



PROPOSED LOCAL CENTRE,  
NORTHAMPTON ROAD,  
BRIXWORTH

**DRAFT**

## **Landscape & Visual Appraisal**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1. Background**

- 1.1.1. ES Landscape Planning Ltd was instructed by Dr Dallas Burston to assess the landscape and visual implications arising from the proposed creation of a local centre at land to the west of Northampton Road, Brixworth. The Site location is illustrated on Plan SLP.001.

### **1.2. Approach**

- 1.2.1. The purpose of this assessment is to objectively assess the proposed development in the context of the existing landscape character, visual environment and landscape related policy environment.
- 1.2.2. The appraisal has been prepared in accordance with the guidance within Guidance for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third edition (GLVIA3), prepared by the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) and the Landscape Institute (LI) in 2013.
- 1.2.3. A suite of plans and photographs have been prepared to assist the assessment within this LVA and these are referred to within the text. The photographs are included within Appendix 3.
- 1.2.4. This assessment forms part of the suite of documents submitted as part of the outline planning application, and should be reviewed alongside the other submissions that accompany the application.



## **2. BASELINE ASSESSMENT**

### **2.1. The Site**

- 2.1.1. The site lies on the southern edge of Brixworth, a village located approximately 4km to the north of Northampton. The village is located in an elevated position between Pitsford Reservoir, to the east, and the River Bampton Valley, to the west, on the main road between Northampton and Market Harborough (A508).
- 2.1.2. The site is located towards the southern part of the settlement, immediately to the west of Northampton Road, which forms the old road through the village, which is now bypassed by the A508. The site forms a small, broadly triangular piece of land which lies to the north of the Brixworth Cricket Club, between Northampton Road, to the east, and Merry Tom Lane, a bridleway, to the west. The location of the site is illustrated on Plan SLP.001.
- 2.1.3. The site currently comprises an area of semi-improved grassland, which appears to be regularly mown, but not grazed, bound to the west by a 10m wide landscape buffer, to the east by 5m landscape buffer and to the south by a hornbeam hedge and lime tree avenue. The site falls gently from north to south, reflecting the local topography. The site is separated from the westerly aspect slopes of the Bampton Valley by Merry Tom Lane. The site itself is not publicly accessible.
- 2.1.4. The western landscape buffer comprises a mix of native and ornamental trees, including some evergreen species with an established understorey. The trees are over 10m in height, with the understorey forming a dense screen between the site and Merry Tom Lane, to the west. The landscape buffer on the eastern boundary incorporates a relic hedgerow which has been supplemented by a mix of native and ornamental shrub planting. There are several scattered trees within the belt, which assist in creating a degree of separation between the site and Northampton Road, but this planting is not as substantial as the vegetation to the west, allowing some intervisibility between the site and the settlement to the east. The southern boundary is defined by a hornbeam hedge and lime tree avenue that line the access drive between Hill Farm, and the Cricket Club, and Northampton Road. The planting appears to have been implemented around the same time as the Cricket Club was established and now forms a mature

landscape feature within the context of the site and assists with containing views of the site from the approaches to Brixworth from the south east. The site and its immediate setting are illustrated on Plan SCP.002.

## **2.2. The Site's Setting**

- 2.2.1. As noted above, the site lies on the southern side of Brixworth. The historic centre of the village lies approximately 1km to the north and is designated as a Conservation Area. The Saxon church is a key townscape feature and lies approximately 1.6km to the north of the site, on the other side of the village. There is no intervisibility between the site and this feature. As the village has grown, development has extended out from the historic core, most recently to the south where there are fewer constraints (topography to the west, the defensible boundary of the A508, the setting of the Saxon church to the north).
- 2.2.2. To the east of the site, lies an area of new residential development, which includes a doctor's surgery and areas of public open space. The residential development comprises a mix of terraced, semi-detached and detached properties, which include a variety of building materials, including red brick and render. The A508 lies to the east of this residential development, with the land then falling down from the ridgeline towards Brixworth Country Park and Pitsford Reservoir.
- 2.2.3. To the south of the site, lies the Brixworth Cricket Club. This comprises a high quality oval with nets, clubhouse and associated ancillary buildings. The land has been remodelled to achieve an appropriate playing surface resulting in the southern part of the ground being elevated above Northampton Road. This localised topography, together with boundary planting creates a degree of enclosure within the streetscene and contains views of the site to the north. The land falls to the south towards a local tributary which drains Pitsford Reservoir. The land then rises to the south, towards the village of Pitsford which is located on the opposite ridgeline.
- 2.2.4. Merry Tom Lane is a bridleway which forms part of the promoted Northamptonshire Round and Midshires Way routes. The route extends south west from Northampton Road, crossing the Brampton Valley Way before meeting the A5199. The junction between Merry Tom Lane and Northampton Road lies immediately to the north of the site, with the

bridleway running alongside the western boundary of the site. The landscape falls to the west of the route down towards the River Brampton valley. The Brampton Valley Way follows the former railway between Northampton and Market Harborough, running south – north along the valley floor. The land rises to the west towards the village of Spratton which is located in an elevated position on the opposite side of the valley.

## **2.3. Landscape Related Policy Background**

- 2.3.1. The site is covered by the policies of the 2014 West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (Part 1) and the 2020 Settlements and Countryside for Daventry District Local Plan (Part 2). It is also noted that Brixworth has a Made Neighbourhood Plan.
- 2.3.2. The site is not covered by any qualitative landscape designations. It is noted that there is a Special Landscape Area designation which covers Spratton and the landscape to the west of the Brampton Valley Way. This lies approximately 1.3km to the west of the site and is illustrated on Plan SLP.001.
- 2.3.3. The site is located approximately 950m to the south of the Brixworth Conservation Area.
- 2.3.4. It is noted that while the site is not publicly accessible and separated from the Cricket Club, with its associated recreational facilities, it is identified as a Local Green Space within the Neighbourhood Plan, with reference to “Haywards and Victors Barns recreation area”.
- 2.3.5. The Neighbourhood Plan also identifies a series of “Important Views”. These vary from views within the village looking out over the wider countryside to views from the wider setting looking back towards the village in its elevated location. NP View 5 is located closest to the site, on Northampton Road, to the north, however, this view is focussed on the wider valley landscape to the west, rather than along the road corridor towards the site. There is also a view from Merry Tom Lane, to the south west of the site, looking back towards the village (NP View 7). From this location the site is screened by the mature treescape of the western boundary.

- 2.3.6. A detailed appraisal of planning policy is included within the planning statement prepared by Framptons Planning.

## 2.4. Landscape Character

- 2.4.1. The European Landscape Convention (ELC) defines landscape as “...**an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and / or human factors**”.
- 2.4.2. As set out within “An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment” (Christine Tudor, Natural England; October 2014) “**landscape character may be defined as a distinct and recognisable pattern of elements, or characteristics, in the landscape that make one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse. Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) is the process of identifying and describing variation in the character of the landscape. It seeks to identify and explain the unique combination of elements and features (characteristics) that make landscapes distinctive.**”
- 2.4.3. As part of the baseline assessment, published landscape character assessments have been identified and reviewed and these form the basis of the assessment of the landscape character of the site.

### Regional Landscape Character Assessment

- 2.4.4. Natural England have prepared the Character Map of England which provides a broad assessment of landscape character at a regional level. The site lies within the “Northamptonshire Uplands” national character area (NCA 95). An extract of the assessment is included within Appendix 1.
- 2.4.5. It is noted that the assessment identifies a number of key characteristics, including:

**“Gently rolling rounded hills and valleys with many long, low ridgelines and great variety of landform. Wide, far-reaching views from the edges and across the ridgetops.**

**Sparse woodland cover, but with scattered, visually prominent, small, broadleaved woods, copses and coverts, particularly on higher ground.**

**Mixed farming dominates with open arable contrasting with permanent pasture.**

**Typical ‘planned countryside’ with largely rectangular, enclosed field patterns surrounded by distinctive, high, often A-shaped hedgerows of predominantly hawthorn and blackthorn, with many mature hedgerow trees, mostly ash and oak. Some ironstone and limestone walls in places and some localised areas of early irregular enclosure.**

**Nucleated villages often on hill tops or at valley heads with low densities of dispersed settlement. Cob, ironstone and limestone in older buildings with some remaining thatch, but mostly pantile and slate roofs. Brick buildings in some villages. Extensive new developments in villages along main transport corridors and in the two main towns.**

**The many historic houses, parks and gardens open to the public, the reservoirs, long-distance paths (such as the Knightley Way, Jurassic Way and Brampton Valley Way) and the Grand Union and Oxford canals provide well-used recreation assets”.**

- 2.4.6. The regional assessment is useful in introducing the wider landscape character context in which the site is set. However, the assessment does not provide an assessment of sensitivity or value.

#### Local Landscape Character Assessment

- 2.4.7. At a more local level, TEP prepared a Landscape Character Assessment on behalf of Daventry District Council (dated 2017) which seeks to break down the landscape of the District into broadly homogenous landscape types and more localised landscape character areas. The site is located within the “Hanging Houghton” landscape character area (LCA 4d) of the wider “Rolling Ironstone Valley Slopes” landscape character type (LCT 4)

An extract from the Daventry Landscape Character Assessment is included within Appendix 2.

- 2.4.8. The assessment includes a description of the “Hanging Houghton Rolling Ironstone Valley Slopes” LCA, stating that:

**“Hanging Houghton is the smallest of the Rolling Ironstone Valley Slopes landscape character type. It extends from Brixworth in the south to Draughton and is less than 1km in width. Its eastern edge follows a ridgeline and the landform gradually slopes down westwards before forming a steep west facing scarp down to the River Brampton.**

**Most land is occupied by arable farming with large fields and low clipped hedgerow boundaries. The steeper slopes near to Lamport, Hanging Houghton and Brixworth are characterised by pastoral fields enclosed by tall unclipped stockproof hedgerows and some hedgerow trees. There is limited woodland with the exception of the occasional spinney in the vicinity of Draughton (Leywell Spinney) and Lamport (Bullock Close Spinney) and the scarp slopes west of Hanging Houghton (Clint Hill Fox Covert) and land south of Brixworth. Although a sense of enclosure is provided by the consistently wooded eastern side of A508 Harborough Road in the adjacent landscape character area.**

**In terms of settlements there is Brixworth village and the hamlets at Draughton, Lamport and Hanging Houghton. All are on high ground associated with the ridgeline... Elsewhere the western and southern edges of the village are characterised by post war residential development and a partially visible edge to the village. The exception is the row of lime trees forming the approach to Park Farm to the south west, providing a soft well vegetated edge to the village...**

**...In terms of PROW, there is the Brampton Valley Way near to the western edge and the Northampton Round that passes to the southern side of Brixworth along the Merry Tom Lane bridleway...”**

2.4.9. The assessment provides a judgment of landscape condition, concluding that it is medium and that **“Most features are well maintained and intact, however there is evidence of some hedgerow fragmentation south of Brixworth”**.

