

RADSTONE FIELDS EXTENSION
& SPORTS PITCHES DEVELOPMENT,
AT LAND ADJOINING RADSTONE FIELDS,
HALSE ROAD,
BRACKLEY.

Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment

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REVISION	DATE	WRITTEN	CHECKED
001	04.11.2020	JM	BW
002	12.11.2020	JM	BW

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Aspect Landscape Planning Ltd has been appointed by Mintondale Developments Ltd. to undertake a landscape and visual impact assessment relating to the outline application seeking the development comprising up to 450 dwellings, including formal sports provision, public open space and a cemetery together with associated infrastructure, including foul and storm water drainage and full details of access arrangements from Halse Road and Radstone Fields. The location and context of the application site is illustrated on ASP1 Site Location Plan and ASP2 Site and Setting Plan.
- 1.2. This assessment follows on from the previous Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) (5069.LVA.002) which supported a pre-application submission to South Northamptonshire Council. This new LVIA, has taken on board the council's pre-application response and has considered additional viewpoints as requested and assesses the potential impact of the revised proposals and reduced site area on the receiving landscape and visual environment.
- 1.3. A detailed appraisal of the surrounding study area has been undertaken using Ordnance Survey data, historical map data, local policy and published character assessments. This has informed the on-site field analysis to identify key viewpoints, analyse the landscape character and visual environment of the local area, and determine the extent and significance of any potential landscape and visual effects.
- 1.4. The assessment of effects has been derived from guidance provided within GLVIA3 (Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3 Edition) published by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment in April 2013. The methodology is contained within Appendix 1 of this document.
- 1.5. The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) will take the following format:
 - Review of landscape related policy – national and local policy context reviewed with any designations identified (Section 2);
 - Baseline assessment – review of the existing landscape character and visual environment (Section 3);

- Description of the proposals – introducing the proposed development and the associated landscape proposals and associated mitigation (Section 4);
- Assessment of effects – using an established methodology based on the guidance of GLVIA3, the potential effects of the proposals upon the existing landscape character and visual environment will be assessed (Section 5);
- Conclusions will be drawn (Section 6).

1.6. This assessment should be read alongside the other supporting material which accompanies this application.

2. LANDSCAPE RELATED POLICY

- 2.1. The application site lies on the north western edge of the built up area of Brackley and is covered by the policies contained within the adopted Local Plan Part 1 (West Northamptonshire, Joint Core Strategy, Dec 2014) & Local Plan Part 2 (South Northamptonshire Part 2 Local Plan, 2011-2029), which builds on the policies contained within the core strategy. The application site is located directly adjacent to the existing built up edge of the recent 'Radstone Fields' residential development, which forms part of a 'Sustainable Urban Extension' but is shown to be located outside of the defined 'Settlement Confines' and is therefore within 'open countryside.' It is noted that Brackley is not covered by an adopted Neighbourhood Plan.
- 2.2. The site is not covered by any qualitative landscape designations at either a localised or national level. There are two Conservation Areas located within Brackley, which include the 'Brackley Town Conservation Area' and 'Brackley Old Town Conservation Area.' However, these are located within the central and southern parts of the settlement and are separated from the application site by extensive intervening built form. As such, the above CAs' are not considered to be of any relevance to this application in either landscape or visual terms and an assessment of the potential impacts on their settings has not been considered within this report.

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (Feb 2019)

- 2.3. The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in February 2019. The document sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied, and is a material consideration in planning decisions. The document places an emphasis on the promotion of sustainable growth whilst also protecting the environment.
- 2.4. Paragraph 7 states that: ***"The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development."***

- 2.5. Paragraph 8 states that: ***“Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (...)” including an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.”***
- 2.6. Paragraph 11 states that: ***“Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.***

For plan-making this means that:

a) plans should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area, and be sufficiently flexible to adapt to rapid change;

b) strategic plans should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other development, as well as any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas, unless:

i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the plan area; or

ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

For decision-taking this means:

c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or

d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or

ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.”

2.7. Design is dealt with in Chapter 12 which sets out the objectives for achieving “well-designed places”. Para 127 states that: ***“Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:***

- a) Will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;***
- b) Are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;***
- c) Are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);***
- d) Establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;***
- e) Optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and***
- f) Create spaces that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and wellbeing with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder and fear of crime do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.”***

2.8. Chapter 15 deals with the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment. In particular para 170 states that: ***“Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:***

- a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality);***
- b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital – including the economic and other***

benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;

- c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it;***
- d) minimising impacts and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;***
- e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air quality; and***
- f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.”***

- 2.9. The NPPF has been of material consideration as part of our assessment of the site and its setting, and the proposals shall take on board the overall framework guidance and principles contained within the NPPF.

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) 2019

- 2.10. Those categories within the NPPG that are of relevance to landscape and visual matters in relation to this site are set out below.

Design: Process and Tools

- 2.11. The NPPG states that well-designed places can be achieved by taking a pro-active and collaborative approach at all stages of the planning process. The guidance sets out processes and tools that can be used through the planning system. The guidance is to be read alongside the National Design Guide.
- 2.12. As set out in paragraph 130 of the NPPF, permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, taking into account any local design standards or style guides in plans or supplementary planning documents.

National Design Guide

- 2.13. The importance of design is a key focus within the guide as is the local and wider context and character of the site.

Green Infrastructure

- 2.14. The NPPG highlights the multifaceted benefits delivered through Green Infrastructure and recognises how it can be used to reinforce and enhance local landscape character and contribute to a sense of place.

Landscape

- 2.15. Finally, the NPPG refers to the NPPF and the recognition of the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and the provision of strategic policies to provide the conservation and enhancement of landscapes. Adverse landscape impacts are to be avoided and mitigation measures employed where necessary.
- 2.16. The NPPF has been of material consideration as part of our assessment of the site and its setting, and the proposals shall take on board the overall framework guidance and principles contained within the NPPF.

Local Planning Policy

- 2.17. The following adopted local plan policies are considered to be of relevance to the application in relation to landscape and visual matters.

West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (Part 1) (Adopted December 2014)

"POLICY BN1 - GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE CONNECTIONS GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE CORRIDORS OF SUB-REGIONAL 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;

3) *DELIVERING LONG TERM MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR THE SUB-REGIONAL AND LOCAL NETWORK.*

MEASURES TO ENHANCE EXISTING AND PROVIDE NEW GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE PROVISION WILL:

- a) BE DESIGNED AND DELIVERED SUSTAINABLY WITH PRUDENT USE OF NATURAL RESOURCES;*
- b) MITIGATE AND ADAPT TO THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE INCLUDING THROUGH IMPROVED FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT AND AS A CARBON STORE;*
- c) BE DESIGNED TO THE HIGHEST QUALITY IN TERMS OF APPEARANCE, ACCESS PROVISION AND BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENT AND PROTECTION;*
- d) REFLECT LOCAL CHARACTER THROUGH THE PLANTING OF NATIVE AND OTHER CLIMATE APPROPRIATE SPECIES AND CONSIDERATION OF NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE FEATURES;***
- e) BE SUPPORTED BY A LONG-TERM MANAGEMENT STRATEGY."*

- 2.18. It is noted that the application site resides within proximity to '**Local Green Corridor 3: Middleton Cheyney – Brackley & Buckingham Extension.**' This is identified within 'Figure 6, Green Infrastructure Network Plan' of the Core Strategy, contained within Appendix 03 of this assessment. It is noted that Green Infrastructure corridors are not designations associated with landscapes of 'value' but establish a network of multi-functional green spaces and features, which can deliver environmental and quality of life benefits.

"POLICY BN3 - WOODLAND ENHANCEMENT AND CREATION MEASURES TO ENHANCE AND MANAGE EXISTING WOODLANDS AND CREATE NEW WOODLANDS IN WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE WILL BE SUPPORTED. OPPORTUNITIES WILL BE SOUGHT TO CREATE NEW WOODLAND TO BUFFER, EXTEND AND RELINK AREAS OF ANCIENT WOODLAND WHICH HAVE BECOME FRAGMENTED. THE PROTECTION OF AGED OR VETERAN TREES OUTSIDE ANCIENT WOODLANDS WILL ALSO BE SUPPORTED. DEVELOPMENT THAT WOULD LEAD TO FURTHER FRAGMENTATION OR RESULT IN A LOSS OF ANCIENT WOODLAND, AGED AND VETERAN TREES WILL NOT BE PERMITTED UNLESS THE NEED FOR, AND BENEFITS OF, THE DEVELOPMENT IN THAT LOCATION CLEARLY OUTWEIGH THE LOSS. WOODLAND ENHANCEMENT AND CREATION ALONG THE YARDLEY WHITTLEWOOD RIDGE FROM THE VILLAGE OF YARDLEY HASTINGS TOWARDS TOWCESTER AND BRACKLEY WILL BE

PRIORITISED IN RECOGNITION OF ITS IMPORTANCE TO THE CHARACTER AND BIODIVERSITY OF WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.”

“POLICY R1 - SPATIAL STRATEGY FOR THE RURAL AREAS

A) PROVIDE FOR AN APPROPRIATE MIX OF DWELLING TYPES AND SIZES, INCLUDING AFFORDABLE HOUSING TO MEET THE NEEDS OF ALL SECTORS OF THE COMMUNITY, INCLUDING THE ELDERLY AND VULNERABLE; AND

B) NOT AFFECT OPEN LAND WHICH IS OF PARTICULAR SIGNIFICANCE TO THE FORM AND CHARACTER OF THE VILLAGE; AND

C) PRESERVE AND ENHANCE HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND AREAS OF HISTORIC OR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPORTANCE INCLUDING THOSE

IDENTIFIED IN CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISALS AND VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENTS; AND

D) PROTECT THE AMENITY OF EXISTING RESIDENTS; AND

E) BE OF AN APPROPRIATE SCALE TO THE EXISTING SETTLEMENT; AND

F) PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT THAT EQUALLY ADDRESSES ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES; AND

G) BE WITHIN THE EXISTING CONFINES OF THE VILLAGE. DEVELOPMENT OUTSIDE THE EXISTING CONFINES WILL BE PERMITTED WHERE IT INVOLVES THE RE-USE OF BUILDINGS OR, IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES, WHERE IT WILL ENHANCE OR MAINTAIN THE VITALITY OF RURAL COMMUNITIES OR WOULD CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS AND IMPROVE THE LOCAL ECONOMY.

South Northamptonshire, Part 2 Local Plan (2011-2029)

“Policy NE3: Green Infrastructure Corridors

1. Proposals which would undermine the integrity of green infrastructure corridors identified on the proposals map will not be permitted unless the benefits of development clearly outweigh the adverse impacts and adequate mitigation or compensation measures can be provided.

2. Development proposals which accord with the development plan will be permitted where they contribute to the delivery of green infrastructure that meets the needs of communities both within and beyond the boundaries of the district, including the establishment of new infrastructure and improvements to the quality, use and provision of existing infrastructure.”

- 2.19. A copy of the Brackley Inset 'Proposals Map' is contained within Appendix 03 of this assessment and identifies that the site does not associate with any Green Infrastructure Corridors, identified within Part 2 of the Local Plan.

"Policy NE4: Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows

- 1. Proposals for development should seek to integrate existing trees, woodland and hedgerows.*
- 2. Development that results in the loss of ancient woodland or aged and veteran trees or other protected trees will rarely be acceptable. Proposals that would result in the loss or deterioration of these specimens will be refused unless the need for, and benefit of the development in that location clearly and demonstrably outweighs the loss.*
- 3. Proposals for felling or pruning will not be permitted to a tree in a conservation area or to a tree subject to a tree preservation order except where the proposal is justified in the interests of good arboricultural practice or other clear environmental benefits.*
- 4. Where the loss of existing trees, woodland or hedgerows is unavoidable, suitable replacement planting will be required within the development site, or secured via planning obligation to be provided at another location with direct links to the development site.*
- 5. Planting schemes should, where possible, use native or similar species and varieties, and maximise the benefits to the local landscape and wildlife."*

South Northamptonshire Design Guide (2017), An analysis of Existing Settlements and Informal Guidance on Future Development.

- 2.20. The guide establishes a benchmark for high quality design standards for new development within the district, with a particular focus on protecting the District's character as a key element to its future success, seeking to ensure that new development respects and reinforces that best attributes of the pervading character.
- 2.21. The design guide has informed the ongoing illustrative proposals and in particular, the guidance contained within Chapter 5 'Open space, Landscape and Surfacing for Highways, Parking and Public Space' guidance has been of material importance to this application.

Supplementary Planning Guidance: Brackley Masterplan (Adopted January 2011)

- 2.22. The Brackley Masterplan was procured by South Northamptonshire Council, to establish a clear, positive, vision for Brackley up to 2026 covering a range of broad aspects including its infrastructure, housing, cultural and employment issues. The masterplan has been considered, particularly in relation to the site's Green Infrastructure, which will incorporate multi-functional public open space, play facilities and positive pedestrian links across the proposed development and between the established settlement and wider landscape settings. The Brackley Masterplan has been of material consideration and has contributed to the proposals put forward within this application.

3. BASELINE ASSESSMENT

- 3.1. The site currently extends into four separate arable fields on the north western edge of Brackley. The site is split into two separate land parcels, linked by Halse Road which extends from the northern edge of Brackley. The site's larger southern parcel lies immediately adjacent to the recently established Radstone Fields residential development, whilst the smaller northern parcel lies adjacent to a large solar array and is accessed off Halse Road by an established field access track, which allows plant and vehicular access to the surrounding fields and solar array, as well as accommodating 'The Worlidge' bridleway / footpath. The site's location is shown on Plan ASP1.
- 3.2. As noted above, the southern parcel extends north west from the recently constructed residential area of Radstone Fields. The contemporary development extends up to the south eastern boundary of the site and the roofscape of the properties are evident within localised and longer distance views from the north. The north eastern boundary is defined by a mature hedgerow and tree belt. This separates the site from a solar farm array that lies to the north. The parcel's northern western boundary is presently undefined, being located within the centre of an established working agricultural field, but is contained by the adjacent field hedgerow that is established to the immediate north. The south western boundary is part defined by a managed hedgerow and the Halse Road corridor, and an established woodland tree belt which extends from the settlement edge before reorientating across the full width of the site along a north east – south west axis. An elevated localised ridgeline lies just to the west, beyond which the land falls towards localised farmsteads including Brackley Grange and Hill Farm and the river valley setting that wraps around Brackley to the south west.
- 3.3. The northern parcel is sited within a singular field parcel and lies immediately to the north west of The Worlidge, with the bridleway forming its southern boundary. Whilst the parcels north eastern boundary is presently undefined, the immediate mature field hedgerows and established hedgerow trees create a degree of separation from The Worlidge public right of way and the surrounding landscape.
- 3.4. Radstone Fields represents the latest phase of residential development associated with Brackley which has extended north from the town centre. This part of Brackley has extended out along Radstone Road and Halse Road with the River Great Ouse

and its tributaries defining the eastern, south east and south western extents of the settlement and forming a defensible edge to Brackley. This defensible edge is reinforced by the presence of the A43 and A422 road corridors which wrap around the eastern, southern and south western edges of Brackley. The recent growth areas of the town, including the Radstone Fields development, represents the logical growth of the settlement where there are fewer environmental constraints and the effect of the urban area upon Turweston and Evenly Park is avoided.

