planning and management policies. They are important for monitoring change and can provide a useful reference point against which landscape change can be assessed. They can be used as indicators to inform thinking about whether and how the landscape is changing and whether, or not, particular policies – for example - are effective and having the desired effect on landscape character.”

It follows from the above that in order to assess whether landscape character is significantly affected by a development, it should be determined how each of the key characteristics would be affected. The judgement of magnitude therefore reflects the degree to which the key characteristics and elements which form those characteristics will be altered by the proposals.
Viewpoints and Visual Receptors - Considerations

A wide variety of visual receptors can reasonably be anticipated to be affected by the proposed development. Within the baseline assessment, the ZTV study and site visits will be used to determine which visual receptors are likely to be most affected and therefore merit detailed assessment. In line with guidance (GLVIA, 3rd Edition, 2013, paragraph 6.19); both representative and specific viewpoints may be identified to inform the assessment. In general, the majority of viewpoints will be representative – representing the visual receptors at the distance and direction in which they are located and of the type(s) that would be present at that location. The representative viewpoints have generally been selected in locations where the greatest effects would be anticipated; though some may be selected outside of that zone – either to demonstrate the reduction of effects with distance; or to specifically ensure the representation of a particularly sensitive receptor.

The types of visual receptors considered for inclusion within the assessment are:

- Users of walking routes or accessible landscapes within 2km of the proposed development (including Public Rights of Way, National and Regional Trails and other long distance routes, Common Land, Open Access Land, permissive paths, land held in trust (e.g. Woodland Trust, National Trust) offering free public access, and other regularly used, permitted walking routes;

- Visitors to and residents of settlements within 2km of the proposed development;

- Visitors to specific valued viewpoints;

- Visitors to attractions or heritage assets for which landscape and views contribute to the experience – typically within 2km of the proposed development; and

- Users of roads or identified scenic routes within 2km.
Appendix 4: National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), March 2012

The ministerial foreword to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) makes clear that the purpose of planning is to help achieve sustainable development, and that design is an important component of this. Paragraph 17 lists twelve core land use planning principles underpinning both plan making and decision-taking, which include that planning should (inter alia):

- ‘always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings;
- take account of the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of our main urban areas, protecting the Green Belts around them, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it;
- contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment... ;
- promote mixed use developments, and encourage multiple benefits from the use of land in urban and rural areas, recognising that some open land can perform many functions (such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, carbon storage, or food production);
- ... deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs.’

Section 7 of the NPPF focuses on good design and includes the following:

‘56. The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people.’

‘58. ... Planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments:
- will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit;
- optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development, create and sustain an appropriate mix of uses (including incorporation of green and other public space as part of developments) and support local facilities and transport networks;
- respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation;
- are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.’

‘61. ... planning policies and decisions should address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment.’
‘64. Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.’

Section 11 of the NPPF is headed ‘Conserving and enhancing the natural environment’. Paragraph 109 states:

‘The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by [inter alia] protecting and enhancing valued landscapes...’

Paragraph 113 states:

‘Local planning authorities should set criteria based policies against which proposals for any development on or affecting protected wildlife or geodiversity or landscape areas will be judged. Distinctions should be made between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites, so that protection is commensurate with their status and gives appropriate weight to their importance...’

Following on from the Core Principle regarding ‘character of different areas’ and ‘recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside’, some aspects of landscape character are dealt with under section 12, which relates to the historic environment. Paragraph 126 indicates that ‘local planning authorities should take into account ... the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness’.

Planning Practice Guidance for Natural Environment, March 2014

This document is intended to explain the key issues in implementing policy to protect biodiversity, but also contains a section on landscape. This section reiterates the policy set out in the NPPF, clarifying that development outside National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty “might have an impact on the setting of, and implementation of, the statutory purposes of these protected areas”(para 003), that “National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty management plans may also be material considerations in making decisions on individual planning applications, where they raise relevant issues”(para 004) and that Natural England has published advice on Heritage Coasts. This guidance indicates that heritage coasts are “managed to conserve their natural beauty and, where appropriate, to improve accessibility for visitors”. 
Appendix 5: Extracts from Landscape Character Assessment
framework of new hedges, trees and woodland planting relating to local mixes.

- Maintain the traditional linear form of Gamlingay by limiting backland and cul-de-sac developments.

