Land South of Brackmills

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

May 2015
May 2015
Land South of Brackmills

Contents

1.0 Introduction ................................................................................................................................. 1
  1.1. Background ............................................................................................................................... I
  1.2. The Site and Proposals .......................................................................................................... I
  1.3. The Study Area ....................................................................................................................... I
  1.4. Report Structure..................................................................................................................... 2
2.0 Methodology ............................................................................................................................... 3
  2.1. Overview ................................................................................................................................. 3
  2.2. Introduction ........................................................................................................................... 3
  2.3. Distances ............................................................................................................................... 13
3.0 Planning Policy .......................................................................................................................... 14
  3.1. National Planning Policy ...................................................................................................... 14
  3.2. Local Planning Policy ........................................................................................................... 14
  3.3. Local Guidance ..................................................................................................................... 18
4.0 Baseline ........................................................................................................................................ 19
  4.1. Introduction ........................................................................................................................... 19
  4.2. Site Description ..................................................................................................................... 19
  4.3. Landscape Features .............................................................................................................. 20
  4.4. Topography .......................................................................................................................... 21
  4.5. Key Local Guidance Documents ......................................................................................... 21
  4.6. ZTV Studies ........................................................................................................................ 22
  4.7. Landscape and Townscape Character .............................................................................. 24
  4.8. Visual Receptors .................................................................................................................... 27
  4.9. Landscape Designations and Value ..................................................................................... 33
5.0 The Proposed Development ....................................................................................................... 34
  5.1. The Proposal ........................................................................................................................ 34
  5.2. Site Fabric ............................................................................................................................. 35
  5.3. Landscape Design and Green Infrastructure Response ..................................................... 35
  5.4. Construction ......................................................................................................................... 37
6.0 Landscape and Visual Effects .................................................................................................... 39
  6.1. Introduction ........................................................................................................................... 39
  6.2. Effects on Landscape Character ........................................................................................... 40
  6.3. Effects on Townscape Character ........................................................................................ 56
  6.4. Visual Effects ........................................................................................................................ 60
  6.5. Summary of Landscape and Visual Effects ......................................................................... 74
7.0 Summary ....................................................................................................................................... 80
7.1. Landscape and Townscape Character Effects ................................................................. 80
7.2. Visual Effects .................................................................................................................... 80
7.3. Designated Landscapes ................................................................................................. 82
7.4. Residential Properties .................................................................................................. 82
7.5. Statement of Significance .............................................................................................. 82
May 2015
Land South of Brackmills

Appendices (separate documents)

Volume I – Appendices 1 to 12 (A4)
Appendix 1. Glossary
Appendix 2. References
Appendix 3. Methodology
Appendix 4. National Planning Policy
Appendix 5. Northampton Local Plan 1997 Proposals Map
Appendix 6. Drawing 3238_02_03_A
Appendix 7. Extract from National Character 89 description
Appendix 8. Extracts from Northampton Current Landscape Character Assessment, Strategy and Guidelines
Appendix 9. Figures from the Northampton Landscape Sensitivity and Green Infrastructure Study 2009
Appendix 10. Correspondence
Appendix 11. Extracts from Hardingstone Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan 2009
Appendix 12. Brackmills Country Park Notice Board

Volume II – Appendices 13 to 15 Figures and Photograph Panels (A3)
Appendix 13. Figures 1 to 8 and 10 - Plans
Appendix 14. Figures 9.1 to 9.17 - Photograph Panels
Appendix 15. Illustrative Viewpoints IPI and IPII Photograph Panels
May 2015
Land South of Brackmills

1.0 Introduction

1.1. Background

LDA Design undertook a landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA) of the proposed residential development at land south of Brackmills, Wootton, Northampton on behalf of Housing and Communities Agency in 2012 and 2013 which formed part of the Environmental Impact Assessment submitted with Planning Application reference N/2013/338. The LVIA (the ‘submitted LVIA’) was undertaken following the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Second Edition (the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Assessment & Management, 2002) which was in place at the time the LVIA was prepared. The Second Edition has subsequently been replaced by the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition (the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Assessment & Management, 2013).

Given the length of time that the third edition has been in place and that some aspects of the baseline environment will have changed since the LVIA was prepared, the fact that the Planning Application was refused for reasons including landscape and visual effects, and to include further information agreed with Northampton Borough Council’s (NBC) landscape consultant Influence Environmental Limited (IEL) in the landscape Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) for the forthcoming Appeal reference APP/V2825/A/14/22286, LDA Design has prepared this updated LVIA following the current guidance.

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

Figures 1, 7 and 10 (Appendices Volume II, Appendix 13) place the proposed development within its local context. The application is for a residential-led mixed use sustainable urban extension to Northampton comprising up to 1,000 dwellings with supporting mixed use local retail centre, primary school, associated infrastructure, car parking and green infrastructure.

The site lies on high ground which falls southwards towards Wootton Brook and northwards towards Brackmills and the River Nene. The site lies in an area of predominantly open arable and pastoral farmland and is strongly influenced by the existing adjoining urban area of Northampton which extends to the north, west and south-west. The rural landscape including hamlets, villages and farms continues to the east and south-east of the site.

Further more detailed description of the site and its context is given in section 4.0.

1.3. The Study Area

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
May 2015

Land South of Brackmills

(ZTV) arising from the development itself. In this case a study area of 4km has been agreed in the landscape SoCG as being appropriate to cover all potentially significant landscape and visual impacts.

1.4. Report Structure

This report is structured as follows:

- Introduction
- Methodology
- Planning Policy
- Baseline
- The Proposed Development
- Landscape and Visual Effects
- Summary

Supporting appendices have been prepared that supplement the sections regarding methodology and planning policy. These appendices are important to the assessment and should be read alongside this report. A glossary and references are also provided within Appendices 1 and 2 (Appendices Volume I).
2.0 Methodology

2.1. Overview

“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).

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

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, in particular Scottish Natural Heritage’s ‘Visual representation of Wind Farms Best Practice Guidance’ (both the 2006 (updated in 2007) and 2014 editions1).

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.

These stages are described in greater detail in Appendix 3 (Appendices Volume I).

2.2.1. Assessment Terminology and Judgements

A full glossary is provided in Appendix 2 (Appendices Volume I). 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.

1 The Landscape Institute, in their Advice Note 01/11 Photography and photomontage in landscape and visual impact assessment, strongly endorses following the 2006 SNH guidance for wind farm and other types of development. The Landscape Institute has yet to formally endorse use of the 2014 SNH guidance for use in England, but it is commonly being followed as best practice.
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.

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.

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.

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.

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

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.

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>
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<td>Local/District</td>
<td>High-Medium</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>High-Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.

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.

**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.

**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:
May 2015
Land South of Brackmills

- 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.

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.

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

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.

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:
Land South of Brackmills

Diagram 1: Magnitude
May 2015

Land South of Brackmills

Where the Scale of effect is judged to be Negligible the Magnitude is also assumed to be Negligible and no further judgement is required.

Significance indicates the importance or gravity of the effect. The process of forming a judgement of significance of 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)

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 Major-Moderate or Major are considered to be significant. Effects of Moderate significance or less are “of lesser concern” (GLVIA, 3rd edition, para 3.35). It should also be noted that whilst an effect may be significant, that does not necessarily mean that such an impact would be unacceptable, or should necessarily be regarded as an “undue consequence” (GLVIA, 3rd edition, para 5.40).
May 2015  
Land South of Brackmills  

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.

2.2.2. Positive/Adverse/Neutral  

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.

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.

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.

2.2.3. Landscape and Townscape Character  

Further detail regarding the considerations in respect of the susceptibility of landscape and townscape character to effects from development are provided within Appendix 3 (Appendices Volume I), and briefly summarised below. The susceptibility of landscape and townscape 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.

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.”

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 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.

2.2.4. Landscape Designations  

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
May 2015

Land South of Brackmills

the designation in order to arrive at a judgement of the effects on the designated landscape or landscape element.

2.2.5. Site

The effects of physical changes to the site are assessed in terms of the effects on the physical fabric.

2.2.6. Viewpoints and Visual Receptors

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 significantly 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 significant 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.

For this LVIA the eight viewpoints that were agreed with the local planning authority for the submitted LVIA were used, plus a further nine viewpoints agreed in the landscape SoCG giving a total of 17 agreed representative viewpoints.

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

- Users of walking routes or accessible landscapes within 4 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 4 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 4 km of the proposed development; and
- Users of roads or identified scenic routes within 4 km.

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 ZTVs, 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.
May 2015

Land South of Brackmills

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.

2.2.7. Residential Amenity

Paragraph 6.17 of GLVIA, 3rd edition notes that:

“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.”

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 receivers”, 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.

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.”

Effects on the residential amenity of existing dwellings caused by new residential development are not generally assessed because it is quite normal and acceptable to have views of residential development from houses and gardens. This is the case for this project where public open space, allotments or two storey housing is proposed adjoining existing properties on the edge of Northampton, which would not be “so unpleasant, overwhelming and oppressive” to render any existing property “an unattractive place to live” – the proposed urban extension would be a normal and accepted use as seen from dwellings. Effects on residential amenity are, therefore, not assessed.
May 2015
Land South of Brackmills

2.3. Distances

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.
3.0 Planning Policy

3.1 National Planning Policy
Relevant national planning policy is set out in Appendix 4 (Appendices Volume I).

3.2 Local Planning Policy
Current local planning policy is described in the following adopted document:

- West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (Part 1) (Core Strategy), 15 December 2014.

The following local authorities are located within the 4km study area:

- Northampton Borough Council (contains the Site)
- South Northamptonshire District Council, (immediately south west of the Site)

3.2.1 West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, Local Plan (Part 1), West Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit, (adopted 15 December 2014)
The current adopted Local Plan policies of relevance to this LVIA are outlined below.

Policy N6 – Northampton South of Brackmills Sue

Policy N6 states:

“The boundary of the Northampton South of Brackmills Sue is shown on the policies map (Figure 5). The development will make provision for:

a) in the region of 1,300 dwellings;

b) a primary school;

c) a local centre to include local retail facilities of an appropriate scale (including a small convenience store), health care services and community facilities;

d) an integrated transport network focused on sustainable transport modes including public transport, walking and cycling with strong links to adjoining neighbourhoods, employment areas and the town centre;

e) structural greenspace and wildlife corridors as indicated on the policies map (Figure 5);

f) the creation of a landscape buffer to the south west of the site as indicated on the policies map (Figure 5);

g) archaeological and ecological assessment of the site and required mitigation;

h) open space and leisure provision; and

i) flood risk management including surface water management and from all other sources.

Necessary infrastructure is required to be phased alongside the delivery of the development. Development proposals must be accompanied by a masterplan.”

The supporting text states that:
Policy N6 below details the required elements of development. A masterplan will be required to be submitted alongside any proposal to demonstrate how the land use elements positively respond to context, design issues, connectivity and sustainable planning requirements.” (Paragraph 12.49.)

This statement acknowledges the importance of considering all the relevant issues that shape a sustainable masterplan. The proposals have been developed through an extensive period of assessment and consultation, which have established the contextual issues to the site, considered them and developed a positive design response to them, as presented in the illustrative masterplan and Design and Access Statement (DAS).

The main text of Policy N6 does not refer to the issue of the effects of development within the SUE on views of the skyline that is mentioned in saved Local Plan Policy E7 (see below). However, paragraph 12.46 of the text supporting Policy N6 does discuss views of the skyline as follows:

“The potential for development within the SUE to impact on the skyline when viewed from the north and the east must be taken into account and addressed within the masterplan for the site.”

Under the heading Northampton Today, paragraph 12.6 refers to the Northampton Landscape Sensitivity and Green Infrastructure Study. It states that:

“The distinctive landform, which provides views from/ to Northampton including: the Limestone ridge to the south-east between Whiston and Hunsbury; ... are all also areas of high sensitivity.”

Policy S10 – Sustainable Development Principles

Policy S10 states:

“Development will:

... i)  Protect, conserve and enhance the natural and built environment ... j)  Promote the creation of Green Infrastructure networks ...”

Policy H1 – Housing Density and Mix and Type of Dwellings

Policy H1 states:

“... Housing developments will be expected to make the most efficient use of land having regard to the following considerations:

a)  The location and setting of the site;

b)  The existing character and density of the local area;

... g)  The impact on the amenities of occupiers of neighbouring properties.

...”
Section 10.0 Built Environment

The introduction to Section 10.0 introduces the Northampton Landscape Sensitivity and Green Infrastructure Study (which is discussed in sections 4.5.2 and 6.2.2 below) as follows:

“Further Landscape Sensitivity and Green Infrastructure Studies have also been carried out for the towns in West Northamptonshire. These studies provide additional broad advice on the overall sensitivity of an area, including historic character, green infrastructure, biodiversity and overall landscape sensitivity. These studies have informed the selection of the areas for development identified in this plan. The development of areas highlighted as having High Landscape Sensitivity in the study is not precluded, but it does mean that additional care and appropriate mitigation will be required when planning for new development…” (para 10.7)

Policy BN1 – Green Infrastructure Connections

Policy BN1 addresses how Green Infrastructure (GI) will be conserved, managed and enhanced. GI is defined as:

“a network comprising the broadest range of multi-functional green spaces, their connections and other environmental features including but not limited to parks, private green spaces, woodlands, wetlands, open and running water, wastelands and disturbed grounds, rivers and canals and their banks, roads and rail corridors, public rights of way, allotments, cemeteries and churchyards.” (Supporting paragraph 10.9)

Policy BN1 states:

“Green Infrastructure corridors of subregional and local importance as set out in Figure 6 of the Joint Core Strategy will be recognised for their important contribution to sense of place and conserved, managed and enhanced by:

1) Incorporating existing and identified future networks into new development proposals
2) Securing contributions from development or other sources for the creation of and future management of the green infrastructure networks;

Measures to enhance and provide new Green Infrastructure provision will:

a) Be designed and delivered sustainably with prudent use of natural resources;

b) Be designed to the highest quality in terms of appearance, access provision and biodiversity enhancement and protection;

c) Reflect local character through the planting of native and other climate appropriate species and consideration of natural and cultural heritage features;

…”

The closest Green Infrastructure corridor to the application site shown on Figure 6 of the JCS is sub regional corridor 1 the Nene (Newnham-Northampton) which runs along the valley bottom approximately 1.5km north of the site.

Supporting paragraph 10.12 states that the Northamptonshire-wide approach to Green Infrastructure is set out within the Landscape Character Assessment (River Nene Regional
May 2015

Land South of Brackmills

Park (2008) Northamptonshire Environmental Character and Green Infrastructure Suite v 2.2) which is supported by a prioritisation and management strategy for the network as well as identifying areas for future enhancement. It also states that the Northampton Landscape Sensitivity and Green Infrastructure Study by Living Landscapes (2009) identifies GI assets and opportunities, and provides a framework for planning GI at the site specific level, advising how development can enhance the GI networks.

Objective 14 of the JCS states:

“To protect natural species present in West Northamptonshire and enhance the existing strategic green infrastructure network, including biodiversity corridors, by incorporating and designing these into Sustainable Urban Extensions (SUEs) at Northampton, Daventry, Towcester and Brackley.”

Policy BN5 – the Historic Environment and Landscape

Policy BN5 addresses the historic environment and landscape. Supporting text at paragraph 10.32 states that:

“In addition to natural features, such as green infrastructure networks and habitats, the historic environment is an important element of the overall landscape sensitivity and reflects human interaction with geology, topography and the natural environment over time.”

In relation to landscape, this policy addresses how the historic environment has shaped the landscape and contributes to overall landscape sensitivity.

In relation to areas of landscape sensitivity Policy BN5 states:

“... development in areas of landscape sensitivity ... will be required to:

1. Sustain and enhance the heritage and landscape features which contribute to the character of the area including:

... 

c) the skyline and landscape settings of towns and villages:

...

3. Be sympathetic to locally distinctive landscape features, design styles and materials in order to contribute to sense of place

...”


Paragraph 2.3 in the introductory text to Chapter 2 of the Northampton Local Plan states:

“... South of the river there is a defined ridge line, seen from the town centre, which extends from Hunsbury Hill through Hardingstone to Great Houghton in the east. ....”
Policy E7 Skyline Development

The Local Plan Proposals Map (see Appendix 5 (Appendices Volume I)) indicates that an Area of Skyline Conservation Policy E7 runs across the application site and continuing eastwards wrapping around woodland at Brackmills Country Park.

Saved Policy E7 states:

“When considering, in the context of policy E1, the impact of proposed development upon the landscape, special importance will be attached to its effect upon the skyline of the following areas:

between Great Houghton and Hardingstone (as seen from the Nene Valley to the north)

...”

Policy E1 has been replaced by the adopted Core Strategy and policy E7 can no longer be considered in its context.

The supporting text to Policy E7 states:

“The topography of Northampton is another important feature which has influenced the growth of the town. The areas of major expansion in the east and south have both been developed in the context of the major characteristics of the landscape. The southern skyline from Hardingstone to Great Houghton and Delapre Park to Hunsbury Hill appears remarkably free from development. ... It is important that the skylines around the town are safeguarded to ensure that these important elements of the landscape are retained. For any development to be considered appropriate, it should be low rise and should seek to maintain and enhance existing landscape features. ... Between Great Houghton and Hardingstone, the skyline provides a strong feature within which Brackmills employment area is contained. ...”

(para 2.21)

3.3. Local Guidance

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

- Northamptonshire Environmental Character Assessment, version 2.2, April 2008 (River Nene Regional Park CIC)
- Northampton Landscape Sensitivity and Green Infrastructure Study, Feb 2009 (River Nene Regional Park CIC)

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

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 6.0 for ease of reference.

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).

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 discuss designated landscapes after having described landscape character and visual receptors earlier in the chapter.

4.2. Site Description

The context of the site can be seen on Figures 6, 7 and 10 (Appendices Volume II, Appendix 13).

The site is situated approximately 3.7km to the southeast of Northampton town centre and comprises an area of some 45.07ha of mainly arable agricultural fields, within countryside and to the immediate east of Hardingstone and north of Wootton. The site is bisected into two parcels by Landimore Road which is lined with tall light columns, the parcel to the west being 20.51ha and the eastern section being 24.56ha.

The site is bounded by the existing residential areas of Hardingstone along The Warren and Newport Pagnell Road to the west and southwest (with rear garden fences and boundaries backing onto the fields within the site) and the existing suburban residential areas of Wootton to the south beyond Newport Pagnell Road which is lined with tall light columns. Hardingstone Conservation Area is situated to the northwest of the site. The location of the Conservation Area in relation to the Appeal site is shown on Figure 11 of the DAS; the Conservation Area does not abut the site (see Appendix 11 for a plan of the Conservation Area (Appendices Volume I)).