- 3.5. As noted above, a solar farm lies to the north east of the site, with a line of pylons running broadly north west – south east across the landscape to the north east. It is also noted that HS2 is proposed to run through the landscape to the north east of the site, between the solar farm and the village of Radstone. A water tower lies in an elevated position to the east of the hamlet of Halse and is a prominent landmark. The hamlets of Radstone and Halse lie approximately 1km to the north east and 900m to the north west, respectively.
- 3.6. The field pattern of the site and its localised setting is medium scale, comprising of arable land use. The field network appears relatively modern unlike the more historic field patterns around Hinton-in-the-Hedges to the south west of Brackley.

Vegetation Cover

- 3.7. The site currently extends within 4 medium – large scale arable fields adjacent to the north western edge of the urban area. An established woodland treebelt separates the southernmost fields of the southern parcel from its northern half. An established hedgerow and line of trees, including pine and oak, defines the north eastern boundary of the southern parcel, creating a significant degree of separation between the site and the wider landscape, including the solar farms and setting of Radstone village to the north east. Managed hedgerows with scattered hedgerow trees, typical of the Undulating Claylands LCT, characterise the remaining field boundaries. The Worlidge bridleway is relatively enclosed alongside the northern parcel's southern and south eastern boundaries, by an established native hedgerow and tree groups which line the bridleway on both sides where it runs adjacent to the site. The existing components of the site are illustrated on Plan ASP2, Site and Setting.

Topography

- 3.8. The site is located within a gently undulating landscape which, when combined with the mature vegetation structure that characterises the localised landscape setting, ensures that an enclosed, more intimate landscape is established, with few middle or longer distance views. Halse Road follows a localised ridgeline, with the land to the east, in which the site is set, gently falling to the north east, while the land to the west gently rises before falling again towards a wider river valley that wraps around Brackley from the west, around the southern side of the town. The localised and wider topography is illustrated on the OS base on Plan ASP1.

Public Rights of Way

- 3.9. The southern parcel is not publicly accessible, whilst the northern parcel is approached by The Worlidge (which falls within the application boundary line) before wrapping around its southern boundary. At the northern parcels southern corner, a field opening allows access for another public footpath (AN24) to extend north, from The Worlidge, towards the Halse water tower, crossing the northern parcel of the site. Despite the wider rural setting of the site being relatively well accessed by an established public right of way network, there are relatively few vantage points, from which either the northern or southern site parcels are clearly perceived. The OS base on Plan ASP1 and aerial imagery within ASP2 illustrate the extent of the public right of way network within the wider setting of the site.

National Landscape Character

- 3.10. At a regional level, the Natural England Character Map of England illustrates that the site is located on the boundary between the Yardley Whittlewood Ridge (NCA 91) and the Cotswolds (NCA107). The summary of key characteristics associated with these character areas are listed as being:
- ***A broad, low and gently undulating limestone plateau, more distinctly elevated in the west, rising above adjacent claylands and more commonly referred to as 'the Ridge' locally***
 - ***Watercourses include short sections of the rivers Til, Tove, Great Ouse and Kym as they flow across and out of the NCA. The Grand Union Canal utilises the valley cut by the River Tove dissecting the ridge at Stoke Bruerne.***

- *Well wooded with blocks of semi-natural ancient woodland, wood pasture and historic parkland including Royal Hunting Forests around Yardley Chase, Salcey Forest and Whittlewood Forest, although many areas have been supplemented with conifer plantations.*
- *Fields are medium sized with mature, speciesrich hedgerows and numerous hedgerow trees, usually oak or ash. Pasture and mixed farming dominate in the west, giving way to an increasingly arable landscape further east towards the claylands.*
- *Rural, tranquil and sparsely populated with a scattering of small nucleated settlements and attractive limestone villages. There are several large well-managed estates with historic country houses and associated parkland and veteran trees providing opportunities for quiet recreation.*
- *Arable farming dominates the high wold and dip slope while permanent pasture prevails on the steep slopes of the scarp and river valleys with pockets of internationally important limestone grassland.*
- *Ancient beech hangers line stretches of the upper slopes of the scarp, while oak/ash woodlands are characteristic of the river valleys. Regular blocks of coniferous and mixed plantations are scattered across the open high wold and dip slope.*
- *The majority of the principal rivers flow south-eastwards forming the headwaters of the Thames with the exception of rivers in the west which flow into the River Avon and then the Severn Estuary.*

County Landscape Character

Northamptonshire County Council: Current Landscape Character Assessment of Northamptonshire (2003)

- 3.11. At a more local level, the Northamptonshire Landscape Character Assessment identifies that the site is located within the Undulating Claylands Landscape Character Type (LCT) and the more detailed Tove Catchment Landscape Character Area (LCA 6a). The assessment identifies that the LCT is characterised by a number of features, including:

- *“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;*
- *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;...”*

3.12. The assessment concludes that:

“On the whole the Undulating Claylands are a well maintained and managed landscape of moderate scenic quality. Local variations in condition are apparent, however, and frequently depend on the extent to which hedgerows are managed. Across the landscape type, a number have become gappy and seen the introduction of post and wire fences. A number of trees have also become stag headed. The introduction of water towers has created prominent vertical elements across the landscape along with new infrastructure elements and associated facilities, such as the M1, lighting and signage. At a

county scale the landscape is generally unremarkable although occasional estate houses and associated parkland are of note and the wooded horizon of the surrounding Low Wooded Clay Ridge are distinctive from the landscape type. 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.”

- 3.13. The assessment then goes on to identify the more specific characteristics of the LCA, which include:

“The Tove Catchment Character Area lies to the southwest of Northampton and comprises the largest of the Undulating Claylands. The area forms the catchment of the River Tove, which originates north of Sulgrave. Flowing eastwards from more elevated land to the west of the area, the river is fed by a dendritic pattern of streams from the north and south until the river itself becomes a significant landscape feature east of Towcester, forming part of the River Valley Floodplain. The streams have eroded broad, gentle, convex sloped valleys, resulting in the distinctive undulating landform. The streams are of limited scale, however, with undulations therefore varying in size, with many not evident in the landscape as river valleys...”

Land cover is typically a combination of both arable and pasture farming with improved pasture largely located around village settlements bordering the River Tove and its tributaries, and also on sloping valley sides. Where pastoral fields predominate, a more intricate and intimate pattern prevails.

...Surrounding the southern boundary of the character area are significant woodland blocks within the Low Wooded Clay Ridge, which although beyond the area, create a notable wooded horizon in many views to the south.

Whilst woodland is not a prominent feature on the Undulating Claylands, there are a number of moderately sized woodland blocks. These create a more localised woodland character in places that contain views, and result in a more intimate landscape...

The landscape is relatively well settled with numerous villages scattered throughout the area. Whilst the majority are relatively small in size, Blisworth, Roade and Greens Norton are slightly larger with evidence of post war

development on the edge of the settlements. Village morphology varies greatly within the area...The landscape beyond the villages is generally well settled with numerous farms and dwellings, although some areas are devoid of any development and often have an unoccupied character. Communication routes are extensive in the area, including the A43, A5 and A508. Glimpsed views are also possible towards the M1 on the northeastern edge of the character area..."

Aspect Landscape Character Assessment

- 3.14. While the NCA and more localised Character Assessments provide a good assessment and overview of the quality and character of the landscape within which the site is set, it is considered that they represent a broad-brush approach and do not necessarily reflect the particular qualities of the application site itself and its immediate localised setting. As such Aspect has undertaken a more localised landscape character assessment of the application site, the settlement edge of Brackley and the immediate surrounding landscape.
- 3.15. In order to assess the effects on the landscape resource, the 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment', Third Edition, provides a number of definitions for landscape susceptibility, landscape value and finally landscape sensitivity, as follows:
- **Landscape 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";* and
 - **Landscape 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."*
- 3.16. In terms of landscape sensitivity, there are a number of factors that both influence and affect the value of the landscape character of the site and its setting, and their susceptibility to change. The sensitivity of a particular landscape in relation to new development can be categorised as very high, high, medium, low or negligible. This

takes into account the susceptibility of the receptor to the type of development proposed and the value attached to different landscapes by society.

Landscape Susceptibility

- 3.17. In terms of the susceptibility of the landscape resource to accommodate change of the type proposed within the southern field parcel, it is considered that the presence of the existing urban edge immediately to the south and the solar arrays to the north, reduces the susceptibility of this part of the site to change resulting from residential development. The established field boundaries, in particular along its north eastern boundary, and within the southern parcel itself, combined with the elevated ridgeline to the west and positive wider field boundary vegetations, create a robust external edge to the site's southern parcel, forming a defensible boundary between the settlement fringe and the wider rural setting to the north of Brackley.
- 3.18. The site's northern parcel is of a relatively small scale and is well contained by the established treescape and hedgerow vegetation structure established along its boundaries, and the wider field parcel that contains its north eastern boundary. The Worlidge is particularly well vegetated, providing further containment along its southern and south eastern boundaries. The solar arrays and overhead power lines, which are perceived from PRoW VA14, form prominent man made features located to the immediate east and within the site itself respectively. The northern parcel's northern boundary is well contained by an established high hedgerow, providing containment from the neighbouring fieldscape setting to the north and north west where the mature hedgerow extends towards Halse Road.
- 3.19. It is therefore considered that the landscape character of the site's northern and southern field parcels have capacity to accommodate carefully incorporated sports pitches and a sensitively designed residential development. The susceptibility of the landscape resource to change of the type proposed is therefore considered to be **medium**.

Landscape Value

- 3.20. The Guidelines for Landscape & Visual Impact (GLVIA 3) sets out at Box 5.1 a range of factors that can help in the identification of valued landscapes. These factors include:

- Landscape quality (condition);
- Scenic quality;
- Rarity;
- Representativeness;
- Conservation Interests;
- Recreation Value;
- Perceptual aspects; and
- Associations.

- 3.21. The site reflects the local field network and typical land uses to the north, north east and west. This is not a remarkable landscape but one that has been shaped by transport corridors and watercourses. The site and its setting are relatively intact; however, recent human activities are present in the form of the settlement edge to the south, the solar farm and the electricity pylons.
- 3.22. There are no features associated with the site of particular scenic importance. The mature boundary planting shortens views and reinforces the compartmentalised character of this landscape. There are no features associated with the site that are considered rare or of particular importance within this landscape context.
- 3.23. The site is currently under arable land use which reduces the ecological interest internally. The key features are the boundary hedgerows and trees. There are no ecological designations associated with the site. There are also no heritage assets or designations associated with the site. The northern parcel has some recreational value as a footpath runs broadly north – south between the Halse water tower and The Worlidge, however, the southern parcel is not publicly accessible.
- 3.24. It is acknowledged that the current land uses associated with the site give rise to a perception of tranquillity, however, the presence of the settlement edge immediately to the south east, together with other features such as the road corridor, pylons and solar farm reduce the tranquillity of the site when compared to the more remote parts of the landscape to the north and west. There are no known historic or artistic associations associated with the site.
- 3.25. It is considered that while the site currently has a rural character, the presence of the Radstone Fields development influences the site and extends the perception of the built up area within it. The presence of the solar farm and overhead pylons also

reduce the perceived tranquillity of the site and while it is acknowledged that such features are not uncharacteristic within the countryside, these elements, alongside the existing settlement edge influence the character of the site.

- 3.26. It is considered that the key landscape features associated with the site are the established vegetation cover and public rights of way. However, there are no physical attributes associated with either parcel that elevate it above ordinary countryside and, as such, it is considered that the site and its immediate setting do not represent a “valued landscape” within the context of para 170 (a) of the NPPF.
- 3.27. It is considered that the location of the site, adjacent to the Radstone Fields SUE, reduces the susceptibility of the landscape receptor to the type of change proposed. As noted above, it is considered that the site does not represent a “valued landscape” and the key landscape features associated with the site tend to form boundary features and are not rare elements within the landscape context. Aspect concludes that the landscape value of the site and its immediate setting is **medium**.

Landscape Sensitivity

- 3.28. Taking into account the assessment of the various factors above, the site is considered to be consistent in terms of its land use, features and elements with that of the immediate surrounding area, and is not remarkable nor does it include any features which elevate it above ordinary landscape. The site is not considered to represent a “valued landscape” in relation to the NPPF. When both value and susceptibility of the landscape resource are considered together, it is considered that the application site would typically be of **medium** landscape sensitivity.
- 3.29. With regard to the localised and wider rural landscape to the north, north west and west of the site and settlement edge, the gently undulating topography which exists within the locality alongside the established vegetation structure established within the surrounding field boundaries, highway corridors and water course tributaries provide positive landscape features that also help to integrate the existing built edge within the landscape. It is however considered that the existing settlement edge of Brackley is still a notable feature within the wider receiving landscape setting from the north and north east. Within the localised and wider landscape setting, it is considered that the landscape would therefore be of **medium / high** sensitivity, as the distance from the settlement edge and, consequently tranquillity, increases.