- Ensure buildings are positioned to reflect local patterns such as mostly continuous frontages running along the back edge of pavements, with only occasional gaps, giving glimpses of countryside beyond.

- Ensure new developments reflect the form, scale and proportions of the existing vernacular buildings of the area and pick up on the traditional building styles, materials, colours and textures of the locality.

- Enclose boundaries facing onto roads by brick walls in the village core.

- Retain hedges and introduce them as boundaries alongside roads outside village cores.

- Avoid the use of standardised and intrusive urban materials, street furniture, lighting and signage as part of traffic calming measures wherever appropriate.

- Ensure large barns are sited and designed to minimise their bulk and impact on the wider landscape, normally relating them to existing groupings of farm buildings.

E. The Fen Edge

Landscape Character

3.37 This character area has a mostly flat, low-lying landscape with open views. However, scatterings of clumps of trees, poplar shelterbelts and occasional hedgerows sometimes merge together to give the sense of a more densely treed horizon. Straight running ‘lodes’, drains and north-south droves are distinctive features. The Great Ouse river and the ‘lodes’ are enclosed by raised banks, which sometimes provide valuable grassland habitats, or are marked by lines of willows. Low sand and gravel fen ‘islands’ rise above the flat landscape and have provided an historic focus for settlements. Smallholdings for market gardens, flower growing nurseries and orchards introduce additional local variety and interest in the landscape.

Open fen landscape
Enclosed farmland and long gardens
Evidence of medieval long fields provide soft edge

Mature trees and hedgerows contribute to landscape setting
Village green

Typical settlement landscape setting

3.38 The key characteristics are:

- A low-lying, flat open landscape with extensive vistas.
- Large skies create drama.
- A hierarchy of streams, ‘lodes’, drains and ditches dissect the landscape.
- The rich and varied intensive agricultural land use includes a wide range of arable and horticultural crops and livestock.
- Orchards are a distinctive feature.
- Slightly elevated fen ‘islands’ have a higher proportion of grassland cover, trees and hedgerows.

- Small scale, irregular medieval field patterns are still visible around the edge of settlements.

- Church towers and spires create landmarks.

**Settlement Character**

3.39 The villages on the low fen islands are characterised by their strong linear form, often having developed outwards from crossroads along approach roads. The historic linear form is retained despite the modern estate developments that have occurred in many of the villages. Some village edges, such as at Cottenham, have a well wooded character, with hedgerows and mature trees concealing buildings, while others, such as Fen Drayton, have more open edges. Within the historic cores narrow lanes with continuous street frontages are typical, but on village edges buildings are more often setback with low walls and hedges fronting the streets. Long back gardens are also a common feature.

**Willingham**  
- Groups of buildings on or close to the back of the pavement in the village core  
- Discontinuous frontages on edge of settlement

**Fen Drayton**  
- Narrow lanes  
- Intimate character

3.40 The key characteristics are:

- Historic cores of villages are located on the fen islands, although some modern development has spread onto low-lying land.
Settlements sit low in the landscape, often screened by thick hedgerows to paddocks, copses, groups of mature trees and orchards.

Strong linear form and street pattern.

Narrow lanes with continuous street frontages create an intimate character.

More loose knit arrangement of buildings facing the roads on some village approaches, with open areas and mature hedges interspersed.

Occasional central medieval village greens formed from infilled historic docks and wharves.

Clusters of glasshouses, farms, cottages and some modern detached houses are located along lanes.

3.41 Building and Materials:

Vernacular buildings are typically small scale, one and a half or two storeys in height. A few larger villas occur in some village core areas.

Wall materials vary; yellow Gault clay brickwork predominates, but plastered timber-frame, dark stained weatherboarding and red brick are also present.

Roofs are historically of thatch and plain clay tiles, with pantiles and Welsh slate being later introductions.

Timber-frame building details include; steeply pitched roofs, side hung timber casements set flush to the outside face of the wall, drip boards...
set on gable ends and over the windows, with four or six panelled or planked doors.

- Eighteenth and nineteenth century house details include; vertically sliding sash windows set in reveals over shallow stone cills and with gauged or segmental arched brick lintels over, four or six panelled doors in simple classical door cases incorporating fan lights and chimneys incorporated within the buildings or at gable ends.

- Some brick buildings in the village cores have Dutch gables, reflecting the eighteenth and nineteenth century’s links with the Low Countries.
3.42 Trees and Hedgerows:

- **Peat and Silt Fenland**
  Ash, white willow, oak, field maple, birch, white poplar, hybrid black poplar, goat willow, grey willow, hawthorn, guelder rose, dogwood, horse chestnut, sycamore.