The north of the site is enclosed by 28ha of mixed deciduous and evergreen plantation woodland with areas of grassland and scrub known as Brackmills Wood and Brackmills Country Park, beyond which Brackmills Industrial Estate extends northwards into the Nene Valley. The estate is a large business park within Northampton.

The site wraps around Pagnell Court, a small group of dwellings surrounded by TPO trees situated outside of the site along its southern boundary in the eastern part of the site and accessed from Newport Pagnell Road.

The southern part of the eastern boundary of the site is a single track road (The Green) which defines the District boundary with South Northamptonshire beyond which is a former
May 2015

Land South of Brackmills

quarry and landfill site that has been restored to rough grassland and woodland planting. The Northern part of the eastern boundary is defined by a field hedge beyond which lies an arable field. The appeal site forms part of a rolling agricultural landscape set within an urban context.

The site and the arable field and the former quarry and landfill site to the east and south east of the site form part of the allocation for in the region of 1,300 dwellings and associated infrastructure and open space under Policy N6 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (Part 1), adopted December 2014.

A residential development for approximately 300 dwellings has been granted planning permission on what were fields to the east and south-east of the easternmost part of Wootton, south of Newport Pagnell Road and the Appeal site, and is currently under construction.

Public footpath KN6 extends from the northwest in Hardingstone across the site south-easwards towards Pagnell Court and onto Newport Pagnell Road.

There is a network of powerlines and associated pylons extending across the site managed by Western Power.

4.3. Landscape Features

The arable fields within the site contain a small number of landscape features comprising hedges, trees, scrub and a small area of woodland. Within the site, there are five sections of hedgerow. These are as follows:

- Fragmented overgrown section of native species hedgerow / scrub with some trees, running roughly north-west to south-east along part of the public footpath (KN6);
- Fragmented section of native species hedgerow / scrub (approximate length 50m) running north-south from the northern boundary of the site due north of Pagnell Court;
- Sections of native species hedge running north-south from The Green to the boundary with Brackmills Wood. The hedgerow contains some large gaps along its length and four mature oak trees; and
- Two continuous lengths of hedgerow with occasional trees located on the western and eastern edges of Landimore Road. The lengths were planted when the road was constructed.

Hedgerows within or on the boundaries of the site are dominated by hawthorn (Crataegus monogyna) with abundant blackthorn (Prunus spinosa) and occasional field maple (Acer campestre).

Principal individual trees within the site comprise the four oak trees within the hedge running north-south from The Green to Brackmills Wood mentioned above, and a single mature oak tree near the northern boundary adjacent to Landimore Road. There is also a small area of woodland to the north of Pagnell Court on the southern edge of the site, and the occasional small tree on other boundaries.

There are some landscape features on the boundaries of the site comprising:
May 2015

**Land South of Brackmills**

- A mixture of rear garden fence boundaries and scrub and occasional trees along the back of properties on The Warren (west) and Newport Pagnell Road (south).
- The remaining section of the southern boundary is marked by a native species hedgerow with occasional trees; this runs along Newport Pagnell Road and The Green.
- The vegetation along the eastern boundary with the adjoining arable field comprises a gappy native hedge with some small trees.
- The northern boundary has sections of stock proof fence enclosing the site. Immediately outside of the northern site boundary there is a substantial area of plantation woodland (Brackmills Wood) containing native species including silver birch, Scots pine, oak, ash and cherry. The wood is approximately 8 - 10m tall.

**4.4. Topography**

The topography of the site and study area is shown on Figures 1 and 2 (Appendices Volume II, Appendix 13). Elevations stated below have been gleaned from these plans and from the more detailed topographical survey of the site and OS maps. The site lies on high ground which falls southwards towards Wootton Brook and northwards towards Brackmills and the River Nene. It forms part of an elevated section of land running west-east from Huntsbury Hill within the urban area of Northampton, to Hardingstone, continuing across the site and the countryside to the east as far as Cogenhoe over 5km north east of the site. The highest point within the site is located on the western edge adjoining Hardingstone at approximately 108m AOD and the lowest point is in the south-east corner near the junction of Newport Pagnell Road with The Green at approximately 83m AOD. The land continues to rise to the east of the site, reaching between 110-120m AOD approximately 0.5km east of the site boundary. The ground falls northwards from the site to the River Nene at approximately 55m AOD before rising again north of the River Nene. To the south of the site the land falls to Wootton Brook at below 75m AOD, a small tributary to the Nene, before rising again south of Wootton Brook.

**4.5. Key Local Guidance Documents**

4.5.1. **Northamptonshire Environmental Character and Green Infrastructure Suite, version 2.2, April 2008 (River Nene Regional Park CIC)**

The Northamptonshire Environmental Character Strategy (ECS) and Green Infrastructure Suite (GIS) are two initiatives placing the environment at the heart of decision making enabling a proactive approach to planning, design and project delivery.

**Landscape Character**

Character assessments form the core of the ECS, mapping and describing the landscape resource. They are detailed assessments of current landscape, biodiversity and historic character, and are supported by guidelines to facilitate positive management in the future.

The ECS is published and presented online as a suite of documents which outline the policy context in regards to historic, biodiversity and current landscape character at the national, regional and local level. The documents provide detailed assessments and descriptions of the physical environment of Northamptonshire.
The Current Northamptonshire Landscape Character Assessment which forms part of this suite of documents provides the most detailed assessment of the study area and identifies the most localised published changes in landscape character. It identifies 19 landscape character types (excluding urban areas), and 63 rural landscape character areas across the county. As can be seen on Figure 8 (Appendices Volume II, Appendix 13), the entire site lies within the Limestone Valley Slopes landscape character type (LCT) and 12a Wollaston to Irchester landscape character area (LCA) with the area to the east and south covered by the Undulating Claylands LCT and 6a The Tove Catchment LCA. Areas defined as Urban adjoin the site to the south and west, and lie a short distance to the north.

Green Infrastructure

The GIS provides a GI model and strategy for the county and include a report *Making the Connection – Strategic Green Infrastructure Framework for Northamptonshire* which presents the strategy.

4.5.2. Northampton Landscape Sensitivity and Green Infrastructure Study 2009 (Living Landscapes Consultancy)

The Northampton Landscape Sensitivity and Green Infrastructure Study 2009 was prepared by Living Landscapes Consultancy Ltd. on behalf of the River Nene Regional Park CIC, who commissioned the study on behalf of the Joint Planning Unit. The Study covered all land within Northampton Borough as well as adjoining parishes in Daventry District, the Borough of Wellingborough and South Northamptonshire District. The study was prepared as part of the evidence base for the Local Development Framework, in particular the preparation of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy. Key stakeholders were consulted on a draft of the document but it was not subject to public consultation. The stated overall scope of the Study was:

- "To provide a broad outline of the baseline resource;

- To provide a review of the sensitivity of the landscape and landscape character, biodiversity, cultural heritage, flood zones and minerals resources surrounding Northampton;

- To contribute to the identification of an optimal green infrastructure strategy for Northampton as it grows to include 40,000 new homes;

- To assist the public sector agencies involved in growth decisions in their understanding of the relative sensitivity of the areas surrounding the town to proposals for growth;

- To progress the understanding of sensitivity in relation to green infrastructure, and to use this to guide an optimal green infrastructure network linked to Northampton’s growth; and

- To identify a schedule for proposed green infrastructure investment associated with growth proposals for the town.” (Paragraph 1.2.3.)

4.6. ZTV Studies

A ZTV study was produced for the submitted LVIA based on potential 3 storey (10m high) buildings within the application site (see Drawing Number 3238_02_03_A in Appendix 6
May 2015

Land South of Brackmills

(Appendices Volume I)). The analysis was carried out using a topographic model and including principal settlements and woodlands modelled to the heights shown to provide a more realistic indication of potential visibility. It does not include many smaller scale features such as small woods, individual trees, hedges or individual buildings and therefore gives an exaggerated impression of visibility.

More detailed ZTV studies have been produced for this updated LVIA to provide more accurate information on the potential visibility of the proposed development based on the layout shown on the Scale Framework Plan (drawing 3238_204 Rev A) submitted with the planning application using heights shown on the Figures below, as follows (see Figures in Appendices Volume II, Appendix 13).

- Figure 3 – indicates more accurately the areas of potential visibility of the highest parts of the proposed development based on a ZTV run using a more detailed digital surface model. This ZTV was created using detailed Digital Surface Model (DSM) data recorded from aerial photography at 2m² resolution. This records smaller features than shown on Drawing Number 3238_02_03_A including landform, woodlands, settlements, and larger trees, but does not take into account every localised feature such as some walls, small trees and narrow hedges.

- Figure 4 – shows an enlarged area of Figure 4 focused on the site and its immediate surrounds so that it can be seen in more detail where the proposed development would theoretically be visible from closest to the site.

In addition a ‘bareground’ ZTV was produced for this updated LVIA at the request of IEL as follows.

- Figure 5 is the same as Figure 3 but run using detailed Digital Terrain Model (DTM) data recorded from aerial photography at 2m² resolution. This does not include any above ground features and provides a less realistic ZTV than that shown on Figures 3 and 4. It is not LDA Design’s normal method to produce ‘bareground’ ZTVs for residential developments because it is less accurate and less useful than ZTVs produced including surface features. It was produced at the request of IEL.

The ZTV models do not incorporate any proposed mitigation planting and its potential effect on visibility.

A full description of the method for producing the ZTV studies is included in Appendix 3 (Appendices Volume I).

The Digital Surface Model (DSM) and Digital Terrain Model (DTM) data used to produce Figures 3, 4 and 5 was derived from photography captured on 24/5/2009. Brackmills Wood will have grown taller since 2009 and is likely to provided additional screening, reducing areas of visibility to the north of the site within the Nene Valley and Northampton further than indicated on the Figures.

Extent of Theoretical Visibility

Figure 3 indicates that there would be limited potential visibility from the north-west, west and south-west beyond the urban edge of Northampton adjoining the site. To the north and north-west there would potentially be visibility from areas of land within Brackmills Country Park and Industrial Estate, and from parts of the Nene Valley and Northampton north of the Nene Valley. The ZTV indicates that potential visibility from the east would be
Land South of Brackmills

limited to two parcels of land adjoining the site (within the allocated SUE) and small areas up to approximately 1 – 1.5km before the land falls away into the valley of Wootton Brook from where the development would not be visible. Further east small areas of potential visibility occur from higher land beyond Wootton Brook at approximately 2.5 – 3km from the site. To the south the proposed development would potentially be visible from fields sloping down towards Wootton Brook, with visibility reducing in the valley bottom and then increasing as land rises south of the Brook. The greatest extent of potential visibility occurs from the elevated farmland south of the Wootton Brook valley.

Figure 4 indicates that there would be potential visibility of the proposed development in areas immediately adjacent or in close proximity to the site boundary. Potential visibility is largely filtered by the first line of existing residential built form to the west along The Warren in Hardingstone and to the south on Newport Pagnell Road at Wootton. Here potential visibility is shown to be channelled along some roads. The ZTV suggests views are likely to be available through breaks in the woodland at Brackmills Country Park, with potential visibility extending down the valley side to some areas within Brackmills Industrial Estate. To the east, the ZTV illustrates that potential views are likely to be available from the adjoining fields, though visibility is shown to be increasingly filtered by field boundary vegetation beyond the first two to three hedgerows. This is most evident on the allocated site (former landfill) to the south east of the proposed development site. To the south, potential visibility is shown to extend beyond half a kilometre over mainly agricultural land, although a combination of rising landform and field boundary hedgerows largely contain the ZTV to fields neighbouring the existing settlement of Wootton. The Residential Development Under Construction (Wootton Fields) to the east of Wootton shown on Figure 4 is not included in the ZTV model and houses will curtail visibility within and south of this area, in a manner not shown on the Figure. Because Wootton Fields has planning consent and is being constructed it forms part of the existing baseline for the purpose of this LVIA.

4.7. Landscape and Townscape Character

Paragraphs 5.13-5.15 of GLVIA, 3rd edition indicate that 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.

The 4km study area is covered by the following landscape and townscape character assessments:

- **National Scale**: Natural England co-ordinated the identification and description of Landscape Character Areas across England. The site lies within National Character Area (NCA) 89: Northamptonshire Vales. (Appendix 7 (Appendices Volume I))

- **Regional Scale**: East Midlands Regional Landscape Character Assessment, April 2010 for Natural England. The site lies within regional landscape character type 5C: Undulating Mixed Farmlands.

- **County Scale**: Current Northamptonshire Landscape Character Assessment, November 2008.
May 2015

Land South of Brackmills


In order to carry out a coherent and efficient assessment of effects on landscape character, the effects of the proposed development will be assessed against the landscape baseline information presented in the Current Northamptonshire Landscape Character Assessment and the townscape baseline information presented in the Northampton Landscape Sensitivity and Green Infrastructure Study. The Current Northamptonshire Landscape Character Assessment provides the most detailed assessment of the study area and identifies the most localised changes in landscape character. The Northampton Landscape Sensitivity and Green Infrastructure Study provides a simple assessment of townscape character of Northampton.

4.7.1. Local Landscape Character

Local landscape character types and areas defined in the Current Northamptonshire Landscape Character Assessment are shown on Figure 8 (Appendices Volume II, Appendix 13). The Current Landscape Character Assessment explains landscape character types and areas as follows:

“Landscape character types are distinct types of landscape that are relatively homogeneous in character. They are generic in nature in that they may occur in different parts of the country, but wherever they occur they share broadly similar combinations of geology, landform, drainage patterns, vegetation, and historical land use and settlement pattern. By comparison, landscape character areas are unique and geographically discrete, sharing characteristics of the broader landscape type to which they belong.” (Section 1.3.)

Landscape character types (LCTs) and landscape character areas (LCAs) within 4km of the site are:

- Limestone Valley Slopes (LCT)
  - 12a Wollaston to Irchester (LCA) (contains the Site)
- Undulating Claylands
  - 6a The Tove Catchment (2.7km, south west)
  - 6b Hackleton Claylands (adjacent to the Site, south)
- Broad River Valley Floodplain
  - 18c The Nene, Duston Mill to Billing Wharf (0.7km, north)
- Undulating Hills and Valleys
  - 13b Bugbrooke and Daventry (1.8km, south west)
- River Valley Floodplain
  - 17c Brampton Valley Floodplain (3.8km, north west)

Effects are assessed at the most detailed landscape character area scale, with the description of the LCT within which LCAs lie providing detail on the baseline assessment of the character areas.
May 2015

Land South of Brackmills

The entire site lies within 12a Wollaston to Irchester LCA (which forms part of the Limestone Valley Slopes LCT). Much of the area to the east and south of the site is covered by the 6b Hackleton Claylands LCA (which forms part of the Undulating Claylands LCT); the detailed ZTV study (Figure 3 (Appendices Volume II, Appendix 13)) indicates that the proposed development would theoretically be visible from extensive areas of this LCA. The detailed ZTV study indicates that the proposed development could potentially be visible from parts of the 18c The Nene – Duston Mill to Billing Wharf LCA (which forms part of the Broad River Valley Floodplain LCT) which is located to the north of the site beyond Brackmills Industrial Estate. Effects on these three LCAs are assessed in section 6.0.

Character areas 6a The Tove Catchment, 13b Bugbrooke and Daventry and 17c Brampton Valley Floodplain are excluded from detailed assessment because there would be limited visibility of the proposed development from them, they lie beyond Northampton and alongside or beyond the M1, and because effects would be Negligible.

A detailed baseline description and an assessment of effects on the following local landscape character areas are given in section 6.2:

- 12a Wollaston to Irchester
- 6b Hackleton Claylands
- 18c The Nene, Duston Mill to Billing Wharf

The effects of the proposed development are assessed against both the baseline information and site observations. Extracts from the landscape character assessment are included in Appendix 8 (Appendices Volume I).

4.7.2. Local Townscape Character

Townscape character types (TCTs) are shown on Figure 12 (Appendices Volume I, Appendix 9) taken from the Northampton Landscape Sensitivity and Green Infrastructure Study 2009. TCTs within the study area include:

- Historic Core, Pre-1835 (at Hardingstone, Delepre, Collingtree, Wootton and Northampton town centre. Hardingstone is the closest to the site, lying approximately 0.1km north west of the site boundary)
- Victorian and Early 20thC, c. 1835 – c. 1920 (at Far Cotton approximately 2.4km north west of the site, and areas north and east of the town centre)
- Interwar Development, c.1921 – c.1950 (at Far Cotton 1.4km north west of the site and areas north and east of the town centre)
- Post-war and Overspill Development, c.1950 – c.1990 (at Hardingstone, Brackmills, Wootton, Collingtree and Nun Mills Road). Hardingstone is the closest to the site, adjoining the site boundary.
- Modern Development c.1990 – Present (Wootton, Grange Park, New South Bridge Road and Brackmills Industrial Estate). Wootton is the closest to the site, south of Newport Pagnell Road to the south.
May 2015

Land South of Brackmills

Analysis of the detailed ZTVs Figures 3 and 4 (Appendices Volume II, Appendix 13) and site work has identified that there would be very little potential for effects on townscape character for all TCTs except discrete areas of:

- Historic Core, Pre-1835 at Hardingstone;
- Post-war and Overspill Development, c.1950 – c.1990 at Hardingstone; and
- Modern Development c.1990 – Present at Wootton.

These three parts of TCTs have been defined as townscape character areas (TCAs) for the purpose of this assessment. Effects on them are assessed in section 6.0.

4.8. Visual Receptors

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.

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.

17 representative viewpoints were agreed with Northampton Borough Council’s landscape consultant IEL in the Landscape SoCG. Eight of these were originally agreed with Northampton Borough Council and West Northamptonshire Development Corporation for the submitted LVIA (Viewpoints 1 to 8). After the Planning Application was refused and given that one of the issues in dispute is potential effects of the development on the skyline, and that supporting text to Policy N6 of the Core Strategy (paragraph 12.46) states that “The potential for development within the SUE to impact on the skyline when viewed from the north and the east must be taken into account and addressed within the masterplan for the site”, NBC’s Principal Planning Officer was consulted to ask if they could identify any specific locations with skyline views that are of concern to the Council. Only viewpoints agreed in the submitted LVIA were identified by the Principal Planning Officer as follows:

“One particular area where the site is visible is from Cliftonville Road which rises up from the Nene Valley with views across towards Hardingstone on the skyline [this is the location of previously agreed Viewpoint 8]. In addition, the Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment in the ES at page 122 onwards identifies viewpoints.” (See correspondence in Appendix 10 (Appendices Volume I)).

Following that the detailed ZTV was prepared and fieldwork undertaken with the objective of locating the clearest views from the town and Nene valley to the north and the landscape to the east, and two additional viewpoints were proposed by LDA Design in the draft landscape SoCG (Viewpoints 9 and 10). IEL requested a further seven. 17 representative viewpoint locations are shown on Figures 3 and 4 (Appendices Volume II, Appendix 13).
May 2015
Land South of Brackmills

4.8.1. **Visual Environment of Existing Site**

As well as the Representative Viewpoints (hereafter referred to as Viewpoints) which are used to inform impact assessment judgements, Illustrative Viewpoints have been selected to illustrate relevant points within the LVIA, and are supported by photograph panels included in Appendix 15 (Appendices Volume II).

