

**LAND SOUTH OF THE A271 AND EAST OF THE A22,
LOWER HORSEBRIDGE**

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL
HERTFORDSHIRE HOLDINGS LTD
NOVEMBER 2022



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1.0 Landscape and visual appraisal

Introduction

- 1.1 This Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) has been prepared by Terence O'Rourke Ltd on behalf of Hertfordshire Holdings Ltd to support an outline planning application on land at Lower Horsebridge, East Sussex for up to 124 dwellings and associated infrastructure and open space. The purpose of this appraisal is to identify, describe and assess the potential effects of the proposed development on the landscape character and visual amenity of the site and its surroundings and also take account of the wider community benefits and substantial biodiversity gains that will arise from the change of use from agricultural land use to public access and biodiversity purposes of the wider site.

References and data sources

- 1.2 In preparing this report the published documents and plans set out in table 1.1 have been referred to. The application site is from this point on simply referred to as *the site*.

Table 1.1: References and data sources

Natural England, October 2014, An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment
Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, 2013, Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Assessment (3 rd edition)
Visual Representation of Development Proposals Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 06/19 17 September 2019
Landscape Institute, 2021, Assessing landscape value outside national designations Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 02/21
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, February 2019, The National Planning Policy Framework
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)
Natural England National Character Area Profiles; website www.naturalengland.org.uk
East Sussex County Landscape Character Assessment Update 2016
Wealden Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment 2014_ Wealden District Council- by Chris Blandford Associates
Wealden Local Plan Sites – Landscape and Ecological assessment Study 2017. For Wealden DC, by The Landscape Partnership
Wealden Green Infrastructure Study 2017_ Wealden District Council- by Chris Blandford Associates
Wealden District Core Strategy Local Plan 2013
Adopted Wealden Local Plan 1998 – Saved Policies
Local Plan emerging-Insert latest advice from Wealden on progress
The Hellingly Neighbourhood Plan, February 2021

The site

- 1.3 The site comprising both the proposed development area and the associated biodiversity area/public open space, is on land east of the A22 Boship

Roundabout and associated development which lies immediately adjacent to the site's western boundary. The village of Lower Horsebridge lies to the north east of the site and the north west edge of Hailsham lies to the south.

- 1.4 The section of A271 between the Boship Roundabout and Lower Horsebridge forms the north western boundary. Development and vegetation along the west side of this A271 corridor provide a good visual barrier to the landscape lying further to the north west, helping to enclose the site from wider views.
- 1.5 The field area east of the site and the continuing countryside beyond the A271 bridge over the Cuckmere River, extends beyond the boundary to the north east along the corridor of the Cuckmere River. The meandering course of the Cuckmere River forms the south eastern boundary with vegetation partially screening the land and development south of the river, on the north western edge of Hailsham. The combined effects of the vegetation and development form a strong visual barrier to the east and south east.
- 1.6 The Hailsham bypass A22 and the Boship roundabout, form the south western boundary with vegetation on the highway embankments and central reservation forming an effective visual screen for the area of landscape further to the west and south.
- 1.7 The proposed area of development occupies the westernmost portion of the site, adjacent to the developed environment centred around the Boship roundabout and extending west along the A22.

Planning policy

Relevant planning policy documents

- 1.8 The site lies within the administrative areas of Wealden District Council and East Sussex County Council. The key planning documents at the national scale applicable to the study area are, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) and at the local scale, Wealden District Council's adopted Local Plan Documents. East Sussex County's Mineral and Waste Plans do not appear to relate to this site or its context. There are also supplementary planning documents with more detailed guidance as set out below. A broad appraisal of the local documents has been carried out identifying the key landscape related planning policies and designations, as well as relevant nature conservation and cultural heritage designations that will also have an impact in terms of the landscape. The designations are illustrated on figure 10 and are summarised below. A full list of policy criteria can be found in appendix A1.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), July 2021

- 1.9 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the government's planning policies for England, the following of which are relevant to the landscape and visual appraisal. The policy detail for the following headings can be found in Appendix A1:

Achieving sustainable development

- Paragraph 8 – achieving sustainable development

Promoting healthy and safe communities

- Paragraph 98 – planning policies promoting open space, sport and recreation facilities
- Paragraph 99 – Existing open space, sports and recreational facilities

Making effective use of land

- Paragraph 119 – planning policies and decisions promoting effective use of land
- Paragraph 120 – list of considerations for planning policies and decisions

Achieving appropriate densities

- Paragraph 124 – list of considerations for supporting development
- Paragraph 125 – making optimal use of the potential of each site

Achieving well-designed places

- Paragraph 126 – the requirement for good design
- Paragraph 129 – use of local or national design guides
- Paragraph 130 – list of considerations for developments
- Paragraph 131 – the important contribution of trees

Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

- Paragraph 174 – list of planning policies and decisions that contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment
- Paragraph 175 – allocating land with the least environmental or amenity value
- Paragraph 176 – consideration of applications in or near protected environments

Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

- Paragraph 189 – importance of the historic environment
- Paragraph 190 – consideration of a strategy for the conservation of the historic environment
- Paragraph 194, 195 and 197 – proposals affecting heritage assets
- Paragraphs 199, 200, 201, 202 and 203 – considering potential impacts