2.4.10. The assessment also sets out a landscape strategy for the LCA, stating that:

**“The main areas for intervention are the large areas of arable farming, the setting to the hamlets and historic core to Brixworth and the countryside to the south and west of the same village. The arable farming forms the ‘spine’ of the landscape character area and the large fields and low clipped hedgerows and occasional hedgerow trees allow expansive views across the wider area. The open nature of the arable fields is complemented by occasional spinneys on lower ground which bring visual interest. There are opportunities for new hedgerow trees and small wooded blocks that would maintain openness but would contribute to the distinctiveness of the landscape character area.**

**The finer grain pastoral fields next to the hamlets and historic core of Brixworth should be conserved as they contribute to the setting of those places and enhance views towards roofscapes of historic buildings and church spires. Conservation of pastoral fields should include retention of the taller unclipped stockproof hedgerow boundaries and hedgerow trees. The south western edge of Brixworth is characterised by large arable fields, with limited vegetation to field boundaries and more gently sloping landform. Through land management there is opportunity to plant up gaps in field boundaries with hedgerows with hedgerow trees. This would enhance landscape character and would provide visual interest.**

**There are also opportunities for new hedgerow trees to the boundary of the Northampton Round promoted footpath, with small copses to the corners of fields. This would enhance views from the footpath towards the settlement edge.”**

2.4.11. These guidelines have informed the design development of the proposed layout and the landscape proposals.

### ESLP Landscape Character Assessment

- 2.4.12. ESLP has also undertaken an assessment of the localised landscape character, and this has been informed by the published assessments prepared by Natural England and Daventry District Council.
- 2.4.13. The site comprises a visually contained parcel of land on the southern edge of the settlement. This part of Brixworth has experienced a significant degree of change in the recent past with the extension of the residential areas south towards the roundabout between the A508 and Northampton Road. This new development lies to the east of the site and influences the character of the streetscene. The tree avenue to the south and the Cricket Club, with its outbuildings and boundary treatments, creates a suburban character to the south of the site. The established landscape buffer to the west creates a robust and defensible edge between the site and Merry Tom Lane, just to the west, containing longer distance views of this part of Brixworth from the wider landscape to the south west and west. The landscape buffer and Merry Tom Lane also separate the site from the wider valley landscape to the west. The site itself falls gently to the south, while the valley runs broadly north - south, to the west of Brixworth.
- 2.4.14. The site comprises semi-improved grassland which is of limited ecological merit and is not particularly scenic. The existing planting along the eastern boundary contains views into the site, ensuring that it currently does little to contribute to the setting of Northampton Road. It is considered that the site is closely related to the settlement of Brixworth, rather than the wider rural setting.
- 2.4.15. As part of the landscape character assessment, there is a need to assess the susceptibility, value and overall sensitivity of the landscape resource. These assessments will inform the objective assessment of effects within Section 4.2 and ensure that a transparent and objective approach to the assessment is achieved. GLVIA3 defines landscape susceptibility, landscape value and landscape sensitivity, as follows:

**“Susceptibility: the ability of a defined landscape to accommodate the specific proposed development without undue negative consequences;**



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

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

#### Landscape Susceptibility

- 2.4.16. In terms of the susceptibility of the localised landscape receptor to change of the type proposed, it is considered that the residential development to the east and sports development to the south influence the susceptibility of the site’s landscape character. The residential development to the east is recent demonstrating that the extension of the settlement to the south is considered acceptable. The site is visually well contained from the wider rural landscape to the south west and west, with the existing vegetation forming a robust and defensible edge to the site as well as ensuring it is more closely related to the existing settlement to the east. It is concluded that the susceptibility of the landscape, in which the site is set, to change of the type proposed is Medium / Low.

#### Landscape Value

- 2.4.17. In terms of value, Box 5.1 within GLVIA3 identifies a series of eight criteria which are generally accepted as being appropriate indicators of landscape value.
- 2.4.18. Table 1, below, assesses the value of the landscape in which the site is set against each of the eight criteria set out in Box 5.1.

*Table 1: Baseline Analysis of Landscape Value*

Value Criteria	Assessment
<i>Landscape Quality (Condition)</i>	Medium / Low – The site has been influenced by the surrounding land uses associated with its village location. The triangular nature of the northern part of the site does not appear to have changed significantly

	over the past 100 years, being defined by Northampton Road and Merry Tom Lane, however, the southern part of the field has changed with the introduction of the access to Hill Farm and the formation of the Cricket Club. The extension of the settlement south on the opposite side of Northampton Road significantly influences the site, reducing the perception of a rural character. The mature landscape buffer to the western boundary also separates the site from the wider rural landscape to the west.
<i>Scenic Quality</i>	Medium / Low – While there are no notable detractors associated with the site, the established boundary planting ensures that views across the site of the wider rural landscape to the south west and west are contained. There is little of visual interest within the site.
<i>Rarity</i>	Low – There are no rare elements or features associated with the site or its landscape setting that do not exist elsewhere within the wider landscape context.
<i>Representativeness</i>	Medium / Low – There are no characteristics or features associated with the site or its setting that are considered particularly important examples.
<i>Conservation Interests</i>	Medium – The site has some limited ecological value. The boundary hedgerows form the primary features of ecological interest within the site, with the main body of the site comprising species poor, semi-improved grassland.
<i>Recreation Value</i>	None – The site is not publicly accessible.
<i>Perceptual Aspects</i>	Medium / Low – The presence of the recently completed housing estate to the east, the Cricket Club to the south and Northampton Road immediately adjacent to the eastern boundary all reduce the perceived tranquility of the localised landscape setting of the site.
<i>Associations</i>	None – There are no known associations with the site or its immediate landscape setting.

2.4.19. As an overview, it is considered that the overall value of the site, and the landscape in which it is set, is Medium / Low. It is considered that the site

and the landscape in which it is set do not represent a “valued landscape” in the context of para 170a of the NPPF.

#### Landscape Sensitivity

- 2.4.20. Overall, in terms of sensitivity, when the judgements of susceptibility and value are considered, it is concluded that the sensitivity of the landscape in which the site is set is **Medium / Low**.

### 2.5. The Visual Environment

- 2.5.1. As part of the initial desk study and the subsequent site visit, a number of key views have been identified which are taken from publicly accessible locations showing the site in its localised and wider landscape context. The viewpoints seek to reflect the views of the site by more sensitive receptors, such as walkers on the local public right of way network, however, the viewpoints are considered representative and not exhaustive.
- 2.5.2. The viewpoints are illustrated on the Viewpoint Location Plan (9136L.VLP.003) within Appendix 3. The photographs were taken in July 2020. The day was clear and visibility was generally good at middle and longer distances.
- 2.5.3. The photographs within Appendix 3 were taken with a Canon 35mm equivalent digital SLR. The camera is a cropped sensor model so, in line with Landscape Institute TGN 06/19 – Visual Representation of Development Proposals, the photographs were taken at 35mm. The photographs are presented in Appendix 3 at a scale whereby they can be viewed at a distance of 260mm to represent the view from the particular location. The extent of the site / proposed development is indicated on the photographs to assist the viewer’s understanding of where the site / proposals sit within the context of the view. It must be noted that the photographs are illustrative and do not replace visiting the viewpoints in person.
- 2.5.4. As part of the baseline visual assessment, key receptors have been identified and this has informed the overall assessment of sensitivity of the view. Table 2, below, identifies the locations, receptors and sensitivities of the key viewpoints.

*Table 2: Baseline Visual Analysis*

Viewpoint	Location	Primary Receptors	Sensitivity
1	Northampton Road, to the south of the site	Motorists	Medium
2	Northampton Road, to the south of the site	Motorists	Medium
3	Northampton Road, just to the south east of the site, opposite the proposed access	Motorists	Medium
4	Merry Tom Lane, on the Northamptonshire Round promoted route, to the north of the site	Walkers & Riders	High
5	Northampton Road, to the north of the site	Motorists	Medium
6	Merry Tom Lane, on the Northamptonshire Round promoted route, to the south west of the site	Walkers & Riders	High
7	Merry Tom Lane, on the Northamptonshire Round promoted route, to the south west of the site	Walkers & Riders	High
8	Brampton Valley Way, to the south west of the site	Walkers & Riders	High
9	Picnic area off Grange Lane to the east of Pitsford Reservoir and the site	Visitors	High
10	Footpath DK2 on the north western edge of Pitsford village, to the south east of the site	Walkers	High
11	A508 Harborough Road, to the west of Pitsford village, to the south of the site	Motorists	Medium

12	Brampton Lane, to the west of Pitsford village, to the south of the site	Motorists	Medium
13	A5199 Welford Road, north of Chapel Brampton, to the south of the site	Motorists	Medium
14	Merry Tom Lane, on the Midshires Way promoted route, to the south west of the site	Walkers & Riders	High
15	Footpath DP4 on the southern edge of Spratton, within the Special Landscape Area, to the west of the site	Walkers	High
16	Footpath DP2 on the eastern edge of Spratton, within the Special Landscape Area, to the north west of the site	Walkers	High

2.5.5. As illustrated by the Photographic Record, views of the site are highly localised as a result of the topography and vegetation cover that characterises the immediate setting of the site. There is no intervisibility between the site itself and the designated landscape to the west. Section 4.3 of this LVA assesses the potential effects of the proposals upon these views.