Visual Baseline Assessment

- 3.30. A number of viewpoints have been identified in order to demonstrate the visibility of the site within the localised and wider setting. The views have been informed by a thorough desk study and a number of field assessments. The views are taken from publicly accessible viewpoints and although are not exhaustive, are considered to provide a fair representation of the visual environment within which the site is set. The visual analysis seeks to identify the views that will, potentially, experience the greatest degree of change as a result of the proposals.
- 3.31. The visual assessment is included within Appendix 2 and the baseline studies have fully considered the various factors required, as detailed in Section 6 of the 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment', Third Edition (GLVIA3) published in April 2013 by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, and the Landscape Institute Technical Note 06/19.
- 3.32. The photorecord includes photos taken in April 2019 to support the previous LVA with additional views taken in October 2020 in response to the Pre-Application feedback provided by South Northamptonshire Council. The photos were taken by Chartered Landscape Architects using a 35mm equivalent digital SLR camera at a 50mm focal length in line with LI technical Note 06/19. The weather was bright with good visibility in April 2019 and overcast but with good visibility in October 2020. The full assessment of effects upon the visual environment and each viewpoint is detailed in section 5 of this report and the table below provides a summary of the viewpoint assessment. Table 2 below identifies the locations of the identified viewpoints, together with the key receptors and considered sensitivity.

Table 2: Baseline Visual Assessment

Viewpoint	Location	Distance and Direction from Application Site	Primary Receptors	Sensitivity
1	Halse Road	<20m, south	Motorists	Medium
2	Halse Road	<10m, west	Motorists	Medium
3	The Worlidge VA16 (looking	<200m, north west	Walkers, cyclists, horse	High

	south east)		riders	
4	The Worlidge VA16 (looking north)	<150m, west	Walkers, cyclists, horse riders	High
5	The Worlidge VA16 (looking west)	<10m, east	Walkers, cyclists, horse riders	High
6	The Worlidge VA16 (looking south)	<10m, east	Walkers, cyclists, horse riders	High
7	The Worlidge VA16 (looking south west)	<10m, east	Walkers, cyclists, horse riders	High
8/ 8A	Bridleway AX19 (looking south west)	40m, north east	Walkers, cyclists, horse riders	High
9	Footpath AN24 (looking south)	100m, north	Walkers	High
10	Halse Road	150m, west	Motorists	Medium
11	Bridleway AN26 to Hill Farm	540m, west	Walkers, cyclists, horse riders	High
12	Bridleway AN38, near to Halse water tower	930m, north	Walkers, cyclists, horse riders	High
13 / 13A	Bridleway AX19 between The Worlidge and Radstone	550m, north east	Walkers, cyclists, horse riders	High
14	Western edge of Radstone	940m, north east	Motorists	Medium
15	Radstone Road, south of Hall Farm	360m, east	Motorists	Medium
16	Road to the west of Fox Covert, south east of	1km, east	Motorists	Medium

	Radstone			
17	PRoW VA14	Within northern parcel	Walkers	High
18	PRoW VA14	Site's southern corner	Walkers	High
19 / 20	PRoW VA6	800m, west	Walkers	High
21	Miranda Lane, Radstone Fields	50m, south	Residents, motorists and users of residential footpath	Medium

- 3.33. As noted above, the compartmentalised character of the localised landscape setting reduces opportunities for middle and longer distance views towards the site. The key publicly accessible views of the site are limited to the Halse Road corridor, The Worldge and the footpath which crosses the northern parcel. Some middle distance views towards the site are possible from the more elevated landscape to the north and north east, however, the site is not apparent within the context of these views and is often seen within the context of the settlement edge created by Radstone Fields. The built environment to the south curtails longer distance views from this direction, while the more undulating and wooded landscape to the west contains views from this direction.
- 3.34. As an overview, there are views of the site from the immediate setting which are perceived by higher sensitivity receptors i.e. the users of bridleways or footpaths within close proximity to the site's northern parcel. However, these views would be limited to the proposed sports pitches which by their nature are not considered overly prominent visual components. As illustrated by the photographic record, opportunities for middle and longer distance views are reduced by the undulating topography and established vegetation cover that characterises the wider landscape setting.
- 3.35. The other localised views of the site are from Halse Road where the primary receptors will be motorists. These are considered to be less sensitive to change and are transient, passing through the landscape at speed and will be predominantly limited to views of properties within the northern part of the site's southern parcel,

with the majority of the proposed residential development screened beyond the established tree belt that is established within the site's southern parcel.

4. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSALS

- 4.1. Full details of the proposal are provided within the Design and Access Statement and supporting material which accompanies this application. While this is an outline application, with all matters reserved (except for access), the layout has been carefully developed to complement the receiving landscape and townscape settings.
- 4.2. An illustrative masterplan plan has been prepared by the Urban Design Studio, which illustrates the proposals within their immediate context. This accompanies this report, refer Appendix 4. The proposals seek to extend residential development north west from Radstone Fields. The proposed residential development would adopt the well-established principles set out within the Radstone Fields design codes, establishing a mixed density development within a high quality landscaped setting.
- 4.3. The illustrative masterplan indicates the creation of a development that will link directly to Radstone Fields as well as Halse Road. The proposals would include extensive new footpath links that would circulate around the site and link up with the Radstone Fields development to the south and The Worlidge to the north via new safe links established along Halse Road.
- 4.4. Further wider community benefits include a cemetery, childrens play and a series of linked green spaces which will extend through the development, providing landscaped links to the wider countryside and settlement edge, providing enhanced opportunities for informal recreation and habitat creation. A central green spine will run through the development extending north west from the Roadstone Fields site, and south west – north east along the established central tree belt, creating a positive green framework within the heart of the proposed residential area with further extensive open space created within the site's north eastern extents directly linking to the linear park established within the northern extents of Radstone Fields.
- 4.5. The proposed sports pitches represents a further significant community benefit, presenting opportunities for formal recreation and a sensitive transitional land use between the residential areas to the south east and the wider countryside setting. The sports facilities will be fully integrated via enhanced footpath links and sensitively incorporated vehicular access.

- 4.6. Vehicular access will be from Halse Road along the site's south western boundary and Radstone Fields to the South, allowing access for a new bus route. Whilst some vegetation removal will be inevitable, the site's key central tree belt within the southern parcel will remain intact, as will the positive hedgerow and treescape vegetation established along The Worlidge. This has been carefully designed in conjunction with the technical requirements set out within the Transport Assessment that accompanies this application.
- 4.7. The proposed layout incorporates various buffers around the edges of the site to ensure that the landscape setting and amenities of neighbouring properties have been appropriately considered. It is intended that any built form on the site would incorporate a simple palette of materials that have been informed by the local setting and vernacular, established within the adjacent Radstone Fields development.

Landscape Strategy

- 4.8. The proposed residential development consists of a mix of detached, semi-detached and terraced properties, alongside associated garages, access roads, footpaths, landscape structure and public open space. The sensitively designed proposals have sought to respond to the identified opportunities and constraints of the application site and its setting.
- 4.9. The proposals will seek to enhance the site boundaries with additional tree, hedge and shrub planting, where required, in order to provide an enhanced degree of amenity to the surroundings, and to ensure that the proposals can be integrated into the setting without harm. Key vegetation prioritised for protection includes the southern parcels central woodland tree belt and the positive hedgerows and hedgerow trees established along its north eastern south boundary, maintaining residential amenity within Radstone Fields and visual containment to the north.
- 4.10. The Halse Road boundary will be redefined with new native hedgerow and hedgerow tree planting, which will tie into the retained sections of hedgerow ensuring that in the long term the rural character of the approach road is maintained.
- 4.11. Further hedgerow planting will also be created along the residential developments north western boundary to visually integrate the development when perceived from Halse Road, with properties limited to 2.5 stories in height within this part of the

development ensuring that the roofscape of these properties do not break the central vegetated tree line.

- 4.12. Gaps within the hedgelines along The Worlidge will be infilled, to reinforce the historic field pattern and create a high quality, sensitive approach to the proposed sports pitches. A new mixed species native hedgerow and hedgerow trees, are proposed adjacent to the northern edge of the proposed sports pitches, with additional hedgerow trees proposed along its western boundary reinforcing the key landscape elements of the site, whilst maintaining a high degree of visual containment to views on approach from the north along the VA14 and AN24 public footpaths.
- 4.13. The proposed planting strategy will prioritise the use of native species typical of the wider Tove Catchment LCA and localised setting, with the extensive public open space areas incorporating, new tree and shrub planting and wildflower grassland areas, providing biodiversity enhancements within the site and positive green links with the surrounding tree lines and field boundary vegetation.
- 4.14. The proposals will seek to incorporate a robust landscape strategy that will provide a natural structure to the proposed residential areas, creating a high quality development which sits well within its landscaped context and which is conducive to happy and healthy family life. Street tree planting along primary road corridors and further structural planting within the remainder of the street scene settings will assist in anchoring and visually breaking up and softening the perceived built environment.
- 4.15. The identified landscape proposals have been informed by the site constraints and opportunities, and local policy objectives to ensure that an appropriate and high quality landscaped setting is achieved.

5. ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS

- 5.1. To assess the nature of the change as a result of the proposals, it is appropriate to appraise the impact of the proposed development upon the existing landscape character and visual environment within which the site is situated.
- 5.2. In order to assess the effect of a development on the receiving environment, it is important to understand the quality and sensitivity of the landscape, the sensitivity of visual receptors, and the magnitude of change.
- 5.3. The assessment of effects have been derived from guidance provided within GLVIA3 (Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3 Edition) published by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment in April 2013. The methodology is contained within Appendix 2 of this document.

Effect upon Landscape Character

- 5.4. Having regard to the effect of the proposals upon the immediate localised landscape character, it is considered that the proposals represent a sustainable and appropriate high quality development within Brackley.
- 5.5. It is clear that the established vegetation structure and mature treescape which exists within the locality provides positive landscape features, which also help to integrate the existing built form and settlement edge within the wider landscape. This ensures that the proposals within the application site are not readily perceived and as a result will not have a significant impact upon the wider landscape character. Furthermore, it is clear that the southern part of the site, is influenced far more greatly by recently extended settlement edge and suburban character established within Radstone Fields, than it is the wider rural landscape setting of the character area.

Site & Immediate Setting

- 5.6. The character assessment identifies that the application site itself has been influenced by the presence of the existing urban edge immediately to the south and the solar arrays to the north, which reduces the susceptibility of the site's southern parcel to change resulting from residential development. The established field

boundaries, in particular along its north eastern boundary, and within the southern parcel itself, combined with the elevated ridgeline to the west and positive wider field boundary vegetations, create a robust external edge to the site's southern parcel, forming a defensible boundary between the settlement fringe and the wider rural setting to the north of Brackley.

- 5.7. The landscape-led approach to the development, will protect the mature treescape and established hedgerows associated with the site's boundaries, which form the key landscape features associated with the site and ensures an established green edge to the site is achieved from Day One. Whilst the southern parcel is presently undefined along its northern boundary, a new mixed species hedgerow will be established, which in conjunction with the adjacent hedgerow to the north will help to physically anchor the development within the immediate landscape setting once matured.
- 5.8. The proposed access links off Halse Road, would result in some initial harm to the character of the adjacent section of road due to the necessary hedgerow removals. However, this will not be perceived from the wider landscape setting and will be a short term, temporary effect. Replacement native hedgerow and hedgerow trees will re-establish this positive roadside vegetation structure once it has matured over a 10 year period and will physically integrate the new road alignments and associated roundabouts, so that the rural character on approach to the village is maintained.
- 5.9. Access is proposed from Radstone Fields, which will necessitate the removal of a short section of the established hedgerow that presently separates the site from the neighbouring development to the south. However, the majority of this hedgerow will be maintained, with appropriate development offsets integrated within the landscape proposals to ensure that the hedgerow can be maintained in healthy condition whilst establishing a sensitive landscaped buffer between the two development areas.
- 5.10. The internal woodland treebelt and established hedgerows will be retained to create a degree of maturity within the landscaped setting of the proposals from Day One, as well as breaking up the development parcels and the overall scale of the development. The positive treelines established along the site's north east and south western boundaries will be retained and supplemented through further native planting that will reinforce the tree stock and ensure the long-term maintenance of the compartmentalised character of the site.

- 5.11. A significant framework of open space flows through the heart of the proposed residential development and will incorporate high quality, locally prevalent species, presenting an opportunity to establish areas of species rich grassland, native copses, wetland (within the attenuation zones) and the reinforcement of the existing key landscape features. This will represent a positive contribution to local biodiversity, replacing the low value arable farmland and will establish positive green links that directly connect with those already established with the adjacent Radstone Fields development and the adjoining field parcels to the north and will enhance the local green infrastructure
- 5.12. The character of the site is clearly influenced by the adjacent settlement edge, which reduces its sense of ruralness and tranquility. It is considered therefore that whilst the loss of an area of greenfield would represent some initial harm to the site itself, the development provides long term opportunities to enhance biodiversity and establish a sensitive residential development that will create a positive transition with the rural setting to the north east of Brackley. The site's key landscape features will be retained and utilised to establish a high quality landscaped setting for the new residents that will establish positive green links with the adjacent development. Overall, therefore, it is considered that there will be a medium magnitude of change, with the proposals constituting a perceptible change within the site and its immediate setting. Given the sensitivity of the site, which has been assessed as medium, this would result in a significance of effect of **Moderate adverse**. This is representative of change, that materially effects a landscape that has the ability to accommodate change and is not significant in landscape terms.

Localised & Wider Landscape Setting

- 5.1. As noted within both the published assessment and Aspect's own assessment of landscape character, the immediate setting is unremarkable and does not contain any physical attributes that elevate it above ordinary countryside. The Northamptonshire Landscape Character Assessment identifies a number of key characteristics associated with the Undulating Claylands LCT and then provides a more detailed appraisal of the Tove Catchment LCA. It is considered that the proposals will not significantly harm the characteristics or qualities of the wider landscape setting.