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

- 1.10 The National Planning Practice Guidance is a web based resource that supports the NPPF and contains government guidance, the following of which are relevant to the landscape and visual appraisal:

- Paragraph: 001 Ref ID: 26-001-20191001 - Design: Process and tools
- Paragraph 005 Ref ID: 8-005-20190721 - Green Infrastructure
- Paragraph 008 Ref ID: 8-008-20190721 - Green Infrastructure
- Paragraph 029 Ref ID: 8-029-20190721 – Trees and Woodland
- Paragraph 036 Ref ID: 8-036-20190721 - Landscape
- Paragraph 037 Ref ID: 8-037-20190721 – Landscape
- Paragraph 039 Ref ID: 8-039-20190721 –Duty of Regard to National Park Setting
- Paragraph 042 Ref ID: 8-042-20190721 –Development in National Park Setting
- Paragraph 004 Ref ID: 37-004-20140306 – Public Rights of Way

Local plans

- 1.11 On 19 February 2020, Wealden District Council formally withdrew its draft Wealden Local Plan 2019 following its Stage One examination process.
- 1.12 The following saved policies in the **The Adopted Wealden District local Plan**, adopted in 1998 are relevant to the landscape and visual appraisal. The policy detail for the following headings can be found in Appendix A1:
- 1998 Saved Policy GD2 Development outside development boundaries – (Title)
 - 1998 Saved Policy EN1 – Sustainable Development
 - 1998 Saved Policy EN2 – Development Pattern
 - 1998 Saved Policy EN8 – Low Weald
 - 1998 Saved Policy EN12 – Protection of trees and woodlands
 - 1998 Saved Policy EN13 – Ancient semi-natural woodlands
 - 1998 Saved Policy EN14 – Landscaping
 - 1998 Saved Policy EN15 – Nature Conservation sites
 - 1998 Saved Policy EN27 – layout and design criteria
 - 1998 Saved Policy EN29 – Light pollution
- 1.13 The following policies in the **(Wealden District Core Strategy Local Plan) Plan**, adopted in (2013) are relevant to the landscape and visual assessment:
- **Policy WCS12** – Biodiversity)
 - **Policy WCS13** – (Green infrastructure)
 - **Policy WCS14**– (Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development)

Wealden - Direction of Travel

- 1.14 The local plan is under review with the current programme of adopting a new local plan in 2023. As part of this process, Wealden District Council has published a consultation document titled ‘Direction of Travel policy options’ which is a strong

indication of the future policy direction. Sections 10 and 11 of that document, respectively titled 'Our Natural Environment and 'Our Landscape, Heritage and Cultural Assets', lists the following policy options relevant to the landscape and visual appraisal. The policy detail for the following headings can be found in Appendix A1, but is also set out in full below as a strong indication of Wealden's current landscape and environmental approach:

Our Natural Environment

- *Provide a policy to seek biodiversity net gains onsite and only consider other avenues when this is not possible and it is supported by firm evidence;*
- *Provide a criteria based policy for allowing offsite biodiversity net gains to be delivered;*
- *Continue to resist development proposals that would be likely to adversely affect the biodiversity of the district including designated and non-designated sites as well as individual biodiversity features;*
- *Provide policies which support and encourage development that maintains, restores, enhances and where possible creates biodiversity and ecological networks;*
- *Look at the potential to establish a strategic network of areas/sites that could be identified and allocated for off-site biodiversity net gains and set this within policy;*

Our Landscape, Heritage and Cultural Assets

- *To continue to resist inappropriate loss of valued landscapes and approving proposals that will conserve or enhance landscape character and its wider benefits;*
- *Providing a criteria based policy for allowing development in the countryside; Consider a policy that protects green and blue corridors;*
- *Consider a policy which is specific to design within the landscape – designated and non-designated – and set out certain criteria;*
- *Develop a High Weald AONB specific policy requiring proposals to clearly demonstrate how they have regard to the objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan and High Weald Design Guide;*
- *Consider a policy which protects and enhances rural landscape features in their own right i.e. hedgerows, field patterns, settlement patterns, trees, water features; and*
- *Consider the inclusion of a dark night skies policy which will control lighting schemes in those parts of the district with the darkest skies.*

Hellingly Neighbourhood plan

1.15 The Hellingly Neighbourhood Plan was adopted in February 2021. Policies contained within the local plan that are relevant to the landscape and visual appraisal are as follows:

- **Policy (HNDP4)** – (Flood risk assessments)
- **Policy (HNDP5)** – (related to the enhancement of green and blue infrastructure)
- **Policy (HNDP6)** – (for the protection and enhancement of biodiversity)
- **Policy (LHB1)** – (i) How it supports the preservation and enhancement of designated heritage assets and their settings.
- **Policy (LHB1)** – (ii) Acknowledgement of buildings that make a positive contribution to the settlement and its character and appearance through designation as locally listed buildings and show how the development has regard to the scale of loss or harm when balanced against the significance of the building.
- **Policy (LHB1)** – (iii) How the proposed development protects the historic development pattern and the key views and vistas as shown on Map 4.
- **Policy (LHB1)** – (iv) That there is no erosion of the sense of openness and rural character of the existing setting of the settlement.
- **Policy (LHB1)** – (v) How it promotes the use of locally distinctive materials including brick, tile hanging and plain tiled roofs together with use of or retention of traditional windows, doors, porches and shop fronts where they exist.
- **Policy (LBH2)** – (i) Designs that do not respect local character, identity and distinctiveness will not be supported
- **Policy (LBH2)** – (ii) New dwellings should not exceed two storeys in height
- **Policy (LBH2)** – (iii) Roofs should be pitched to no less than 40 degrees
- **Policy (LBH2)** – (iv) Front dormers and roof extensions should be resisted
- **Policy (LBH2)** – (v) Extensions to existing dwellings should clearly be subordinate to the host building
- **Policy (LBH2)** – (vi) As a general principle gaps between existing buildings should be retained and not encroached upon or reduced
- **Policy (LBH2)** – (vii) Traditional features elements and proportions should be respected

Methodology

- 1.16 The appraisal judges the potential effects of the proposed development on the landscape and visual receptors that have been identified. This is determined by consideration of the sensitivity of the landscape and visual receptors and the magnitude of the landscape and visual effect as a result of the proposals. Further details of the methodology used in the appraisal is set out in full in appendix A2 and in figures 22 to 25 at the end of this report. Details of the methodology used in the photographic survey are set out in appendix A3.

Landscape baseline

- 1.17 As part of the desktop appraisal, previous classifications and evaluations of the surrounding landscape within the study area have been examined. The purpose of this was to assess whether the site shares any of these common landscape characteristics and to assess how typical or unique the site is within the landscape context. It also helps to understand the landscape characteristics of the study area and how the site interacts with them.
- 1.18 The baseline study concentrates on the site and the wider area within the surrounding landscape. Taking into consideration the moderate scale and limited height of the proposals, a distance of 2.5km from the site boundary was identified as an appropriate distance within which to consider the wider landscape setting of the site. Although the site, or at least some limited elements of the proposals, may be perceptible from beyond this distance in some seasonal and weather conditions, it is considered that beyond 2.5km any visible element would be so minor, that it would not result in any perceived adverse landscape and visual impact.

National landscape character areas (refer to figure 6)

- 1.19 Natural England's online National Character Area Profiles provide a description of the landscape character of the study area and the site at its broadest level. The site lies within character area (NCA121 Low Weald), and the surrounding study area lies within character area (NCA122 High Weald) and NCA 124 Pevensey Levels.

County landscape character areas (refer to figure 7)

- 1.20 The East Sussex County Landscape Character Update 2016, divides the county into a series of 40 landscape character areas. The site lies within character area LCA15, Eastern Low Weald. The description of this area contained in the assessment is:

This area is more open and exposed than the western low weald, with many more flat, treeless areas. It contains the large woodland areas of Abbot's and Vert Woods, which are mainly conifer plantations. Running from Ringmer in the west (outside Wealden District) to Polegate in the east the area contains the upper River Cuckmere and Arlington Reservoir.

The key characteristics are described as:

- Significant areas of flat, nearly treeless country
- A greater area (15%) is under woodland than in the Western Low Weald but, by contrast, nearly all of this is in large blocks over 2 Ha.
- About half the woodland is coniferous.
- Hedges and hedgerow trees are slightly less abundant, and trees are often small and wind-bent
- Dog walking pathways across
- Fine, open views of the Downs
- Small, remote and largely unspoiled rural villages
- Historic designed landscapes and parkland
- Small, winding, partly tree-lined streams, notably the River Cuckmere, but also many artificial, straightened drains and channels in the area around Hailsham West.

1.21 The 2017 South Wealden Growth Area Landscape and Ecology Studies report suggests; *Most of these characteristics e.g. 'flat, nearly treeless country with remote windswept feel ' and 'and fine open views of the Downs ' are more typical of the landscape to the south and west of the Eastern Low Weald than of the area around Hailsham West.* The site is within the Hailsham West area of the study.

1.22 Most of the characteristics within the site specifically are different from the wider landscape character area as it is closer to a main road, A22, a main, busy roundabout and near the residential areas of Hailsham. This gives the site a more urban influence than the rest of the character area.

1.23 The national and county level character area assessments provide a broad overview of the landscape context and does not necessarily represent the local landscape characteristics of the site and surrounding area. Therefore it is considered appropriate to refer to the local character assessment as the basis for judging the value of the landscape in which the site and surrounding area lies.

Local landscape character areas (refer to figure 8)

1.24 The site lies within character area E6 Hellingly of the Wealden Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment 2014.

1.25 The surrounding study area extends also to the following character areas; A6 Horam; B1 Cowbeech Hill; D5 Chiddingly; D6 Upper Dicker; D7 Wilmington and Abbots Wood and E5 Hailsham and Lower Horsebridge. A combination of ZTV analysis and site studies have informed the conclusion that the proposals would only have potential adverse effects on the landscape of character areas E6

Hellingly and D6 Upper Dicker. The remaining areas are therefore not considered further as landscape receptors in this study.