- **Fen Islands**
  Ash, oak, field maple, crab apple, wild cherry, white willow, goat willow, hawthorn, hazel, dogwood, blackthorn, wild privet.

(left) Simple brick bridge  
(right) Orchards on settlement edges

**Design Principles**

3.43 Based on the above analysis of landscape settlement and built character, the following key design principles are set out:

- Ensure any village extensions are located on the high ground of the Fen Islands, avoiding incremental development on the flat, low-lying fen.

- Ensure new developments on the edges of villages are integrated by thick hedgerows, copses and shelterbelt planting reflecting the local mixes. Ensure a transition between Fen and Fen Island by retention and creation of small hedgerowed paddocks.

- Conserve and enhance existing orchard and hedgerowed paddocks.

- Maintain linear or rectilinear form of the settlements and avoid closes and cul-de-sacs where possible.

- Ensure buildings are mostly set on the back edge of pavements, or face the street with small front gardens in the village cores.
• Ensure new developments reflect the form, scale and proportions of the existing vernacular buildings of the area and pick up on the traditional building styles, materials, colours and textures of the locality.

• Enclose boundaries facing onto roads by low brick walls and/or simple iron railings, timber picket fences and hedges as appropriate in the village cores.

• Retain hedges and introduce them as boundaries alongside roads outside village cores.

• Integrate water features, such as ditches dykes and ponds, into new developments as part of open spaces.

• Avoid the use of standardised and intrusive urban materials, street furniture, lighting and signage as part of traffic calming measures wherever appropriate.

OUTLINE OF TRADITIONAL BUILDING FORMS AND ELEMENTS OF THE AREA

3.44 The vernacular architecture of a region is heavily influenced by the building materials available in that area, which in turn are related to the geology. The geology of South Cambridgeshire is outlined in Chapter 2, and basically comprises chalk in the southern parts of the district with clay further north.

3.45 This limited palette of materials gives traditional buildings a consistency of appearance despite their many periods and designs. This helps to identify and characterise the locality and our towns and villages.

Walling materials

Timber Frame

Close studded timber frame
AREA 3: WESTERN CLAYLANDS

As in the South-eastern Claylands, dense woodland and heavy soils deterred prehistoric farmers, and even Roman settlements are not commonly found in these regions. Population pressure and the use of improved ploughs, however, led to many medieval settlements which have since been deserted or have shrunken to tiny hamlets or single farms. Ridge and furrow (a survival of medieval ploughing), deserted medieval villages, such as Wintringham, Weald and Washingley, and other substantial medieval settlement earthworks, such as those at Steeple and Little Gidding, Hamerton, and Winwick, together with numerous moated sites and ruined churches (at Denton and Woolley) are now all features of this sparsely populated landscape.

This gentle undulating landscape is subdivided by the shallow Ouse Valley (landscape area 4). It consists of large-scale arable farmland with open fields, sparse trimmed hedgerows and watercourses often cleared of bankside vegetation. There are scattered woodlands and approximately half of these are ancient semi-natural woodlands of considerable importance in the County context. The biggest concentration of woodlands is in the south-west corner of the County. Elsewhere individual woods are of importance in visual and nature conservation terms, but they tend to be isolated incidents in an area dominated by arable farmland.

The landscape of this part of Cambridgeshire has been greatly affected by modern agricultural practices. Increased mechanisation has led to the removal of hedgerows and amalgamation of fields. Many of the remaining hedges are ‘gappy’ and trimmed almost out of existence by regular cutting. Dutch Elm Disease has taken a considerable toll of hedgerow trees, and the extensive replanting which is still young has yet to make any major impact, although with over one million grant-aided trees having been planted since 1974 significant change is likely over the next few decades. Marginal land has been brought into production by drainage and other soil improvements. Larger farm units have created a need for large storage buildings, which can be prominent in the landscape.

Small villages and hamlets are scattered throughout the area, usually in sheltered places with existing trees. Small grass paddocks typically occur on the edges of the villages. Church spires and towers enliven the skyline.

Existing and former wartime airfields at Alconbury, Wyton, Molesworth, Glatton, Warboys, Upwood, Kimbolton, Gravelsley, Staughton, Sibson, Bourn and Great Gransden have a significant impact on the area.