### 3. THE PROPOSALS

- 3.1. The proposals comprise a new local centre for Brixworth which will include a pharmacy, located opposite the recently constructed doctors surgery; convenience store; food retail premises; local start-up business and office units; gymnasium / dance school; and drive through coffee shop, with associated public realm and parking. This is an outline application with all matters, except access, reserved. The proposed layout (ref: A\_1908 PL100) prepared by AT Architecture, within Appendix 4, illustrates one way in which the site could be developed to accommodate the suggested uses.
- 3.2. It is anticipated that the proposed units will all be single storey ensuring that they do not break the vegetated skyline created by the existing boundary vegetation. The proposals will adopt a simple palette of materials, ensuring that they complement the built form of the residential areas and doctor's surgery to the east.
- 3.3. The landscape strategy for the site seeks to ensure the integration of the proposals into the receiving landscape and visual environment, while also creating a high quality setting for the proposed businesses and public realm. The proposals have been informed by the existing vegetation structure, ensuring that the proposed built form can be integrated into the site without harm to the landscape buffers and planting associated with the southern and western boundaries.
- 3.4. It is acknowledged that the proposed access will require the removal of several of the lime trees within the avenue to the south and two sections of the hornbeam hedgerow, however, there are opportunities to mitigate these losses within the public realm areas internally and as part of the landscape treatment to Northampton Road.
- 3.5. The proposals will introduce a management regime in relation to the landscape treatment associated with the Northampton Road frontage, including pruning and selective thinning of the vegetation and introduction of new shrub planting where gaps exist. New tree planting along this frontage will introduce vertical scale, assisting the integration of the proposed built form and complement the vegetation on the opposite side of the road, creating a landscaped approach to Brixworth from the south.

- 3.6. It is noted that there is a relic ironstone wall along parts of the eastern boundary. This will be retained and restored as part of the proposals, reflecting the feature on the opposite side of the road, associated with the residential site.
- 3.7. Internally there are opportunities for new landscaping, with a central area of public realm forming the heart of the development creating a meeting space for visitors and users of the local centre.
- 3.8. ES Landscape Planning has worked closely with AT Architecture to develop the overall landscape strategy, as illustrated on the Proposed Site Plan within Appendix 4. It is considered that details of the proposed landscaping can be dealt with via condition.

## **4. ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE & VISUAL EFFECTS**

### **4.1. Background**

- 4.1.1. In line with the guidance in GLVIA3, it is appropriate to assess the effect of the proposed development upon the baseline landscape character and visual environment as identified in Section 2 of the LVA. The magnitude of change arising from the proposed development is assessed against the identified sensitivity of the landscape or visual receptor and a reasoned judgement is made as to the significance of the effect.

### **4.2. Effect upon Landscape Character**

#### Regional Landscape Character Assessment

- 4.2.1. With regard to the effect of the proposals upon the “Northamptonshire Uplands” national character area (NCA 95), it is noted that this published assessment does not provide an assessment of sensitivity. The proposals will not affect the perception of elevated, ridgeline settlements or the local topography of the area. The site is currently characterised by semi-improved grassland which does not appear to be under agricultural use. The proposals will not affect the appreciation of the rural character of this NCA. The proposals will not introduce any new or alien features into this landscape setting or compromise any of the existing positive characteristics or features.

#### Local Landscape Character Assessment

- 4.2.2. As noted within Section 2, the site is located within the “Hanging Houghton” LCA of the wider “Rolling Ironstone Valley Slopes” character type. It is noted that while the District assessment identifies that this LCA has a medium condition, it does not provide an assessment of sensitivity.
- 4.2.3. While the District assessment does not identify specific key characteristics of this LCA, it is considered that the following elements contribute to the local character of the “Hanging Houghton Rolling Ironstone Valley Slopes”:
- West facing slopes of localised ridgeline;



- Predominantly arable farmland, with some pastoral on the steeper slopes around the settlements;
- Clipped hedges around the arable fields with taller field boundary hedgerows around the pastoral land uses;
- Limited woodland cover. Some scattered spinneys, including to the south of Brixworth;
- Ridgeline settlements;
- Western and southern parts of Brixworth characterised by visible edge caused by post-war housing. Lime trees to the south west of the village, assist in softening the edge of the village;
- There are a number of public rights of way passing through this area;
- Some expansive views from the road network where it runs along the ridgeline, but tall hedgerows or wooded boundaries create a degree of enclosure.

4.2.4. Based on this assessment of key characteristics, the proposals will not adversely affect the character of the “Hanging Houghton Rolling Ironstone Valley Slopes”. The proposals will not affect the topography of the site or the perception of ridgeline settlements. The site is currently semi-improved grassland, which does not appear to be under agricultural use, immediately adjacent to the settlement edge, with residential and recreation developments to the north east, east and south. The site is bound by established landscape buffers which will be retained as part of the proposals, ensuring that the degree of enclosure experienced within the site and its immediate setting is maintained. The proposals are set back from Merry Tom Lane, behind the established tree belt which will be retained. The proposals will not affect the public’s ability to access or enjoy the wider countryside setting. It is acknowledged that the proposals will represent a degree of change within the site itself, however, they are located immediately adjacent to the existing settlement edge of Brixworth and represent a land use which complements the residential setting.

4.2.5. As set out above, it is considered that the proposals have been carefully designed to ensure that they will not affect the key characteristics identified within the published assessments nor will they adversely affect the wider countryside or the setting of Brixworth within the context of the “Hanging Houghton Rolling Ironstone Valley Slopes”.

### ESLP Landscape Character Assessment

- 4.2.6. As set out within Section 2 of this LVA, ESLP has also undertaken an assessment of the localised landscape character, and this has been informed by the published assessments prepared by Natural England and Daventry District Council. The assessment within Section 2 concludes that the overall sensitivity of the landscape receptor in which the site is set is Medium / Low.
- 4.2.7. As identified within the assessment of effects upon the published assessments, it is considered that the proposals can be integrated without giving rise to any significant adverse effects to the receiving landscape character. The site has an enclosed character as a result of the mature vegetation structure that defines the boundaries. This planting separates the site from the wider rural setting to the west and ensures that the site is not prominent on approaches to the village from the south. While the site is currently open grassland, it is not perceived from the wider setting as a result of the existing vegetation structure and townscape setting. The proposals will retain this landscaped setting and introduce opportunities to enhance it through the establishment of an appropriate regime of management and additional planting.
- 4.2.8. This part of Brixworth has experienced the most recent change with the development of the residential estates to the north east and east and is less constrained than the northern, eastern or western parts of the village. The proposals will retain the enclosed character of the site and the green approach to the village from the south. The retained landscape buffers will ensure that the proposals do not extend the perception of the village extending out into the wider countryside setting. It is considered that the proposals represent a sustainable land use within the context of the village, providing opportunities for services and work spaces that will benefit the local community.
- 4.2.9. The proposals will result in the loss of an area of semi-improved grassland and some limited vegetation on the southern and eastern boundaries to enable access, however, the layout also presents opportunities to introduce new native structure, tree and hedgerow planting that will mitigate these losses and contribute positively to local biodiversity.

- 4.2.10. This part of the village is characterised by a variety of built form, with the club house and ancillary buildings of the Cricket Club to the south and the new residential areas, including doctor's surgery to the east. The proposals will incorporate a simple palette of materials which have been informed by the localised townscape context. The proposed built form will be single storey and as such will not appear overbearing or out of character within the localised setting, which is characterised by the single storey built form of the club house and doctor's surgery and two storey residential built form to the east.
- 4.2.11. The proposals will not affect any of the expansive views over the Brampton Valley to the west from the local road or public right of way network. Nor will the proposals affect the recreational value of Merry Tom Lane. The existing vegetation associated with the western boundary will be retained and will ensure that the proposals are separated and visually screened from this route.
- 4.2.12. In conclusion, it is considered that while the proposals will give rise to a perceived change within the context of the site itself, the enclosed nature of the boundaries means that this will be highly localised to the site and the Northampton Road streetscene immediately to the east. Beyond this, the robust and defensible boundaries of the site and wider village will ensure that the perceived effect is negligible. It is acknowledged that there will be a moderate effect upon the character of the site initially, however, as the proposed landscaping matures and the built form weathers, the perceived effect will reduce. It is considered that the proposals will not give rise to a significant adverse effect. Beyond the site and its immediate setting, the proposals will not materially affect the character of the area and it is considered that the proposals can be integrated within this landscape context.

#### **4.3. Effect upon the Visual Environment**

- 4.3.1. In terms of the effect of the proposals upon the identified viewpoints in Appendix 3, it is considered that any views of the proposed local centre will be highly localised as a result of the existing vegetation structure and topography. Where the proposals are visible, they will be perceived within the context of the existing village to the north and east.

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### Localised Views

- 4.3.2. Viewpoints 1 – 3 and 5 are taken from Northampton Road, within the localised context of the site. Within these views the proposals will be afforded a degree of visual containment year-round. The mature treescape associated with the boundaries has a dense canopy ensuring that during the winter views of the proposals will be heavily filtered. The proposed built form is single storey so will not break the vegetated skyline. While there may be some glimpsed views during the winter months, the proposals will be seen in the context of the approaches to the village which are characterised by the built form and features of the Cricket Club, the streetlighting on Northampton Road and the residential areas to the east. The proposals will not introduce any features which are considered out of character within this townscape setting.
- 4.3.3. Viewpoint 3 looks west along the access drive and illustrates the landscaped character of the southern boundary. It is acknowledged that the proposals will result in the loss of several trees from the avenue to enable access, however, these removals will not be immediately apparent given the oblique angle of the approach and the dense nature of the tree avenue on the southern side of the drive. It is considered that the proposals will give rise to a negligible degree of change within the context of these views and can be integrated without significant adverse effects.
- 4.3.4. Viewpoints 4 and 6 are taken from Merry Tom Lane to the north and south west of the site respectively. From these locations the dense nature of the landscape buffer associated with the northern corner and western boundary of the site will contain views of the proposals year-round and will not affect the rural character of the bridleway. It is considered that the proposals can be integrated without harm to these views.