The relatively flat to gently sloping nature of the site along with the mature vegetation enclosing the site to the north and settlement Northampton to the west and south means that the site is screened from many locations in the north, west and south-west sections of the study area. It is possible to view small parts the site from some locations to the north, east and south (e.g. Viewpoints 5, 6 and 8) but in many cases it is often barely discernible within the context of the view, and largely screened by vegetation, development and/or landform.

360 degree views from the PRoW within the site (KN6 – see Figure 7) or on the site boundary are shown at Viewpoints 11, 12 and 13 on Figures 9.11, 9.12 and 9.13 (Appendices Volume II, Appendix 14). Viewpoints 12 and 13 illustrate the views out of the site from the highest parts of this PRoW and show how the site is enclosed by development, trees and landform with only narrow and limited views across the Nene Valley to the north between woodland, and distant views to high land south of the valley of Wootton Brook to the south above houses and between road light columns on adjacent roads and within Wootton. The rising topography within the allocated land to the east of the site curtails views in this direction (refer also to Illustrative Viewpoint I in Appendix 15 (Appendices Volume II) – rising land as well as vegetation to the right of the view screens further east).

Views to the site from the sections of Newport Pagnell Road and The Green which run along the site boundary are over well maintained roadside hedges (refer to Viewpoints 1, 2 and 15). Views to the site from the sections of Newport Pagnell Road and The Green east of the site up to about 400m become partly screened by roadside vegetation; beyond this approximate distance the site is not visible from these roads. Views towards the site from the surrounding Public Rights of Way network are limited due to intervening topography, buildings and vegetation.

Residential properties located along the perimeter of the site to the west and south have views across the site, but these buildings largely obscure the site from the adjacent roads that lie behind them (Newport Pagnell Road (south) and The Warren (west).

Existing development within Northampton is prominent in many views of or towards the site. From the Nene Valley and Northampton to the north large scale buildings in Brackmills Industrial Estate, electricity pylons and overhead wires, and development on the skyline within Hardingstone is visible (see Viewpoints 7, 8, 9 and 10). From the south and south-east development within Northampton south of the River Nene is frequently visible (see Viewpoints 1, 2 and 5). From the east development within Northampton is less visible in views towards the site due to the rising landform and vegetation east of the site (see Viewpoints 3 and 6.

4.8.2. **Settlements**

Settlement within the Study Area varies from the nucleated villages within the rural landscape and the more densely populated urban area of Northampton.
May 2015  

Land South of Brackmills

The following settlements lie within the 4km study area as can be seen on Figure 6 (Appendices Volume II, Appendix 13):

- Northampton, adjoining the site
- Preston Deanery, 1.8km, south-east
- Collingtree, 1.7km, south-west
- Great Houghton, 1.8km, north-east
- Quinton, 2.5km, south
- Little Houghton, 3.1km, north-east
- Milton Malsor, 3.4km, south-west
- Piddington and Hackleton, 3.2km south-east

There are a number of settlements listed above which are excluded from the detailed assessment where it is considered that, due to a combination of distance, intervening built form, topography and vegetation, visual effects would be of Negligible scale and magnitude. This has been informed by analysis of the detailed ZTV Figure 3 (Appendices Volume II, Appendix 13) and site visits. These are Preston Deanery, Collingtree, Great Houghton, Little Houghton Milton Malsor, Fiddington and Hackleton.

Effects on Northampton (including Grange Park) and Quinton are assessed in section 6.0.

4.8.3. Roads and Rail

Key Routes

The key routes that run through the study area that have potential to be affected by views of the development are:

- M1 motorway (2.7km, south west)
- A45 (0.7km, west)
- A428 (1.9km, north)
- Other ‘A’ roads within Northampton
- London to Northampton Railway Line (2.8km west)

These routes can be seen on Figure 6 (Appendices Volume II, Appendix 13) and are excluded from the detailed assessment as it is considered that, due to a combination of intervening built form, topography and vegetation, distance from the site and the developed context through which they pass, as well as the direction and speed of travel, visual effects would be of Negligible scale and magnitude. This has been informed by analysis of the detailed ZTV Figure 3 and site visits.

Local Roads

Local roads within Northampton are included in the assessment on the settlement of Northampton. This assessment considers local roads outside the urban area of Northampton. The names of roads referred to can be seen on Figure 7 (Appendices Volume II, Appendix 13).
May 2015

Land South of Brackmills

The detailed ZTV studies (Figures 3 and 4 (Appendices Volume II, Appendix 13)) indicate that there would potentially be visibility of the proposed development from some parts of local roads within the study area, to the north east, east and south of the site. Views of the proposed development from local roads in other areas are unlikely.

Effects on views for road users are likely to vary greatly depending on factors including distance from the proposed development, the context in which it is seen (e.g. seen with or without existing development), the amount of the development that is visible and the direction of travel. The local roads have been divided into the following groups for the purposes of this assessment because they would potentially experience similar scale of effects:

1) Local roads adjoining and within approximately 0.5km of the site where the proposed development would potentially be visible in close views. The larger scale detailed ZTV study (Figure 4) indicates that there would potentially be extensive visibility of the proposed development from these roads which comprise Newport Pagnell Road, Landimore Road and The Green.

2) Local roads beyond 0.5km. The detailed ZTV study Figure 3 indicates that potential visibility from these roads would be patchy with extensive lengths with no visibility.

Summary

In summary, effects on the following road routes outside the Northampton urban area are considered in section 6.0:

- Local Road Group 1 adjoining and within approximately 0.5km of the site
- Local Road Group 2 between approximately 0.5 and 4km of the site.

4.8.4. Recreational Routes

Long Distance Walking Routes

The following long distance walking routes lie within the study area, as shown on Figure 6 (Appendices Volume II, Appendix 13):

- Nene Way – (1.7km, north). This route runs east-west through the northern part of the study area along the River Nene and the detailed ZTV (Figure 3 (Appendices Volume II, Appendix 13)) shows potential visibility of the proposed development from parts of it.

- Midshires Way – (3.5km south east). This route passes within the study area for a short length north of Salcey Forest. The detailed ZTV (Figure 3) shows potential visibility of the proposed development from parts of it but, at this distance, effects would be of Negligible scale and magnitude, and it is not assessed further.

Effects on users of the Nene Way Long Distance Walking route are assessed in section 6.0.

River Nene

The River Nene (1.7km, north) is a navigable waterway and is included in this section because users would primarily comprise boaters, many of whom use the water course for recreational purposes. It runs east-west through the northern part of the study area and the detailed ZTV (Figure 3 (Appendices Volume II, Appendix 13)) shows potential visibility of
May 2015
Land South of Brackmills

the proposed development from parts of it. Effects on users of the River Nene are assessed in section 6.0.

National and Regional Cycle Routes

The following national and regional cycle routes lie within the study area, as shown on Figure 6 (Appendices Volume II, Appendix 13):

- National Cycle Route 6 – (0.8km, east)

Effects on this cycle route are assessed in section 6.0.

There are also a number of local cycle routes within Northampton but these do not pass close to the site and are mainly within the urban area, and are unlikely to experience effects greater than Negligible scale and magnitude, and are not assessed further.

Public Rights of Way

As shown on Figures 6 and 7 (Appendices Volume II, Appendix 13) there are a number of public rights of way (PRoW) within the study area. The footpath references on Figure 7 have been taken from the Northamptonshire County Council Interactive Map².

Footpath reference KN6 crosses the middle and western portion of the site linking Hardingstone with the B526 Newport Pagnell Road adjacent to The Warren. Footpath reference KU15/KU17 runs along a track approximately 800m to the east of the site linking The Green with Brackmills Industrial Estate to the north.

There is a concentration of public rights of way located to the south-east of the site near Grange Cottages (references KM1, KM2, KM3 and KM4), these cross fields and provide recreational routes which link the small village of Preston Deanery to the B526 Newport Pagnell Road and Wootton. There are also a number of public rights of way within the built up area of Northampton and within the wider rural landscape outside Northampton.

Analysis of the detailed ZTVs (Figures 3 and 4 (Appendices Volume II, Appendix 13)) and field work has identified that:

- The proposed development would be visible from PRoW KN6 which runs through the site.
- The proposed development would also be visible from the western end of PRoW KM1 which runs across fields from Newport Pagnell Road towards Grange Cottages where it meets PRoW KM2.
- There is potential for visibility of the proposed development from the western part of PRoW KM2 to the south of the site. However, this section runs south of a field hedge which would obscure views of the development from most parts. A residential development (Wootton Fields) is also under construction north of this path, which is not included in the ZTV model, and is likely to provide further screening to that

²http://maps.northamptonshire.gov.uk/#x=479000,y=269000,zoom=0,base=NCC,layers=search,fade=false,mX=0,mY=0
May 2015

Land South of Brackmills

indicated on the ZTVs. If the proposed development is visible it would be much less prominent than existing development in the foreground. It is therefore not assessed further.

- The PRoW within the built up area of Northampton are unlikely to have views of the proposed development due to intervening buildings, topography or vegetation which screen views. They are therefore not assessed further.

- Other PRoW outside the site are unlikely to experience extensive visibility and would experience limited or no effects due to intervening landform, vegetation and development screening most or all of the proposed development, the urban context within which the development would frequently be seen, and distance from the proposals. They are therefore not assessed further.

Effects on PRoW KN6 and KM1 are assessed at section 6.0.

Summary

In summary, effects on the following recreational routes are considered in section 6.0:

- Nene Way Long Distance Footpath (1.7km, north)
- National Cycle Route 6 (0.8km, east)
- PRoW KN6 (within site) and KM1 (0.3km south east)

4.8.5. Accessible and Recreational Landscapes

There are a number of accessible or recreational landscapes within the 4km study area including Brackmills Country Park, Becketts Park, Midsummer Meadows Recreation Ground, Foxfield at Grange Park, Cherry Orchard Park, Wootton Hall Park, Blacky More Park, Bridge Meadow at Wootton, Delapre Park and Golf Centre, Delapre Lake, the south western tip of Billing Aquadrome, a water ski club, sports pitches and play areas. There are also a number of nature reserves within the River Nene Valley which have some public access including Barnes Meadow Nature Reserve, Becks Meadow Nature Reserve and Abington Meadows Nature Reserve. Most of these are identified on Figure 6 (Appendices Volume II, Appendix 13). Analysis of the detailed ZTVs (Figures 3 and 4 (Appendices Volume II, Appendix 13)) and field work has identified that all of these except Brackmills Country Park and Foxfield at Grange Park are unlikely to experience extensive visibility and would experience limited or no effects due to intervening landform, vegetation and development screening most or all of the proposed development, the urban context within which the development would frequently be seen, and distance from the proposals. They are therefore not assessed further.

Brackmills Country Park which adjoins the site to the north, and users of Foxfield at Grange Park which lies approximately 1.9km south of the site are assessed in section 6.0.

4.8.6. Specific Viewpoints

There are no specific viewpoints identified within the 4km study area.
4.9. Landscape Designations and Value

4.9.1. Designated Landscapes

There are no designated landscapes within the study area. No designated landscapes would be affected by the proposed development and they are not assessed further.

4.9.2. Local Landscape Value

Within the 4km study area there are a number of features that contribute to the value of the local landscape, such as Long Distance Footpaths, Public Rights of Way, Delapre Abbey, Brackmills Country Park, Hardingstone Conservation Area and the recreational and ecological uses in the Nene Valley. The site and its immediate surroundings feature a number of amenities such as public footpaths as well as the Country Park. The landscape within the site and the study area is not covered by any national or local landscape designations. However, saved Policy E7 of the Northampton Local Plan (which covers part of the site and land to the east (see Appendix 5 (Appendices Volume I)) indicates the area covered by E7 as being more valued than the surrounding area due to the role that it plays in views from the Nene Valley to the north; the area covered by Policy E7 is therefore assessed as Local value.

The Nene Valley is valued locally as indicated by The Nene Way Long Distance Footpath that follows the length of its route as well as a number of partly accessible wildlife sites with circular walks including an SPA at the Northampton Washlands. The above elements and other recreational uses are considered to demonstrate that the landscape within the Nene Valley is of Local Value.

The wider rural landscape within the study area and the town of Northampton are assessed as Community value.

None of the other specific features are considered to be features in need of assessment in their own right, largely as a result of them being considered elsewhere in the assessment.
5.0 The Proposed Development

The principal elements of the proposed scheme that are relevant to this LVIA are summarised below. A full description of the scheme is included in the Design and Access Statement (DAS). The planning application was submitted in outline and is accompanied by seven Framework (parameter) Plans for determination, a full Environmental Impact Assessment, an illustrative Masterplan and a Design and Access Statement. All matters are reserved except for means of access. The Framework Plans referred to in this LVIA are as follows:

- 3238_201 Rev A – Access and Movement Framework
- 3238_204 Rev A – Scale Framework
- 3238_205 Rev A – Green Infrastructure Framework
- 3238_207 – Urban Structure and Legibility Framework

The Illustrative Masterplan drawing number 3238/200 is also referred to.

5.1. The Proposal

The proposed development is the same as assessed for the submitted LVIA. The details are summarised below.

The Land South of Brackmills to be developed as a Sustainable Urban Extension to include 1000 dwellings (Use Class C3), supporting retail facilities of up to 1,320 sqm net (Use Classes A1, A2 and A3), food and drink premises of up to 375 sqm net (Use Class A4), a two form entry primary school (Use Class D1) and up to 750 sqm of community uses which may include a medical centre, pharmacy and community centre (Use Class D1).

The built components of the scheme include:

- 1,000 new residential dwellings;
- Up to 1,320 sq.m of retail space (Use Class A1, A2 & A3) in a new local centre;
- A 2 form entry primary school;
- Community uses to include medical centre, pharmacy and community centre space;
- Up to 375 sq.m of food and drink (Use Class A4) [i.e. Public House]

The infrastructure components of the scheme include:

- Creation of a network of green space amounting to up to 9.98ha;
- Provision of a cycle and footpath networks linking Hardingstone and Wootton, Brackmills and the wider Green Infrastructure network;
- Construction of a new road to service development land west of Landimore Road with two points of access onto Landimore Road;
- Construction of a new road to land east of Landimore Road with single points of access/egress off Landimore Road and Newport Pagnell Road; and
May 2015  
**Land South of Brackmills**

- Construction of a new access route from the western portion of the proposed development area out to The Warren for pedestrian/cycle priority use with occasional controlled service access by vehicles.

5.2. **Site Fabric**

There are few trees and hedges within the site and a number on the site boundaries or adjacent to the site. Most of these will be retained and they will be protected during construction in accordance with *BS 5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction. Recommendations*. A small number of landscape features, comprising parts of the site's physical fabric, will need to be modified or removed to accommodate the proposals, as follows:

- A number of short gaps would be made in the existing hedgerows along Landimore Road, Newport Pagnell Road and The Green as well the existing hedgerow within the eastern part of the Site to allow for vehicular and pedestrian access.
- The replacement of arable fields with residential and mixed use development, public open space and green infrastructure.

Other site features including trees and hedges will be retained and incorporated into the development subject to recommendations of an arboriculturalist regarding tree safety and management, and agreement of detailed design with the Local Planning Authority at Reserved Matters stage.

Effects on site fabric would be limited to the removal of features described above.

5.3. **Landscape Design and Green Infrastructure Response**

Landscape and Green Infrastructure considerations were considered as an integral part of the design process as the masterplan evolved. Key aspects of the design that were particularly informed by the landscape assessment were:

- The approach to the skyline issue informed by saved Policy E7 of the Local Plan. This was carefully considered when defining where built development should be located and how development and landscape should be designed. The existing landform within the site is not widely visible on the skyline due to the site being enclosed by woodland to the north, development to the west and south and rising landform to the east, but there is potential for the proposed development to be visible on the skyline from some locations within the landscape and urban area surrounding the site. The design seeks to address this and integrate development into the wider landscape and townscape.

- The Illustrative Masterplan has been structured around swaths of open space including a green infrastructure spine, which runs roughly north-west to south-east along PRoW KN6 across the highest, western part of the site (see item 4 on Figure 45 of the DAS and drawing number 3238_205 Rev A). This green infrastructure spine will be a wide green space which will have an informal and formal treed character, with trees and other planting having the potential to filter views of adjacent buildings. Further planting will be incorporated into the scheme within open spaces and along streets and within public open spaces.
May 2015

Land South of Brackmills

- A green corridor will run around the interface with the northern, eastern and part of the southern boundaries of the site (see drawing number 3238_205 Rev A). This will be a multifunctional green corridor that provides habitat improvements and ecological connectivity. Coordinated with the Access and Movement Framework Plan (see Figures 24 and 27 of the DAS and drawing number 3238_201 Rev A) these green corridors and spaces provide for cycle and pedestrian circulation as appropriate into adjacent publicly accessible green spaces including Brackmills Country Park, delivering objectives set out in the Core Strategy Policy N6 – Northampton South of Brackmills SUE.

- Tree planting within these spaces will provide additional screening of the development to that provided by existing woodland within Brackmills Country Park and development adjoining the site, helping to give it a green and treed appearance when viewed from the surrounding countryside, and Northampton and the Nene Valley to the north, thus softening the development and helping to integrate it into the landscape and minimise effects on the skyline protected by Policy E7. This will continue the existing treed appearance of the developed ‘ridge’ of high land which runs through neighbourhoods in Northampton to the west, and through the site where it adjoins Hardingstone.

- The proposed public open space, routes and Green Infrastructure will safeguard and provide an attractive setting for PRoW KN6 retaining the link between Hardingstone and the Newport Pagnell Road, and provide access to additional new routes and spaces that are currently on land not accessible to the public, increasing the amenity value of the land. This will also allow people in existing communities in Hardingstone and Wootton to have new access links to existing Green Infrastructure areas and routes such as Brackmills Country Park.

- The proposed Green and Blue Infrastructure will also provide opportunities for increasing biodiversity through the introduction of elements including swales and water attenuation areas, grassland and tree and shrub planting.

- The retention and enhancement of existing mature trees and hedgerows (except where hedges are locally broken to enable access) within and on the boundaries of the site. This will help screen or filter views of the proposed development from the surrounding landscape, as well as providing an established ‘green’ setting within and around the new development.