- 1.26 In addition to the character area assessments, the 2014 CBA study includes assessment of the landscape setting of settlements, and the most relevant part to this study is section 5.13 which assesses the landscape setting of Hailsham.
- 1.27 The CBA study places the site within an area of landscape (Area 9) which appears to be defined by the Cuckmere River corridor assessed as 'High Sensitivity'. The listed key characteristics of Area 9 are:
- Gently meandering corridor of the River Cuckmere, which is lined with a patchwork of predominantly pastoral, ancient fields;
 - A22 road corridor crosses the northern part of the area, introducing a source of noise and movement.
- 1.28 The assessment scores Area 9 as high sensitivity, high landscape value, and low landscape capacity. The summary for Area 9 states:
- 1.29 Landscape Setting Area 9 is considered to have Low Landscape Capacity as a result of its High Landscape Sensitivity and High Landscape Value. This area has a strong landscape structure of mature hedgerows and trees and strong historic continuity, resulting from the ancient field pattern. Valuable landscape features include mature hedgerows and trees. The gently meandering corridor of the River Cuckmere, which is lined with patchwork of predominantly pastoral, ancient fields is considered to have High Landscape Sensitivity.
- 1.30 It should be noted that Area 9 is a very large character area and that the site and proposed developable areas comprise a very small proportion of the area. A finer grained and more recent study of the site, which this study finds more appropriate to the site is contained in the South Wealden Landscape and Ecological Assessment Study 2017 which is described in the following paragraphs.

South Wealden – Landscape and Ecological Assessment Study – April 2017

- 1.31 Wealden District Council commissioned The Landscape Partnership to undertake landscape and ecological assessments of potential development sites within South Wealden including the settlements of Hailsham, Polegate and Willingdon, Lower Horsebridge, Hellingly, Magham Down, Lower Dicker and Upper Dicker. The purpose of the study was to aid the Council in terms of determining the allocation of sites for residential development and to inform the development of site-specific ecological and landscape policies.
- 1.32 The scope of the study comprises landscape and ecological assessments of a number of sites that were previously submitted to the SHELAA process as available for potential development. The sites that were assessed in that study include this site and the relevant sections are Chapter 7 of the South Wealden Growth Area Landscape and Ecology Studies, Appendix 1.6 Ecological Site assessment and Appendix 2.6, Lower Horsebridge landscape assessment. The study purpose was to provide '*detailed assessments of these sites suitability, from a landscape and ecology perspective, for development*'.

- 1.33 The 2017 assessment states that *‘despite the proximity of the urban area the site has a strong pastoral character and creates an effective sense of separation between Lower Horsebridge and Upper Horsebridge.’* The summary of visibility states:

The principal ZVI of the site extends to the A22 in the west, the southern edge of Lower Horsebridge to the north, along the Cuckmere valley to the east and to the northern built edge of Hailsham/Upper Horsebridge to the south.

Key views and principal visual receptors

Principal visual receptors likely to be affected by the site are:

- *Residential properties (High sensitivity)*
- *PRoW (High sensitivity)*
- *B2104/A271 (Low sensitivity)*

- 1.34 The assessment of site sensitivity and capacity in the 2017 study is Moderate-Low Landscape Capacity. The report acknowledges that the site is *‘relatively low visibility’* and also notes that the sensitivity of the site varies, *with the areas adjacent to the Cuckmere river being most sensitive, whilst the ‘western corner of the site adjacent to the A267/A22 roundabout junction is less sensitive and is not in flood zones 2/3.’* This report notes that the less sensitive area equates to the proposed development area.

- 1.35 The conclusion that this study draws from the 2017 assessment, is that there is capacity for development with a strategy that restricts development to the less sensitive areas and retains and enhances the more sensitive areas of the site.

- 1.36 The list of ‘landscape qualities/feature’ to be safeguarded also suggest that a development strategy that leaves these elements intact or enhanced would be acceptable.

- 1.37 The report also suggests that there are enhancement opportunities:

Opportunities for landscape enhancement:

6. River corridor would benefit from long term management plan and programme of regular management works to preserve and enhance the character of the corridor

- 1.38 Overall, the 2017 assessment contains some important positive indications that there is capacity for development in the less sensitive western corner of the site and with a sensitive and well-targeted landscape strategy to address the landscape and visual issues and provide landscape enhancements.

Hellingly Neighbourhood Plan February 2021 – Landscape references

- 1.39 The Hellingly Neighbourhood Plan (February 2021) contains some references to landscape and views into the site. It defines an “Area of Local Landscape Value”

which lies approximately 1.4km to the north of the site. ZTV and site studies show that the proposals would not have any significant impact on that area which is not a national designation. The policies for Lower Horsebridge include LHB1 relating to development, but it appears to relate only to development within the village area. The site is not included within the defined village area.

Landscape receptors included in the appraisal

- 1.40 Landscape receptors to be considered in the assessment are the site and Wealden Local Character areas LCA-E6 Hellingly and LCA-D6 Upper Dicker.
- 1.41 The site (see brief description in paragraphs 1.3-1.8), as acknowledged in Wealden's 2017 report (Appendix 2.6) (see paragraph 1.34) is 'less sensitive.'
- 1.42 The Wealden Local Landscape Character LCA-E6 Hellingly includes the site itself, and so to prevent double counting of effects, LCA E6 is assessed as the part of it that lies outside the site.
- 1.43 The potential effects of the development proposals on the character areas will be assessed within the predicted effects on the landscape character section later in this report. A description of the relevant landscape receptors is provided in the following paragraphs.