PRINCIPLES FOR LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENT AND MANAGEMENT IN THE WESTERN CLAYLANDS

It would be unrealistic and inappropriate to attempt to restore the pre-war landscape of smaller fields with tree-lined hedges. Instead a new landscape pattern that responds to the demands of both modern agricultural practice and the need for landscape enhancement is necessary. The vision is one of a fairly large-scale landscape with large rolling fields enclosed by and sweeping around hocks and belts of woodland and broad hedgerows. In the valley bottoms, the objective should be to create small-scaled streamside landscape zones with trees, copses, meadows and other features.

Where remnants of the old ridge and furrow survive as grassland or in woodland they should be preserved.

Creation of the new landscape structure should be directed towards the following principles:

1. Management of existing woodlands: the careful management of ancient semi-natural woodlands and selective re-stocking and creation of ‘edge areas’ elsewhere (see Farmland Model A4b) is essential.

2. Creation of new woodlands: ideally these should be at least 2 hectares in size and located so that they make a major impact in relation to:
Western Claylands: Boxworth

- viewing points:
- wildlife potential;
- landform and skylines.

The new woodland blocks may be planted to reflect landforms, thus developing a new character of wooded skylines, distinctive clumps and woodlands following the folds in the land. Elsewhere, woodlands may be planted to reflect the existing or former field patterns, thus being derived from the inherited pattern (see Farmland Model A5). In practice, a combination of these two approaches would emerge, reflecting both old and new landscape patterns.

3. **Planting of woodland belts:** probably based on existing hedgerows, linking woodland blocks, the belts should be carefully aligned to reinforce landforms and would enclose large areas of rolling farmland (see Farmland Model A4b).

4. **Creation of landscape corridors in valley bottoms:** this will necessitate setting aside 5-15m or more either side of streams to create semi-wooded corridors of diverse habitats (see Farmland Model A6).

5. **Hedgerows:** selected hedgerows should be reinforced or managed for particularly significant impact, based upon their visual and wildlife potential. Historically significant hedgerows should be carefully conserved, and new hedges planted to emphasise the existing landscape.

6. **Road margins:** verges should be managed for floral diversity; hedgerows with trees should be concentrated on lower slopes to prevent loss of views from higher land and planted to create a bold sequence of enclosed and open characters appropriate to the large scale of the landscape (see Farmland Models A4a and A4b).

7. **Footpath corridor improvements:** a small number of long-distance routes and also circular/linking routes related to villages and towns should be located, and landscape improvements implemented along their alignments; ideally these features will be integrated with other new features as in 1 and 4 above (see Farmland Model A7).
8. **Village approaches:** increased tree cover with trees along road margins, woodland belts alongside roads, planting at edges of villages and hedgerow planting is desirable; it is important to ensure key views are not lost.

9. **Old airfields:** there may be unsightly buildings which require fresh landscape treatment.

10. **Urban fringe:** where the claylands border the Ouse Valley towns (St Ives, Huntingdon, St Neots) a substantial increase in tree and hedge cover is needed with trees along road margins, and woodland belts alongside roads and edges of developments.

**WESTERN CLAYLANDS Before**

| Dead tree | Very little sense of landform or enclosure. | Poor, sparse hedgerows. | Large, modern farm buildings prominent on the skyline. | Small scrubland on land difficult to cultivate. |

**WESTERN CLAYLANDS After**

| Dead tree retained for hole-nesting birds. | Tree line on horizon helps to tie features together and enclose the space. | Hedgerows emphasise landform and give character; tree planting in hedge. | Farm buildings well screened by planting. | Woodland on horizon provides good backdrop. | New woodland forms strong feature. |
PLANT SPECIES GUIDELINES FOR THE WESTERN CLAYLANDS

Mixed Woodlands
Quercus robur (oak) dominant tree.
Fraxinus excelsior (ash) dominant tree.
Prunus avium (wild cherry) less common.
Acer campestre (field maple) glades, near edges.
Corlus avellana (hazel) dominant shrub, edges, glades, scrub.
Crataegus monogyna (hawthorn) near edges, mixed thickets.
Sambucus nigra (elder) occasional, understorey and edges.

Hedgerows, woodland edges and scrub
Crataegus monogyna (hawthorn)
Corylus avellana (hazel)
Prunus spinosa (blackthorn)
Rosa canina (dog rose)
Acer campestre (field maple)
Malus sylvestris (crab apple)
Cornus sanguinea (dogwood)
occasional.