- 5.2. The Radstone Fields development demonstrates that the extension of the settlement into the rural landscape to the north is acceptable, protecting the more sensitive river valley landscapes to the south east and south west. The proposals will result in the loss of several arable fields; however, these are not considered rare or important examples that are particularly representative of the wider landscape setting. Furthermore, the site benefits from a degree of enclosure as a result of mature vegetation associated with the field boundaries, which separates it from the adjoining fields to the north and north east, while the Halse Road corridor and localised topography separates the site from the wider landscape to the south west, which falls towards the tributary river valley.
- 5.3. The presence of the solar farm to the north east and overhead power lines are considered detracting elements within the localised countryside setting and reinforces the perception of separation of the site from the wider rural landscape. A high quality, sympathetic layout can be achieved which retains and re-establishes the existing boundaries, enhancing the compartmentalised character of the localised landscape setting. Setting built form back from the external boundaries and creating green buffers to the development through planting and areas of public open space will ensure that an appropriate transition between the proposals and the wider rural setting is achieved.
- 5.4. The site is well contained within the wider landscape by a gently undulating topography, positive robust tree lines that traverse the wider landscape setting and managed field boundaries and roadside hedgerows. As such, any perceived harm will be highly localised to the immediate context of the site and will not harm the perception of a rural setting to Brackley.
- 5.5. The proposed sports pitches within the site's northern parcel are well contained within an established vegetation structure that characterises The Worlidge and approaching footpath routes and mature field boundaries. The proposed new hedgerow and additional hedgerow tree planting proposed along the northern edge of the proposed sports pitches as well as the remaining field boundaries, will reinforce the compartmentalised field pattern and enhance the condition of these key landscape features within the wider countryside. By their very nature, the sports pitches will not be prominent within the receiving countryside setting and it is considered that the proposed access enhancements can be sensitively integrated alongside the established and reinforced hedgerow that characterises The Worlidge approach from the south west.

- 5.6. Therefore, while it is acknowledged that the proposals will result in the loss of some arable farmland, it is clear that there is evident and ongoing recent change within the surrounding countryside. The undulating topography and robust intervening landscape features ensure that the proposals will be well integrated within the context of the localised and wider landscape setting. As such, it is considered that there will be a low magnitude of change, with the proposals constituting only a minor component within the receiving landscape. Give the sensitivity of the localised / wider landscape setting, which has been assessed as being medium / high, this would result in a significance of effect of **Moderate to Moderate / Minor Adverse**. This is not considered significant in landscape terms and is representative of countryside that has the ability to accommodate the nature of change.
- 5.7. With regard to the potential harm to the identity of Brackley, it is considered that the location of the site will ensure that the historic character of the market town, that forms the core of the settlement, is not adversely affected. Most of the recent growth associated with the town has been located to the north of the town centre, with the Radstone Fields development representing a coordinated strategic urban extension based on an established set of principles set out within a design code. This has been applied to the parcels coming forward regardless of the developer to ensure a coordinated approach that achieves high quality residential additions to the settlement. This approach ensures that while there may be subtle differences between parcels, which actually assist in placemaking, the general approach in terms of spatial planning and urban design ensure that neighbouring parcels sit comfortably next to one another and avoids awkward, jarring interfaces.
- 5.8. The town is constrained to the east, south and south west by the River Great Ouse and its tributaries which prevents development extending further into the river valleys. Furthermore, the A43 and A422 road corridors create robust and defensible boundaries to the town which deter extensions to the east and south up the opposite valley sides. New development in Brackley has been focussed to the north and north west of the town centre since the 1950s. The extension of the Radstone Fields development, which applies the same established principles, into the southern parcel of the site is not considered to represent a significant adverse effect upon the identity of Brackley. The proposals will be perceived within the context of some of the most recent development in Brackley, forming a logical extension, rather than

trying to introduce new development alongside the more historic or sensitive parts of the settlement to the south.

- 5.9. In conclusion, it is considered that, subject to the incorporation of a sympathetic, landscape-led approach to the design of the residential and sports schemes, the proposed development can be integrated within the site without significant adverse effects upon the localised or wider landscape receptor.

Effect upon the Visual Environment

- 5.10. A number of viewpoints have been identified in order to demonstrate the visibility of the site within the localised and wider setting. The views have been informed by a thorough desk study and a number of field assessments. The views are taken from publicly accessible viewpoints and although are not exhaustive, have picked up the additional locations suggested within the pre-application response and are considered to provide a fair representation of the visual environment within which the site is set. The visual analysis seeks to identify those views that will, potentially, experience the greatest degree of change as a result of the proposals. The viewpoints are illustrated on the Viewpoint Location Plan within Appendix 02 and an assessment of each individual viewpoint is provided within 'Table 3: Effects upon the Visual Environment' below:

Table 3: Effects upon the Visual Environment

Viewpoint	Location	Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Significance of Effect
1	Halse Road	Motorists	Medium	Negligible	Minor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minor glimpsed views of the residential development will be perceived whilst passing at speed along Halse Road, through a gap within the otherwise robust roadside vegetation structure. This gap will be filled in with a new mixed species native hedgerow and hedgerow trees, which once established after 10 years would further reduce the prominence of the proposed built form. Barely perceived glimpsed views of the development, would be perceived within the context of the adjacent Radstone Fields properties and overhead power lines which form prominent visual components, reducing the perceived sense of ruralness and tranquility within the view. The established built form seen within Radstone Fields, ensures that the proposed development will not be perceived as an alien visual component. 				
2	Halse Road	Motorists	Medium	Medium	Moderate
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposed development would initially constitute a perceptible change within the view. However, once the proposed mixed species native hedgerow planting along Halse Road and the southern parcels north western boundary has matured over a period of ten years, it is considered that the rural character along this part of Halse Road will be re-instated with the new access points sensitively integrated, and the visual prominence of the proposed built form reduced. Properties to the north of the mature woodland belt seen within the view, will be limited to a maximum of 2.5 stories in height and will incorporate a high quality recessive palette of building materials, ensuring that they are not visually prominent and do not break the skyline. 				

3	The Worlidge VA16 (looking south east)	Walkers, cyclists, horse riders	High	Low	Moderate
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposed development would initially constitute a perceptible change within the view. However, once the proposed mixed species native hedgerow planting along the southern parcels north western boundary has matured over a period of ten years, it is considered that the properties will further recede within the view, with the combined effects of the established intervening hedgerow seen containing the immediate field parcel to the north of the site ensuring that the proposals would constitute only a minor visual component. Properties to the north of the mature woodland belt seen within the view, will be limited to a maximum of 2.5 stories in height and will incorporate a high quality recessive palette of building materials, ensuring that they are not visually prominent and do not break the skyline. 				
4	The Worlidge VA16 (looking north east)	Walkers, cyclists, horse riders	High	Negligible	Moderate / Minor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Due to the discrete nature of the proposed sports pitches and the small scale of the proposed parking area, located beyond the intervening field hedgerow established along the northern parcel's western boundary, it is considered that the proposals will be barely perceived. Enhancements to the hedgerow structure along The Worlidge, will ensure that views of the new access road, located on the northern side of The Worlidge, beyond the enhanced hedgerow, will be largely contained from view. Additional native hedgerow tree planting along the western boundary will further integrate the proposals and enhance the surrounding treescape character that is evident within the field boundary hedgerows to the immediate north and north west of the site. 				

5	The Worlidge VA16 (looking west)	Walkers, cyclists, horse riders	High	Negligible	Moderate
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhancements to the established hedgerow and hedgerow tree planting along The Worlidge, will ensure that by Year 10, once the proposed mitigation planting has established, the proposed sports pitches will be barely perceived from this location. 				
6	The Worlidge VA16 (looking south)	Walkers, cyclists, horse riders	High	Low	Moderate
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposed development would initially constitute a perceptible change within the view. However, once the proposed mixed species native hedgerow planting along the southern parcels north western boundary has matured over a period of ten years, it is considered that the properties will further recede within the view, with the combined effects of the established intervening hedgerow seen containing the immediate field parcel to the north of the site ensuring that the proposals would constitute only a minor visual component. Properties to the north of the mature woodland belt seen within the view, will be limited to a maximum of 2.5 stories in height and will incorporate a high quality recessive palette of building materials, ensuring that they are not visually prominent and do not break the skyline. 				
7	The Worlidge VA16 (looking south west)	Walkers, cyclists, horse riders	High	Negligible	Moderate / Minor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Due to the established intervening hedgerow and hedgerow trees seen along The Worlidge, it is considered that the proposed sports pitches will be barely perceived from this location. 				

8 / 8A	Bridleway AX19 (looking south west)	Walkers, cyclists, horse riders	High	Negligible	Moderate / Minor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Due to the established intervening hedgerow and hedgerow trees seen along The Worlidge, it is considered that the proposed sports pitches will be barely perceived from this location. Views of the proposed development within the southern parcel, will also be highly contained, as a result of the intervening landform, tree line, solar array panels and power line, ensuring that the properties would result in a barely perceptible degree of change within the view. 				
9	Footpath AN24 (looking south)	Walkers	High	Negligible	Moderate / Minor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Barely perceived, glimpsed views of the proposed sports pitches would be visible through the gap within the otherwise robust hedgeline that contains the site's northern boundary. The proposed native hedgerow and hedgerow tree planting along the northern boundary, will establish over a period of ten years, further reducing the prominence of the proposed sports pitches and parking area, forming an established natural feature in keeping with the surrounding countryside character. 				

10	Halse Road	Motorists	Medium	Negligible	Minor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As a result of the intervening landform and vegetation structure it is considered that the proposed sport pitch development, within the site's northern parcel, will not be visible from this location and would result in a significance of effect of None. Due to the effects of distance and the intervening landform, it is considered that the built form located within the site's southern parcel, would be barely perceived. Properties to the north of the mature woodland belt seen on the ridge, will be limited to a maximum of 2.5 stories in height and will incorporate a high quality recessive palette of building materials, ensuring that they are not visually prominent and do not break the vegetated skyline. 				
11	Bridleway AN26 to Hill Farm	Walkers, cyclists, horse riders	High	Negligible	Moderate / Minor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As a result of the intervening landform and vegetation structure it is considered that the proposed sport pitch development, within the site's northern parcel, will not be visible from this location and would result in a significance of effect of None. Due to the effects of distance and the intervening landform, it is considered that the built form located within the site's southern parcel, would be barely perceived. Properties to the north of the mature woodland belt seen on the ridge, will be limited to a maximum of 2.5 stories in height and will incorporate a high quality recessive palette of building materials, ensuring that they are not visually prominent and do not break the vegetated skyline. 				

12	Bridleway AN38, near to Halse water tower	Walkers, cyclists, horse riders	High	Negligible	Moderate / Minor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Due to the effects of distance and the intervening landform and vegetation structure it is considered that the proposed sports pitch development, set down within the site's northern parcel, will not be visible from this location and would result in a significance of effect of None. Due to the effects of distance and the intervening vegetation structure, it is considered that the built form located within the site's southern parcel, would be barely perceived. Properties to the north of the mature woodland glimpsed within the background of the view, will be limited to a maximum of 2.5 stories in height and will incorporate a high quality recessive palette of building materials, ensuring that they are not visually prominent and do not break the vegetated skyline. 				
13 / 13A	Bridleway AX19 between The Worlidge and Radstone	Walkers, cyclists, horse riders	High	Negligible	Moderate / Minor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Due to the established intervening hedgerow and hedgerow trees seen along The Worlidge, it is considered that the proposed sports pitches will be barely perceived from this location, with the parking area, visually contained beyond the intervening tree groups established along The Worlidge. Views of the proposed development within the southern parcel, will also be highly contained, as a result of the intervening landform, tree line, solar array panels and power line and will be barely perceived. Glimpsed views of the proposed development would be seen within the context of adjacent Radstone Fields development, which is prominent within the view, ensuring that the proposed built form is not perceived as an alien component within the view. 				

14	Western edge of Radstone	Motorists	Medium	Negligible	Minor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to the effects of distance and the established intervening vegetation structure and landform, it is considered that the proposed sports pitches will not be visible from this location and would result in a significance of effect of None. • Views of the proposed development within the southern parcel, will also be well contained, due to the intervening roadside hedgerow, surrounding vegetation structure and the intervening power lines, which reduces the perceive sense of ruralness and tranquility within the view and ensures that the built form would be barely perceived. • Glimpsed views of the proposed rooflines would be seen within the context of adjacent Radstone Fields development, which is prominent within the view, ensuring that the proposed built form would not be perceived as an alien visual component. 				
15	Radstone Road, south of Hall Farm	Motorists	Medium	Negligible	Minor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to the effects of distance and the established intervening vegetation structure and landform, it is considered that the proposed sports pitches will not be visible from this location and would result in a significance of effect of None. • Views of the proposed development within the southern parcel, will be partially contained by the presence of the intervening solar farm and raised landform, whilst views of the northern extents of the development, would be perceived beyond the proposed open space landscape enhancements, which will reduce its prominence, and against the backdrop of the established Radstone Fields Development / settlement edge. • As such, it is considered that development would not be prominent or perceived as being an alien feature within the receiving visual environment and would therefore constitute a barely perceptible degree of change within the view. 				

16	Road to the west of Fox Covert, south east of Radstone	Motorists	Medium	No change	None
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Due to the effects of distance and the intervening landform and established vegetation structure, it is considered that the proposals will not be visible from this location. 				
17	PRoW VA14 looking south	Walkers	High	Low	Moderate (Northern Parcel)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Although located within close proximity to the northern parcel, it is considered that due to the discreet nature of the proposed sports pitches and the high quality landscape mitigation, which will include a new mixed species native hedgerow and hedgerow tree planting proposed along its northern boundary, will ensure that the once matured, the proposed sports pitches and parking area, will form a minor visual component on approach to the site from the north, with the mature hedgerow establishing a robust natural feature in keeping with the surrounding countryside character and a high degree of visual containment. Due to the effects of distance, and the intervening vegetation structure, together with the proposed landscape enhancements to the southern parcels north western boundary, it is considered that the proposed residential development, will be barely perceived from this location, resulting in a significance of effect of Moderate / Minor. 				

18	PRoW VA14 looking north	Walkers	High	Medium	Major / Moderate
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Located within the site's northern field parcel, it is acknowledged that the proposed car parking facilities, albeit of a small scale, and vehicular access, would constitute a perceptible change within this view. However, as is evident from the adjacent viewpoints taken on approach to the northern parcel, these effects will be limited to a very short section of The Worlidge and PRoW VA14, with the established vegetation structure established along the wider sections of these footpath routes, ensuring that there will be no significant visual effects perceived from these settings. 				
19/20	PRoW VA6 looking north east and east	Walkers	High	Negligible	Moderate / Minor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Due to the effects of distance and the established intervening vegetation structure and landform, it is considered that the proposed sports pitches and residential development will not be visible from the localised ridgeline setting to the west of the site, resulting in a significance of effect of None. 				