The site character and its immediate context

- 1.44 Site photographs taken in March 2022 are shown in figures 2 (photographs location) and 3.
- 1.45 The site is predominantly an area of pasture lying on the north side of the Cuckmere River. It includes a small wooded area, some individual trees, small areas of scrub and the eastern boundary is a tributary watercourse that feeds in to the river Cuckmere. The area, whilst physically open due to the relatively flat topography and lack of dividing hedgerows or fences, does have a sense of enclosure due to boundary trees and hedgerows, surrounding vegetation and enclosure to the west by development and vegetation along the A271 corridor.
- 1.46 Just beyond the stream forming the northern boundary of the site, the open land (of which the site is part), is enclosed by trees and hedgerows associated with the neighbouring residential properties on the southern edge of Lower Horsebridge. There is a footpath (Hellingly 12/1) along the northern boundary of the wider open land.
- 1.47 The southern boundary is with the A22 and here the trees and shrubs on the road embankments and central reservation provide strong enclosure. There is a telecommunications mast adjacent to this boundary.
- 1.48 To the north west, the boundary is with a section of the A271 between the Boship roundabout and Lower Horsebridge. Most of this boundary is hedgerow maintained at around 1.5m. On the west side of the A271, houses and garden vegetation provide a strong visual screen and enclosure.

- 1.49 To the east, the boundary is with the tributary stream, with open pasture leading down to the River Cuckmere extending further to the east and some development on the north west edge of Hailsham visible.
- 1.50 The site is affected by the adjacent roads and development. The view and sound of traffic and development visible along the A271 and the mobile phone mast means that it does not have a strong pastoral character and has urban edge characteristics.

Local Landscape Character Area LCA-E6 Hellingly

- 1.51 The 2014 character assessment summarises this area as follows: *This LLCA wraps around the northern edge of the large town of Hailsham and provides its northern and eastern landscape setting. To the east Hailsham, open views across the Levels are a key feature looking eastwards, whilst views westwards are dominated by residential properties at the urban edge. Here, a patchwork of small scale, predominantly pastoral fields dominate landscape character. To the north of Hailsham, settlement pattern includes the two small villages of Hellingly and Lower Horsebridge. From this part of the LLCA, views southwards are dominated by the urban edges of Hailsham (although these are often screened by mature vegetation). Urban fringe land uses are apparent, including several nurseries. The upper reaches of the River Cuckmere also flows north-south through this LLCA. Despite proximity to Hailsham, there is a strong landscape structure of hedgerows lining field boundaries and trees lining some of the road corridors'.*

Wealden Character Area D6 Lower Dicker (part remaining beyond site)

- 1.52 The 2014 character assessment summarises this area as follows: This LLCA encompasses a radial network of minor rural corridors which converge at the village of Upper Dicker in the centre of the area. There is a strong sense of remoteness and tranquillity throughout much of the area, which comprises a relatively small-scale patchwork of arable and pastoral fields. There is strong historic continuity within this area, evidenced by the ancient field pattern and the remains of Michelham Priory to the southeast of Upper Dicker, in the east of the area. The gently meandering corridor of the River Cuckmere is a key landscape feature within the east. Views southeast from the eastern part of the area are enclosed by mature woodland within Wilmington and Abbot's Wood (LLCA D7). There is a mature landscape structure of hedgerows and trees throughout.

Visual baseline

Views of the site

- 1.53 The site benefits from a good degree of visual enclosure from boundary vegetation and from the combined effects of topography and existing development. However, site observations confirm that there are some clear views into the site from some adjacent residential properties (including some listed properties), residential development south of the river, short sections of the A271 at both the western and eastern ends of the site and from the recreation ground. Naturally, there are open and extensive views from the public right of way that cross the northern part of the site. To investigate wider visibility, desktop visibility studies included generating ZTVs for a residential development of 2-2.5 storeys

(up to a maximum of 12.5m). The ZTVs were based on 'bare earth' where no account is taken of the vegetation, and 'normal' conditions where vegetation is accounted for. These preliminary ZTVs are based on free height data, appropriate for initial studies as they provide a 'worst case' scenario.. The ZTVs were then tested in fieldwork and augmented with visits to accessible areas indicated as having potential visibility of the proposals. The ZTV (version including vegetation as this is most representative) is included in figure 9 of this report. Table 1.2 identifies the potential visual receptors of the proposals. A number of representative viewpoints have been selected within the study area to illustrate how the site is experienced by the identified visual receptors. The viewpoints chosen provide a representative selection of views from locations covering a range of receptors from varying directions and distances. The viewpoint locations are illustrated on figure 10 and the photographic viewpoints are illustrated on figures 11 to 20.