### Middle Distance Views

- 4.3.5. Viewpoints 7 and 8 are taken from the public right of way network to the south west of the site. Both views are taken from promoted routes and represent high sensitivity receptors. From these locations, the intervening distance reduces the perception of the elevated settlement, although the built edge created by Stonehill Way, Froxhill Crescent and Shelleycotes

Road is visible. The mature treescape associated with the western boundary and the setting of Hill Farm contains will contain views of the proposals. The proposed development is single storey and will not break the vegetated skyline. It is expected that views of the proposals will not be possible during the winter. However, should glimpsed views become possible, they will not only be heavily filtered as a result of the intervening canopy structures, but the proposals will be seen within the context of the wider settlement and will not extend the perception of the village extending along, or down off, the ridgeline. It is considered that the proposals will not affect these views, or the public's enjoyment of these routes.

- 4.3.6. Viewpoints 9 – 12 are taken from the elevated landscape to the south of Brixworth, on the southern side of the river valley associated with the tributary that drains Pitsford Reservoir. From these locations the intervening built form of the residential areas to the east of the site, and the vegetated setting of Brixworth will contain views of the proposals. The single storey nature of the built form will ensure that the proposals do not break the skyline and while some heavily filtered views may be possible during the winter, the proposals will be seen within the context of the existing built environment of the village and will not appear prominent or out of character. It is considered that the proposals can be integrated into the context of these views without adverse effects.

#### Longer Distance Views

- 4.3.7. Viewpoints 13 – 16 are taken from the western side of the Brampton Valley. Viewpoint 13 is taken from the main road between Northampton and Spratton, looking north east. The intervening distance and vegetation cover will ensure that even during the winter the proposals do not affect the amenities or qualities of this view.
- 4.3.8. Viewpoints 14 – 16 are taken from the wider public right of way network and are located within the Special Landscape Area. From these locations the intervening vegetation cover contains views of the proposals. As noted with other views, the single storey nature of the proposed built form will ensure that it does not break the vegetated skyline. Even during the winter months, the intervening distance will ensure that the proposals are not evident within the context of these views. The proposals will not harm the ridgeline

settlement character of Brixworth nor will they harm the setting of the Special Landscape Area. It is concluded that the proposals will not affect these views.

- 4.3.9. In summary, as illustrated by the photographic record, views of the site are highly localised to Northampton Road where it lies adjacent to the site. Within the context of these views the existing landscape buffers will assist in integrating the proposed built form and will be reinforced with new planting. It is acknowledged that the proposals will be more visible during the winter months, however, they will be seen within the context of the suburban setting, which is characterised by the residential development to the east, Cricket Club to the south and streetlighting along the road corridor. Furthermore, the proposed built form will only be single storey, as well as being set back from the road, ensuring that it does not appear prominent or overbearing. While some change will be perceived it is not considered to be significant and will reduce as the proposed landscaping matures and the built form weathers.
- 4.3.10. Within the context of the wider visual environment, the established vegetation structure associated with the southern and western boundaries, and the townscape to the east, will contain views of the proposals. It is acknowledged that some heavily filtered, glimpsed views could be possible during the winter from some of the closer viewpoints, however, the proposals will not break the skyline and will be perceived within the context of the wider settlement which will also become more visible during these months. The intervening distance will further reduce the perception of the proposals ensuring that they can be integrated into the wider visual environment without harm. It is concluded that the proposals can be integrated into the receiving visual environment.

#### **4.4. Effect upon Landscape Related Policy**

- 4.4.1. In terms of the effect upon national and local landscape related policy, the site and its immediate setting are not covered by any qualitative landscape designations.
- 4.4.2. As set out in Section 2, it is considered that the site and its setting do not represent a “valued landscape” in the context of Para 170a of the NPPF.

- 4.4.3. Para 170b of the NPPF requires development to recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. As set out within this assessment, it is considered that the proposals can be integrated without long term adverse effects upon those landscape receptors which characterise the site and its wider landscape setting. It is concluded that the proposals will not harm the intrinsic character or beauty of the wider countryside or the setting of Brixworth.
- 4.4.4. National and local policy seeks to achieve high quality and sustainable development. The proposals will not adversely affect the Special Landscape Area to the west or the Conservation Area to the north. As demonstrated by Viewpoints 14 – 16, the intervening distance and vegetation structure between the proposals and the views within the Special Landscape Area will ensure that the proposed development does not affect this designation.
- 4.4.5. The site is visually enclosed ensuring that the proposals will not be evident on the wider approaches to Brixworth and, as such, will not affect the perceived setting of the village or the appreciation of the wider countryside. It is considered that the proposals comply with the aims and objectives set out within the national and local planning policy framework from a landscape and visual perspective.

## 5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1. ES Landscape Planning Ltd was instructed by Dr Dallas Burston to assess the landscape and visual implications arising from the proposed creation of a local centre at land to the west of Northampton Road, Brixworth.
- 5.2. The site lies on the southern edge of Brixworth, a village located approximately 4km to the north of Northampton. The site forms a small, broadly triangular piece of land which lies to the north of the Brixworth Cricket Club, between Northampton Road, to the east, and Merry Tom Lane, a bridleway, to the west.
- 5.3. The site currently comprises an area of semi-improved grassland, which appears to be regularly mown, but not grazed, bound to the west by a 10m wide landscape buffer, to the east by 5m landscape buffer and to the south by a hornbeam hedge and lime tree avenue. The site falls gently from north to south, reflecting the local topography of this part of Brixworth. The site itself is not publicly accessible.
- 5.4. The site is not subject to any qualitative landscape designations.

### Effect upon Landscape Character

- 5.5. While the proposals will give rise to a perceived change within the context of the site itself, the enclosed nature of the site means that this will be highly localised to the site and the Northampton Road streetscene immediately to the east. Beyond this, the robust and defensible boundaries of the site and wider village will ensure that the perceived effect is negligible. It is acknowledged that there will be a moderate effect upon the character of the site initially, however, as the proposed landscaping matures and the built form weathers, the perceived effect will reduce. It is considered that the proposals will not give rise to a significant adverse effect. Beyond the site and its immediate setting the proposals will not materially affect the character of the area and it is considered that the proposals can be integrated within this landscape context.

### Effect upon the Visual Environment

- 5.6. As illustrated by the photographic record, views of the site are highly localised to Northampton Road where it lies adjacent to the site. Within the context of these views the existing landscape buffers will assist in integrating the proposed built form and will be reinforced with new planting. It is acknowledged that the



proposals will be more visible during the winter months, however, they will be seen within the context of the suburban setting, which is characterised by the residential development to the east, Cricket Club to the south and streetlighting along the road corridor. Furthermore, the proposed built form will only be single storey, as well as being set back from the road, ensuring that it does not appear prominent or overbearing. While some change will be perceived it is not considered to be significant and will reduce as the proposed landscaping matures and the built form weathers.

- 5.7. Within the context of the wider visual environment, the established vegetation structure associated with the southern and western boundaries, and the townscape to the east, will contain views of the proposals. It is acknowledged that some heavily filtered, glimpsed views could be possible during the winter from some of the closer viewpoints, however, the proposals will not break the skyline and will be perceived within the context of the wider settlement which will also become more visible during these months. The intervening distance will further reduce the perception of the proposals ensuring that they can be integrated into the wider visual environment without harm. It is concluded that the proposals can be integrated into the receiving visual environment.

#### Effect upon Landscape Related Policy

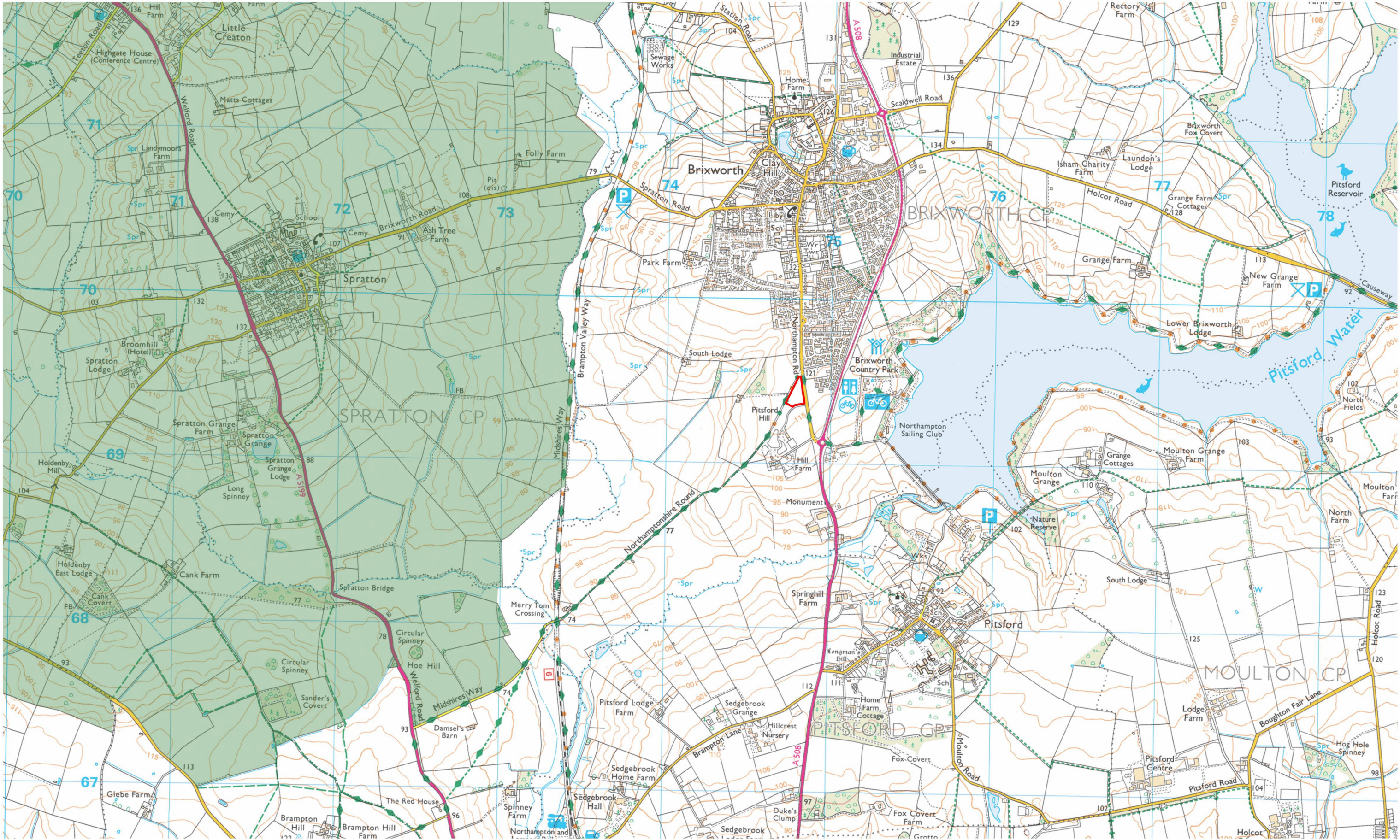
- 5.8. In terms of the effect upon national and local landscape related policy, the site and its setting are not covered by any qualitative landscape designations.
- 5.9. The assessment concludes that the site and its landscape setting do not represent a “valued landscape” in the context of para 170a of the NPPF.
- 5.10. National and local policy seek to achieve high quality and sustainable development. It is considered that the proposals comply with the aims and objectives set out within the national and local planning policy framework from a landscape and visual perspective.