Trees in hedgerows
Quercus robur (oak) dominant.
Fraxinus excelsior (ash) sub-dominant.
Acer campestre (field maple) sub-dominant.

Avenues
Quercus robur (oak)
Tilia sp. (lime)
Aesculus hippocastanum (horse chestnut)
Environs of villages only.
Avenues – all as single species, not mixed.

Stream sides, wet clay soils
Alnus glutinosa (alder) dominant, in copses and small groups.
Salix alba (white willow)
Sub-dominant, not in mixes.
Salix fragilis (crack willow)
typical pollarded tree.
Salix caprea (goat willow) scrubby copses.
Fraxinus excelsior (ash) occasional where not waterlogged.
Quercus robur (oak)
occasional where not water logged.
Corylus avellana (hazel) occasional on stream banks if not waterlogged.
Populus tremula (aspen)
in thickets; not in mixes.
Viburnum opulus (guilder rose) occasional as individuals and small groups.
Cornus sanguinea (dogwood) occasional as individuals and small groups.
Lowland Village Farmlands

**Summary**

**Overall description:**
This is a well settled, low lying landscape which is often crossed by major river corridors. The high density of settlement, intensive agriculture and major transport infrastructure mean that this is often a busy, rural landscape.

**Location:**
Located predominately in west Norfolk, south Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire.

**Physical environment**

**Landform:**
A generally low lying, gently rolling topography, although some areas adjacent to lower lying levels can appear elevated.

**Natural / water features:**
This landscape is drained by small streams which are visually indistinct. Occasionally there are gravel extraction lakes (e.g. Hemingfords and Buckden) along the River Great Ouse and within the Ivel valley in Bedfordshire.

**Vegetation and land use**

**Ecological character:**
A productive, intensively farmed agricultural landscape, with patches of wet woodland, reedbed and wet grassland along river valleys and in damp, low-lying hollows. Almost 10% of these sites are afforded some degree of designated protection.

**Primary land use:**
Arable land use predominates with some areas of pasture and orchards. Occasional mineral extraction, lake creation and brickworks.

**Tree cover:**
Groups of trees, often around farmsteads and occasional small plantations.

**Cultural pattern**

**Historic features:**
Medieval moated sites and fine stone churches are a characteristic feature.

**Enclosure pattern:**
Medium/large scale, regular field pattern, defined by well trimmed hedgerows. Field systems include a mix of rectilinear & sinuous patterns, reflecting the process of planned surveyor enclosure from common fields.

**Settlement pattern:**
A dense, largely nucleated, rural settlement pattern composed of small towns (e.g. Biggleswade), villages and outlying
farmsteads. Larger towns (e.g. Bedford) often exert an urbanising influence on this landscape. Main building materials include Gault clay, brick, clay tile, render and thatch.

**Historic development**: A landscape dominated by the late enclosure of common fields. Large pockets of earlier enclosure also exist, also created from common fields. All fieldscapes have experienced significant modification during the 20th century.

---

**Perceptions**

**Tranquility:**
Away from major transport routes this landscape has a greater sense of tranquillity although intensive farming activity and a high density settlement pattern mean that many areas retain a busy feel.

**Views:**
Sparse woodland cover giving rise to open character and extensive views.
Planned Peat Fen

Summary

Overall description:
A flat, low lying and sparsely populated landscape characterised by dark peaty soils, a grid like pattern of large arable fields bounded by drainage ditches and wide views to distant, often dramatic skies.

Location:
This is the southern component of the extensive former Fenland of eastern England – stretching from south Lincolnshire, through Cambridgeshire, to south west Norfolk, and north–west Suffolk.

Physical environment

Landform:
An expansive, low-lying (often below sea level), landscape with a distinctively flat landform.

Natural / water features:
The Hundred Foot Washes are a key water feature when flooded in winter, as are the altered courses of major rivers (e.g. Old Bedford River and the Nene). There are also occasional gravel extraction lakes (e.g. at Needingworth).

Vegetation and land use

Ecological character:
A uniform and low-lying landscape, characterised by drained fenland, but supporting a mosaic of wetland habitats including fens, reedbed, wet woodland and patches of grazing marsh.

Primary land use:
An intensively farmed arable landscape.

Tree cover:
Almost no tree cover – restricted to infrequent patches of secondary woodland/scrub and discrete conifer belts around farmsteads.