1.54

Table 1.2 Visual receptors		
Visual receptor	Location	Identified viewpoint(s)
Residents accessing local streets/PRowS/areas	Residents of properties serviced from A271 adjacent/close to northern boundary at western end of site Potential views from the Lower Horsebridge properties likely to be extremely varied. Detailed analysis of individual property views is not within the scope of this report but there would be some views of the proposals which would vary with the amount of intervening vegetation and development. The degree of visibility will be judged within the constraints of access to the site and from publicly accessible routes. Residents of these properties using the local path and road network would experience clear views of the proposals primarily from the PRow crossing the site and using the A271.	Views from PRow footpath 12 (viewpoints 1, 2 & 3) and travelling the A271 and A22 (Viewpoint 4)
	Residents of properties north west of the site, on the section of A271 between Lower Horsebridge and the Boship roundabout Properties adjacent to this section of the A271 would have clear views of the proposals. Detailed analysis of individual property views is not within the scope of this report. Residents of these properties using the local path and road network would experience clear views of the proposals primarily from the PRow crossing the site and using the A271.	Views from PRow footpath 12 (viewpoints 1, 2 & 3) and travelling the A271 and A22 (Viewpoint 4)
	Residents of properties at Welbury Meadows, Solent Crescent and Cuckmere Close, Hailsham Potential views from a number of properties. Detailed analysis of individual property views is not within the scope of this report. Residents of these properties using the public open space at Welbury Meadows, other local paths and the road network would experience clear views of the proposals.	Views from Welbury Meadows public open space, (viewpoint 6) and travelling the A271 and A22 (Viewpoints 1, 2, 3 and 4)

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Users of transport routes	A22 and Boship roundabout The section of A22 adjacent or close to the site includes a dual carriageway with mature planting alongside both carriageways to the north east, the Boship roundabout and a section of single carriageway to the north. For most of the dual carriageway section, the site is obscured by roadside vegetation but there are some significant gaps in the vegetation where clearer views are glimpsed in passing. The site is visible from the Boship roundabout, but for the remaining section of A22 westwards, the site is obscured by roadside development and vegetation.	Views from restricted sections of A22 dual carriageway and Boship roundabout (Viewpoint 4)
	A271 Two sections of A271 pass adjacent to the site. The proposals would be theoretically visible from the section of A271 adjacent to the eastern end of the site but it is unlikely that it would be readily perceived. There would be clear views of the proposals from section of A271 adjacent to the western end of the site.	Views from A271adj. east end of (Viewpoint 1) and from A271adj. west end of (Viewpoints 3 & 4)
Users of recreational routes	Public right of way (footpath Hellingly 12/1) passing north of the site Footpath 12/1 passes just to the north of the site. Views of the proposals would be clearest from the westernmost sections of the PROW, reducing eastwards.	Views from footpath 12/1 (Viewpoints 1, 2 and 3)
	Public right of way to the north east of the site (Hellingly 61/3) The ZTV suggests potential views from a section of bridleway between Grove Hill and Shawpits Farm approximately 2.2km to the north east of the site	View from a very restricted section of public footpath Viewpoint 10
	Public rights of way to the west of the site Hellingly 14/1 and 15/1. Views of site mostly obscured by intervening wooded area and service station/hotel; at Boship Roundabout.	View from restricted section of public footpath (Viewpoint 5)
	Public rights of way to the south of the site (Arlington 3/1) Footpath section between Hailsham and Michelham Priory. Some limited sections of path have views towards the site with the A22 roadside site boundary vegetation and light columns at Boship roundabout perceptible	Views from restricted sections of public footpath (Viewpoints 7, 8 and 9)

Development proposals

Description of the proposals

- 1.55 The proposals are illustrated in the landscape strategy plan in figure 21 and described in detail in the design and access statement. The proposals are for an up to 124 dwelling residential development in the westernmost part of the site, with associated infrastructure including a new vehicle access from the A271 and use of the remaining area of the site for biodiversity-led public open space.
- 1.56 As part of this landscape appraisal process, initial findings have informed the design of the development framework for the development. The main elements of the proposals that would result in potential landscape and visual effects and the mitigation measures that have been taken account of in the assessment are set out in the following paragraphs.

Predicted sources of landscape and visual effects

Predicted temporary effects during construction

- 1.57 The following activities will cause temporary changes to landscape and visual receptors during all phases of the construction period:
- Infrastructure provision – building access roads / connection to services / trenching operations
 - The erection of temporary protective and security fencing as well as hoarding to reduce noise impact
 - Site compounds and contractors' car parking
 - Site excavation and the movement of site soils for the construction of the new vehicular access
 - Site level minor changes, mainly involving foundations, creation of new road infrastructure and the creation of a development platform
 - Introduction of cranes, rigs and large machinery and their associated movement and noise, both to and from the site and around the site
 - Temporary lighting and signage associated with construction works
 - Changes to the surrounding roads due to the movement of additional heavy machinery during construction
 - Construction related noise affecting local levels.

Predicted permanent effects at completion (post-construction)

- 1.58 The following activities will cause permanent changes to landscape and visual receptors:

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- Introduction of new junction on A271 and access into site including removal of 209.5 linear metre section of existing hedgerow.
- New area of residential development over 2.848ha of the site.
- New open space for residential development with native planting, areas of grassland, attenuation basins and swales and wildlife ponds. (refer to landscape strategy plan figure 2 for detail)
- Earthworks/contouring including floodwater attenuation basins and where required, A22/A271 noise attenuation features.