#### Conclusion



- 5.11. In conclusion, as demonstrated in this appraisal the proposals can be integrated in this location without significant adverse effects upon the receiving landscape character or visual environment. It is concluded that the proposals are supportable from a landscape and visual perspective.


## PLANS





Key

-  Site Boundary
-  Special Landscape Area



**ES LANDSCAPE PLANNING**  
Part of the ES Group

### Brixworth Local Centre Site Location Plan

Dr Dallas Burston

Drawing Ref: 9136L.SLP.001  
Date: Jul 2020    Drawn: AM    Checked: AM





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**Brixworth Local Centre  
Site Context Plan**  
  
Dr Dallas Burston  
  
Drawing Ref: 9136L.SCP.002  
Date: Jul 2020 Drawn: AM Checked: AM



## **APPENDIX 1**

Extract from Natural England's Character Map of England –  
Northamptonshire Uplands NCA 95

Introduction & Summary

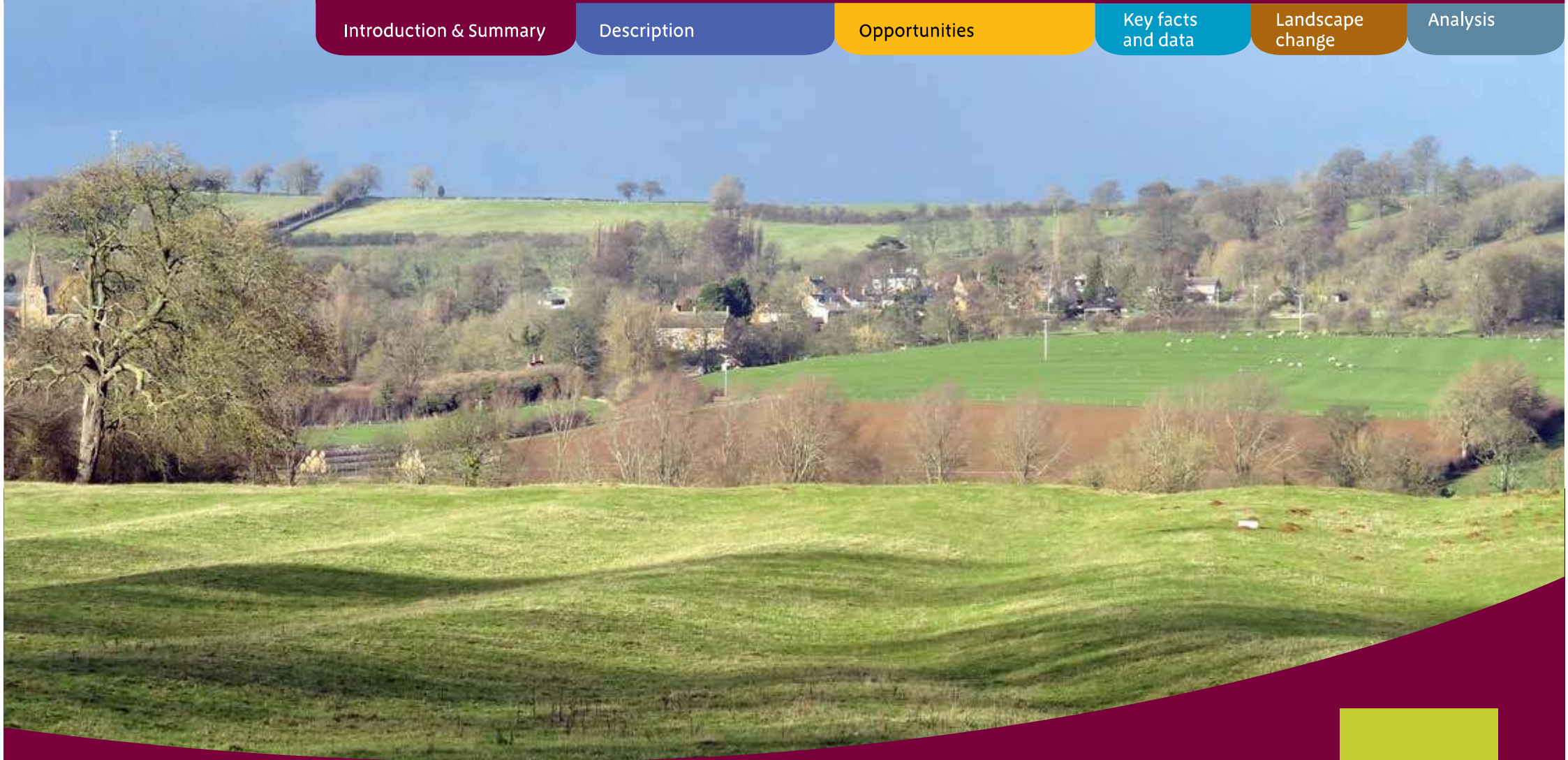
Description

Opportunities

Key facts  
and data

Landscape  
change

Analysis



[www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk)

NATURAL  
ENGLAND

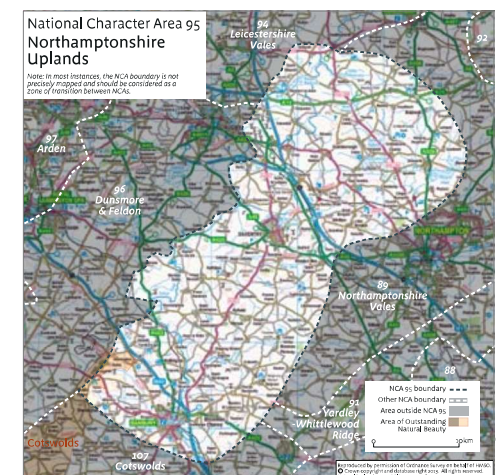
## Summary

The Northamptonshire Uplands National Character Area (NCA) is an area of gently rolling, limestone hills and valleys capped by ironstone-bearing sandstone and clay Lias, with many long, low ridgelines. Rivers flow out from the NCA in all directions, including several major rivers – the Cherwell, Avon, Welland, Tove, Ouse, Nene and Ise. While there are areas of differing character, there are strong unifying landscape features across the Northamptonshire Uplands, most importantly the extensive areas of open field systems with ridge and furrow and the earthworks of deserted and shrunken settlements which occur throughout. Other features include the strong, mostly Parliamentary enclosure pattern with high, wide, A-shaped hedgerows bounding the largely rectilinear fields with their frequent mature ash and oak trees; the many country houses and their associated extensive areas of historic and nationally important designed parkland landscapes; the distinctive ironstone, cob and brick nucleated settlements with their large stone churches, often with prominent steeples; the narrow lanes with very wide grassy verges; and the small, scattered but prominent broadleaved woods and coverts. There are also wide, long-distance views from the edges and across the ridgetops throughout the area.

Land is in mixed agricultural use, mostly pasture and arable, and reservoirs are a significant feature. Woodland is sparse, with many scattered, small, broadleaved coverts and copses, some in prominent hill-top positions, dotted across the landscape. The few ancient woodlands, such as Badby, take on a special value and interest in an NCA with few other areas of semi-natural vegetation and relatively limited wildlife interest. Flood plain grazing marsh occurs around Banbury and there are small, scattered pockets of

mire, lowland meadow, calcareous grassland and lowland dry acid grassland throughout the NCA, some designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest for their biodiversity interest. The area is also important for farmland birds.

Around the fringes and two main towns, the area has seen extensive development and construction of major strategic road and rail infrastructure, with associated reductions in levels of tranquillity and loss of rural character, though overall the area retains a strong sense of rural tranquillity. The area is particularly important for delivery of sense of history, sense of place, recreation and water availability and some ecosystem services are under pressure from development and agricultural practice, particularly water availability and water quality, soil erosion, soil quality and tranquillity.



Click map to enlarge; click again to reduce



## Statements of Environmental Opportunities:

- **SEO 1:** Protect, manage and promote the historic and archaeological features, designed landscapes and field patterns – including the parkland, battlefield sites, canals, ridge and furrow and settlement sites, and distinctive high hedgerows with their many trees – to ensure that these key features for sense of place and history are conserved, people's enjoyment and understanding is increased, and recreation opportunities are enhanced.
- **SEO 2:** Conserve, enhance, expand and restore the semi-natural and farmed features of the area – including the mix of agricultural production, particularly the pasture and meadows, patches of semi-natural habitats, and veteran and ancient trees – to enhance biodiversity and landscape character and to safeguard the continued sustainable provision of food.
- **SEO 3:** Conserve, manage and enhance the river catchments and reservoirs, improving water quality and flow management and benefiting biodiversity and recreation through managing soils, diffuse pollution and run-off, reconnecting flood plains and extending natural habitats.
- **SEO 4:** Conserve, maintain and promote local building styles and materials and plan strategic growth, infrastructure development and mineral extraction to ensure they protect remaining areas of high tranquillity, strengthen local sense of place and biodiversity, and increase adaptation for climate change through multifunctional green infrastructure networks, building on existing resources such as canals, rivers and access routes, creating strong ecological and recreation networks.