- The principal areas of vegetation within the site comprising a small area of woodland and length of hedgerow north of Pagnell Court, and a length of hedge with four mature oak trees further east, will be incorporated into two open spaces.
  - The wood and hedge north of North of Pagnell Court will be incorporated into a large public space (13 on Figure 45 of the DAS) connecting to the green spine running along PRoW KN6, providing a new green amenity space accessible on an attractive route from Hardingstone.
  - The existing hedge and four mature oak trees running north south in the eastern part of the site will be incorporated into a green corridor that includes a ‘village green’ at its centre (10 on Figure 45 of the DAS). It will provide a Green Infrastructure link between the southern perimeter green corridor, The Green (a minor road) and the further allocated development area within the SUE to the
May 2015

Land South of Brackmills

south of the site, and proposed allotments, the northern perimeter green corridor and Brackmills Country Park to the north of the site.

- The Masterplan responds to the existing urban fabric and character of Hardingstone to the west and Wootton to the south, and the landscape to the east and north. The edge of the proposed housing would be set back approximately 140m from Hardingstone Conservation Area and separated from it by a proposed amenity green space as shown on drawing 3238_205 Rev A which would contain tree and shrub planting.

- A range of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) solutions will be implemented in accordance with the Blue Infrastructure Framework (see Figure 44 in the DAS and drawing number 3238_206 Rev A) to manage the surface water. These measures will include swales, attenuation basins, infiltration basins and trenches, filter drains and permeable paving solutions. These will be integrated as part of the Green Infrastructure framework to allow habitat creation, and opportunities for enhancements to biodiversity and landscape character. For example, responding to the topography within the site, drainage of the proposed development will fall to the south-east (lowest point of the site) where an area of public open space has been proposed (11 on Figure 45 of the DAS), allowing for a retention pond, new habitat, a soft green edge to the proposed development seen from Newport Pagnell Road and The Green, and informal green space.

- The development of areas of usable space between the rear gardens of properties located along The Warren and Pagnell Court (13 and 15 on Figure 45 of the DAS) ensuring that the spaces are overlooked by existing and proposed housing, providing casual surveillance to help ensure that it is safe and not misused.

- The development of an appropriate and secure interface between the existing residential properties and new development on other parts of the boundaries with The Warren and Newport Pagnell Road by having new gardens backing onto existing rear gardens.

5.4. Construction

The proposed development is intended to be implemented through phased construction over nine years. The construction phase of a residential development is generally likely to feature the following:

- the erection of security fencing;
- the movement of site vehicles and construction traffic, within the site and surrounding areas;
- the movement of large plant within and around the site;
- the creation of access roads and temporary areas of hardstanding;
- the stripping and stockpiling of existing topsoil;
- the erection of scaffolding, in particular during the latter periods of the construction phase;
- the construction of built form and associated areas of landscape, open space and Green Infrastructure;
May 2015

Land South of Brackmills

- other components typical of construction including stockpiles of material and lighting of specific areas such as construction compounds as well as lights on vehicles and plant machinery; and
- existing trees and hedges to be retained will be protected in accordance BS 5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction. Recommendations.

The Environmental Statement submitted with the planning application (Homes and Community Agency, March 2013) indicates a 16 year construction period with construction likely to start in both the east and western portions of the site simultaneously, at a rate of approximately 70 units per year. (Paragraph 2.7.1.)
May 2015
Land South of Brackmills

6.0 Landscape and Visual Effects

6.1. Introduction

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

Effects are assessed during construction, with construction activity affecting localised areas at any given time during the 16 year phased construction of the proposed development. Key potential impacts during the construction phase might include the visual effects 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, temporary lighting of specific areas, such as construction compounds; construction of roads and buildings; and gradual modification of landscape character as part of a phased programme of works. Effects during construction would last for 16 years and therefore be Long term.

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

As additional planting is proposed as part of the scheme, and as trees within Brackmills Wood to the north will continue to grow taller, effects, once the vegetation has matured, are also assessed. From completion of development up to this point effects are described as Medium term, thereafter they are considered to be Permanent.

Trees within Brackmills Country Park are currently approximately 8 – 10m tall as agreed in the SoCG. These were planted approximately 15 years ago and will continue to grow. For the purpose of this assessment growth rates of trees in Brackmills Wood stated in the SoCG have been assumed which are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approximate height during construction and at Year 1</th>
<th>Annual growth rate</th>
<th>Approximate at Year 15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8-10m</td>
<td>30cm</td>
<td>Up to 13.5m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The height of the trees at Year 1 is a conservative estimate, based on the existing heights. Actual heights will be greater because they will grow between now and completion of development.

Photomontages and wireframes of the proposed illustrative development have been produced from six of the representative Viewpoints and these are included in Appendix 6 of the Landscape SoCG. The method for their production is included in Appendix 7 of the Landscape SoCG.
6.2. Effects on Landscape Character

6.2.1. Introduction

The site is currently arable farmland as shown on Figure 10 (Appendices Volume II, Appendix 13). It comprises gently undulating fields enclosed by a mixture of rear garden fence boundaries and native species field hedgerows, featuring occasional trees and scrub. The section of the southern boundary which passes to the north of Pagnell Court is marked by a small pocket of woodland. Woodland within Brackmills Country Park encloses the site to the north which helps to screen views of the site from the north.

The character of the site is influenced by adjoining land uses comprising urban development at Wootton and Hardingstone to the south and west; Landimore Road running through the site and the B526 south of the site (both lined with road light columns); extensive woodland planting at Brackmills Country Park; and industrial development lying to the north at Brackmills Industrial Estate. To the east, the most visible land from within the site comprises a triangle of land south east of The Green that is a former quarry and landfill site and has been restored to rough grassland, tree and scrub planting; this area and a single arable field to its north both form part of the allocation N6 - Northampton South of Brackmills SUE for residential development. None of these existing neighbouring land uses are typical of the character of the wider rural landscape to the east and south-east, and they have a stronger influence on the character of the site than the rural landscape to the east and south east.

The site lies entirely within LCA12a Wollaston to Irchester which is part of LCT Limestone Valley Slopes as shown on Figure 8 (Appendices Volume II, Appendix 13). The site possesses some of the characteristics typical of the LCT and LCA but, due to its urban and wooded context, is in many ways not typical of them.

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

- Development on the site, as allocated under Policy N6 and proposed in the Illustrative Masterplan, will inevitably cause a significant change to character of the existing arable farmland. The key has been to design the proposal so that a new neighbourhood is created that responds positively to the context and is an attractive and characterful place. The close iterative relationship between the EIA and Masterplanning process has been central to this.

- Physical changes to the landscape fabric of the site.

- Integration of the development with the surrounding townscape and landscape character, patterns and structure.

The development would involve the permanent loss of arable fields and replacement with mixed use development. Existing mature trees and hedgerows bordering the site would be retained, along with most internal hedgerows and trees, except where access is required. A network of green links and areas of public open space incorporating new tree and hedgerow planting would implemented through and around much of the periphery of the site, as described in section 5.0. The proposed development would be of a similar scale to the existing built form of residential development within Wootton and Hardingstone, and smaller in scale than buildings within Brackmills Industrial Estate to the north.
Scale of effects on landscape and townscape character within and outside the site

Scale of effects on landscape and townscape character within and outside the site (irrespective of the distribution of landscape and townscape character areas) is assessed in this section first, before magnitude and significance of effects on landscape and townscape character areas are assessed in sections 6.2.3 and 6.3.

Effects on landscape and townscape character would be localised to within close proximity of the site. The effects would consist of an urban extension within an area of arable land which is already influenced by urban development, and it would be seen as an integrated part of the urban context of Wootton and Hardingstone. Areas with potential visibility of the proposed development would frequently view the proposal in the context of the existing built development of Wootton, Hardingstone, Brackmills and the wider town of Northampton. The proposed development would be relatively well screened by existing development, trees and landform from the wider landscape and, over time as existing trees in Brackmills Country Park and proposed planting with the site matures, the development would become less visible and better integrated with the existing landscape and settlement.

During operation the character of the landscape within the site would change from arable farmland strongly influenced by the existing urban settlement of Northampton, to a new residential and mixed use development designed to respond positively to the character of the site and its context. The new development would provide a more positive and green interface between Northampton and its landscape setting than currently exists along the edges of Hardingstone and Wootton, and allow for further extension to the east and south-east into the remainder of the SUE.

Effects during construction and upon completion within the site would be of large scale, decreasing rapidly with distance from the site boundary and where intervening development, vegetation and landform provides screening. Large scale effects would extend part way into the adjoining field to the east and the adjoin former landfill site to the south east (up to approximately 150 - 200m from the site) (both areas allocated for residential development as part of N6). To the north Large scale effects would be buffered by existing woodland adjacent to the site boundary, but would extend a short distance into Brackmills Country Park where there are gaps in the trees. Large scale effects would extend as far as the existing urban edge of Wootton and Hardingstone to the south and west, but not as far as the existing barns / disused farm buildings north of the north west corner of the site.

Effects outside the site would reduce as the tree planting within the site and vegetation proposed along the boundaries matures. The existing trees in Brackmills Country Park will continue to grow and would further screen the built development from the Country Park, and from Nene Valley and Northampton to the north, as illustrated by Year 15 photomontages from Viewpoints 8, 9 and 10 (Appendix 6 of the Landscape SoCG).

Medium scale effects during construction and on completion would extend beyond the areas outlined above in areas only as far east as the hedge marking the eastern edge of the field east of the site (which is allocated for residential development), south east part way across the allocated former landfill site, and south as far south as Newport Pagnell Road. Medium scale effects during construction and on completion would extend for a short distance into Brackmills Country Park in limited areas where development would be visible. These effects would also reduce as proposed planting and existing woodland matures.
May 2015

Land South of Brackmills

Small scale effects are likely to extend a short distance beyond the areas described above but only where the proposed development is visible, and these would also reduce as proposed planting and existing woodland matures. From areas where the proposed development is visible small scale effects would not extend further than approximately 0.4km from the site outside the urban area during all stages of the project’s life and, in most directions from the site, Small scale effects would not extend this far.

Medium scale and Small scale effects are unlikely to extend into the urban areas to the west and south except for very limited areas on The Warren and Newport Pagnell Road due to screening by and influence on character of existing development.

Effects of Negligible scale would occur to areas outside those described above.

6.2.2. The Northampton Landscape Sensitivity and Green Infrastructure Study

The Northampton Landscape Sensitivity and Green Infrastructure Study provides an assessment of the landscape around Northampton to “major mixed-use urban extension development in excess of 5ha” (paragraph 8.1.8). It indicates that the ridge on which the site lies comprises broad swathe of land that is identified as High landscape and visual sensitivity for reasons that relate to the visibility on the skyline and the contribution to the setting of Northampton; “the ridge of land which runs from Cogenhoe to Hunsbury Hill, which is visually prominent and forms the southern setting to Northampton” (paragraph 8.5.15).

Figure 14 (Visual Analysis) of the study indicates that part of the site and the land to the east and north east is “Distinctive landform which has intervisibility with Northampton and contributes to the setting of the town”. Areas of landscape and visual sensitivity are shown on Figure 24. These Figures are included in Appendix 9 (Appendices Volume I).

No other landscape or visual reasons are given for defining the site and the SUE as lying on a broad swathe of land of sensitivity. The key issue arising from the Landscape Sensitivity and Green Infrastructure Study is therefore effects on views of the undeveloped skyline as seen from Northampton and how development on the “distinctive landform” would affect the setting of the town.

Figures 14 and 24 in the Northampton Landscape Sensitivity and Green Infrastructure Study illustrate sensitivity areas as ‘hazy’ shades of green that do not show clearly the sensitivity of the site. For example Figure 14 shows the western part of the site as white, gradually fading to green towards the eastern part of the site. Figure 24 shows the site with an area of green not as dark as land on the ‘ridge’ further east implying that the site is not of such high landscape and visual sensitivity as the land further north east.

The Decision Notice for the Planning Application N/2013/338 states that the Northampton Landscape Sensitivity and Green Infrastructure Study identifies the site as being of high-medium landscape and visual sensitivity but does not give any explanation of how this is defined.

The Landscape Sensitivity and Green Infrastructure Study defines High-Medium sensitivity as:

“Definition: Significant constraints identified, although smaller scale development may be possible subject to further detailed investigation and appropriate mitigation.”
May 2015
Land South of Brackmills

This category includes locally-designated biodiversity sites and areas identified as sensitive to smaller scale development in urban fringe and rural areas within the Core Study Area.” (para 8.2.5)

The areas of High or High-Medium landscape and visual sensitivity shown on Figure 24 are not easy to define because of the hazy presentation of the sensitivity areas, but they cover part of LCA 12a Wollaston to Irchester. The implications of this in coming to a judgement on the susceptibility of the LCA to the proposed development is discussed in section 6.2.3 below.

As discussed in section 3.2.1, paragraph 10.7 of the adopted JCS states that “The development of areas highlighted as having High Landscape Sensitivity in the [Northampton Landscape Sensitivity and Green Infrastructure] study is not precluded, but it does mean that additional care and appropriate mitigation will be required when planning for new development…”


Limestone Valley Slopes - Area 12a Wollaston to Irchester

LCA 12a Wollaston to Irchester lies within the Limestone Valley Slopes LCT. The site is located on the southern edge of this LCA which extends from Northampton to Rushden, on the southern slopes of the Nene Valley and, in some places, into the valley bottom. It is a linear shaped LCA which extends for approximately 1km to the north west of the site up to the A45, and approximately 19km to the north east of the site at Rushden.

The key characteristics of the Limestone Valley Slopes LCT are as follows with LDA Design’s commentary in relation to the site:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key characteristic of Limestone Valley Slopes LCT</th>
<th>LDA Design’s Commentary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transitional landscape displaying characteristics of surrounding landscape character types</td>
<td>The site lies on the edge of the LCT and is strongly influenced by roads, the adjoining Urban areas and also by extensive woodland planting in Brackmills Country Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>limestone geology evident in local buildings</td>
<td>There are no buildings within the site. Those adjoining the site are generally brick or rendered and not stone. Older buildings within Hardingstone to the north west are often constructed from limestone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gently undulating farmed slopes bordering the Nene and its principal tributaries</td>
<td>The site lies on gently undulating farmed land between the Nene valley and the tributary valley of Wootton Brook.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>expansive long distance views and wide panoramas across the valley to neighbouring landscapes</td>
<td>Long distance views from within the site are restricted by enclosing development, vegetation and landform.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
May 2015

Land South of Brackmills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key characteristic of Limestone Valley Slopes LCT</th>
<th>LDA Design’s Commentary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>predominance of arable land with isolated areas of improved and semi improved pasture and setaside land</td>
<td>The site is arable land enclosed by other land uses not characteristic of this LCT on all sides except for the extreme eastern boundary which adjoins an arable field.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>very sparse woodland cover comprising small deciduous and occasionally coniferous shelterbelts limiting the sense of exposure locally</td>
<td>The site contains few trees but adjoins a large woodland to the north and an area of restored landfill planted with some woodland to the east, which are not characteristic of this LCT. Adjacent woodland and urban areas provide enclosure to the site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fields predominantly large, and medium to large</td>
<td>Fields within the site reflect this key characteristic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>small to medium sized pasture fields conspicuous surrounding villages</td>
<td>There are no small to medium sized pasture fields within the site and there no conspicuous villages visible from the site. The site is not conspicuous from surrounding villages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fields generally enclosed by hedgerows with intermittent mature hedgerow trees, often showing signs of decline</td>
<td>The fields within the site are enclosed by hedgerows with some gaps and open boundaries, and a small number of mature hedgerow trees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>numerous villages display close relationship to landform in their morphology and orientation</td>
<td>The site does not lie near any villages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>communication routes principally limited to direct roads parallel to the course of the main river channel, minor roads connecting small settlements and individual dwellings running along tributaries at right angles to the main route</td>
<td>The B525 Newport Pagnell Road and The Green that run along the south site boundary reflect this characteristic. Landimore Road is a new road running north-south through the site, cutting through the landscape and down the valley slope in a way that is not characteristic of the pattern of roads within the LCT.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Under the heading **Woodland and Trees** within the LCT it refers to “A large area of new planting is also evident to the south of Brackmills Industrial Estate.” It also states that “Hedgerow trees and small areas of tree planting surrounding farmsteads are important locally as they often represent the only strong vertical elements in these agricultural landscapes” and that “Many fields are also large and the landscape therefore retains an open
character." A small number of trees are the only strong vertical feature within the site but it is enclosed by many strong vertical features close to the site boundary including woodland to the north, and housing to the west and south (within which there are taller vertical features including a water tower, a telecommunications mast and the distinctive group of pine trees at Pagnell Court).

Under the heading **Buildings and Settlement** it states that “The Limestone Valley Slopes are strongly influenced by five of the county's fifteen urban areas.” This is particularly true of the site. It also notes the influence of industrial estates such as Brackmills “Northampton has also expanded from its historic core on the Rolling Ironstone Valley Slopes across the Nene where new industrial estates have been established on and bordering the Limestone Valley Slopes.”

Under the heading **Aesthetic and Perceptual Qualities** of the LCT it states that “The landscape is characterised by gently undulating, productive farmland. Land shelves gently to the Nene. From elevated areas, wide views are possible over the landscape to the course of the valley, and beyond into neighbouring landscape types. Here, the landscape is perceived as relatively open and elevated, an absence of woodland and hedgerow trees increasing the frequency of long distance viewing opportunities." Although the site includes land that shelves gently to the Nene and is elevated, there are no wide views over the landscape to the course of the Nene valley and the landscape beyond from within the site due to the enclosing woodland, development and landform as discussed in section 4.8.1.

Under the heading **Local Distinctiveness, Landscape Condition and Landscape Change** it states that “The expansion of urban areas in recent years has resulted in the despoiling of some areas of the landscape on the urban fringes of settlements, although the impact is relatively localised.”

Within the **Landscape Strategy and Guidelines** for the character type it states the new development should “...be controlled and encouraged to conserve and enhance the diversity of this settled and productive rural landscape of the Limestone Valley Slopes. In view of the limited woodland cover, existing woodlands should be retained wherever possible, and enriched to strengthen this resource and its biodiversity value. However, the changing patterns of openness and enclosure that form an integral part of the diversity of the landscape should remain. In view of the proximity of the many urban areas within and surrounding this landscape, it is likely to be vulnerable to development pressures and change. It is therefore particularly important that where development is considered, the subtle variations in the landform are responded to and incorporated in a creative and positive way.”