21	Miranda Lane, Radstone Fields	Residents, motorists and users of residential footpath	Medium	Medium	Moderate
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is acknowledged that the proposed vehicular access and bus route proposed along Miranda Lan, through the site's southern boundary, would constitute a perceptible change within the view and would also require some vegetation loss along this boundary. However, clearly the view is characterised by a suburban street scene setting, with properties located and visually prominent either side of the approaching residential street. Proposed properties will be located beyond the established intervening hedgerow and therefore any glimpsed views of these properties and their rooflines, would not be overly prominent, or perceived as being out of context with the established development setting. Views of built elevations through the proposed access point will be integrated via the internal street tree planting and further structural landscaping that is proposed along this primary vehicular route. The proposed building materials and architectural style and scale, will be of a high quality and in keeping with the established positive streetscape seen within this view, ensuring a seamless extension to the Radstone Fields development is established. 				

5.11. In terms of potential visual effects, these will be highly localised as a result of the compartmentalised nature of the site's setting and the typically gently undulating landform.

5.12. No significant visual effects have been identified, other than from viewpoint 18, which is located within the northern parcels southern corner, where the proposed car parking facilities, albeit of a small scale, and vehicular access, would constitute a perceptible change within this view. However, as is evident from the adjacent viewpoints taken on approach to the northern parcel, these effects will be limited to a very short section of The Worlidge and PRow VA14.

5.13. The sports pitch proposals, by their nature, will not be visually prominent, and it is considered that a sensitive landscape treatment, incorporating a new native

hedgerow and hedgerow trees across the northern edge of the new sports pitches, will ensure that they can be successfully visually integrated within the immediate countryside setting.

- 5.14. The wider sections of The Worlidge footpath and surrounding footpath routes are well contained from the northern parcel via established high hedgerows and mature tree groups, refer viewpoints 9 and 12 taken from PRoW AN24 and VA14 to the north and viewpoints 8 and 13 taken from along PRoW AX19 to the north east.
- 5.15. Views on approach from the north east along Halse Road, would experience some short term harm as a result of the necessary hedgerow removals required for the new access points (refer viewpoint 2). However, over a period of ten years, the roadside vegetation structure and access points will be re-established, to maintain a rural village approach. The robust woodland tree belt, established within the site's southern parcel, ensures that the properties proposed immediately adjacent to the settlement edge will not be perceived from the wider countryside setting to the north east (refer viewpoints 6, 10 and 11). Whilst the reinforcement planting proposed along Halse Road and the southern parcels presently undefined northern boundary, together with the retained intervening vegetation structure and undulating topography, ensures that a new settlement edge will be sensitively integrated.
- 5.16. Additional views have been picked up from along the localised ridgeline setting to the west. Viewpoints 19 and 20, illustrate the effects of the rising topography, that is typical of the Tove Catchment LCA, and the robust intervening vegetation structure, ensuring that the proposed development will not be visible from this setting.
- 5.17. There are some minor glimpsed localised views to the north when accessing the fieldscape beyond the solar farm (refer views 8 & 13) and on approach to the northern settlement edge from Radstone Road (refer view 15). Within these views the site is not immediately apparent with the intervening topography, vegetation and the solar arrays themselves filtering and containing views. Due to the undulating landscape and effects of distance, the proposals will not break the skyline or appear prominent, with the established development within Radstone Fields already characterising the visual environment from these locations.
- 5.18. With regard to longer distance viewpoints, opportunities for views towards the site are limited, as illustrated by the photographic record (refer Viewpoints 12, 14 and

16) recorded from the setting of the water tower to the north west, Radstone village to the north east and the setting of the Fox Covert to the west.

5.19. In terms of potential effects upon residential amenity, the incorporation of a sympathetic layout will ensure that the amenities of existing properties associated with Radstone Fields or those on Halse Road will not be compromised. A hedgerow defines the boundary between the site and the northern extent of Radstone Fields. This will be largely retained and any proposed development along the southern edge of the site could be oriented to front onto it with appropriate development offset distances incorporated. It is considered that the residential amenities of existing properties on the edge of Brackley or the wider setting will not be harmed by the proposed development of the site. Views of built elevations through the proposed access point / bus route, will be integrated via the internal street tree planting and further structural landscaping that is proposed along this primary vehicular route. The proposed building materials and architectural style and scale, will be of a high quality and in keeping with the established positive streetscape seen within viewpoint 21 taken along Miranda Lane, ensuring a seamless extension to the Radstone Fields development is established.

5.20. The incorporation of a comprehensive scheme of landscaping will soften the perception of the built environment, while the adoption of a high quality, sympathetic palette of materials will ensure that, where visible, the proposed built form creates a high quality addition to the existing townscape of Brackley and forms an appropriate edge to the settlement. While the proposals will give rise to some localised significant visual effects at Year One, as the landscaping matures it will integrate the built form and reduce the perception of a hard built edge. It is concluded that the proposals can be integrated into the immediate visual environment of the site without significant long term adverse effects.

Effect upon landscape related policy

5.21. The site is not subject to any qualitative landscape designations at a national or local level and, as set out above, is not considered to represent a “valued” landscape with reference to para 170 (a) of the NPPF.

5.22. The proposals adopt a sensitive, landscape-led approach that has been informed by the Radstone Fields design codes and the guidelines set out within the South

Northamptonshire Design Guide which has informed the emerging illustrative proposals.

- 5.23. It is considered that a sympathetic, landscape-led development can be achieved within this site that respects the localised landscape setting, represents a logical addition to Brackley and will not give rise to significant landscape or visual harm. and would therefore accord with the relevant Local Plan policies set out within Section 2 of this report.

6. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1. Aspect Landscape Planning Ltd has been appointed by Mintondale Developments Ltd. to undertake a landscape and visual impact assessment relating to the outline application seeking the development comprising up to 450 dwellings, including formal sports provision, public open space and a cemetery together with associated infrastructure, including foul and storm water drainage and full details of access arrangements from Halse Road and Radstone Fields. The location and context of the application site is illustrated on ASP1 Site Location Plan and ASP2 Site and Setting Plan.

Landscape

- 6.2. In reviewing effects upon the landscape character, it is considered that whilst some harm is acknowledged to the immediate landscape character of the application site itself, the harm is restricted to the site only and reduces within the immediate setting and furthermore in the wider setting.
- 6.3. The character assessment identifies that the application site itself has been influenced by the presence of the existing urban edge immediately to the south and the solar arrays to the north, which reduces the susceptibility of the site's southern parcel to change resulting from residential development. The established field boundaries, in particular along its north eastern boundary, and within the southern parcel itself, combined with the elevated ridgeline to the west and positive wider field boundary vegetations, create a robust external edge to the site's southern parcel, forming a defensible boundary between the settlement fringe and the wider rural setting to the north of Brackley.
- 6.4. The landscape-led approach to the development, will protect the mature treescape and established hedgerows associated with the site's boundaries, which form its key landscape features ensuring an established green edge to the site is achieved from Day One. Whilst the southern parcel is presently undefined along its northern boundary, a new mixed species hedgerow will be established, which in conjunction with the adjacent hedgerow to the north will help to physically anchor the development within the immediate landscape setting once matured.

- 6.5. The proposed access links off Halse Road, would result in some initial harm to the character of the adjacent section of road due to the necessary hedgerow removals. However, this will not be perceived from the wider landscape setting and will be a short term, temporary effect, with replacement native hedgerow and hedgerow trees maturing to physically integrate the new road alignments and associated roundabouts, so that the rural character on approach to the village is maintained.
- 6.6. Access is proposed from Radstone Fields, which will necessitate the removal of a short section of the established hedgerow that presently separates the site from the neighbouring development to the south. However, the majority of this hedgerow will be maintained, with appropriate development offsets integrated within the landscape proposals to ensure that the hedgerow can be maintained in healthy condition whilst establishing a sensitive landscaped buffer between the two development areas.
- 6.7. The internal woodland treebelt and established hedgerows will be retained to create a degree of maturity within the landscaped setting of the proposals from Day One, as well as breaking up the development parcels and the overall scale of the development.
- 6.8. The proposals will incorporate a significant framework of open space that flows through the heart of the proposed residential development and will incorporate high quality, locally prevalent species and biodiversity enhancements that will extend into the adjacent settlement edge and wider countryside setting.
- 6.9. It is considered therefore that whilst the loss of an area of greenfield would represent some initial harm to the site itself, development of the type proposed could be incorporated within significant harm in the long term.
- 6.10. As noted within both the published assessment and Aspect's own assessment of landscape character, the immediate setting is unremarkable and does not contain any physical attributes that elevate it above ordinary countryside. The Northamptonshire Landscape Character Assessment identifies a number of key characteristics associated with the Undulating Claylands LCT and then provides a more detailed appraisal of the Tove Catchment LCA. It is considered that the proposals will not significantly harm the characteristics or qualities of the wider landscape setting.

- 6.11. The Radstone Fields development demonstrates that the extension of the settlement into the rural landscape to the north is acceptable, protecting the more sensitive river valley landscapes to the south east and south west. The proposals will result in the loss of several arable fields; however, these are not considered rare or important examples that are particularly representative of the wider landscape setting.
- 6.12. The presence of the solar farm to the north east and overhead power lines are considered detracting elements within the localised countryside setting and reinforces the perception of separation of the site from the wider rural landscape.
- 6.13. The site is well contained within the wider landscape by a gently undulating topography, positive robust tree lines that traverse the wider landscape setting and managed field boundaries and roadside hedgerows. As such, any perceived harm will be highly localised to the immediate context of the site and will not harm the perception of a rural setting to Brackley.
- 6.14. The sports pitches are well contained within an established vegetation structure that characterises The Worlidge and approaching footpath routes and surrounding field boundaries. The proposed new hedgerow and additional hedgerow tree planting will reinforce the compartmentalised field pattern and enhance the condition of these key landscape features within the wider countryside. Whilst representing a change in land use, by their very nature, the sports pitches will not be prominent within the receiving countryside setting and will not require the removal of any significant key vegetation. As such, it is considered that the proposed access enhancements and parking can be sensitively integrated alongside the established and reinforced hedgerow that characterises The Worlidge approach from the south west.
- 6.15. Therefore, while it is acknowledged that the proposals will result in the loss of some arable farmland, it is clear that there is evident and ongoing recent change within the surrounding countryside and that the undulating topography and robust intervening landscape features ensure that the proposals will be well integrated within the context of the localised and wider landscape setting.

Visual

- 6.16. In terms of potential visual effects, these will be highly localised as a result of the compartmentalised nature of the site's setting and the typically gently undulating landform.

- 6.17. No significant visual effects have been identified, other than from viewpoint 18, which is located within the northern parcels southern corner, where the proposed car parking facilities, albeit of a small scale, and vehicular access, would constitute a perceptible change within this view. However, as is evident from the adjacent viewpoints taken on approach to the northern parcel, these effects will be limited to a very short section of The Worlidge and PRoW VA14.
- 6.18. The sports pitch proposals, by their nature, will not be visually prominent, and it is considered that a sensitive landscape treatment, incorporating a new native hedgerow and hedgerow trees along the sports pitches northern edge, will ensure that they can be successfully visually integrated within the immediate countryside setting.
- 6.19. The wider sections of The Worlidge footpath and surrounding footpath routes are well contained from the northern parcel via established high hedgerows and mature tree groups, refer viewpoints 9 and 12 taken from PRoW AN24 and VA14 to the north and viewpoints 8 and 13 taken from along PRoW AX19 to the north east.
- 6.20. Views on approach from the north east along Halse Road, would experience some short term harm as a result of the necessary hedgerow removals required for the new access points (refer viewpoint 2). However, over a period of ten years, the roadside vegetation structure and access points will be re-established, to maintain a rural village approach. The robust woodland tree belt, established within the site's southern parcel, ensures that the properties proposed immediately adjacent to the settlement edge will not be perceived from the wider countryside setting to the north east (refer viewpoints 6, 10 and 11). Whilst the reinforcement planting proposed along Halse Road and the southern parcels presently undefined northern boundary, together with the retained intervening vegetation structure and undulating topography, ensures that a new settlement edge will be sensitively integrated.
- 6.21. Additional views have been picked up from along the localised ridgeline setting to the west, with viewpoints 19 and 20, illustrating the effects of the rising topography, that is typical of the Tove Catchment LCA, and the robust intervening vegetation structure, ensuring that the proposed development will not be visible from this setting.
- 6.22. There are some minor glimpsed localised views to the north when accessing the fieldscape beyond the solar farm (refer views 8 & 13) and on approach to the

northern settlement edge from Radstone Road (refer view 15). Within these views the site is not immediately apparent with the intervening topography, vegetation and the solar arrays themselves filtering and containing views. Due to the undulating landscape and effects of distance, the proposals will not break the skyline or appear prominent, with the established development within Radstone Fields already characterising the visual environment from these locations.