Wide panoramic views are a key feature of the area, here from the Knightley Way, one of many named long-distance paths.



## Description

### Physical and functional links to other National Character Areas

The Northamptonshire Uplands National Character Area (NCA) extends north-east from the Cotswolds NCA south of Banbury to border the Northamptonshire Vales NCA and Leicestershire Vales NCA around Market Harborough at its northern extent. In the west it borders Dunsmore and Felton NCA and it shares most of its eastern boundary with the Northamptonshire Vales NCA. A small area in the south-east abuts the Yardley Whittlewood Ridge NCA. It is part of the wider Jurassic 'wolds' landscapes that include the dip slope of the Cotswolds and extend north to the High Leicestershire NCA and the Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire Wolds NCA. The south-western corner of the NCA is designated as part of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

The hills are 'the main watershed of Middle England', with wide, far-reaching views from the edges and across the ridgetops. The area is an important supplier of water to towns in surrounding NCAs with many reservoirs and much abstraction from rivers. The River Cherwell rises in the south near Charwelton and flows south. The Tewkesbury Avon rises on the north-eastern edge near Naseby, and flows west then south-west, while the north-east-flowing Welland rises near Sibbertoft. The rivers Tove and Ouse rise here too and flow south-east. The eastern slopes form the upper catchment of the Nene, with the major tributary of the Isle in the far north-east. Topographically, the Upper Nene divides the Northamptonshire Heights to the north from the Cherwell/Ouse plateau, sometimes known as the 'Ironstone Wolds' in the south.

The NCA is crossed by several nationally important transport corridors. It is effectively divided in two from Rugby to Northampton by the M45, M1, A5, the West Coast Main Line railway and the Grand Union Canal. In the south, the M40, A423 and the Oxford Canal cross through, and further north the A14. Urban areas and large towns include Daventry and Banbury. Close by in neighbouring NCAs are Northampton and Milton Keynes, Kettering, Rugby, Coventry, Leamington Spa and Warwick. The many historic houses, parks and gardens, the Knightley Way, Jurassic Way, Brampton Valley Way, Battlefields Trail and the Grand Union and Oxford canals provide well-used recreation assets for people in surrounding areas.



**Fawley Park; extensive areas of parkland are a key feature of the area, here being restored through agri-environment funding and grazed by the once locally common Hereford cattle.**

## Key characteristics

- Gently rolling rounded hills and valleys with many long, low ridgelines and great variety of landform. Wide, far-reaching views from the edges and across the ridgetops.
- Dominant Jurassic scarp slope of limestone and Lias clay hills capped locally with ironstone-bearing Marlstone and Northampton Sands. Glacial boulder clay covers the northern and eastern areas, with sands and gravels along river valleys.
- The Upper Nene Valley divides the gently undulating Northamptonshire Heights to the north from the hillier Cherwell/Ouse plateau (the 'Ironstone Wolds') to the south and has been exploited for sand and gravel.
- Rivers rise and flow outwards in all directions, including the rivers Cherwell, Avon, Welland, Tove, Ouse, Nene and Ise, and the area forms the main watershed of Middle England.
- Sparse woodland cover, but with scattered, visually prominent, small, broadleaved woods, copses and coverts, particularly on higher ground.
- Mixed farming dominates with open arable contrasting with permanent pasture.
- Typical 'planned countryside' with largely rectangular, enclosed field patterns surrounded by distinctive, high, often A-shaped hedgerows of predominantly hawthorn and blackthorn, with many mature hedgerow trees, mostly ash and oak. Some ironstone and limestone walls in places and some localised areas of early irregular enclosure.
- Small pockets of semi-natural vegetation with many small scattered broadleaved woodlands, some ancient and often on hill tops, with mires, areas of lowland meadow, calcareous grassland and lowland dry acid grassland in the river valleys. Bluebell woods occur in places.
- Nationally rare, locally abundant and prominent ridge and furrow, with frequent deserted and shrunken settlements. Several large historic country estates such as Cottesbrooke Hall and Althorp and many small country estates, with extensive parkland containing a great many mature, veteran and ancient trees.
- Nucleated villages often on hill tops or at valley heads with low densities of dispersed settlement. Cob, ironstone and limestone in older buildings with some remaining thatch, but mostly pantile and slate roofs. Brick buildings in some villages. Extensive new developments in villages along main transport corridors and in the two main towns.
- A dense network of narrow lanes with wide grassy verges, often following ridges, crossed by many strategic road and rail corridors, including the M1, M40, A14, West Coast Main Line railway, Great Western Railway line and the Oxford and Grand Union canals.
- The many historic houses, parks and gardens open to the public, the reservoirs, long-distance paths (such as the Knightley Way, Jurassic Way and Brampton Valley Way) and the Grand Union and Oxford canals provide well-used recreation assets.

## **APPENDIX 2**

Extract from Daventry District Landscape Character Assessment (TEP, 2017) –  
Rolling Ironstone Valley Slopes: Character Area 4d Hanging Houghton