The purpose of landscape guidelines are given as “The Landscape Guidelines for each of the Landscape Character Types is developed from the range of KLCFs [Key Landscape Character Features] that have been identified for that Type. The Guidelines are generic, and applicable to the whole type rather than for specific sites or areas. They provide a strategic framework for managing change in the landscape in order to conserve and enhance landscape character. The management objectives encompassing 'Conserve', 'Enhance', 'Restore' and 'Create' are the terms applied to describe the mechanisms and processes for managing positive change, in order to enrich and sustain Northamptonshire's future landscape.”
May 2015  
**Land South of Brackmills**

It gives the landscape following guidelines under the heading **Landform and Views** (first two columns) with LDA Design’s commentary in relation to the proposed development in the third column:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Landscape Character Features</th>
<th>Landscape Guidelines</th>
<th>LDA Design’s comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transitional landscape displaying characteristics of surrounding landscape character types.</strong> The area is underlain by a complex and changing geology. This sequence of rock types is matched by local and often subtle variations in landform, soils and changing patterns of land use. The overall character, however, is that of a quiet, productive and managed landscape with a local diversity of patterns of field scale, cropping and tree cover.</td>
<td><strong>Conserve</strong> the intrinsic character of the quiet, productive and managed landscape, retaining the local diversity of field scale, cropping and tree cover.</td>
<td>The site is not typical of the wider quiet, managed landscapes due to the influences of adjacent extensive areas of development and woodland at Brackmills Country Park, and roads with light columns running south of and through the site. The proposed development would create a new character within the site, retaining most hedge boundaries and trees as part of the urban extension. Effects on landscape character outside the site would be contained as described in section 6.2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expansive long distance views and wide panoramas across the valley to neighbouring landscapes</strong> emphasises the more open character of some parts of the Valley Slopes.</td>
<td><strong>Conserve</strong> opportunities to experience long distance views across the landscape by encouraging sensitive woodland planting and agricultural land use, and hedgerow management.</td>
<td>The site is more enclosed than other parts of the Limestone Valley Slopes LCT due to enclosing urban development, woodland and other vegetation, and rising landform to the east, limiting long distance views across the landscape to the wider landscape, as described in section 4.8.1.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The description of the character of LCA 12a Wollaston to Irchester refers to the large scale arable fields, woodland north of the site, villages, roads pylons and quarrying, and states that the character area is reasonably well settled.

The proposed development would result in the expansion of urban development into this character area. After it has been developed the character of the site is likely to be more typical of the surrounding areas of Wootton and Hardingstone than to the Limestone Valley slopes to the east, but it has been designed to integrate with and create a new softer edge to
May 2015
Land South of Brackmills

Northampton than currently exists south and west of the site. The development would cause an increase in the influence of urban character on this part of the character area in close proximity to the edge of Northampton.

The trend of urban expansion, as noted within the landscape character assessment, has been particularly prevalent at this area of Northampton south of the River Nene. The proposed development would lie within a gap between areas of development at Wootton/Hardingstone and Brackmills Industrial Estate, within an area already influenced by urban development. The site would be less susceptible to residential development than the more rural landscape further east, away from the site.

Landscape sensitivity of LCA 12a Wollaston to Irchester

Figure 14 of the Northamptonshire Landscape Sensitivity and Green Infrastructure Study identifies that areas of the LCA 12a Wollaston to Irchester within the study area as “distinctive landform which has intervisibility with Northampton and contributes to the setting of the town”. The site has limited intervisibility with Northampton except from houses and roads adjoining the site boundary to the west and south, due to the screening effects of woodland within Brackmills Country Park and existing development, unlike the wooded Limestone Valley Slopes to the north of the site and the slopes east of Brackmills Industrial Estate which are more exposed to views from Northampton and the Nene Valley to the north. As discussed in section 6.2.2 above, paragraph 8.5.15 of the Study stage that “the ridge of land which runs for Cogenhoe to Hunsbury Hill…is visually prominent and forms the southern setting to Northampton” is an area of high sensitivity landscape and the Decision Notice states that the site is of high-medium landscape and visual sensitivity.

Landscape sensitivity to the type of development proposed varies thought the character area, with the site being within a lower sensitivity area due to the relatively enclosed, urban context, and parts of the more visually exposed land and land with less urban influence to the north and east of the site being of higher sensitivity. This is supported by the shading on Figure 14 of the Northamptonshire Landscape Sensitivity and Green Infrastructure Study.

The susceptibility of LCA 12a Wollaston to Irchester to the proposed development is judged to be Medium.

There are a number of localised features of landscape value within LCA 12a Limestone Valley Slopes–Wollaston to Irchester, such as the rights of way network and Brackmills Country Park, and part of the site and landscape to the east is covered by saved Policy E7 of the Northampton Local Plan which indicates it as being more valued than the surrounding area. The character area is therefore assessed as Local/District value.

Combining susceptibility and value, the LCA is judged to be of Medium sensitivity to the proposed development.

Effects on LCA 12a Wollaston to Irchester

Viewpoints 1, 2, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15 lie in or on the edge of this LCA. The detailed ZTV studies (Figures 3 and 4 (Appendices Volume II, Appendix 13)) illustrate that the proposed development would theoretically be visible from the two arable fields immediately east of the site (the western field being allocated for residential development), some open and un-treed areas within Brackmills Country Park, from open land between Brackmills Country
May 2015

Land South of Brackmills

Park and Hardington, and from limited small patches of farmland further east and north east of the site. Visibility of the proposed development would generally be limited to land within or close to the site within this LCA. The scale of effects would be as described in section 6.2.1 above.

Long term effects on LCA 12a Wollaston to Irchester during construction

Large scale effects would occur to the site itself, extending to the edge of the character area at the existing urban edge to the west and south, up to and within small areas within Brackmills Country Park to the north and part way across the arable field to the east of the site. These effects would be of Localised extent, High magnitude and Major-Moderate significance.

Medium scale effects would extend to some areas beyond the extent of Large scale effects, over parts the two arable field east of the site and short distance into Brackmills Country Park in limited areas where development would be visible. These effects would be of Localised extent, Medium magnitude and Moderate significance.

Small scale effects would extend a short distance beyond the areas described above but only where the proposed development is visible. These effects would be of Localised extent, Low-Negligible magnitude and Slight-Minimal significance.

The remainder of the LCA would experience effects of Negligible magnitude and Minimal significance.

Effects would occur to a small proportion of the western tip of the LCA within part of it already influenced by urban development and elements not characteristic of the wider character area. Overall effects on LCA 12a Wollaston to Irchester during construction would be of Low magnitude and Slight significance.

Where effects occur they would be, on balance, Adverse.

Medium term effects on LCA 12a Wollaston to Irchester during the first few years of operation

Large scale effects would occur to the same areas described during construction. These effects would be of Localised extent, High-Medium magnitude and Major-Moderate significance.

Medium scale effects would occur to the same areas described during construction. These effects would be of Localised extent, Medium magnitude and Moderate significance.

Small scale effects would occur to the same areas described during construction. These effects would be of Localised extent, Negligible magnitude and Minimal significance.

The remainder of the LCA would experience effects of Negligible magnitude and Minimal significance.

Effects would occur to a small proportion of the western tip of the LCA within part of it already influenced by urban development and elements not characteristic of the wider character area. Overall effects on LCA 12a Wollaston to Irchester during the first few years of operation would be of Low to Negligible magnitude and Slight significance.

Where effects occur they would be, on balance, Adverse.
Land South of Brackmills

Permanent effects on LCA 12a Wollaston to Irchester once planting has matured

Large scale effects would remain within the site but all effects outside the site would have reduced in area due to greater screening effects of maturing vegetation that would help to integrate the development into the landscape. Large scale effects would be of Localised extent, High magnitude and Major-Moderate significance.

Medium scale effects would be of Localised extent, Medium magnitude and Moderate significance.

Small scale effects would be of Localised extent, Low magnitude and Slight significance.

The remainder of the LCA would experience effects of Negligible magnitude and Minimal significance.

These effects would occur to a small proportion of the western tip of the LCA within part of it already influenced by urban development and elements not characteristic of the wider character area. Overall permanent effects on LCA 12a Wollaston to Irchester would be of Low magnitude and Slight significance.

Maturing proposed vegetation, public open spaces and Green Infrastructure, providing a setting to the new buildings, would bring substantial benefits to character in time. It would result in an increasingly attractive setting for the development and further integration of it with the existing built form of Northampton and the landscape context. The planting would soften the appearance of built form next to rural areas and Brackmills Country Park. As discussed in section 6.1, the character of the landscape within the site would change from arable farmland strongly influenced by the existing urban settlement of Northampton, to a new residential and mixed use development designed to respond positively to the character of the site and its context. The new development would provide a more positive and green interface between Northampton and its landscape setting than currently exists along the edges of Hardingstone and Wootton. However, given that LCA 12a Wollaston to Irchester is predominantly a rural landscape character area and that the direction of guidance towards landscape character is to conserve character, effects are judged to be, on balance, Adverse.

If the field east of the site within this LCA was developed for residential development in the future, in accordance with Policy N6 of the adopted Core Strategy, the proposed development would have no effects on landscape character east of the eastern site boundary.

Importantly, the changes in character and significance of effects as described above are the inevitable effects of development in accordance with Policy N6 of the adopted Core Strategy.

Undulating Claylands - Area 6b Hackleton Claylands

Landscape character area 6b – Hackleton Claylands lies within the Undulating Claylands landscape character type and is located to the immediate south east of the site, extending south as far as the M1 and east as far as the village of Grendon, approximately 10km from the site. It comprises an area of rolling predominantly arable farmland with tributary valleys to the Nene, and is located between the urban area of Northampton and the Limestone Valley Slopes LCT to the north and the Low Woodland Clay Ridge LCT to the south.
May 2015

Land South of Brackmills

The key characteristics of the Undulating Claylands landscape LCT are as follows:

- “Boulder Clay deposits overlie almost the entire landscape, revealing little surface expression of the varying underlying solid geology;
- alluvium conspicuous along the tributaries and upper reaches of rivers that drain the area;
- broad, elevated undulating landscape that is more elevated to the west shelving eastwards and drained by numerous broad, gentle convex sloped valleys;
- wide panoramic views across elevated areas, though the undulating landform creates more contained and intimate areas;
- a productive rural landscape with an equal balance of arable and pastoral farming with the former predominating on more elevated land and often larger in scale, although arable land can be found along valley bottoms where sand and gravel deposits are located;
- improved and semi improved pastures located along narrow floodplains and sloping land bordering them, often more intricate and smaller in scale;
- large woodlands are not a characteristic feature, although woodland in surrounding landscape types, small deciduous copses and hedgerow trees can together create the sense of a well-wooded character;
- concentrations of small woodlands apparent around designed parklands;
- hedgerows are often low and well clipped emphasising the undulating character of the landscape with scattered hedgerow oak and ash trees;
- post and wire fencing frequently reinforces gappy hedgerows, in particular where pasture is the current land use;
- numerous villages located throughout the landscape with varying morphology;
- settlement beyond the villages include scattered Enclosure age farmsteads and isolated dwellings, located at the end of short access tracks and adjacent to the roadside;
- a long settled landscape with evidence dating back to the Bronze Age and evidence of Roman occupation;
- many historic remnants evocative of the medieval period, including rural villages, moated sites, and extensive areas of ridge and furrow;
- historic parklands provide important landscape features along with remnants of the industrial age, including disused railways and canals;
- minor roads located on interfluves avoiding river valleys and emphasising the natural grain of the landscape; main routes take a direct course from the northwest to southeast; and
- recreational opportunities are diverse, including listed manors and parkland estates, canal trips, llama trekking and numerous national trails.”

Under the heading Local Distinctiveness, Landscape Condition and Landscape Change of the LCT it states:
May 2015
Land South of Brackmills

“......the Undulating Claylands are a well maintained and managed landscape of moderate scenic quality.”

“At a county scale the landscape is generally unremarkable although occasional estate houses and associated parkland are of note...”

It goes on to say “despite the open and expansive character from more elevated areas of land, the landscape overall has a relatively sheltered character due to the undulating landform and intervening vegetation.”

The description of character of LCA 6b Hackleton Claylands states that “Although not within the area, the urban edge of Wootton is prominent to the northwest.”

The site lies outside this character area, adjoining its northern boundary along The Green. Dense hedgerows line The Green providing separation between the site and the character area. The part of the character area that adjoins the site south of The Green comprises an area of rough grass and young native tree and shrub planting, on a former landfill site that is allocated for development as part of the SUE; this land is higher than the site as can be seen on Figure 2 (Appendices Volume II, Appendix 13) and its use and condition is not typical of the LCA. It provides separation between the site and much of the LCA to the south and east. South of this area and of Newport Pagnell Road the next closest part of the character area to the site is a building site for new residential development on the eastern edge of Wootton which is shown on Figure 6 (Appendices Volume II, Appendix 13).

Viewpoints 3, 5, 6, 15 and 17 lie in or on the edge of this LCA. The detailed ZTV studies (Figures 3 and 4) illustrate that the proposed development would theoretically be visible from the restored landfill site south of the site, some fields south of this sloping down to Wootton Brook (close to the existing edge of Northampton (including the area is currently under construction for residential development), small areas of arable land with minor roads east of the site (where Viewpoints 3 and 15 are located and effects are assessed as Small and Medium scale respectively), and more distant areas of land south of Wootton Brook (where Viewpoints 5 and 6 are located and effects are assessed as Small (reducing to Negligible scale as vegetation matures over time) and Negligible scale respectively).

Effects of the proposed development on this LCA would be indirect and only affect its setting.

This landscape has seen considerable urban expansion of Northampton in the 20th and 21st Century. As noted in the character description the urban edge of Wootton is prominent to the northwest, as is recent development at Grange Park.

Landscape sensitivity of LCA 6b Hackleton Claylands

Figure 24 of the Northampton Landscape Sensitivity and Green Infrastructure Study (Appendices Volume I, Appendix 8) indicates that the Landscape and Visual Sensitivity of the LCA to major mixed-use urban extension development in excess of 5ha ranges from High (within elevated land just outside the study area to the south, north of Salcey Forest), to Medium within the majority of the LCA, to Low close to Wootton and Grange Park.

The susceptibility of LCA 6b Hackleton Claylands to the proposed development is judged to be Low.

There are a number of localised features of landscape value within LCA 6b Hackleton Claylands, such as the rights of way network and long distance footpaths. It is judged that
these are appreciated by the local community but have limited wider recognition of their value. Therefore, LCA 6b Hackleton Claylands is judged to be of Community value.

Combining susceptibility and value, the LCA is judged to be of Low sensitivity to the proposed development.

Effects on LCA 6b Hackleton Claylands

The proposed development would expand urban development up to a short part of the northern edge this LCA which is allocated for residential development and close to an area under construction for residential development. This would result in a slightly increased influence of urban settlement on the setting of this character area in close proximity to the edge of Wootton. The landform coupled with existing hedgerows, trees and urban development constrain effects on the setting of this LCA to localised areas close to the site.

Long term effects on LCA 6b Hackleton Claylands during construction

Large scale effects would occur to a small area of part of the land allocated for residential development within the restored landfill site to the south of the site. These effects would be of Limited extent, Medium magnitude and Slight significance.

Medium scale effects would extend to further parts of the land allocated for residential development within the restored landfill site to the south of the site but are unlikely to occur beyond this allocated area due to strong boundary vegetation on its eastern and southern edges and along Newport Pagnell Road, and the presence of the existing site under construction south of the road. These effects would be of Limited extent, Low magnitude and Slight significance.

Small scale effects would extend up to Newport Pagnell Road, but be limited by the buffering effects of intervening vegetation visibility of existing development within Wootton and the influence of the housing under construction within the LCA. They would occur to parts of the allocated site south west of the site but not east of the eastern edge of the allocated area. These effects would be of Limited extent, Negligible magnitude and Minimal significance.

The remainder of the LCA would experience effects of Negligible magnitude and Minimal significance.

Effects would occur to a very small proportion of the edge of the LCA within part of it already influenced by urban development. Overall effects on LCA 6b Hackleton Claylands during construction would be of Negligible magnitude and Minimal significance.

Where effects occur they would be, on balance, Adverse.

Medium term effects on LCA 6b Hackleton Claylands during the first few years of operation

Large scale effects would occur to the same areas described during construction. These effects would be of Limited extent, Medium magnitude and Slight significance.

Medium scale effects would occur to the same areas described during construction. These effects would be of Limited extent, Low magnitude and Slight significance.

Small scale effects would occur to the same areas described during construction. These effects would be of Limited extent, Negligible magnitude and Minimal significance.
May 2015

Land South of Brackmills

The remainder of the LCA would experience effects of Negligible magnitude and Minimal significance.

Effects would occur to a very small proportion of the edge of the LCA within part of it already influenced by urban development. Overall effects on LCA 6b Hackleton Claylands during the first few years of operation would be of Negligible magnitude and Minimal significance. Where effects occur they would be, on balance, Adverse.

Permanent effects on LCA 6b Hackleton Claylands once planting has matured

Large scale effects would have reduced in area due to the screening effects of maturing vegetation that would help to integrate the development into the landscape. Large scale effects would be of Limited extent, Medium magnitude and Slight significance.

Medium scale effects would be of Limited extent, Medium-Low magnitude and Slight significance.

Small scale effects would be of Limited extent, Negligible magnitude and Minimal significance.

The remainder of the LCA would experience effects of Negligible magnitude and Minimal significance.

Effects would occur to a very small proportion of the edge of the LCA within part of it already influenced by urban development. Overall permanent effects on LCA 6b Hackleton Claylands would be of Negligible magnitude and Minimal significance.

Maturing proposed vegetation, public open spaces and Green Infrastructure, including the proposed green corridor north of The Green, would help to integrate the proposed development into the landscape context, and provide a new, attractive and positive edge to Northampton, or a positive interface with future proposed development within the allocated land to the south should it be developed in the future. The planting would soften the appearance of built form next to rural areas. However, given that LCA 6b Hackleton Claylands is predominantly a rural landscape character area and that the direction of planning policy and guidance towards landscape character is to conserve character, the overall effects are judged to be, on balance, Adverse.

If the triangle of land south of the site within LCA 6b Hackleton Claylands was developed for residential development in the future, in accordance with Policy N6 of the adopted Core Strategy, the proposed development would have no effects on this LCA.

Broad River Valley Floodplain - Area 18C The Nene, Duston Mill to Billing Wharf

This character area lies approximately 0.7km to the north west of the site at its closest point, within the lower parts of the River Nene valley. The key characteristics of this LCA are:

- “Broad, flat and predominantly wide floodplain surrounded by rising landform of adjacent landscape types;
- deep, alluvial clay and silt with sand and gravel, masking the underlying geology;
May 2015

**Land South of Brackmills**

- river channel with slow flowing watercourse with limited bank side vegetation in areas;
- predominance of unimproved pasture with pockets of both neutral and improved grassland and scattered arable land in fields of varying size; arable land becomes more frequent within the western section of the Nene Valley;
- limited woodland cover confined to occasional broadleaved copses scattered throughout the floodplain;
- hedgerow trees, although infrequent, are an important feature where they do occur, creating localised well treed areas;
- hedgerows are generally overgrown and reinforced with post and wire fencing with intermittent sections showing evidence of decline;
- settlement is very limited within the floodplain with a sequence of small nucleated villages on the lower valley slopes, along the western section of the River Nene;
- wider settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads and individual dwellings;
- urban influences arising from the proximity of large urban areas and associated road infrastructure on the perimeter of some sections of the floodplain;
- minor roads generally cross the floodplain landscape at right angles to the river, with major roads also following the valley course and marking the boundary of the type;
- evidence of long periods of gravel extraction and restoration within the Nene Valley, particularly along the middle section of the Valley, with patterns of restored landscapes with numerous areas of wetland and lakes; and
- significant recreational activities within the Nene Valley landscape, mainly focused on the restored lakes.”