Cultural pattern

Historic features:
The area is dissected by long straight roads with 90 degree bends, often located on dykes above the arable fen fields, or following ditches. Occasional pump houses are a feature.

Enclosure pattern:
Planned geometric landscape with large fields defined by straight ditches. There is little apparent structural difference between the early and recent episodes of field creation.

Settlement pattern:
Settlement is sparse and limited mainly to isolated brick-built farmsteads on former fen islands. Most are post-medieval in origin reflecting the late reclamation of the area for agriculture. Thorney is the only historic nucleated settlement.

To be completed at a later date.

Historic development:
A landscape created by drainage from the medieval period onwards to create farmland. Most comprises recent (18/19th century) fen enclosures, but significant areas of early (16th–18th century) enclosure also exist in the south and around Thorney.

**Perceptions**

**Tranquility:**
A quiet, remote landscape where the sky plays a particularly dominant role in creating mood and interest.

**Views:**
The flat horizontal nature of the landscape can give vertical features (eg church towers and more recently wind farms) unusual prominence.
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Appendix 6: LVIA Drawings

Figure 1  Site Location and Local Landscape Policy
Figure 2  Zone of Theoretical Visibility Study, including woodlands and settlements
Figure 3  Topography
Figure 4  Local Context, Representative Viewpoints and Public Rights of Way
Figure 5  Aerial Photograph
Figure 6  Local Landscape Character and Extent of Visual Effects
Photopanel A  Southern edge of Les King Wood
Photopanel B  Oakington Road
Photopanel C  Oakington Road, near Further Or Farm Field
Photopanel D  Rampton Drift (Track)
Photopanel E  Public Footpath near Rampton
Photopanel F  Public Footpath along Near Cut (Drain)
Photopanel H  Public Footpath along New Cut (Drain) near Giant’s Hill
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LAND OFF RAMPTON ROAD, COTTENHAM

Figure 1:
Site Location and Local Landscape Policy

LEGEND

- Site boundary
- Distance from site boundary (1km, 2km, 3km, 4km & 5km)
- District boundary

Local Landscape Policy
- Green Belt

Public Footpath
- Byway open to all traffic

Other routes with public access
- National Trail / Long Distance Route
- Other Route with Public Access

Sustrans
- National Route
- National Cycle Network link

No dimensions are to be scaled from this drawing.
All dimensions are to be checked on site.
Area measurements for indicative purposes only.

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Sources:
Ordnance Survey, South Cambridgeshire District Council, 2011;
DCLG, 2011; SUSTRANS

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June 2015
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Ordnance Survey, South Cambridgeshire District Council, 2011; DCLG, 2011; SUSTRANS

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Figure 2: Zone of Theoretical Visibility Study, including woodlands and settlements

This drawing is based upon computer generated Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) studies produced using the viewshed routine in the ESRI ArcGIS Suite. The areas shown are the maximum theoretical visibility, taking into account topography, principal woodlands and settlements, which have been included in the model with the heights obtained from Nextmap 25. It should be noted that in some areas woodlands included within the ZTV may comprise active forestry, resulting in the felling and replanting of some areas modelled in the ZTV study. The ZTV study reflects this pattern at a specific point in time, as it is based on real height information. Whilst the felling cycle will alter the heights of different areas of forestry over time, altering localised visual effects, the wider pattern will remain relatively constant.

The model does not take into account any localised features such as small copses, hedgerows or individual trees and therefore still gives an exaggerated impression of the extent of visibility. The actual extent of visibility on the ground will be less than that suggested by this plan.

The ZTV includes an adjustment that allows for Earth’s curvature and light refraction. It is based on Nextmap 25 terrain data and has a 25m² resolution.

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Other routes with public access

Public Rights of Way (PROW)
- Public Footpath
- Public Bridleway
- Byway open to all traffic
- Other routes with public access

Sustrans
- National Cycle Route

Figure 4: Local Context, Representative Viewpoints and Public Rights of Way

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LAND OFF RAMPTON ROAD, COTTENHAM

Figure 5: Aerial Photograph

Ordnance Survey

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Sources: Ordnance Survey
Figure 6:
Local Landscape Character and Extent of Landscape Effects

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Representative Viewpoint 1 (Left) - Southern Edge of Les King Wood (north west, 125m)
Representative Viewpoint 1 (Right) - Southern Edge of Les King Wood

This view looks south east from the southern edge of Les King Wood across an open fields towards the site. The landform gently rises away before ascending more steeply at the far edge of the field, up towards the existing settlement of Cottenham, which sits upon the localised ridgeline. Residential and farming buildings can be seen along this elevated ridgeline, beyond the field boundary and roadside hedgerows of the lower fields. From this location, it is possible to see some of well-vegetated urban edge that characterises settlements within this area. Rampton Road and its associated roadside hedgerow are visible to the right of the view as it traverses from the right of the view towards Cottenham, screening views directly into the site.