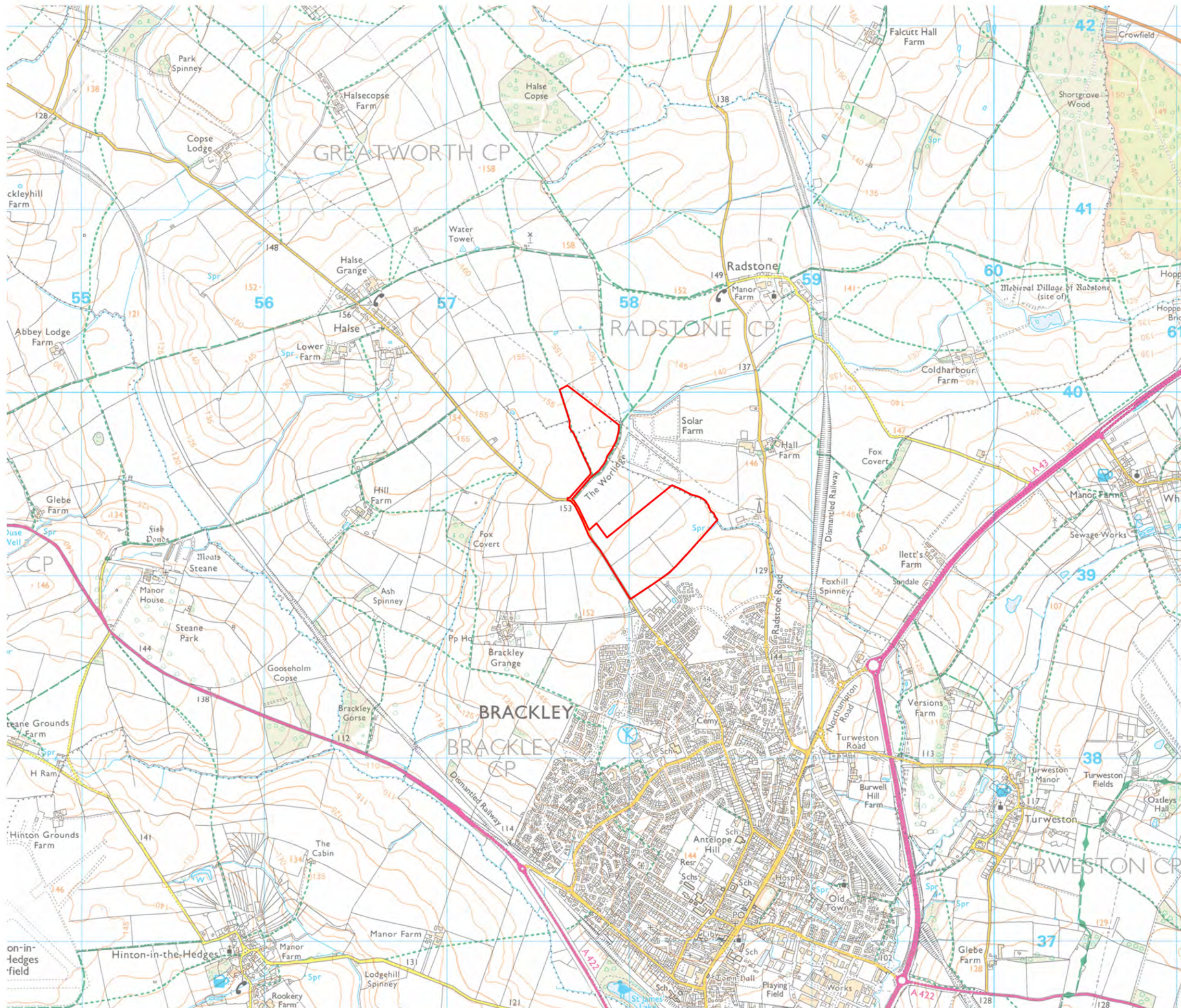
- 6.23. With regard to longer distance viewpoints, opportunities for views towards the site are limited, as illustrated by the photographic record (refer Viewpoints 12, 14 and 16) recorded from the setting of the water tower to the north west, Radstone village to the north east and the setting of the Fox Covert to the west.
- 6.24. In terms of potential effects upon residential amenity, the incorporation of a sympathetic layout will ensure that the amenities of existing properties associated with Radstone Fields or those on Halse Road will not be compromised. A hedgerow defines the boundary between the site and the northern extent of Radstone Fields, which will be largely retained and any proposed development along the southern edge of the site could be oriented to front onto it with appropriate development offset distances incorporated and It is considered that the residential amenities of existing properties on the edge of Brackley or the wider setting will not be harmed by the proposed development of the site.
- 6.25. Views of built elevations through the proposed access point / bus route, will be integrated via the internal street tree planting and further structural landscaping that is proposed along this primary vehicular route. The proposed building materials and architectural style and scale, will be of a high quality and in keeping with the established positive streetscape seen within viewpoint 21 taken along Miranda Lane, ensuring a seamless extension to the Radstone Fields development is established.
- 6.26. The incorporation of a comprehensive scheme of landscaping will soften the perception of the built environment, while the adoption of a high quality, sympathetic palette of materials will ensure that, where visible, the proposed built form creates a high quality addition to the existing townscape of Brackley and forms an appropriate edge to the settlement. While the proposals will give rise to some localised significant visual effects at Year One, as the landscaping matures it will integrate the built form and reduce the perception of a hard built edge. It is concluded that the

proposals can be integrated into the immediate visual environment of the site without significant long term adverse effects.

Policy

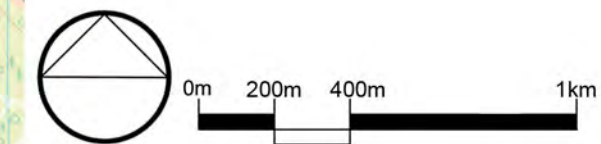
- 6.27. The site is not subject to any qualitative landscape designations at a national or local level and, as set out above, is not considered to represent a “valued” landscape with reference to para 170 (a) of the NPPF.
- 6.28. The proposals adopt a sensitive, landscape-led approach that has been informed by the Radstone Fields design codes and the guidelines set out within the South Northamptonshire Design Guide which has informed the emerging illustrative proposals.
- 6.29. It is considered that a sympathetic, landscape-led development can be achieved within this site that respects the localised landscape setting, represents a logical addition to Brackley and will not give rise to significant landscape or visual harm. and would therefore accord with the relevant Local Plan policies set out within Section 2 of this report.
- 6.30. It is considered that the application site and receiving environment have the capacity to accommodate the proposals. The proposals will not result in significant harm to the landscape character or visual environment and, as such, it is considered that the proposed development can be successfully integrated in this location and is supportable from a landscape and visual perspective.

ASPECT PLANS



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Key:
 Application Site Boundary

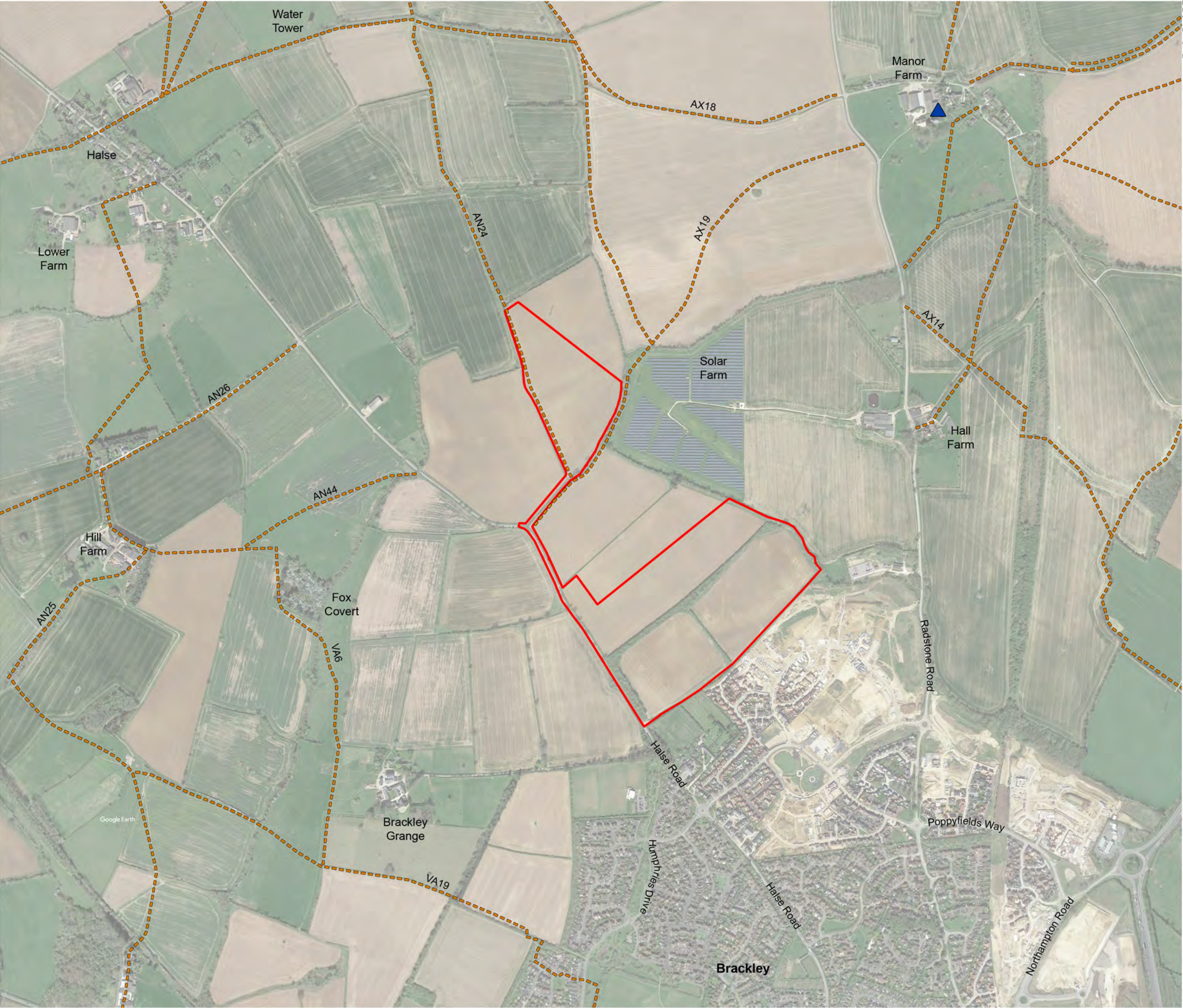
B	12.11.20	Update to boundary line	NB	JM
A	29.10.20	Update to boundary line	NB	JM
REV	DATE	NOTE	DRAWN	CHK'D
REVISIONS				

aspect landscape planning

TITLE
Land North of Radstone Fields, Brackley
Site Location Plan

CLIENT
Mintondale Developments

SCALE 1:20,000@A3	DATE MAR 2019	DRAWN SB	CHK'D AM
DRAWING NUMBER 5069 / ASP1		REVISION B	



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0m100m200m400m

Key:

Application Site Boundary

Public Right of Way

Listed Buildings

B	12.11.20	Update to boundary line	NB	JM
A	29.10.20	Update to boundary line	NB	JM
REV	DATE	NOTE	DRAWN	CHK'D
REVISIONS				

aspect landscape planning

TITLE

Land North of Radstone Fields, Brackley Site & Setting Plan

CLIENT

Mintondale Developments

SCALE	DATE	DRAWN	CHK'D
1:10,000@A3	MAR 2019	SB	AM
DRAWING NUMBER		REVISION	
5069 / ASP2		B	

APPENDIX 1

ASPECT LANDSCAPE & VISUAL IMPACT METHODOLOGY

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

- 1.1. The Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment have jointly published Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition 2013 (GLVIA3) that gives guidance on carrying out a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA), either as a standalone appraisal or part of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). This methodology takes on board the above guidance.
- 1.2. When assessing character within an urban context, this methodology can be applied to Townscape Assessments and how the development will affect the elements that make up the townscape and its distinctive character.
- 1.3. The main stages of the LVIA process are outlined below. This process will identify and assess the potential effects of a development on the landscape resource and the visual environment.

1. Baseline study

Landscape

- Define the scope of the assessment.
- Outline the planning policy context, including any landscape designations.
- Establish the landscape baseline through a site visit and an assessment of published Landscape Character Assessments to identify the value and susceptibility of the landscape resource (receptor), at community, local, national or international levels where appropriate.

Visual

- Define the scope of the assessment.
- Identify the extent of visual receptors within the study area, with the use of Zones of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) where appropriate, and establish the number and sensitivity of the representative viewpoint and/or groups of people (receptors) within the study area whose views may be altered as a result of the proposals.

2. Project description

The baseline study highlights clear opportunities and constraints for the integration of the proposals into the receiving environment. The aspects of the scheme at each phase that will potentially give rise to effects on the landscape and visual amenity will need identifying. At this time, the proposals can be modified to ensure that further mitigation measures are incorporated into the design as a response to the local landscape and visual environment.

3. Description of Effects

The level of effect on both landscape and visual receptors should be identified in respect of the different components of the proposed development. In order to assess the significance of the effect on the receiving environment, it is necessary to consider the **magnitude**, i.e. the degree of change, together with the **sensitivity** of the receptor.

This will identify whether the effects are:

Adverse or Beneficial - beneficial effects would typically occur where a development could positively contribute to the landscape character or view. Neutral effects would include changes that neither add nor detract from the quality and character of an area or view. Adverse effects would typically occur where there is loss of landscape elements, or the proposal detracts from the landscape quality and character of an area or view.

Direct or Indirect – A direct effect will be one where a development will affect a view or the character of an area, either beneficially or adversely. An indirect effect will occur as a result of associated development i.e. a development may result in an increase of traffic on a particular route.

Short, Medium or Long Term – this relates to the expected duration and magnitude of a development. Within this assessment the potential effects are assessed during the Construction Phase, then at Years 1 and 10, following completion of the development.

Reversible or Irreversible – can the resulting effect of a development be mitigated or not, and whether the result of the mitigation is beneficial or adverse.

4. Significance of Effects (EIA only)

A final judgment on whether the effect is likely to be significant, as required by the Regulations. The summary should draw out the key issues and outline the scope for reducing any negative / adverse effects. Mitigation measures need to be identified that may reduce the final judgement on the significance of any residual negative effects in the long term.

Assessing effects

Landscape Sensitivity

- 1.4. The sensitivity of a particular landscape in relation to new development is categorised as high, medium, low or negligible. This takes into account the susceptibility of the receptor to the type of development proposed and the value attached to different landscapes by society. The following table explains each threshold and the factors that make up the degree of sensitivity.

Table 1: Landscape Sensitivity Thresholds

Sensitivity	Definition
High	Landscape resource where there is a high susceptibility to change. Landscapes would be considered of high value, have a high degree of intimacy, strong landscape structure, relatively intact and contain features worthy of protection. Townscapes may include a high proportion of historic assets. Typical examples may be of National or County importance e.g. within the setting of National Parks, AONB's, Conservation Areas etc.
Medium	Landscape resource where there is a medium susceptibility to change. Landscapes would be considered of medium value, good landscape structure, with some detracting features or evidence of recent change. Townscapes may include a proportion of historic assets or of cultural value locally. Typical examples may be designated for their value at District level.
Low	Landscape resource where there is a low susceptibility to change. Landscapes would be considered of low value, and contain evidence of previous landscape change.
Negligible	Landscape resource where there is little or no susceptibility to change. Typical landscapes are likely to be degraded, of weak landscape structure, intensive land uses, and require landscape restoration.