Under the heading **Buildings and Settlement** it states that “The Broad River Valley Floodplain is bordered by seven of the county’s fifteen urban areas, so urban areas have a more significant influence on landscape character than the pattern of intermittent individual dwellings. Influences upon the landscape type are both direct and indirect. Direct influences include views to the urban areas and, during hours of darkness, the distinctive arc of light that rises above the towns. The largest of the urban areas is Northampton, which surrounds significant proportions of the Duston Mill to Billing Wharf section of the Nene Valley. … These areas occupy hillside locations, are visible over wide areas, and create a backdrop to the Nene Valley Broad River Valley Floodplain.”

Under the heading **Communications and Infrastructure** it notes the strong influence of communications and infrastructure development in at the Nene Valley in Northampton:

“… a number of major roads are present. In general, these are associated with larger settlements and provide connecting routes between development within the county and beyond. Although major roads also provide direct access across the river, they principally follow the course of the river and are located along the edge of the floodplain marking the boundary, in contrast to the minor roads that often cross the river at right angles. Sections of railways also occupying the valley floodplain landscape are, and include both dismantled sections and lines in current use. Along with the development of road and rail networks impacting upon the character of the river valleys, the presence of sewage treatment works
May 2015

Land South of Brackmills

are now a frequent occurrence within this landscape. Despite a number of areas within the Broad River Valley Floodplains retaining a rural character, large proportions have been affected by communications and infrastructure development, in particular in the Nene Valley around Northampton.

Under the heading **Local Distinctiveness, Landscape Condition and Landscape Change** of the LCT it states:

“The condition of the landscape varies and is dependent on various factors. These range at a local level from the extent to which hedgerows are managed to the influence of development, including current gravel extraction within the Nene Valley, the extent and type of restoration of workings, development such as marinas, high voltage pylons crossing the landscape, to the nature of the surrounding urban development on the edge of the landscape type. Where urban development is extensive and insensitive to the landscape character, the condition of the landscape can be regarded as low. Elsewhere, however, where the river and floodplain remains largely unspoilt, a tranquil riparian landscape of higher scenic quality prevails.”

The description of character of LCA 18C The Nene, Duston Mill to Billing Wharf goes into further detail on the strong influence of development:

“Located to the south of Northamptonshire, the Duston Mill to Billing Wharf Character Area is heavily influenced by the close proximity of significant areas of urban development. Dominating the area are large man made lakes occupying the valley floodplain, which have been created following the restoration of gravel extraction areas. The River Nene, railway, lines of high voltage pylons and a section of the Grand Union Canal to the west, all combine to provide a character influenced by the use of the floodplain as a communications corridor.

Settlement is limited within the character area, incorporating only office and industrial development. Rising land surrounding the floodplain is heavily developed, with residential, industrial and commercial development creating a backdrop to the Broad River Valley Floodplain. Prominent buildings within Northampton and surrounding areas, including the Express Lifts Tower, provide important visual landmarks from both the character area and wider landscape.”

The description also notes the frequent opportunities for public access and recreation:

“Pedestrian access is ... extensive ... and includes the ... Nene Way and numerous public footpaths. There is a concentration of recreational opportunities within the valley, including Billing Aquadrome to the east, which comprises 235 acres of land, nine lakes with water sports and fishing, a marina and various caravan parks, camping sites, retail outlets and restaurants... Located in the most southern section of the area is the parkland landscape and golf course at Delapre Abbey and Gardens, which provides a valuable resource for the surrounding urban population... “
May 2015

Land South of Brackmills

Landscape sensitivity of LCA 18C The Nene

The character description does not refer to the importance or sensitivity of views of the skyline on higher land either side of the valley, and notably does not refer to views of the skyline southwards towards the site.

The susceptibility of LCA 18C The Nene, Duston Mill to Billing Wharf to the proposed development is judged to be Low.

There are a number of localised features of landscape value within LCA 18C The Nene, Duston Mill to Billing Wharf, such as the many recreation and public access opportunities, the Nene Way and Delapre Abbey and Gardens, and designated wildlife sites. It is judged that these are appreciated by beyond the local community. Therefore, LCA 18C The Nene, Duston Mill to Billing Wharf is judged to be of Local value.

Combining susceptibility and value, the LCA is judged to be of Medium-Low sensitivity to the proposed development.

Effects on LCA 18C The Nene

This character area lies approximately 0.7km to the north west of the site at its closest point but, as discussed in section 6.1, effects would be Negligible scale beyond approximately 0.4km from the site. However, the proposed development would not be visible from this part of the LCA. The closest part of the LCA with potential visibility of the proposed development indicated on the ZTV (Figure 3 (Appendices Volume II, Appendix 13)) lies over 1km north of the site where a narrow sliver is indicated adjacent to the Marriot Hotel west of the A45.

Viewpoints 4, 9, 10 and 16 are located in LCA 8C The Nene, Duston Mill to Billing Wharf where visual effects are assessed as Negligible for all Viewpoints except for 10 which his assessed as Small scale reducing to Negligible scale over time. At Viewpoint 10 some housing would be visible as a minor element between woodland in Brackmills Country Park, with visibility reducing over time as the woodland matures. Small scale temporary visual effects from very small parts of the LCA would lead to Negligible scale effects on landscape character, and would not affect any of the key characteristics.

Effects would be of Negligible scale to all parts of the LCA, at all stages of the project’s life. This would lead to effects of Negligible magnitude and Minimal significance.

6.3. Effects on Townscape Character

The proposed development would have very limited direct effects on any of the TCAs because it mostly lies outside them. The only location where direct effects might occur are at the proposed pedestrian / cycle access with controlled access for authorised vehicles to the Warren as shown on drawings 3238/200 and 3238_201 Rev A, at an existing gap between two houses within TCA Hardstone Post-war and overspill Development. All other potential effects would be on the settings of TCAs.

The main potential effects would occur from the proposed development within arable fields allocated for development in close proximity to these TCAs. The proposed development would be an extension to residential areas of Wootton and Hardingstone. It would be seen in
May 2015

Land South of Brackmills

the context of the existing extensive areas of development built since c.1950 adjoining the site to the west and south.

Descriptions for each of the assessed TCAs are summarised below, along with assessments of effects.

6.3.1. Hardingstone Historic Core TCA: approximately 0.1km north west

The Historic Core area lies approximately 100m to the north of the site boundary, and much of it comprises Hardingstone Conservation Area. Extracts of Hardingstone Conservation Area's description on NBC's web site are given below:

- “The village appears to have developed along an west-east drove road following the crest of the valley slope above the River Nene,
- Most of the buildings forming the old core of the village are predominantly of the local brown iron-rich Jurassic sandstone.
- Evidence from the medieval field patterns seems to suggest Hardingstone was a poly-focal village with two separate parts one centred around the war memorial and Back Lane, the other around the church and junction with Coldstream Lane.
- The majority of the early houses are built right up to the pavement, though higher status houses, such as Hardingstone House and Mulberry House are set back from the road in their own grounds.
- Boundary walls thus play an important part in uniting the disparate elements of the conservation area. Walling materials generally mirror the range of brick and stone used in the buildings, and they display a wide range of traditional capping techniques.
- The views open up as The Green is approached from the west. Several of the buildings at this point are of high quality, but the pleasing effect is reduced by gaps and unsympathetic infilling.
- The area surrounding the memorial at the junction of Back Lane, High Street and The Green provides the main focal point of the village.
- The Green enjoys a good sense of enclosure, and the buildings bounding the east side form one of the finest groups in the village.
- Many Northamptonshire villages have “Back Lanes”. That in Hardingstone seems to have been of very early origin, and describes a long loop to the north of the High Street, dividing into two sections, each of distinctive character.
- Back Lane retains regular and imposing stone façades, while high walls add a sense of enclosure to the street views. At the junction with Haughton Hill, the road swings to the west and narrows considerably, with the street views dominated by large trees.

http://www.northampton.gov.uk/info/200207/building_conservation_and_trees/1630/hardingstone_consolidation_area (this will be a Core Document)
May 2015

Land South of Brackmills

- Here the older buildings consist of large distinctive late C18/early C19 houses, sited in extensive and well-treed gardens; while part of the northern side of the road is occupied by modern bungalows.
- The steep gradient falling to the north ensures that fine views are gained across Delapre Golf Course and Nene Valley Way towards the town centre.

Townscape sensitivity of Hardingstone Historic Core TCA

This TCA features many listed buildings. It lies on the crest and top of the north and east facing slopes of the Nene valley with outward facing mainly private views from some edges facing those directions and not generally towards the site. Part of Brackmills Wood lies between the TCA and eastern parts of the site. It is assessed as Medium susceptibility to the proposed development, Local/District value and Medium sensitivity.

Effects on Hardingstone Historic Core TCA

The detailed ZTVs Figures 3 and 4 (Appendices Volume II, Appendix 13) indicate that parts of the proposed development would potentially be visible from the eastern edge of this TCA. Views from other parts of the TCA are unlikely, including the village core at The Green and High Street. The development would be visible from the south-eastern edge of the Hardingstone Conservation Area south east of The Firs (where PRoW KN6 runs from The Warren to the site), but not from most of the Conservation Area. The edge of the proposed housing is set back approximately 140m from the Conservation Area at this location, beyond a proposed amenity green space which would contain new tree planting.

A Conservation Area Appraisal was conducted by Northampton Borough Council in 2009 (Northampton Borough Council, February 2009) which identified a number of key views which include views across the Nene valley to the north and views of the agricultural land to the east of Pittams Farmhouse (see Appendix 11 (Appendices Volume I)). The proposed development would not obstruct or feature in any of these key views. The part of the TCA with potential visibility of the proposed development is also part of the Conservation Area. The Cultural Heritage chapter of the Environmental Statement (Homes and Community Agency, March 2013) assesses effects on Hardingstone Conservation Area to be of Negligible significance (Table 6.7). Northampton Borough Council’s Conservation Officer advised that the proposed development would not result in any “significant negative impacts on the setting of Hardingstone Conservation Area” (Officer’s Report 6 May 2014, section 6.8).

Effects on Hardingstone Historic Core TCA would be of Negligible scale, Negligible Magnitude and Minimal significance.

6.3.2. Hardingstone Post-war and Overspill Development: adjacent the site, west and south

This character area lies adjacent the site to the west at The Warren. The TCT Post-war and Overspill Development c. 1950 - c.1980 is described within the Northampton Landscape Sensitivity and Green Infrastructure Study 2009 as:

“The architecture associated with this phase of development varies, but is usually typified by a clear hierarchy of roads, and extensive planting, open spaces and landscaping which has now matured, creating a very “green” impression from both within and outside the town.”
May 2015

Land South of Brackmills

This description generally fits the TCA within Hardingstone but the does not properly describe the edge adjoining the site where back gardens with fences and other forms of garden enclosure generally create an abrupt barrier and negative interface between the urban area and the fields within the site. This is softened on some edges by trees, such as at Pagnell Court, but less so for most of the edge along Newport Pagnell Road and The Warren.

Built form in this area is typically semi-detached and detached brick and render two storey dwellings and bungalows with front gardens and larger rear gardens set on mainly straight or long curving roads, with houses accessing directly off the roads. Along the site boundary the settlement pattern is linear along the straight roads of Newport Pagnell Road and The Warren. A group of houses on a close off Newport Pagnell Road at Pagnell Court is isolated from the rest of this TCA and may have been built more recently than 1989; it is set within a group of mature trees. Settlement in this TCA is less dense in comparison to neighbouring historic and more modern areas, generally having larger gardens.

Townscape sensitivity of Hardingstone Post-war and Overspill Development TCA

This TCA is not of recognised value beyond the local community. It is assessed as Low susceptibility to the proposed development, Community value and Low sensitivity.

Effects on Hardingstone Post-war and Overspill Development TCA

This TCA is influenced by extensive areas of more modern development at Wootton to the south and the older parts of Hardingstone to the North. The site plays a very limited role in the setting of the TCA, with houses backing onto it and providing a negative barrier and relationship between the TCA and the site. The detailed ZTVs Figures 3 and 4 (Appendices Volume II, Appendix 13) indicate that the proposed development would be visible from houses and gardens adjoining the site, and from parts of the Warren, Newport Pagnell Road and Pagnell Court west and south of the site, but that there would be very little visibility from the remainder of the TCA. The proposed development would result in an increased enclosure of the eastern side of the TCA by extended residential development as already occurs on other sides of the area. The proposed development would create an improved edge to Northampton on its northern, eastern and south eastern edges than currently exists on the eastern edge of this TCA.

The proposed pedestrian/cycle access with controlled access for authorised vehicles to the Warren would cause a very limited and localised effect on the TCA that would be of Negligible scale.

Small scale effects would occur to parts of the edge of the TCA due to changes to the setting. These would be of Limited extent, Negligible magnitude and Minimal significance at all stages of the project.

6.3.3. Wootton Modern Development: south of Newport Pagnell Road

This TCA lies south of Newport Pagnell Road south of the site. It adjoins Newport Pagnell Road adjacent to the site for about 500m in two sections either side of Pagnell Court. Other edges are separated from the site by houses north of Newport Pagnell Road and east of The Warren, and by the reclaimed landfill site to the east of the site. It includes the area of housing under construction in what were fields to the east as can be seen on Figure 6 (Appendices Volume II, Appendix 13). The TCA extends west up to the A45 and encloses an
May 2015

Land South of Brackmills

Area of Historic Core (pre. 1835) and Post-war and Overspill Development c. 1950 - c.1989 (the older part of Wootton that was once a separate village – from which the proposed development is unlikely to be visible). The TCT is described within the Northampton Landscape Sensitivity and Green Infrastructure Study 2009 as:

“The most modern phase of development (from 1990 to the present) has seen the expansion of Northampton southwards, including the southern-facing ridge of land associated with Hunsbury Hill. The village of Wootton has seen considerable expansion and the new mixed-use development of Grange Park has been constructed between Wootton and the M1.”

Built form in this TCA is typically two storey semi-detached and detached brick houses with small front gardens which usually feature parking space for one or two vehicles, and small rear gardens. Settlement pattern is denser than Post War and Overspill Development at Hardingstone with smaller plots on closes and roads which are often curved in plan. It is separated from the site by Newport Pagnell Road and vegetation that helps to screen it from the road, and houses north of the road. Houses back on to Newport Pagnell Road and face southwards away from the site. It lies on south facing slopes falling away from the site. The site plays a very limited role in the setting of the TCA.

Townscape sensitivity of Wootton Modern Development TCA

This TCA is not of recognised value beyond the local community. It is considered to be of Low susceptibility, Community value and of Low sensitivity.

Effects on Wootton Modern Development TCA

Given the dense and inward looking nature of the settlement pattern of this TCA, the separation by Newport Pagnell Road, vegetation and housing, and that the proposed development would appear as an extension of the urban area, effects would be of Negligible scale, Negligible magnitude and Minimal significance.

6.4. Visual Effects

6.4.1. Visual Aids

Photograph panels with assessment of scale of effects for each representative Viewpoint are shown on Figures 9.1 to 9.17 in Appendix 14 (Appendices Volume II). Wireframes and photomontages have been produced for Viewpoints 3, 6, 8, 9, 10 and 15 and are included in Appendix 6 of the Landscape SoCG. The viewpoint description, description of effects and scale of effect for each viewpoint (see Figures 3 and 4 for locations (Appendices Volume II, Appendix 13)) is set out on the relevant photograph panel. The scale of effect at each viewpoint is summarised below:
Table 2: Summary of scale of effects on viewpoints

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Viewpoint</th>
<th>Distance, direction</th>
<th>Scale of effect</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 - Newport Pagnell Road</td>
<td>20m, south</td>
<td>Large, Adverse</td>
<td>Large, Adverse</td>
<td>Large, Adverse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 - The Green forming the southern edge of site</td>
<td>10m, south</td>
<td>Large, Adverse</td>
<td>Large, Adverse</td>
<td>Large, Adverse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 - Minor Road east of site</td>
<td>0.8m, east</td>
<td>Small, Adverse</td>
<td>Small, Adverse</td>
<td>Small, Adverse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 - Delapré Abbey Parkland</td>
<td>1.8km, north west</td>
<td>Negligible, Neutral</td>
<td>Negligible, Neutral</td>
<td>Negligible, Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 - Preston Deanery Road, near Quinton</td>
<td>2.5km, south</td>
<td>Small, Adverse</td>
<td>Small, Adverse</td>
<td>Negligible, Adverse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 - Public Footpath KV8 north of Hackleton</td>
<td>3.0km, east</td>
<td>Negligible, Adverse</td>
<td>Negligible, Adverse</td>
<td>Negligible, Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 - Mimosa Close, Northampton</td>
<td>3.2km, north</td>
<td>Negligible, Neutral</td>
<td>Negligible, Neutral</td>
<td>Negligible, Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 - Cliftonville Road, Northampton</td>
<td>2.6km, north</td>
<td>Small to Negligible, Neutral</td>
<td>Small to Negligible, Neutral</td>
<td>Negligible, Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 – Nene Way, Barnes Meadow, Northampton</td>
<td>2.0km, north</td>
<td>Negligible, Neutral</td>
<td>Negligible, Neutral</td>
<td>Negligible, Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 – Nene Way, Northampton Washlands</td>
<td>3.2km, north east</td>
<td>Small, Adverse</td>
<td>Small, Adverse</td>
<td>Negligible, Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 – Public Footpath KN6 Hardingstone end</td>
<td>0km</td>
<td>Large, Adverse</td>
<td>Large, Adverse</td>
<td>Large, Adverse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 – Public Footpath KN6 west of Landimore Road</td>
<td>0km</td>
<td>Large, Adverse</td>
<td>Large, Adverse</td>
<td>Large, Adverse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 – Public Footpath KN6 east of Landimore Road</td>
<td>0km</td>
<td>Large, Adverse</td>
<td>Large, Adverse</td>
<td>Large, Adverse</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
May 2015
Land South of Brackmills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Viewpoint</th>
<th>Distance, direction</th>
<th>Scale of effect</th>
<th>Adverse, Neutral, Positive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>Year 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 – Brackmills Country Park</td>
<td>25m, north</td>
<td>Large, Adverse</td>
<td>Large, Adverse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 – The Green west of Hardingstone Lodge</td>
<td>0.4km, east</td>
<td>Medium, Adverse</td>
<td>Medium, Adverse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 – Public Footpath HW26 Delapre Golf Centre</td>
<td>1.2km, north west</td>
<td>Negligible, Neutral</td>
<td>Negligible, Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 – Public Footpath KM1 West of The Grange</td>
<td>0.37km, south east</td>
<td>Medium, Adverse</td>
<td>Medium, Adverse</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.