The proposed development would be partly seen above the roadside vegetation to the right of the existing properties of Rampton Road. The proposed residential properties would extend the existing settlement edge to the right along the ridgeline, which is located beyond by the roadside hedgerow. This would contribute to an increased presence of houses against the skyline.

Over time, as the proposed planting matures that will be located on the slope that descends from the ridgeline, it is likely that some filtering of the lower parts of the proposed properties would occur. Proposed planting located on the break of the slope would also reduce effects by providing further screening, although it is unlikely that it would completely screen the upper parts of the residential facades.

In the Short and Medium term, the scale of effect would be Medium, reducing to Medium-Small as planting matures in the Long term for Permanent effects.
Representative Viewpoint 2 - Oakington Road, Cottenham (south east, 245m)

This view looks north west from Oakington Road, Cottenham, across a field of rough grassland of relatively flat topography. Within the foreground and middle distance of this view, scrub vegetation and a number of young trees are located within the field. More mature scrub vegetation can be seen to the left of the view, forming the southern boundary of the field. Views to the left are screened by this vegetation. To the right of the view, beyond the aforementioned vegetation, the existing southern urban edge of Cottenham is partially visible.

The proposed development would extend the existing urban settlement of Cottenham to the left of the view, beyond the vegetation that can be seen in the distance. Partial views of the upper elevations and rooftops would be available through and above the existing vegetation situated in the field in the foreground.

Over time, as proposed orchard planting matures, some filtering of the visibility of the proposed development would occur, although not entirely screen all views of the upper elevations and rooftops of the proposed housing.

In the Short and Medium term, the scale of effect would be Medium, reducing to Medium-Small as planting matures in the Long term for Permanent effects.

If the existing immature planting in within the field in the foreground remains and matures, it is likely that views beyond would be further screened, reducing effects to be of Small scale in the Long term.
Representative Viewpoint 3 - Oakington Road, near Further Or Farm Field (south east, 800m)

The view looks north west across an open field of arable farmland from a break in the roadside hedgerow along Oakington Road. The landform of the view is relatively flat, slighting rising towards the southern edge of Cottenham, seen in the distance. From this location, it is possible to see the rears of the residential properties along Rampton Road. Field boundary vegetation and the wooded character of Cottenham’s southern urban edge are visible to the right of the view.

The proposed development would be visible in the view, and be of similar size to the residential properties seen along Rampton Road presently. Upon completion, the proposed development would extend the existing settlement edge to the left of the view, screening views beyond. Upon completion, direct views will be available towards the southern edge of the proposed development. As proposed periphery planting matures, the residential properties would be screen and filtered, replicating similar characters to that of the existing wooded settlement edge.

As the proposed periphery planting matures, it is likely that the two storey homes would be screen and filtered, replicating a similar character to the existing wooded settlement edge. The upper elevation of the three storey apartments would still be partially visible above the matured tree planting.

In the Short and Medium term, the scale of effect would be Medium-Small, reducing to Small as planting matures in the Long term for Permanent effects.
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This view looks north east from Rampton Drift (Track) Public Rights of Way (PROW), across an open field of pasture. The landform gently falls away from this location before rising up towards Cottenham, which sits upon the localised ‘Fen’ island. This is a relatively small of vegetation within this view, offering open vistas across the surrounding rural landscape towards Cottenham. Views beyond the settlement are limited by the vegetation that partially encloses the settlement and that line Oakington Road and Rampton Road. Views of the rear of properties along Rampton Road are available, as well as views towards the local landmarks of All Saints Church and the Water Tower.

The proposed development would sit within the local context and extend of the settlement of Cottenham. Upon completion, direct views of the southern edge of the proposed housing will be available, although not extend beyond the present settlement edges.

Once planting has matures, it is likely that views of the proposed development would be screened filtered, replicating similar characteristics of the existing wooded settlement edge presently seen to the south of Cottenham.