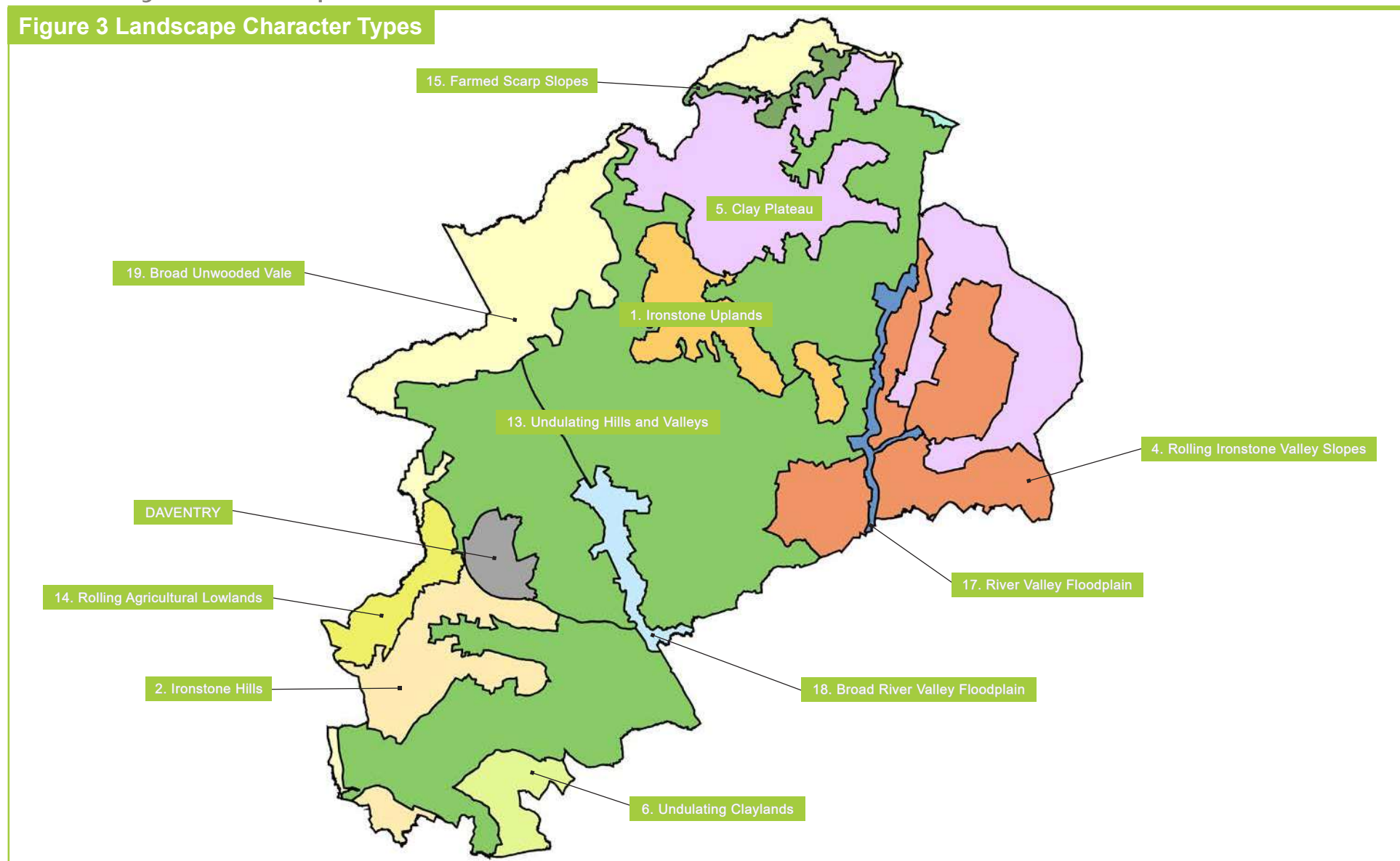


## Daventry Landscape Character Assessment

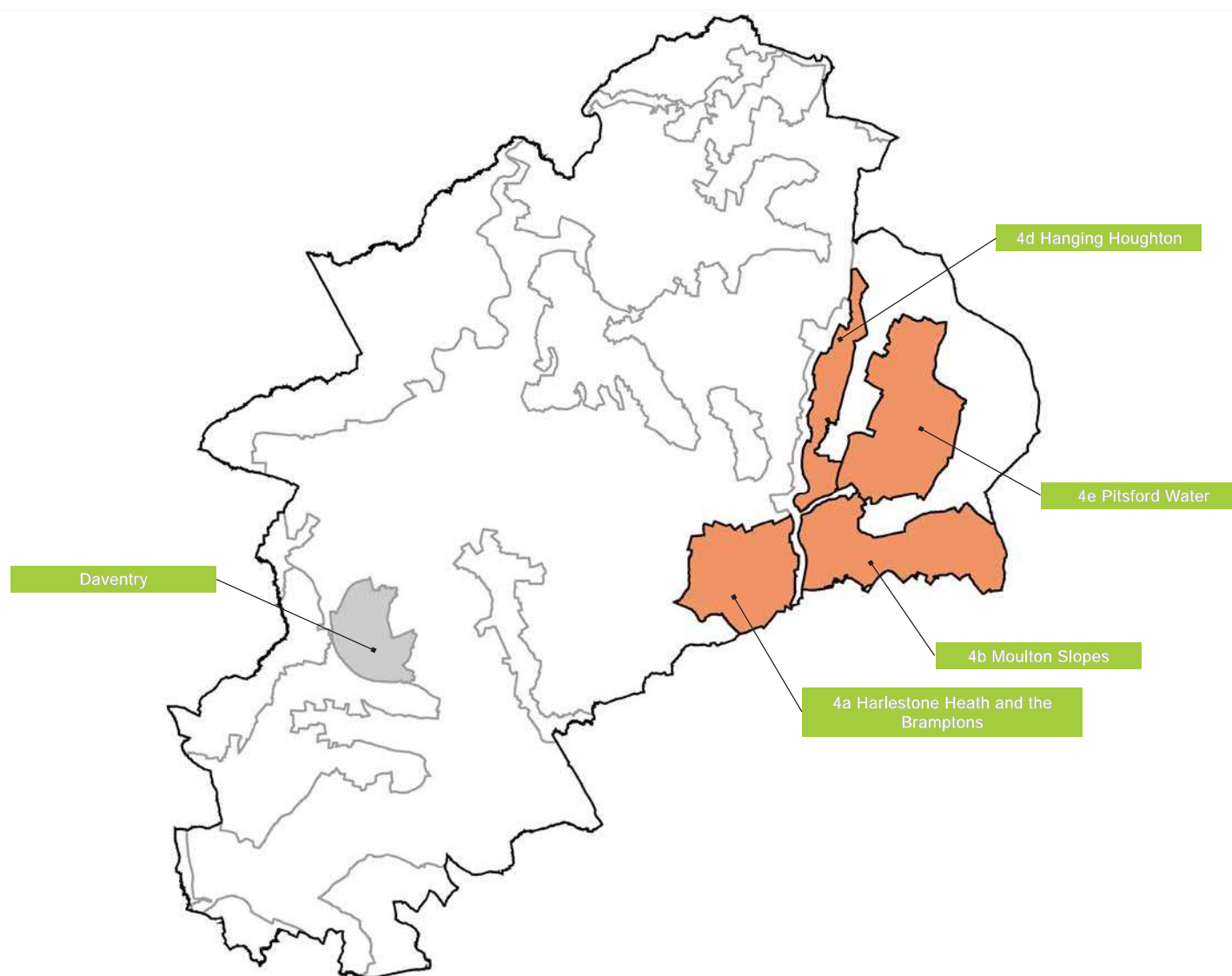


# Daventry Landscape Character Assessment

Figure 3 Landscape Character Types



## LCT 4 Rolling Ironstone Valley Slopes



## LCT 4 Rolling Ironstone Valley Slopes



*View of Pitsford Water from Brixworth Country Park*

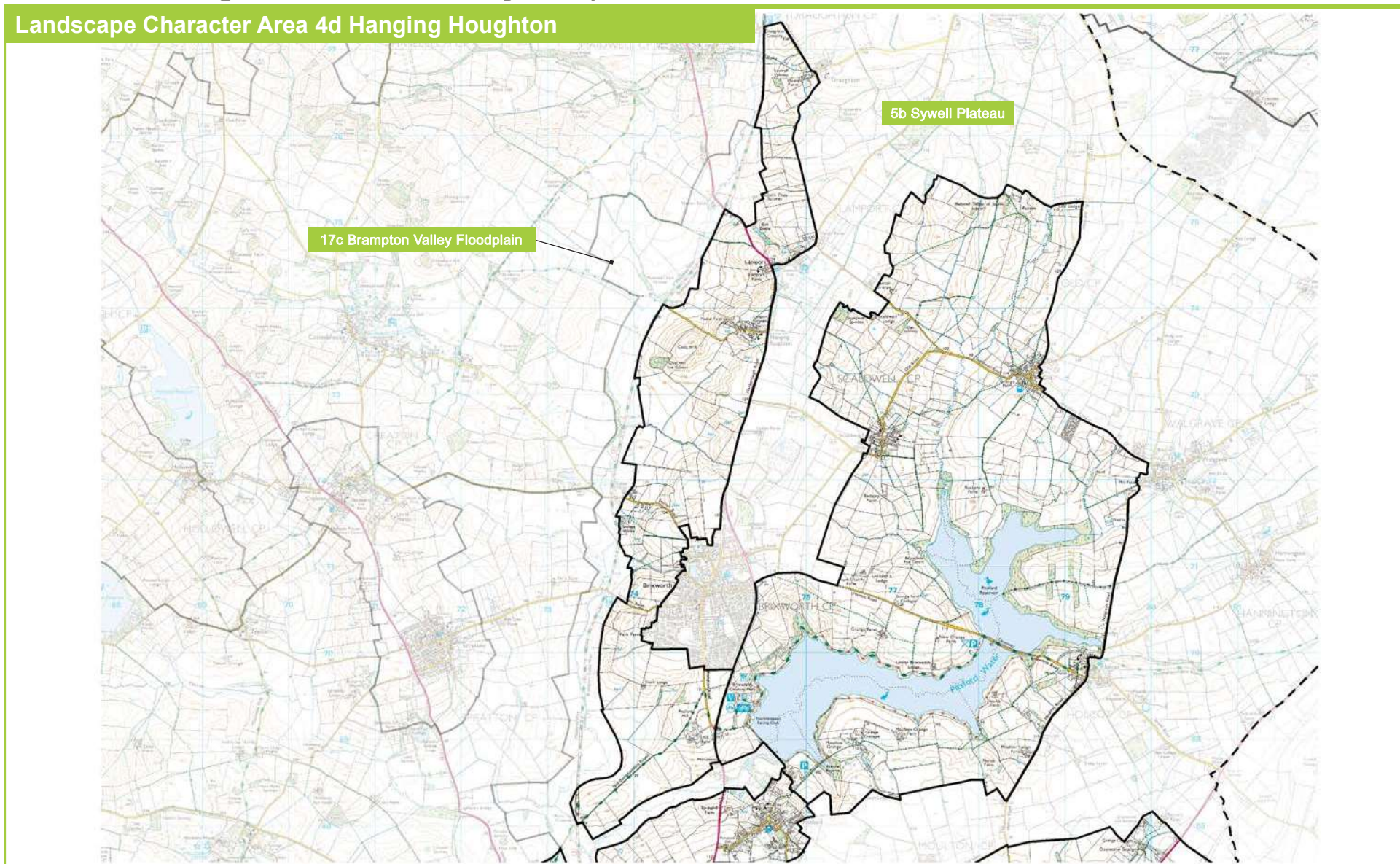
### Key Landscape Character Features

- Broad valley slopes dissected by numerous tributary streams that provide a surface expression of the diverse drainage network and its interrelationship with the variety and complexity of the landform.
- Ironstone geology expressed in local vernacular buildings and in rich red soils.
- Building materials vary, vernacular architecture and churches display the local ironstone.
- This provides a strong sense of connection with the underlying geology and memorable local landmarks and features.
- Rolling landform, extensive views and sense of exposure on some prominent locations creates an expansive and open character in contrast to lower and more secluded areas.
- Steep slopes adjacent to more elevated landscapes provide diversity. These areas are often more secluded and support farm management regimes including smaller pastoral fields that contrast with the more elevated and open areas.
- Water bodies, including the county's largest reservoir at Pitsford Water provide focal features, and enrich the diversity of the landscape. Pitsford is particularly distinctive through its reflective quality and constantly changing appearance in response to changes in both light and weather conditions.
- Productive arable farmland in medium and large-scale fields predominates on elevated land although sheep and cattle pastures are also prevalent, often in smaller fields adjacent to watercourses. Agricultural practices create a patchwork of contrasting colours and textures
- extending across valley slopes providing seasonal interest and diversity to the experience of the landscape.
- Where broadleaved woodlands and mature hedgerow trees combine, these impart a sense of a well treed landscape. The location of this mosaic of woodland and tree cover is an important feature particularly the t association with steeper slopes or adjacent to Woodland also present as coverts in the agricultural landscape or in the designed parklands that are also evident within the Ironstone Valley Slopes.
- Hedgerows are generally low and well clipped although intermittent sections show evidence of decline. The pattern of hedgerows, many of which contain mature and semi-mature oak and ash, creates a rich tapestry across the landscape and is indicative of the many centuries of evolving land management and changing agricultural practices.
- Well settled with numerous villages and towns with the landscape directly and indirectly influenced by the close proximity to Northampton.



## LCT 4 Rolling Ironstone Valley Slopes

### Landscape Character Area 4d Hanging Houghton





# LCT 4 Rolling Ironstone Valley Slopes

## Landscape Character Area 4d Hanging Houghton

### Description

Hanging Houghton is the smallest of the Rolling Ironstone Valley Slopes landscape character type. It extends from Brixworth in the south to Draughton and is less than 1km in width. Its eastern edge follows a ridgeline and the landform gradually slopes down westwards before forming a steep west facing scarp down to the River Brampton.

Most land is occupied by arable farming with large fields and low clipped hedgerow boundaries. The steeper slopes near to Lamport, Hanging Houghton and Brixworth are characterised by pastoral fields enclosed by tall unclipped stockproof hedgerows and some hedgerow trees. There is limited woodland with the exception of the occasional spinney in the vicinity of Draughton (Leywell Spinney) and Lamport (Bullock Close Spinney) and the scarp slopes west of Hanging Houghton (Clint Hill Fox Covert) and land south of Brixworth. Although a sense of enclosure is provided by the consistently wooded eastern side of A508 Harborough Road in the adjacent landscape character area.

In terms of settlements there is Brixworth village and the hamlets at Draughton, Lamport and Hanging Houghton. All are on high ground associated with the ridgeline. The north western edge of Brixworth is distinguished by the All Saints Parish Church spire appearing above mature trees to the churchyard. The large number of trees in the conservation area also contribute to the distinctiveness of the north western part of the village, particularly the wooded land around a small lake in the village and wooded gardens to large residential properties. The lake is drained by a watercourse which has formed steeply sloped small valley



*View towards All Saints Parish Church at Brixworth*

to the west of the village. Elsewhere the western and southern edges of the village are characterised by post-war residential development and a partially visible edge to the village. The exception is the row of lime trees forming the approach to Park Farm to the south west, providing a soft well vegetated edge to the village.