From these viewpoints it can be seen that:

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 are clearly visible and occupy a wide extent of the view.

Beyond this area, the extent of Medium scale effects is fairly limited because views of proposed development would become filtered or obscured by existing development, landform or vegetation moving away from the site, and because the proposed development would frequently be seen in the context of existing development. Medium scale effects are unlikely to occur beyond approximately 0.5km from the site, and only from small areas at this distance.

Beyond approximately 0.5km from the site, scale of effects reduce to Small, as intervening development, landform and vegetation increasingly screens and filters views of the built form, and as it becomes a smaller element in views due perspective.

Small scale effects would occur from some locations on higher land south of the Wootton Brook valley, within wide panoramic views such as Viewpoint 5. In views such as these it would be seen in the context of more prominent urban development at Wootton, and the scale would reduce to Negligible by Year 15 as proposed planting matures.

To the north, within the Nene Valley and Northampton, effects would mainly be of Negligible scale, with potential from some Small scale effects within the vicinity of Viewpoint 10, and Small to Negligible scale at Viewpoint 8 (both reducing to Negligible scale...
Land South of Brackmills

by Year 15). All effects from the Nene Valley and Northampton to the north would be of Negligible scale by Year 15.

Views from publicly accessible locations within the urban areas adjoining the site to the south would be of Large scale where there are existing open views of the fields within the site. From within the urban area where there is existing development between the visual receptor and the site effects would generally not be greater than Medium scale (and often Small or Negligible scale) due to partial screening by development and because foreground development would be more prominent. The detailed ZTV Figure 4 (Appendices Volume II, Appendix 13) shows extensive areas within Hardingstone and Wootton from where the proposed development would not be visible where effects would be of Negligible scale.

Outside these areas, the development would either be screened from visual receptors by vegetation or built development, or the development would form a very limited change in views, being seen in the context of existing housing on the edge of Wootton and development within Northampton and the Nene Valley.

6.4.2. Settlements

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 Community value, High susceptibility and High-Medium sensitivity.

Northampton

The two neighbourhoods of Wootton and Hardingstone adjoining the site are likely to experience the greatest effects and these are assessed first, before the effects on the remainder of Northampton are assessed and a conclusion reached on the overall visual effects on the town.

Wootton (abutting site to the south)

Wootton lies south of Newport Pagnell Road south of the site. The site’s contribution to the setting of Wootton is very limited because it is divided from it by Newport Pagnell Road, planting south of Newport Pagnell Road and housing in Hardingstone north of the road, and the settlement lies on south facing slopes falling away from the site, as discussed in section 6.3.3.

The detailed ZTV within close proximity to the site (Figure 4 (Appendices Volume II, Appendix 13)) shows that parts of the proposed development would potentially be visible from the edge of Wootton on Newport Pagnell Road, from Wooldale Road which runs south from Newport Pagnell Road, and from small areas within the settlement. The greatest scale of effects on views would only occur from the north eastern edge of the settlement, in particular along Newport Pagnell Road (Viewpoint 1). Some other views of small parts of the proposed development would be channelled along streets such as Wooldale Road and Lady Hollows Drive, with existing development seen in the foreground. Views from other streets and open spaces would be very infrequent, and are likely to consist of rooftops seen beyond closer existing housing and light columns on Newport Pagnell Road. There would be very limited or no views of the proposed development from Public open space within Wootton. The proposed development would be visible from some dwellings on the north side of the settlement, largely limited to first floor windows, seen across Newport Pagnell Road.
May 2015
Land South of Brackmills

Effects on Wootton

In the Long term during construction and the Medium term during the first few years of operation, and Permanently after proposed planting has matured, effects from part of Newport Pagnell Road would be Large scale, of Limited extent, of Medium magnitude and Moderate significance.

There would be some Medium and Small scale effects from a Limited extent of other public areas within the northern part of the settlement. In the Long term during construction and the Medium term during the first few years of operation, and Permanently after proposed planting has matured, Medium scale effects would be Low magnitude and Slight significance. Small scale effects would be of Negligible magnitude and Minimal significance.

The proposed development would not be visible from most of Wootton where effects would be of Negligible magnitude and Minimal significance.

Effects on the settlement of Wootton as a whole would be of Negligible magnitude and Minimal significance at all stages of the development.

Where effects occur they would be, on balance, Adverse.

Hardingstone (abutting site to the west and south)

The boundary between Wootton and Hardingstone parishes runs along Newport Pagnell Road so, for the purposes of this assessment, Newport Pagnell Road is assessed as being within both settlements. Closest to the site, the settlement includes Pagnell Court and other houses north of Newport Pagnell Road backing onto the site, and development west and north west of the site.

The detailed ZTV within close proximity to the site (Figure 4 (Appendices Volume II, Appendix 13)) illustrates that parts of the proposed development would potentially be visible from the edge of Hardingstone on Newport Pagnell Road, from The Warren west of the site with potential visibility from small areas close to these roads and from dwellings on the edge of the settlement. The greatest scale of effects on views from publicly accessible areas would occur from Newport Pagnell Road west of Pagnell Court (Viewpoint 1). Partial views of the proposed development are likely to be available between houses and vegetation on other sections of Newport Pagnell, and from The Warren Road and Pagnell Court. Views are likely to consist of development and open space seen beyond the immediate built form. Views from other parts of Hardingstone would be very limited and it would not be visible from most of the neighbourhood including the historic village core at The Green. The development would be visible from the south-eastern edge of the Hardingstone Conservation Area near The Firs, but not from most of the Conservation Area. The edge of the proposed housing is set back approximately 140m from the Conservation Area at this location, beyond a proposed amenity green space which would include tree planting.

The proposed development would be visible from houses on The Warren, Newport Pagnell Road and Pagnell Court that back on to the site with more distant or filtered views from some other houses close to the site.
May 2015
Land South of Brackmills

Effects on Hardingstone

During construction and operation, Large scale effects are only likely to occur from parts of Newport Pagnell Road with open views into the site, such as at Viewpoint 1. Where views are filtered between houses or vegetation or more distant, such as from The Warren, the western section of Newport Pagnell Road and Pagnell Court, effects would generally be of Medium and Small scale. Effects would be of Negligible scale from most of Hardingstone.

In the Long term during construction and the Medium term during the first few years of operation, and Permanently after proposed planting has matured, effects from part of Newport Pagnell Road would be Large Scale, of Limited extent, of Medium magnitude and Moderate significance.

In the Long term during construction and the Medium term during the first few years of operation, and Permanently after proposed planting has matured, Medium scale effects would be of Limited extent, Low magnitude and Slight significance. Small scale effects would be of Negligible magnitude and Minimal significance.

The proposed development would not be visible from most of Hardingstone where effects would be of Negligible magnitude and Minimal significance.

Visual effects on the settlement of Hardingstone as a whole would be of Low magnitude and Slight significance at all stages of the development.

Where effects occur they would be, on balance, Adverse.

Effects on Northampton as a whole

The detailed ZTV (Figure 3 (Appendices Volume II, Appendix 13)) shows that parts of the proposed development would potentially be visible from small areas of other parts of Northampton. Within the urban area, visibility is likely to be limited to small areas within Brackmills Industrial Estate to the north, very small areas within Northampton north of the Nene Valley, and from parts of Grange Park to the south. It would not be visible from the town centre.

Viewpoints 7 and 8 are at two of the limited locations within the urban area north of the Nene Valley from where the proposed development could potentially be seen, where effects are assessed as Negligible scale (Viewpoint 7 at all stages of the project) and Small to Negligible reducing to Negligible over time (Viewpoint 8). Effects from within Brackmills Industrial Estate are likely to be, at greatest, of Small scale due to the filtering and screening effects of buildings, Brackmills Wood and landform, and the industrial foreground context to the views, but would mostly be of Negligible scale. In these views most of the development would be screened and, over time it would become even less visible as existing trees in Brackmills Country Park and proposed planting within the site grows.

Within publicly accessible areas in the Nene Valley to the north, parts of the proposed development would be visible from small areas on the Nene Way and other PRoW and accessible areas, such as at Viewpoints 9 (effects assessed as Negligible scale at all stages of the development) and 10 (effects assessed as Small scale reducing to Negligible scale over time). Viewpoint 10, within Northampton Washlands, could be deemed to be outside Northampton but is included within the settlement for the purpose of this assessment.
May 2015

Land South of Brackmills

Views of the proposed development from the neighbourhood of Grange Park which lies approximately 1.6km to the south are likely to be very limited due to the intervening development within Wootton and a dense tree belt located along the northern and eastern edges of Grange Park. Where views are possible such as within the public open space to the east of the neighbourhood, these views are likely to consist of distant views proposed rooftops seen beyond existing built development in Wootton (including the residential development under construction on the eastern edge of Wootton). Effects on views from Grange Park would be of Negligible scale.

The proposed development would be visible from small areas within Brackmills Country Park immediately to the north of the site. The scale of effects would be as described in detail in section 6.4.5. In summary there would be some Large, Medium and Small scale effects from Limited parts of the Country Park leading to effects of between Medium magnitude and Moderate significance and Negligible magnitude and Minimal significance. Overall effects on Brackmills Country Park would be of Low magnitude and Slight significance during construction and the first few years of operation, reducing Low to Negligible magnitude and Slight to Minimal significance as vegetation matures.

Saved Policy E7 of the 1997 Local Plan states that special importance will be attached to the effect of proposed development on the skyline between Great Houghton and Hardingstone as seen from the Nene Valley to the north, as discussed in section 3.2.2. When the Local Plan incorporating the skyline Policy E7 was prepared and adopted (in 1997) Brackmills Wood did not exist and did not, therefore, provide screening of the open fields on the skyline when viewed from Northampton and the Nene Valley to the north. The land is likely to have appeared more exposed and ‘visually sensitive’ to development. Brackmills Country Park was created in response to a planning requirement to provide visual amelioration and amenity for the development of Brackmills Industrial Estate, responding to Policy E7 Skyline Development. Planting of the wood began circa 1998 and was completed in early 2000. As assessed above, effects on views from the Nene Valley and Northampton to the north would be limited to small areas and would be, at greatest, of Small scale; after 15 years all effects on views would be of Negligible scale.

Conclusion - effects on Northampton as a whole

Large scale effects would occur to a Limited extent of Northampton at all stages of the project and be of Medium magnitude and Moderate significance.

Medium scale effects would occur to a Limited extent of Northampton at all stages of the project and be of Medium-Low magnitude and Moderate significance.

Small scale effects would occur to a Limited extent of Northampton at all stages of the project and be of Negligible magnitude and Minimal significance. This includes all areas within the Nene Valley and Northampton to the north. The proposed development would, therefore, comply with Policy E7 of the Local Plan.

Most of Northampton would experience effects of Negligible magnitude and Minimal significance at all stages of the project.

Overall effects on Northampton would be of Low to Negligible magnitude and Slight to Minimal significance at all stages of the project.
May 2015
Land South of Brackmills

Where effects occur they would be, on balance, Adverse.

Quinton, 2.6km, south

The proposed development is unlikely to be visible from publicly accessible areas within Quinton. Views towards the site from roads within Quinton are generally obscured by development and vegetation on the northern edge of the village. Some dwellings on the northern edge of Quinton are likely to have distant views of small parts of the proposed development seen in the context of much more prominent existing foreground development within Wootton, from the backs of properties. During construction and operation, effects on the settlement of Quinton would be of Negligible magnitude and Minimal significance.

6.4.3. Roads and Rail

Local Roads

Local road users are judged to be of Community value, Medium susceptibility and Medium sensitivity.

Local roads outside the Northampton urban area adjoining and within approximately 0.5km of the site

This grouping comprises Newport Pagnell Road from the point eastwards of houses north of the road west of the roundabout with Landimore Road, and The Green and Landimore Road. Landimore Road has a separate footpath and cycleway alongside the carriage way and there are either one or two pavements along Newport Pagnell Road as far east as The Green. The Green does not have pavements. The extent of potential visibility is shown on the detailed ZTV Figure 4 (Appendices Volume II, Appendix 13) where it can be seen the proposed development is likely to be visible from extensive parts of these roads.

Viewpoints 1, 2 and 15 lie on these roads where effects are assessed as Large scale at all stages of the project (Viewpoints 1 and 2) and Medium scale (Viewpoint 15).

Proposed planting and green infrastructure along the edges of the site would soften views of the proposed development over time and help to integrate the development into the landscape and townscape.

Large scale effects would occur to a Wide extent of these local roads at all stages of the project and be of High magnitude and Major-Moderate significance.

Medium scale effects would occur to a Localised extent of these local roads at all stages of the project and be of Medium magnitude and Moderate significance.

Small scale effects would occur to a Limited extent of these local roads at all stages of the project and be of Negligible magnitude and Minimal significance.

Overall effects on these local roads would be of High-Medium magnitude and Major-Moderate significance at all stages of the project.

Where effects occur they would be, on balance, Adverse.
Local roads outside the Northampton urban area beyond 0.5km

This grouping comprises rural roads that link the small settlements lying within the undulating rural landscape to the east and south east of the site, and part of Newport Pagnell Road (the B526) which links Northampton to Newport Pagnell. The roads are typically lined by dense hedgerows with occasional trees. Most roads are narrow country lanes, with Newport Pagnell Road being a wider and faster route. Outward views from the roads are frequently limited by vegetation though some views are available where there are gaps (see, for example Viewpoints 3 and 5) or over hedges when they have been trimmed. Views of the development would often be fleeting glimpses and it would frequently be seen in the context of existing development in Northampton. The detailed ZTV Figure 3 shows that there are extensive areas of the landscape from where the proposed development would not be visible.

Effects would be, at greatest, of Small scale (see Viewpoints 3 and 5) from a Limited extent. These effects would be of Negligible magnitude and Minimal significance at all stages of the project.

Overall effects on these local roads would be of Negligible magnitude and Minimal significance at all stages of the project.

6.4.4. Recreational Routes

Long Distance Walking Routes

Walkers using long distance footpaths typically have both the opportunity and the inclination to enjoy the view and are judged to be of Community value, High susceptibility and High-Medium sensitivity.

Nene Way – (1.7km, north)

This route runs along the River Nene valley floor, following the route of the river within the study area. It enters the study area to the north west, just south of Northampton town centre, and runs east, leaving the study area near Billing Aquadrome, as shown on Figure 6 (Appendices Volume II, Appendix 13). The route passes business and industrial areas and under busy highway bridges such as the A45, and alongside reclaimed gravel extraction areas now open water for recreation or wildlife. Some areas of relative seclusion are found along this route within nature reserves or open spaces (refer to Viewpoints 9 and 10) although industrial, business, residential, pylons and overhead wires, and highway built form is an almost constant feature in views within the study area.

The detailed ZTV Figure 3 (Appendices Volume II, Appendix 13) shows that the proposed development would only potentially be visible from parts of the route south east of the town centre (around Viewpoint 9 where effects are assessed as Negligible scale at all stages of the project) and from the Northampton Washlands (around Viewpoint 10 where effects are assessed as Small reducing to Negligible scale over time). Photomontages have been produced from both of these viewpoints (see the Landscape SoCG Appendix 6).
May 2015
Land South of Brackmills

Small scale effects during construction and the first few years of operation would occur to a Localised extend of the route within the study area and be of Negligible magnitude and Minimal significance.

All other effects the Nene Way within the study area would be of Negligible magnitude and Minimal significance.

Overall effects on users of the Nene Way would be of Negligible magnitude and Minimal significance at all stages of the project.

River Nene – (1.7km, north)

Recreational boat users typically have both the opportunity and the inclination to enjoy the view and are judged to be of Community value, High susceptibility and High-Medium sensitivity.

The Nene Way runs along the River Nene through the study and effects are as assessed for users of the Nene Way. All effects would be of Negligible magnitude and Minimal significance at all stages of the project.

National and Regional Cycle Routes

National Cycle Route 6 – (0.8km, east)

Cyclists using national cycle routes typically have the opportunity and some inclination to enjoy the view and are judged to be of Community value, Medium susceptibility and Medium sensitivity.

This route runs from the southern edge of the study area passing to within approximately 0.8km of the site’s eastern boundary as shown on Figures 6 and 7 (Appendices Volume II, Appendix 13). Analysis of the ZTV Figure 3 (Appendices Volume II, Appendix 13) shows that the proposed development could potentially be visible from sections of the cycle route on high ground south of the Wootton Brook valley (Viewpoint 5 represents the most open views from this area where effects are assessed as Small scale reducing to Negligible scale over time), from a short length of an unnamed minor road approximately 0.8km east of the site (where Viewpoint 3 represents the most open views from this area where effects are assessed as Small scale at all stages of the project), but from very limited sections further north. Viewpoint 9 lies on the route in the Nene valley to the north, at a location where the ZTV shows potential visibility but where the photomontages (Landscape SoCG Appendix 6) show almost no visibility and effects are assessed as Negligible scale at all stages of the project.

Some sections of the route where the ZTV shows potential visibility would actually have no visibility due to the screening effects of roadside hedges that are not included in the ZTV model.

Small scale effects would occur to a Limited extent of the route within the study area, and be of Negligible magnitude and Minimal significance.

Overall effects on users of the National Cycle Route would be of Negligible magnitude and Minimal significance at all stages of the project.
May 2015
Land South of Brackmills

Public Rights of Way

Walkers using the PRoW assessed below are passing along routes crossing fields where there are no local identified waypoints such as benches where people pause to enjoy views, or key views to/from local landmarks, and are assessed as Community value. They typically have the inclination and opportunity to enjoy the views along the routes and are judged to be of High susceptibility. Combining these judgements they are assessed as High-Medium sensitivity.

The routes below are shown on Figure 7 (Appendices Volume II, Appendix 13).

PROW KN6 (passes through the site)

PRoW KN6 is a public footpath that runs for approximately 1km between The Warren in Hardingstone, south east to Newport Pagnell Road, passing through the site. Users of this public footpath currently have close views of built development at the northern end where it passes along The Firs east of The Warren, and past residential development and farm outbuildings; for most of this northern section on The Firs the site is not visible. On leaving the existing developed area farmland is seen to the south beyond which back gardens and buildings on The Warren and Newport Pagnell Road are visible, and Brackmills Wood is visible close to the footpath to the east. The PRoW then runs between arable fields within the site (with no enclosure either side of the path) before crossing Landimore Road, and then between further arable fields (with some scrub/overgrown hedge enclosure for part of the route) to the edge of a small wood north of Pagnell Court at the southern edge of the site. It then passes between garden boundary fencing on Pagnell Court and a line of scrub separating the PRoW from the arable field within the site.