In the Short and Medium term, the scale of effect would be Small, reducing to Small-Negligible as planting matures in the Long term for Permanent effects.
Representative Viewpoint 5 - Public Footpath, near Rampton (west, 690m)

This view looks east from the Public Right of Way (PROW), south of Rampton Road. Within the foreground of the view, the landscape consists of an open pasture field of relatively flat topography. It is occupied by a number of telegraph poles and wires that traverse the field. Its boundaries are sparsely inhabited by hedgerow and scrub vegetation with some substantial gaps. Beyond, the landform steeply rises up to the settlement of Cottenham, which can be seen upon the local raised landform, or ‘Fen Island’. The ridgeline extends to the right of the views, away from the existing residential properties situated along Rampton Road. It is possible to see the wooded character of the existing settlement edge, which screen direct views into the village.

In the short and medium term, before the proposed planting matures, facades of the proposed housing would be visible upon the ridgeline across the intervening fields. Although the majority of the proposed development would be available within the current visible extent of Cottenham, the proposed properties would both extend the extent of visible housing to the right of the view along the ridgeline, whilst perceptibly drawing the settlement edges closer towards this location.

The proposed access road will be seen approximately halfway down the rising slope, extending to the right from Rampton Road before rising to the ridgeline within the site.

In the long term, it is likely that the planting proposed on the ascending slope would not completely screen the proposed housing from view. However, the maturing planting would increasingly provide a filtering effect over time, replicating similar characteristics of the existing wooded settlement edge, and in turn, reduce effects.

In the Short and Medium term, the scale of effect would be Medium, reducing to Medium-Small as planting matures in the Long term for Permanent effects.
Representative Viewpoint 6 - Public Footpath, along New Cut (Drain) (north west, 980m)

This view looks south west from the Public Right of Way (PROW) along New Cut Drain, across the relatively flat landform that is made up arable farmland divide by man-made drains. Telegraph poles and wires traverses the view. Residential homes and the Water Tower of Cottenham can be partially seen to the left of the view. The residential properties of Rampton Road are visible in the centre of the view, seen in-between the existing vegetation to the west of Cottenham and Les King Wood.

The proposed development would be partly visible to the immediate right of the residential properties of Rampton Road, extending the existing extent of housing along the ridgeline away from this receptor. Upon completion, it is likely that Les King Wood would filter and screen the lower parts of the proposed housing. Over time, as the proposed planting within the site and Les King Wood matures, it is likely that the proposed properties along the ridgeline would be largely filtered and screened from this location.

The scale of effect would be Negligible.
Representative Viewpoint 7 - Public Footpath along New Cut (Drain) near Giant’s Hill (north west, 800m)

This view looks south east from the Public Right of Way (PROW) along New Cut Drain, to the north of Rampton Road. Within the foreground of the view, the landscape consists of an open pasture field of relatively flat topography. It is occupied by a few of telegraph poles and wires that traverse the field. Its boundaries are delineated by hedgerows, scrub vegetation, although there are some noticeable gaps. Les King Wood forms a notable area of vegetation to the left of the view. Beyond, the landform steeply rises up to the settlement of Cottenham, which can be seen upon the raised landform, or ‘Fen Island’. The ridgeline extends to the right of the views, away from the existing residential properties situated along Rampton Road. It is possible to see the wooded character of the existing settlement edge, which screen direct views into the village.

The proposed development would be visible upon the ridgeline across the intervening fields. It is unlikely that the proposed planting on the ascending slope would completely screen the proposed housing from the view, but would provide some additional filtering effect over time alongside the screening effects of the intervening vegetation along the field boundaries and roadside.

In the Short and Medium term, the scale of effect would be Small, reducing to Small-Negligible as planting matures in the Long term for Permanent effects.
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Representative Viewpoint 8 - B1049 (south east, 865m)

The B1049 (Cottenham Road) is situated to the south west of Cottenham, forming a connection to Histon. Within the foreground of this view, the landscape is formed of a plot of rough grassland in-between two residential properties along the B1049. The topography within this view is relatively flat, permitting more views that are distant. Long distance views towards Oakington Road and beyond are available, although existing vegetation alongside and adjacent to Oakington Road restricts any clear visibility. It is possible to see the very tops of some residential properties on the southern edge of Cottenham above the intervening scrub vegetation.

It is unlikely that the proposed development would be clearly seen from this location due to the intervening and proposed vegetation that over time would continue to mature.

The scale of effect would be Negligible.