1.59 It has been assumed as part of the assessment, that a number of primary and secondary mitigation measures will be incorporated as set out below:

Primary mitigation measures

- Consideration of scale and form of built development to minimise impacts on the wider landscape and views
- Consideration of set-back distances and relationship of buildings on A271 frontage to minimise impacts on properties on north west side of A271, including Grade II listed building Brook House and retain views into the open landscape north of the proposed development
- Retain and enhance/rejuvenate the area of mature woodland within the site
- Retain where possible and enhance, boundary vegetation
- New strategic planting to include strong landscape and visual mitigation role to help screen and/or absorb effects of development in terms of identified sensitive landscape and visual receptors
- New strategic planting including new hedgerows and new areas of scrub and woodland to have biodiversity/wildlife corridor role, linking surrounding habitats with the river corridor and enhancing or providing new habitats site-wide.
- New landscape corridor along the A271 boundary including new species rich hedgerow and woodland belt to replace existing hedge removed to enable visibility splays
- Enhancements to the Lower Horsebridge Stream corridor including new areas of streamside planting to enhance its biodiversity value
- Ensuring that the site landscape makes a positive contribution to the wider River Cuckmere corridor, to maintain the river corridor character and enhance biodiversity with a range of appropriate habitats and spaces replacing the current agricultural land use
- Provision of new green infrastructure to provide important amenity space and play space incorporating opportunities for ecological enhancement
- Enhancement of the surface water attenuation features to provide areas of damper grassland habitat and planting
- Creation of two wildlife ponds
- tree planting within developed area to help absorb massing of development and create a greener environment

Secondary mitigation measures

- Building materials and boundary treatments to respond to the local vernacular and but also selected in terms of wider visibility (for instance avoidance of white/light render in considering elevations that may be visible).
- Planting species to reflect locally prevalent species and respond to the site's landscape context and to integrate the development into the wider landscape and to respond to local character.
- Noise attenuation measures along the A22 and new junction.

Predicted potential landscape and visual effects

- 1.60 The following section predicts the potential effects on the landscape resources and visual amenity receptors within the site and in the areas surrounding the site identified in the baseline section. In each case, the predicted degree of the effect is described in relation to the completion of the proposed development.

Predicted effects on landscape character

- 1.61 The effects on the landscape resources identified in the baseline are set out below for each identified landscape character area within the ZTV.

Predicted effects on landscape character of the site and its immediate context

- 1.62 As described in the baseline section of this report, the landscape character of the site comprises an extensive area of fairly level pasture forming part of the Cuckmere River corridor. It has a reasonably distinctive character, but is not as designated site and has some detracting elements in terms of its immediate context. It is generally enclosed by vegetation and some residential development, with more open views to the south of the site towards the Welbury Meadows development on the edge of Hailsham. The visibility of development, particularly at Welbury Meadows and Solent Crescent and the effects on site tranquillity and rural qualities of the site by the adjacent roads A22, Boship roundabout and the A271 and features such as the large substation at the eastern end of the site and mobile phone mast at the western end, reduces its rural character. These adverse influences of roads, traffic and development are reflected in the South Wealden 2017 study which acknowledged '*significant variations in site sensitivity*' noting that the '*western corner of the site adjacent to the A267/A22 roundabout junction is less sensitive...*'
- 1.63 The site is affected by the adjacent roads and development. The view and sound of traffic and development visible along the A271 and the mobile phone mast means that it does not have a strong pastoral character and has urban edge characteristics. There is established development that contributes to the context of the site, and this is cited in the 2017 report where it discusses development in the western corner of the site: '*development in this area could form a continuation to the settlement pattern of Lower Dicker along the A271 and relate to the existing concentration of development around the A22/A271 roundabout junction*'

- 1.64 Using the landscape value guidance in the landscape sensitivity guidance in figure 22, the site is assessed as low to medium value taking into consideration the detracting features. Using the guidance on landscape susceptibility in the same figure, it is assessed as medium susceptibility on the basis that development already has a strong influence on this area and the only landscape components that would be lost would be 209.5 linear m of hedgerow and the area of improved grassland removed to enable development. Using the sensitivity matrix, the overall assessment of sensitivity is medium.
- 1.65 Using the magnitude of landscape effects guidance in figure 23, the development proposals would have a direct effect on a large proportion of the site and would naturally substantially increase the influence of development on the character of the site. This would however, be consistent with the adjacent land uses around the Boship roundabout and extending along the A22 westwards. The landscape measures included as part of the residential development and those included in the change of use of the wider site proposals would provide significant screening and softening of the development in the undeveloped parts of the site. Taking account of these considerations, the magnitude of change arising from the proposals is assessed as large adverse.
- 1.66 Due to the established process of landscape and visual assessment, any built development on land that is currently in agricultural use will, regardless of its quality and sensitivity of design, register as a large adverse magnitude of change and this is therefore the case in this instance. However, the built area (buildings and built infrastructure) of the new development occupies 2.94ha of the overall site area of 7.3ha, so about 40%. The remaining 60% will change from predominantly low biodiversity farmland to biodiversity-rich open space, drainage attenuation and structure planting, which will result in substantial overall benefits to the biodiversity through significant areas of new planting, beneficial management and other enhancements. It will enable much greater public accessibility and engagement with the river valley landscape that will represent a net gain in terms of local green infrastructure.