Visual Sensitivity

- 1.5. The sensitivity of the visual receptor will be assessed against the magnitude of visual change, and is categorised as high, medium, low or negligible. Each receptor should be assessed in terms of both their susceptibility to change in views and visual amenity and also the value attached to particular views.

Table 2: Visual Sensitivity Thresholds

Sensitivity	Definition
High	Viewers on public rights of way whose prime focus is on the landscape around and are often very aware of its value. Occupiers of residential properties with primary views affected by the development. Examples include users of National Trails, Long Distance Routes or Sustrans cycle routes, or within the setting of a listed building.
Medium	Viewers engaged in outdoor recreation with some appreciation of the landscape, occupiers of residential properties with oblique views affected by the development, and users of rural lanes and roads. Examples include viewers within moderate quality landscapes, local recreation grounds, and outdoor pursuits.
Low	Viewers engaged in outdoor sport or recreation whose prime focus is on their activity, or those passing through the area on main transport routes whose attention is focused away from an appreciation of the landscape.
Negligible	Viewers whose attention is focused on their work or activity, and not susceptible to changes in the surrounding landscape.

Effect Magnitude

- 1.6. The magnitude of change relates to the degree in which proposed development alters the fabric of the landscape character or view. This change is categorised as high, medium, low, or negligible.

Table 3: Magnitude of Change

Magnitude	Effect Definition
High	Change resulting in a high degree of deterioration or improvement, or introduction of prominent new elements that are considered to make a major alteration to a landscape or view.
Medium	Change resulting in a moderate degree of deterioration or improvement, or constitutes a perceptible change within a landscape or view.
Low	Change resulting in a low degree of deterioration or improvement to a landscape or view, or constitutes only a minor component within a landscape or view.
Negligible	Change resulting in a barely perceptible degree of deterioration or improvement to a landscape or view.
No Change	It is also possible for a landscape or view to experience no change due to being totally compatible with the local character or not visible due to intervening structures or vegetation.

Significance Threshold

- 1.7. The magnitude of change is then considered against the sensitivity of the landscape resource as a receptor or the existing character of the panorama / view. In formulating the significance of effect, reasoned professional judgement is required which is explained within the assessment. This is carried out both in terms of the predicted effects on landscape character or on visual amenities. The significance thresholds are predicted as Major, Moderate, Minor, Negligible and None, and can be either beneficial or adverse. Unless otherwise stated, all effects are predicted in the winter months. The extent of mitigation measures should be clearly stated, and in the case of planting proposals, the contribution to reducing adverse effects should be demonstrated at different stages (construction stage, operational stage year 0, and year 10).

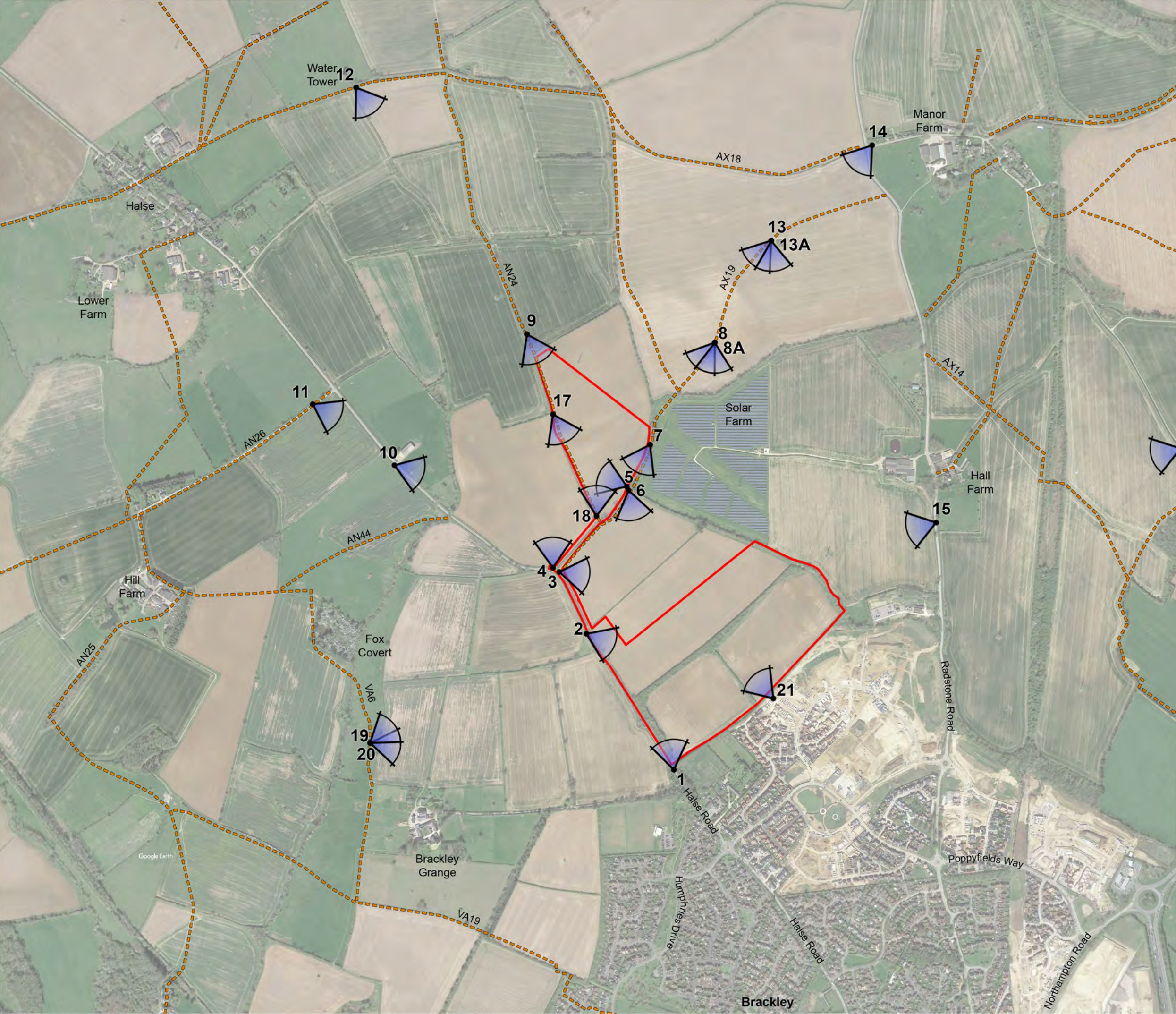
Table 4: Significance of Effect

Significance	Threshold Definition
Major	A high magnitude of change that materially affects a landscape or view, that has little or no ability to accommodate change. Positive effects will typically occur in a damaged landscape or view.
Moderate	A medium magnitude of change that materially affects a landscape or view that may have the ability to accommodate change. Positive effects will typically occur in a lower quality landscape or view.
Minor	A low magnitude of change that materially affects a landscape or view that has the ability to accommodate change. Positive effects will typically occur in a lower quality landscape or view.
Negligible	A negligible magnitude of change that has little effect on a landscape or view that has the ability to accommodate change.
None	It is also possible for a magnitude of change to occur that results in a neutral effect significance due to the change being compatible with local character or not visible.

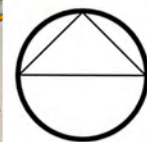
- 1.8. The significance of the effect is measured on the ability of a landscape or view to accommodate the change. In assessing the significance of effects, the following matrix will be used to determine the significance thresholds, through determining the sensitivity of the receptor and the magnitude of change.
- 1.9. In terms of assessing whether the effects are significant or otherwise, it is noted that para 5.56 of GLVIA3 states that there are no “hard and fast rules” about what makes a significant effect. For the purposes of this assessment significant landscape or visual effects are those effects considered to be greater than moderate, shaded below in Table 5.

APPENDIX 2

VISUAL ASSESSMENT




NOTES:
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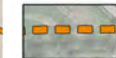


0m100m200m400m


Key:



Application Site Boundary




Public Right of Way



Viewpoint Location

B	12.11.20	Update to boundary line	NB	JM
A	29.10.20	Update to boundary line	NB	JM
REV	DATE	NOTE	DRAWN	CHK'D
REVISIONS				