Viewpoints 11, 12 and 13 lie on this PRoW and the photograph panels (Figures 9.11, 9.12 and 9.13 (Appendices Volume II, Appendix 14)) at the agreed representative viewpoints illustrate the nature of existing views. These are discussed in section 4.5.1 where it is described how views are of a foreground of arable fields within the site enclosed by development, trees and landform with only narrow and limited more distant views across the Nene Valley to the north between woodland, and to high land south of the valley of Wootton Brook to the south above houses and between road light columns on adjacent roads and within Wootton. The rising topography within the allocated land to the east of the site curtails more distant views eastwards. They illustrate the strong urban influences of existing development adjacent to and running through the site.

This PRoW would be retained and incorporated into the proposed development as shown on Access and Movement Framework drawing 3238_201 Rev A. At its northern end, where it passes along part of Firs Court, the proposed development is unlikely to be visible for over 50m of the route. Travelling south the proposed development would become increasingly visible where it passes new residential development and farm buildings before leaving the built up area, where an area of proposed amenity space within the site would be seen in the foreground to proposed housing. It would then pass alongside Brackmills Wood (left) and the area of proposed amenity green space with residential development (as shown on Green Infrastructure Framework drawing number 3238_205 Rev A and Illustrative Masterplan drawing number 3238/200) where the northern edge of proposed housing would be visible. It would then pass along a proposed green corridor between housing (right) and Brackmills Wood (left), before continuing south eastwards along the corridor between areas of
May 2015  
Land South of Brackmills

residential development, public open space, green infrastructure and school playing fields to Newport Pagnell Road. Part of the way along the route it would cross Landimore Road at a new crossing. The alignment of the footpath would be broadly unchanged but it is likely that there would be some local diversions during construction.

Effects on PRoW KN6

Effects are assessed as Large scale at Viewpoints 11, 12 and 13 at all stages of the development. Views across arable fields to existing development, woodland and more distant land would change to views of the proposed broad green spine enclosed by housing and other development providing an appropriate setting to the PRoW within its new urban context, in accordance with Policy N6 of the Core Strategy.

The scale of effects throughout all stages of the development would be Large and of a Wide extent (affecting the majority of the route), with some sections at the northern and southern ends experiencing Medium, Small or Negligible scale effects where the development would be partially or completely obscured by existing or proposed vegetation and existing buildings.

Works during construction would be phased to a programme to be agreed, affecting different parts of the PRoW at different times during the construction period. Effects during construction would be of Long term, High magnitude and Major significance. Effects would be Adverse.

During operation Large sale effects would be Permanent, of High magnitude and Major significance. The proposed development would result in some beneficial effects, creating a diverse urban landscape incorporating the green corridor and proposed buildings and open spaces. On completion the proposed planting would be immature and as it matures over time would increasingly help to soften the built elements and provide a stronger landscape framework for the development. During operation changing the existing views to more enclosed views of the proposed development would be, on balance, Adverse.

PROW KM1 (0.3km south east)

This PRoW is approximately 800m in length. Visibility of the proposed development would be limited to a length of approximately 210m within one field at its western end where Viewpoint 17 is located (see Figure 9.17), as can be seen on the detailed ZTVs Figures 3 and 4 (Appendices Volume II, Appendix 13). The proposed development would be visible when walking in a north westerly direction but not when walking in a south easterly direction. It would be visible to the right of existing development within Wootton, and beyond vegetation on field boundaries and within the land to the east of the site that is allocated for residential development. Young trees within the allocated land to the east of the site including evergreen pine will continue to grow and provide some further screening in time.

Effects on PRoW KM1

Effects from this 210m section of the PRoW would be of Medium scale at all stages of the project. These effects would be of Localised extent, Medium magnitude and Moderate significance at all stages of the project. Effects of Negligible scale, Negligible magnitude and Minimal significance would occur to users of the remainder of the PRoW.
May 2015
Land South of Brackmills

Overall effects on users of PRoW KM1 would be of Low magnitude and Slight significance. Where effects occur they would be, on balance, Adverse.

If the land to the east of the site that is allocated for housing is developed it is likely to screen much of the proposed development and would be more prominent in views, reducing effects on users this PRoW resulting from the proposed development.

6.4.5. Accessible and Recreational Landscapes

Users of the accessible and recreational landscapes assessed below include areas where views are an important contributor to the experience. They are assessed as Local value, High susceptibility and High-Medium sensitivity.

Brackmills Country Park to the north of the site and Foxfield at Grange Park to the south of the site have been included in the assessment of effects on residents and visitors to Northampton in section 6.3.2. Effects on users of these landscapes as recreational receptors are assessed below. Their locations are shown on Figures 6 and 7 (Appendices Volume II, Appendix 13).

Brackmills Country Park immediately to the north of the site

Brackmills Country Park comprises approximately 120ha of woodlands, scrub and grassland with a network of paths on the slopes and top of land on the south side of the Nene Valley, enclosing Brackmills Industrial Estate to the north. As discussed in section 6.3.2, planting of the wood within Brackmills Country Park was completed in early 2000. The trees are now approximately 8 – 10m high and comprise native species including silver birch, Scots pine, poplar, oak, ash and cherry, and some non-native species in small areas. The trees have yet to reach their full height. Views and vistas from the Country Park are mainly northwards across the Nene Valley (see for example Illustrative Viewpoint II in Appendix 15) with dense wood along most of the southern edge and rising landform limiting views southwards into the site to a small number of locations.

The site lies next to the western section of the Country Park as shown on Figures 6 and 7 (Appendices Volume II, Appendix 13). A green corridor (as shown on drawing 3238_205 Rev A) which would include new public access, planting, swales and habitat creation is proposed along the northern edge of the development. The development would be designed to have a positive green edge as shown on drawing 3238_207, providing views of housing fronting onto open space, and an integrated interface between the proposed development and the Country Park. Details of proposed tree planting would be designed at Reserved Matters stage but could include new areas of woodland or trees if further screening of development was considered necessary.

The proposed development would be visible from some areas within Brackmills Country Park. The detailed ZTVs Figures 3 and 4(Appendices Volume II, Appendix 13) indicate potential visibility from some open areas that lie between areas of woodland, but dense woodland along the southern edge and within the Country Park would limit visibility of the proposed development from most areas, and there would be least visibility from the eastern parts of the Country Park furthest from the site. Where development is visible it would generally be small parts seen through gaps in woodland or potentially above trees or scrub, except for a limited number of locations where paths run close to the southern edge such as
May 2015
Land South of Brackmills

at Viewpoint 14 where there would be a more open, wider view of the proposed development.

Effects on Brackmills Country Park

Representative Viewpoint 14 and Illustrative Viewpoint II lie at two of the locations indicated as viewpoints on sign boards within the Country Park as can be seen in Appendix 12 (Appendices Volume I); both are near benches. The proposed development is only likely to be visible in winter from the Illustrative Viewpoint, heavily filtered by existing trees south of the bench. Representative Viewpoint II is the only viewpoint on the sign board facing south towards the site where effects are assessed as Large scale; all other viewpoints face north across the Nene Valley which is the main focus of views from the Country Park. Large scale effects would also occur from small areas close to the site at a small number of other locations. Medium and Small scale effects would occur at some areas further from the site or where views of proposed development are more filtered by trees and scrub within Brackmills Country Park. Proposed planting in the green corridor on the northern edge of the site, and continued growth of trees within the existing woodland, would further screen the development from the Country Park, reducing effects within some areas over time.

Large scale effects would occur to a Limited extent of Brackmills Country Park at all stages of the project and be of Medium magnitude and Moderate significance.

Medium scale effects would occur to a Limited extent of Brackmills Country Park at all stages of the project and be of Medium-Low magnitude and Moderate significance.

Small scale effects would occur to a Limited extent of Brackmills Country Park at all stages of the project and be of Negligible magnitude and Minimal significance.

The remainder of Brackmills Country Park would experience effects of Negligible magnitude and Minimal significance at all stages of the project.

Built elements within the proposed development would become less visible as proposed planting and existing woodland and scrub matures, reducing the area the Country Park affected. This would reduce overall effects on Brackmills Country Park over time. Overall effects on Brackmills Country Park would be of Low magnitude and Slight significance during construction and the first few years of operation, reducing Low to Negligible magnitude and Slight to Minimal significance as vegetation matures.

Where effects occur they would be, on balance, Adverse.

Foxfield (1.9km south)

Foxfield at Grange Park comprises an area of public open space measuring approximately 18ha, including football pitches, a pavilion, a cricket square and areas for informal recreation including footpaths, and disabled access car parking. The detailed ZTV Figure 3 (Appendices Volume II, Appendix 13) indicates potential visibility from approximately 3/4 of the area. Some rooftops within the proposed development are likely to be seen in distant views beyond existing built development in Wootton (including the residential development under construction on the eastern edge of Wootton). Existing development would be much more prominent than the proposed development. Effects on views would be
May 2015

Land South of Brackmills

of Negligible scale. Effects on users of Foxfield would be of Negligible magnitude and Minimal significance at all stages of the project.

6.5. Summary of Landscape and Visual Effects

Effects on the receptors assessed above are summarised in Table 3. Significant effects are underlined. For receptors where the significance of effects varies, the distribution of effects is summarised.

Effects are given for all stages of the project together where assessed magnitude and significance effects do not vary between different stages. Where assessed magnitude and significance effects do vary they are separated into construction phase, the first few years of operation before planting has matured and once planting has matured.
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<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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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Landscape Character</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Limestone Valley Slopes - Area 12a Wollaston to Irchester</td>
<td>Large scale effects within site and small areas outside site</td>
<td>Construction - Long term</td>
<td>okm</td>
<td>Medium</td>
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<td>High-Medium</td>
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<td>Once planting has matured - Permanent</td>
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<td>Medium scale effects to areas outside site, local to site</td>
<td>All stages of the project</td>
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<td>Adverse</td>
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<td>Small scale effects to areas outside site, local to site</td>
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<td>Adverse</td>
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<td>Undulating Claylands - Area 6b Hackleton Claylands</td>
<td>Large scale effects to small area allocated for residential development on restored landfill site</td>
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<td>Medium</td>
<td>Slight</td>
<td>Adverse</td>
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<td>Medium scale effects to small area of the same restored landfill site</td>
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<td>Broad River Valley Floodplain - Area 18C The Nene, Duston Mill to Billing Wharf</td>
<td>Overall effects on the character area</td>
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<td>Medium</td>
<td>Negligible</td>
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<td>Neutral</td>
</tr>
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<td>Overall effects on the character area</td>
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<td><strong>Settlements</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northampton: neighbourhood of Wootton</td>
<td>Large scale effects on Newport Pagnell Road</td>
<td>0m, S</td>
<td>High-Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Adverse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Medium scale effects from small areas near the site</td>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
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<td>Adverse</td>
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<td>Northampton: neighbourhood of Hardingstone</td>
<td>Large scale effects on Newport Pagnell Road</td>
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<td>High-Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Adverse</td>
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<td>Adverse</td>
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<td>Large scale effects on parts of Newport Pagnell Road and Bracknills Country Park</td>
<td>0m, N, W and S</td>
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<td>Moderate</td>
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<td>Slight to Minimal</td>
<td>Adverse</td>
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<td><em>Overall effects on group of routes</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Local roads outside the Northampton urban area beyond 0.5km</td>
<td><em>Overall effects on group of routes</em></td>
<td>0.5 – 4km</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Negligible</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Recreational Routes</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Nene Way Long Distance Footpath</td>
<td>From areas within the ZTV</td>
<td>1.7km, N</td>
<td>High-Medium</td>
<td>Negligible</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Overall effects on route</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>Negligible</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
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<tr>
<td>River Nene</td>
<td>From areas within the ZTV</td>
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<td>High-Medium</td>
<td>Negligible</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Overall effects on route</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>Negligible</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
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<tr>
<td>National Cycle Route 6</td>
<td>From areas within the ZTV</td>
<td>0.8km, E</td>
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<td>Minimal</td>
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<td><em>Overall effects on route</em></td>
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<td>Minimal</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
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<td>PRoW KN6</td>
<td>Within the site</td>
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<td>High</td>
<td>Major</td>
<td>Adverse</td>
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<td>PRoW KM1</td>
<td>From areas within the ZTV</td>
<td>Medium scale effects</td>
<td>0.3km, SE</td>
<td>High-Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Moderate</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>
<td><strong>Accessible and Recreational landscapes</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Brackmills Country Park</td>
<td>Large scale effects to small areas close to site</td>
<td>0km, N</td>
<td>High-Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Adverse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medium scale effects to small areas close to site</td>
<td></td>
<td>High-Medium</td>
<td>Medium-Low</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Adverse</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Small scale effects to small areas</td>
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<td>High-Medium</td>
<td>Negligible</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
<td>Adverse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Overall effects on Brackmills Country Park during construction and first few years of operation</td>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Slight</td>
<td>Slight to Minimal</td>
<td>Adverse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foxfield at Grange Park</td>
<td>Overall effects on Foxfield</td>
<td>1.9km, S</td>
<td>High-Medium</td>
<td>Negligible</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
<td>Adverse</td>
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</table>
**7.0 Summary**

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; and assesses the magnitude and significance of the changes for the construction and operational phases. The key findings of the assessment are summarised below.

The proposed development will sit neatly into the context of the existing neighbourhoods of Hardingstone and Wootton. Brackmills Wood and other existing hedgerow and tree vegetation within the surrounding landscape, rising landform to the east, and existing urban areas to the west and south help to screen or filter views the development and integrate it into the landscape and townscape.

Extensive new Green Infrastructure including a green corridor following PRoW KN6, new and existing hedgerows and trees along the site's boundary, together with the provision of further areas of Green Infrastructure, and public open space and planting, will help to integrate the development into the urban and rural context. This will have some beneficial effects on landscape and townscape character and views. However, given that the landscape character areas that the proposals would affect are predominantly rural and that the direction of guidance towards landscape character is to conserve character, and that changing views of arable fields to development would generally cause adverse effects to views, effects are judged to be, on balance, Adverse where they occur.

**7.1. Landscape and Townscape Character Effects**

There would be some localised significant effects during construction and operation on landscape character within the site and up to the existing urban edge to the west and south, up to and within small areas within Brackmills Country Park to the north and part way across the arable field to the east, affecting part Northamptonshire’s 12a Wollaston to Irchester landscape character area during construction and operation. These effects would occur to an area already influenced by existing urban and infrastructure development. Effects on most of Northamptonshire’s 12a Wollaston to Irchester landscape character area and overall effects on the character would not be significant. Effects on all other landscape character areas would not be significant.

Effects on townscape character areas including those adjoining the site would be of Negligible magnitude and Minimal significance during construction and operation, and not significant.

**7.2. Visual Effects**

**7.2.1. Settlements**

Parts of Northampton adjoining the site boundary within the neighbourhoods of Wootton and Hardingstone would have the clearest views of the proposed development; however, these would be from limited areas on roads and effects would not be significant. The proposed development would be visible from small areas from other parts of Northampton but it would be a minor element in views seen in the context of existing more prominent
Land South of Brackmills

development. Saved Policy E7 of the 1997 Local Plan states that special importance will be attached to the effect of proposed development on the skyline between Great Houghton and Hardingstone as seen from the Nene Valley to the north. Effects on visual receptors from the Nene Valley and Northampton to the north would be limited to small areas and would be Negligible magnitude and Minimal significance during construction and operation, and not significant.

Effects on all villages within the study area would be of Negligible magnitude and Minimal significance during construction and operation, and not significant.

7.2.2. Roads and Rail

Effects on all rail, ‘A’ roads and the M1 motorway which pass through the site would be of Negligible magnitude and Minimal significance during construction and operation, and not significant.

Users of local roads outside the urban area within 0.5km of the site comprising Newport Pagnell Road, Landimore Road and The Green would have views of the proposed development. Effects on this group of roads would be of High magnitude and Major-Moderate significance during construction and operation, and significant. Effects on users of local roads beyond 0.5km would be of Negligible magnitude and Minimal significance, and not significant.

7.2.3. Recreational Routes

Effects on long distance walking routes within the study area would be of Negligible magnitude and Minimal significance, and not significant.

Effects on boaters on the River Nene within the study area would be of Negligible magnitude and Minimal significance, and not significant.

Effects on national cycle routes within the study area would be of Negligible magnitude and Minimal significance, and not significant.

Effects on users of all PRoW within the study area except for KN6 and KM1 would be of Negligible magnitude and Minimal significance, and not significant.

- PRoW KN6 runs through the site and it would be retained and incorporated into the proposed development within a green corridor. Views across arable fields to existing development, woodland and more distant land would change to views of the proposed broad green corridor enclosed by housing and other development providing an appropriate setting to the PRoW within its new urban context. Effects would be of High magnitude and Major significance during construction and operation, and significant.

- PRoW KM1 runs across fields south east of the site and users of its western end (approximately 210m in length) would experience effects of Medium magnitude and Moderate significance during construction and operation (not significant), but there would be no effects on the remaining approximate 590m of the path. Overall effects of PRoW KM1 would be of Low magnitude and Slight significance, and not significant.
7.2.4. **Accessible and Recreational Landscapes**

The only recreational and accessible landscape likely to experience effects greater than Negligible magnitude and Minimal significance is Brackmills Country Park which lies on the top and north facing slopes of the River Nene valley immediately north of the site. Views out of the Country Park are generally focussed northwards across the Nene Valley with limited views south into the site. Effects would be up to Medium magnitude and Moderate significance from small areas close to the site. Overall effects on Brackmills Country Park would be of Low magnitude and Slight significance during construction and the first few years of operation, reducing Low to Negligible magnitude and Slight to Minimal significance as existing trees within the woodland and proposed planting within the proposed green corridor on the northern edge of the development vegetation matures. Effects would not be significant.

7.3. **Designated Landscapes**

No designated landscapes would be affected by the proposed development.

7.4. **Residential Properties**

Residential properties that have the greatest potential to be affected by views of the proposed development are properties backing onto the site on The Warren, Newport Pagnell Road and Pagnell Court. It is normal and acceptable for residential properties to have views of residential development from houses and gardens. This is the case for the proposed development where public open space, allotments or gardens of two storey housing is proposed adjoining existing properties on the edge of Northampton. The proposed development would be a normal and accepted use as seen from existing dwellings.

7.5. **Statement of Significance**

As set out in the assessment methodology, effects that are Major-Moderate or Major are judged to be significant. Effects of Moderate significance or less are judged to be of lesser concern. It should be noted that whilst an effect may be significant, that does not necessarily mean that such an impact would be unacceptable.

The findings of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment indicate that significant effects would arise locally as follows:

- Part of landscape character area 12a Wollaston to Irchester within and close to the site;
- Local roads outside the urban area within approximately 0.5km of the site (Newport Pagnell Road, The Green and Landimore Road); and
- Public Right of Way KN6 which runs through the site.

The changes in character and significance of effects as described above are the inevitable effects of development in accordance with Policy N6 of the adopted Core Strategy.