The western part of Draughton is in the landscape character area and is characterised by several large properties set in wooded grounds next to Home Farm. West of the farm complex, arable land slopes down towards the Brampton Valley Way.

The northern part of Lamport is in the landscape character area and includes several listed properties with wooded gardens and some pastoral fields beyond with some tall unclipped stockproof hedgerows, some hedgerow trees



*View towards Clint Hill and a spinney south of Hanging Houghton*

# LCT 4 Rolling Ironstone Valley Slopes

## Landscape Character Area 4d Hanging Houghton



*Distinctive line of lime trees forming approach to Hanging Houghton*



*Country lane south of Draughton with hedgerows and hedgerow trees*

and a short wooded network leading to fish ponds to the north west.

Hanging Houghton has a distinctive line of lime trees linking it to Harborough Road and this is supplemented by the well wooded grounds to Lamport Grange. There are a number of modern properties but with maturing vegetation to their plot boundaries. Manor Farm includes some traditional buildings and more modern warehouses but there are some groups of trees alongside that enhance the setting of the hamlet.

Other development in the Hanging Houghton landscape character area includes the Lamport Hotel next to Harborough Road and farmsteads near to Draughton and on farmland near to Brixworth.

The A508 is the only main road passing through the landscape character and although north of Brixworth it follows the highest section of the ridge the eastern and part of the western boundaries tend to be wooded limiting its impact on the wider landscape. There are a number of country lanes that link the hamlets to the A508 and these are bordered by low clipped hedgerows with occasional hedgerow trees. In terms of PRoW, there is the Brampton Valley Way near to the western edge and the Northampton Round that passes to the southern side of Brixworth along the Merry Tom Lane bridleway. There are short sections of PRoW near to Draughton and near to the small valley west of Brixworth.

Where the road network follows the ridge, there are some extensive views across the undulating neighbouring landscape character areas as the roads follow the highest ground compared with the wider area. However, there are places where these views are screened by tall hedgerow boundaries or the wooded boundaries to the A508.

### Landscape Condition

#### **Moderate**

Most features are well maintained and intact, however there is evidence of some hedgerow fragmentation south of Brixworth.

# LCT 4 Rolling Ironstone Valley Slopes

## Landscape Character Area 4d Hanging Houghton



*View towards All Saints Parish Church, Brixworth from Station Road*

### Landscape Strategy

The main areas for intervention are the large areas of arable farming, the setting to the hamlets and historic core to Brixworth and the countryside to the south and west of the same village. The arable farming forms the 'spine' of the landscape character area and the large fields and low clipped hedgerows and occasional hedgerow trees allow expansive views across the wider area. The open nature of the arable fields is complemented by occasional spinneys on lower ground which bring visual interest. There are opportunities for new hedgerow trees and small wooded blocks that would maintain openness but would contribute to the distinctiveness of the landscape character area.

The finer grain pastoral fields next to the hamlets and historic core of Brixworth should be conserved as they contribute to the setting of those places and enhance views towards roofscapes of historic buildings and church spires. Conservation of pastoral fields should include retention of the taller unclipped stockproof hedgerow boundaries and hedgerow trees.

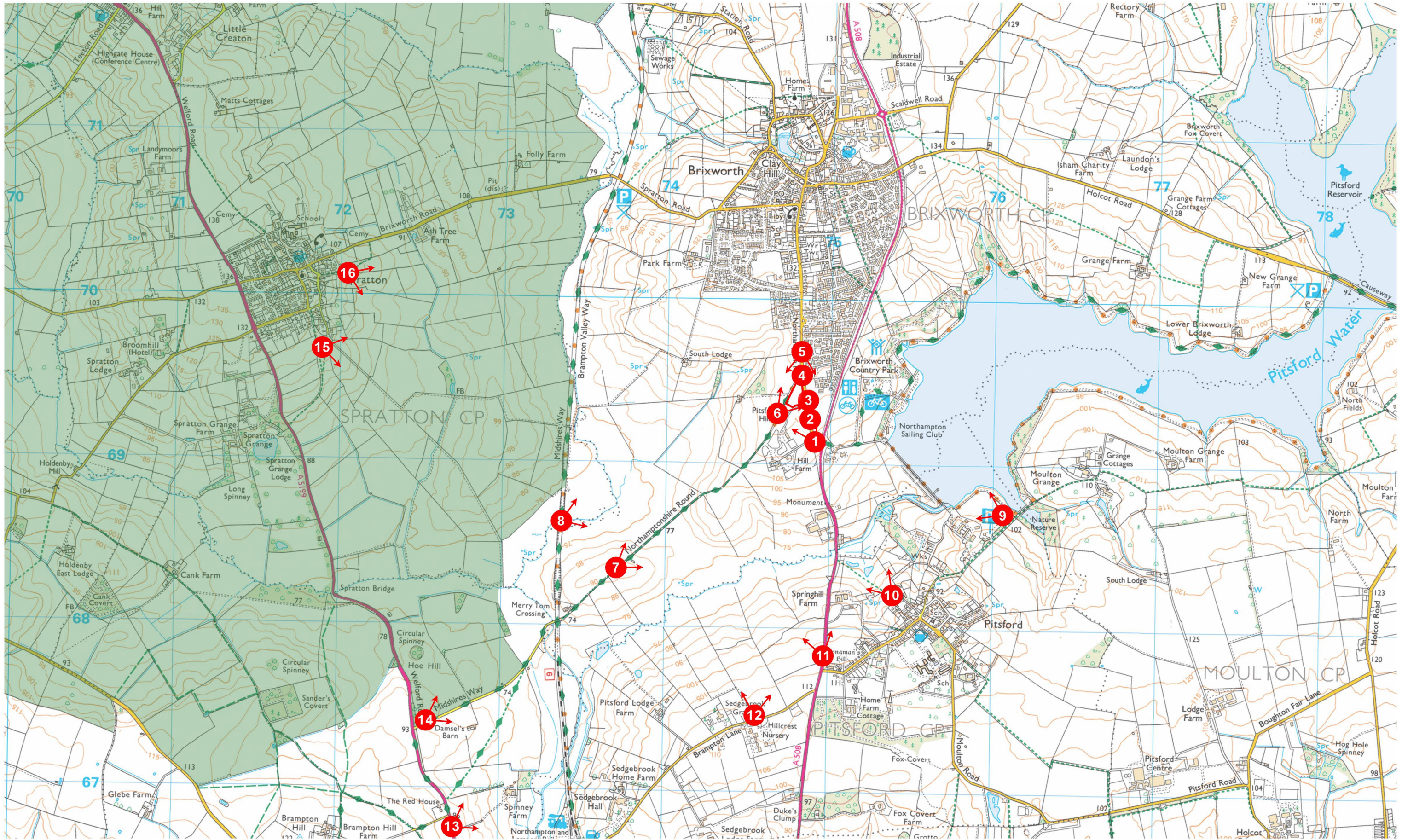
The south western edge of Brixworth is characterised by large arable fields, with limited vegetation to field boundaries and more gently sloping landform. Through land management there is opportunity to plant up gaps in field boundaries with hedgerows with hedgerow trees. This would enhance landscape character and would provide visual interest.

There are also opportunities for new hedgerow trees to the boundary of the Northampton Round promoted footpath, with small copses to the corners of fields. This would enhance views from the footpath towards the settlement edge.

## **APPENDIX 3**

### Photographic Record





#### Key

-  Site Boundary
-  Special Landscape Area
-  Viewpoint Location



Drawing notes: Based on Ordnance Survey data with permission of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, Crown Copyright

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#### Brixworth Local Centre Viewpoint Location Plan

Dr Dallas Burston

Drawing Ref: 9136L.VLP.003

Date: Jul 2020 Drawn: AM Checked: AM





Viewpoint 1



Viewpoint 2

NOTE: PHOTOGRAPHS ILLUSTRATE THE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CONTEXT ONLY AND SHOULD NOT REPLACE VISITING THE VIEWPOINTS IN PERSON TO ENSURE AN OBJECTIVE ASSESSMENT. Panoramas are created from multiple photographs which are stitched together in Adobe Photoshop. The photographs are taken using a digital equivalent of a 35mm camera in line with best practice and current guidance. The camera is a cropped sensor model and, as such, the photographs are taken at a 35mm focal length which most closely reflects a 50mm focal length on a full sensor DSLR. Images illustrate a horizontal field of view of 68° and, when printed at A3, should be viewed at a distance of 260mm curved through the same radius in order to most closely reflect the existing landscape context.





Location of proposed access

Application site located beyond vegetation structure.

**Viewpoint 3**



Application site located beyond vegetation structure.

**Viewpoint 4**

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**Viewpoint 5**



**Viewpoint 6**

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**Viewpoint 7**



**Viewpoint 8**

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Application site located beyond vegetation structure.



**Viewpoint 9**

Application site located beyond vegetation structure.



**Viewpoint 10**

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**Viewpoint 11**



**Viewpoint 12**

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**Viewpoint 13**



**Viewpoint 14**

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**Viewpoint 15**



**Viewpoint 16**

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## **APPENDIX 4**

AT Architecture Proposed Layout



**NOTES:**

AT ARCHITECTURE LIMITED  
WWW.ATARCHITECTURELTD.COM  
OXFORD HOUSE, CLIFTONVILLE, NN1 5BE  
INFO@AT-ARCHITECTURE.UK

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REV: BY: DATE: DETAILS:



PROJECT:

**Brixworth Local  
Services Centre**

DRAWING TITLE:

**Proposed Site Plan**

SCALE: 1:1000 (A3) STAGE: Planning DATE: June 2020

DRAWING NO: A\_1908 PL100 REVISION:





**ES LANDSCAPE  
PLANNING**  
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ES Landscape Planning Limited | Beckett House | 14 Billing Road | Northampton | Northamptonshire | NN1 5AW

+ 44 (0) 1604 265075 | [info@eslandscapeplanning.co.uk](mailto:info@eslandscapeplanning.co.uk) | [www.eslandscapeplanning.co.uk](http://www.eslandscapeplanning.co.uk)

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