TITLE
Land North of Radstone Fields, Brackley
Viewpoint Location Plan

CLIENT
Mintondale Developments

SCALE 1:10,000@A3	DATE MAR 2019	DRAWN SB	CHK'D AM
DRAWING NUMBER 5069 / VLP		REVISION B	



Viewpoint 1



Viewpoint 2



Southern parcel of site located
beyond intervening hedgerow

Radstone Fields
Development

Viewpoint 3



Halse Water Tower

Northern parcel of site beyond
intervening hedgerow

Viewpoint 4



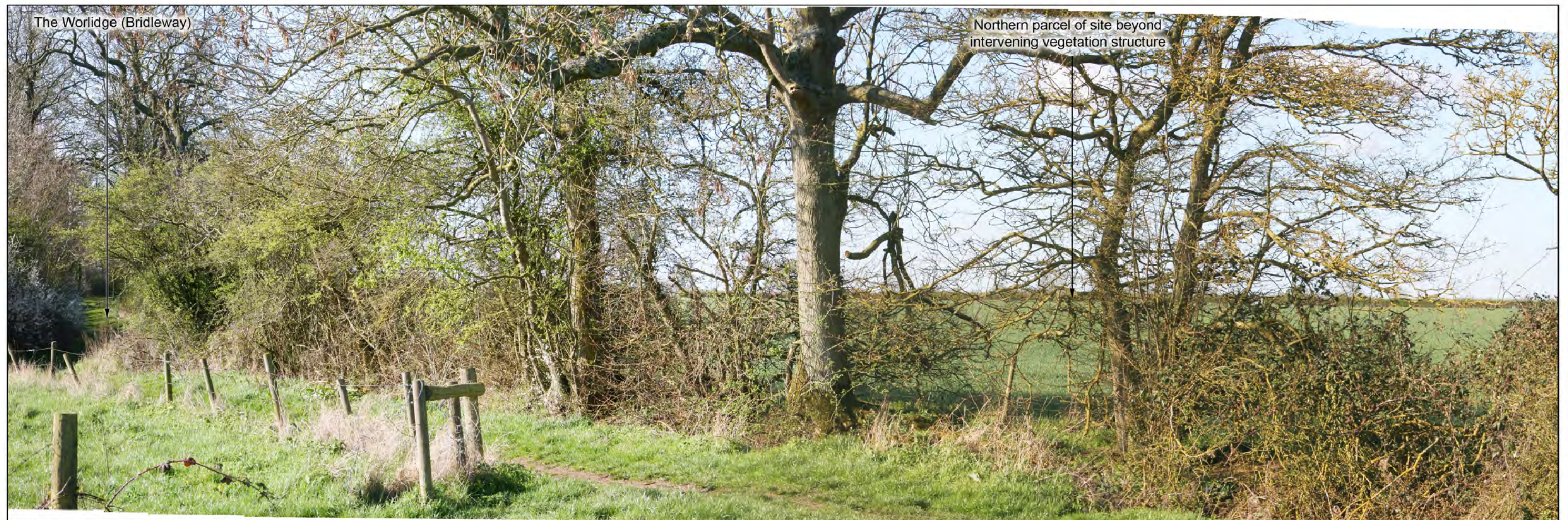
Viewpoint 5



Viewpoint 6



Viewpoint 7



Viewpoint 8



Viewpoint 8A



Viewpoint 9



Viewpoint 10



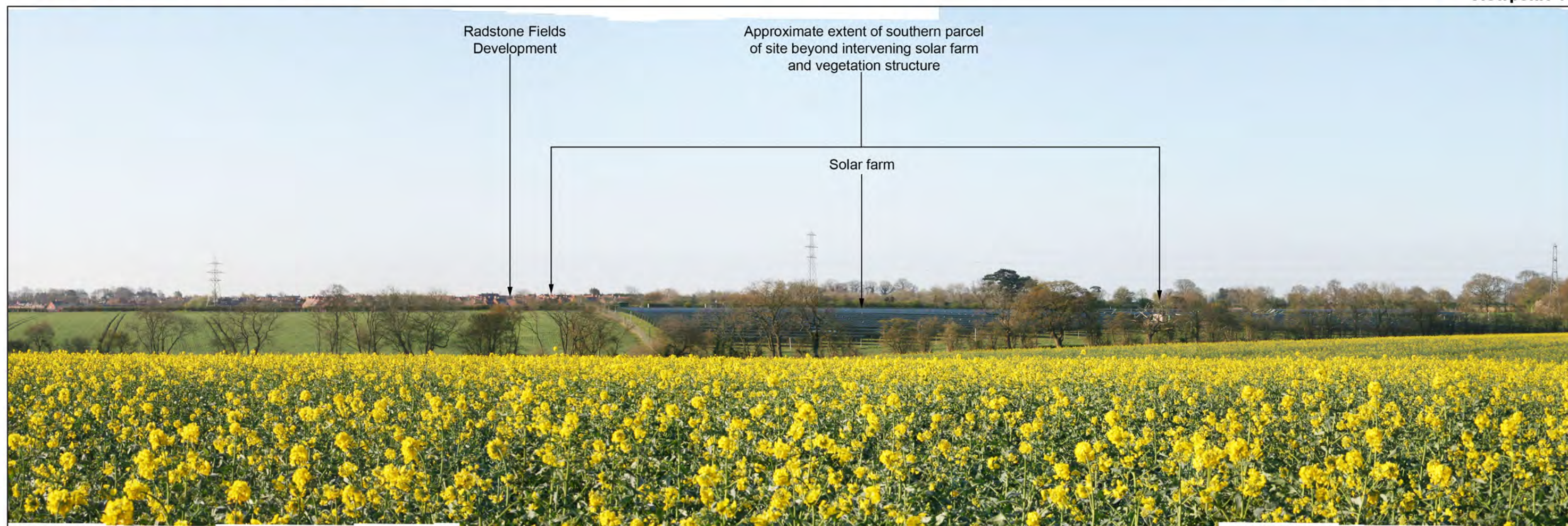
Viewpoint 11



Viewpoint 12



Viewpoint 13



Viewpoint 13A



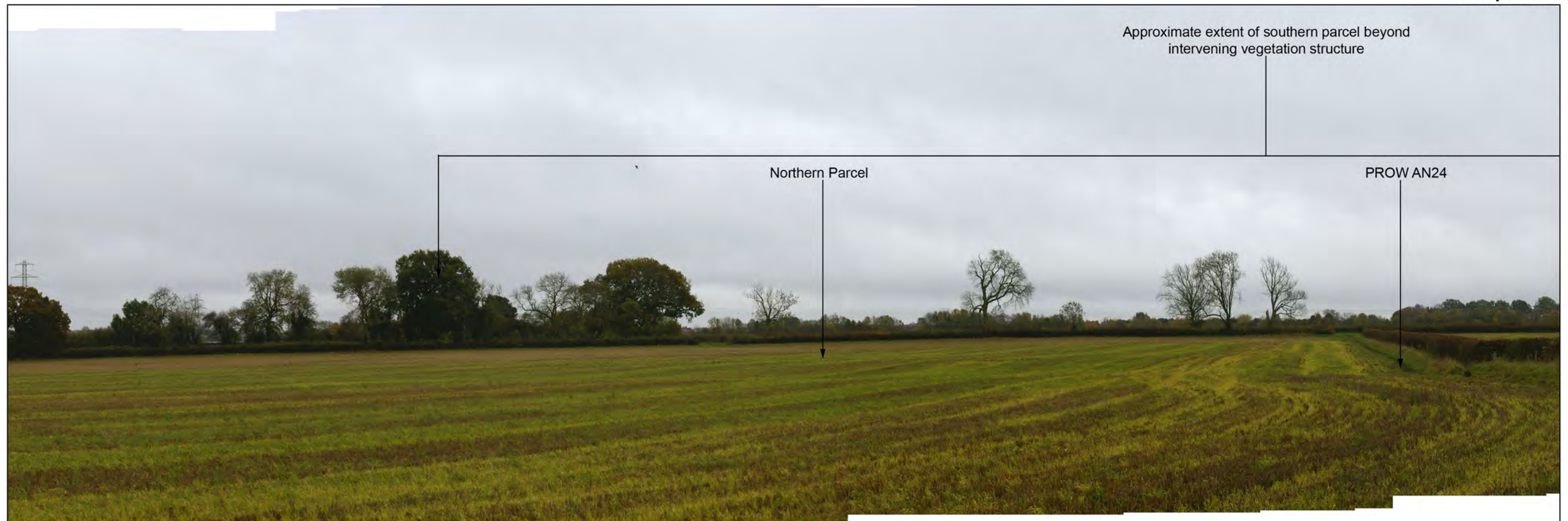
Viewpoint 14



Viewpoint 15



Viewpoint 16



Viewpoint 17

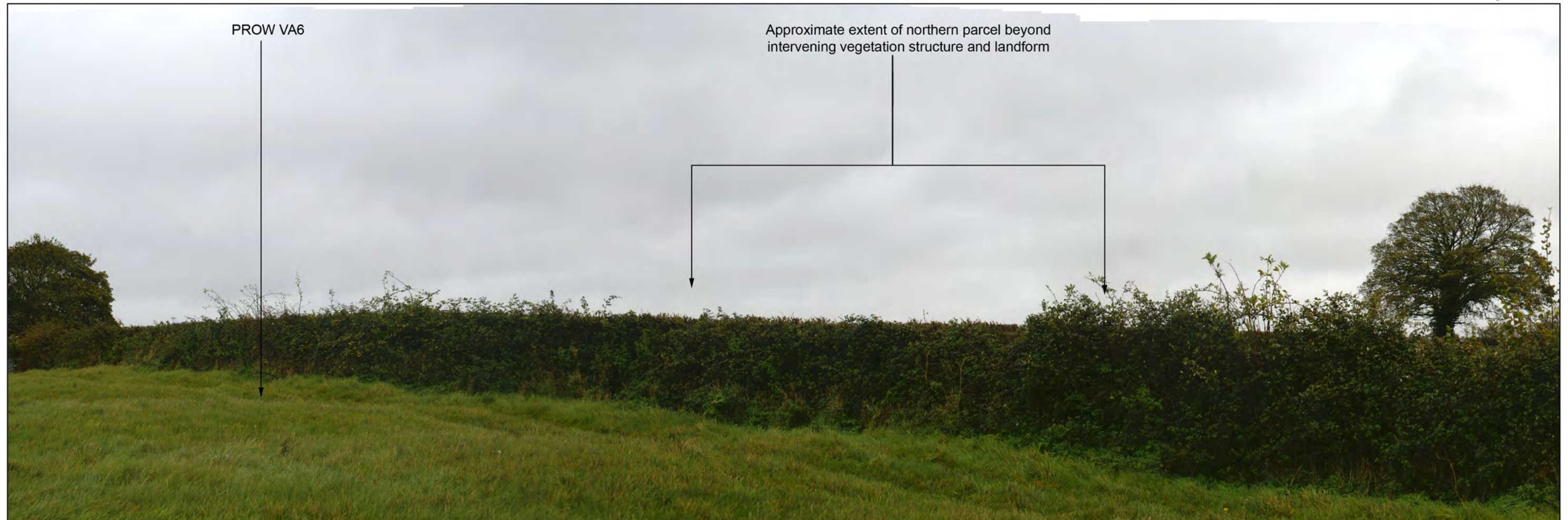


Halse Water Tower

PROW AN24

Northern parcel of application site

Viewpoint 18



PROW VA6

Approximate extent of northern parcel beyond
intervening vegetation structure and landform

Viewpoint 19



Viewpoint 20

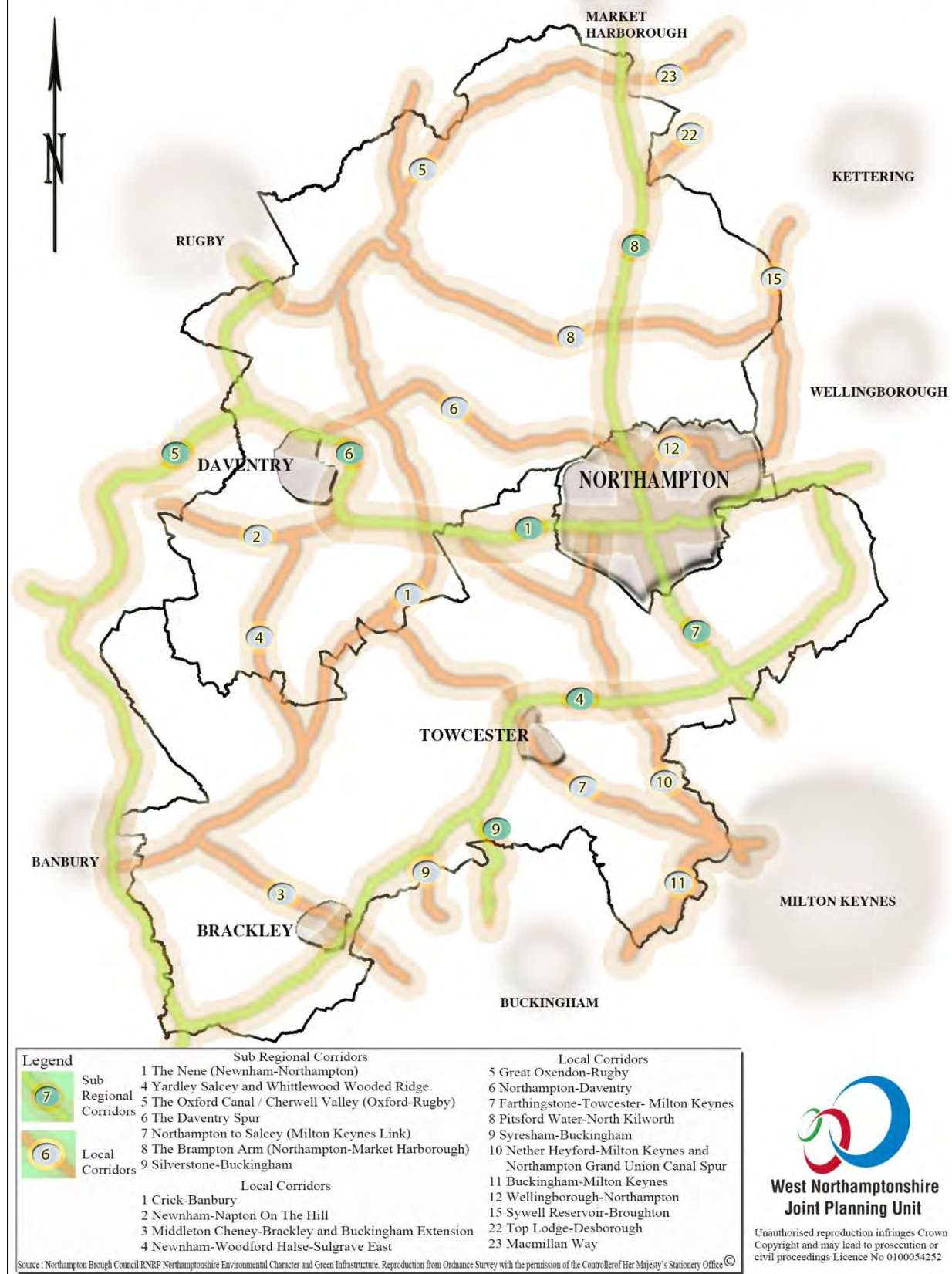


Viewpoint 21

APPENDIX 3

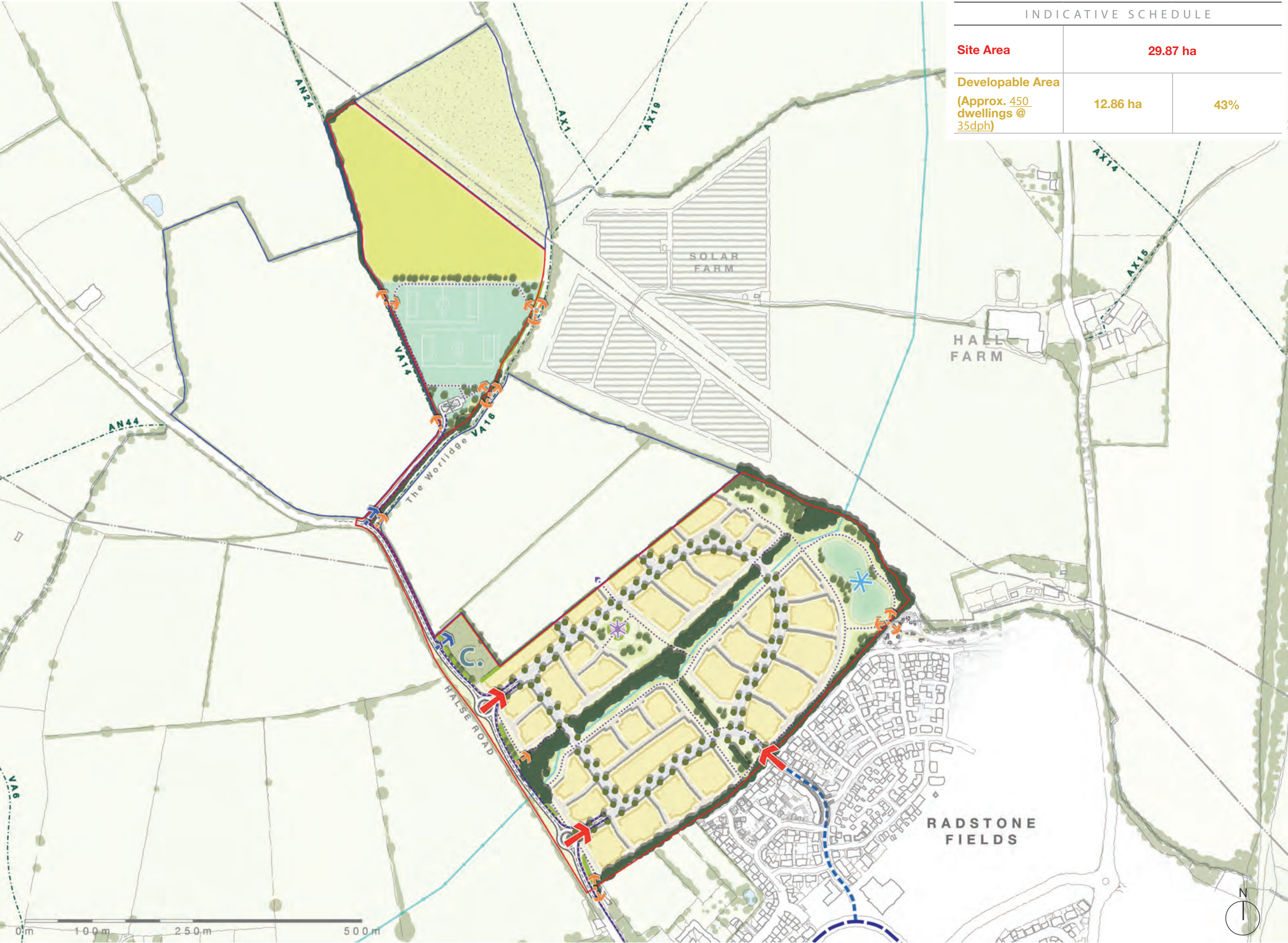
JOINT CORE STRATEGY EXTRACTS

Figure 6 - West Northamptonshire Green Infrastructure Network



APPENDIX 4

URBAN DESIGN STUDIO ILLUSTRATIVE MASTERPLAN



- Site Boundary
- Retained Land
- Proposed Residential Development
- Proposed Residential Frontages
- Proposed Primary Vehicular Access Points
- Proposed Secondary Vehicular Access Points
- Existing Medium Pressure Gas Main
- Existing Bus Route through Radstone Fields
- Proposed Bus Route Extension through Radstone Fields
- Existing Public Rights of Way
- Proposed Pedestrian Connections
- Proposed Footpath Along Halse Road
- Indicative Footpath / Cycle Network
- Proposed Primary Road / Bus Loop
- Existing Vegetation
- Proposed Open Space
- Call Option Recreation Land
- Land Reserved for Biodiversity Net Gain
- Formal Sports / Recreational Land
- Proposed Location of Cemetery / Allotments
- Proposed Car Park for associated Formal Sports / Recreational Land
- Proposed Children's Play Area
- Proposed Location of Attenuation Basins

Land North of Radstone Fields, Brackley

Mintondale Developments

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drawing no.	LB01	drawing	Illustrative Masterplan
revision	I	scale	Refer to scale bar
drawn by	CJM	checked by	AR
date	06/11/2020	job no.	462784

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