Predicted effects on landscape character area LCA E6 Hellingly

- 1.67 The 2014 character assessment assesses the overall sensitivity of Open Clay Vales (of which LCA E6 is one) as high sensitivity (para 5.6.5 of the Low Weald assessment). There was no separate assessment of the individual character areas comprising this landscape character type.
- 1.68 The high sensitivity score in the 2014 assessment appears to relate to the areas of countryside more distant from the urban edges and as a result, those areas that even in 2014 were described as having 'urban fringe land uses' were 'bundled' in with the genuinely higher sensitivity areas. It would probably have been more accurate and reflective of the landscape to have either separated the urban fringe areas into separate character areas with lower sensitivity or to have moderated the overall score of sensitivity to take account of those detracting urban fringe elements.
- 1.69 Since the 2014 assessment was published, more development has taken place within this character area around the edge of Hailsham, including Welsbury Meadows, and this has reduced the sensitivity of parts of the character area. As

a result of that development, the parts of LCA E6 closest to the developed area are strongly influenced by that development and the A22, A271 and A267 road corridors.

- 1.70 Using the landscape value guidance in the landscape sensitivity guidance in figure 22, whilst LCA E6 has areas of attractive landscape, it is not designated and taking into consideration the detracting features this study assesses those parts of the LCA that would potentially be affected by the proposals as medium value. Using the guidance on landscape susceptibility in the same figure, the susceptibility is assessed as medium. Using the sensitivity matrix, the overall assessment of sensitivity is medium.
- 1.71 The changes to the character area arising from the proposals would be limited. The effects on the site itself (which lies within this character area) are assessed in the assessment of effects on the site in paragraphs 1.61 to 1.66. These direct affects are therefore discounted from the assessment of effects on the remaining area to avoid 'double counting' of effects. The area of the remaining part of the character area affected by the visual appearance of the development is very restricted as indicated by the ZTV mapping, so that the vast majority of the character area would be unaffected and the parts of it that would be affected, are already affected by main road corridors and urban fringe development. The magnitude of change is therefore assessed as small.

Predicted effects on *Wealden Character Area D6 Lower Dicker*

- 1.72 The 2014 character assessment summarises this areas as follows: This LLCA encompasses a radial network of minor rural corridors which converge at the village of Upper Dicker in the centre of the area. There is a strong sense of remoteness and tranquillity throughout much of the area, which comprises a relatively small-scale patchwork of arable and pastoral fields. There is strong historic continuity within this area, evidenced by the ancient field pattern and the remains of Michelham Priory to the southeast of Upper Dicker, in the east of the area. The gently meandering corridor of the River Cuckmere is a key landscape feature within the east. Views southeast from the eastern part of the area are enclosed by mature woodland within Wilmington and Abbot's Wood (LLCA D7). There is a mature landscape structure of hedgerows and trees throughout.
- 1.73 The 2014 character assessment assesses the overall sensitivity of Wooded Clay Vales (of which LCA D6 is one) as high sensitivity (para 5.5.5 of the Low Weald assessment). There was no separate assessment of the individual character areas comprising this landscape character type.
- 1.74 The high sensitivity score in the 2014 assessment appears to relate to most of the areas of countryside. In paragraph 5.51 under the heading 'Tranquillity and Remoteness' the assessment suggests tranquillity is reduced nearer to the A22 main road corridor. The ZTV suggests that the areas of the character area potentially most affected by the proposals are in the corridor of the Cuckmere river and parts of this corridor are close to the A22. There are however, parts of the corridor further from the A22 that would have potential visibility, that are sufficiently distant to be tranquil.

- 1.75 The restricted parts of this character area that have potential visibility of the proposals, also have views of the urban edge of Hailsham, including the Boship roundabout and glimpses of buildings, including Welbury Meadows, developed since the 2014 assessment was published. However, these elements are not readily perceptible and do not particularly detract from the character of the river corridor. It is considered that the proposed development would have a similar effect, so that whilst theoretically visible, the effects of the proposals would not be a readily perceived change.
- 1.76 The 2014 assessment of high sensitivity seems to be a reasonable judgement on landscape sensitivity in terms of the relative local context, but in terms of the landscape and visual assessment process, the landscape character area includes areas that are attractive and distinctive, it includes valued footpath routes, but is not a designated landscape and is influenced by some detracting features, mainly the busy roads contained within the area. For these reasons, referring to the landscape value guidance in the landscape sensitivity guidance in figure 22, the value is assessed as medium-high. Using the guidance on landscape susceptibility in the same figure, the susceptibility is assessed as medium-high as the area has capacity to accommodate a small amount of change with similar characteristics to the influences it currently experiences. Using the sensitivity matrix, the overall assessment of sensitivity is medium-high.

The changes to the character area arising from the proposals would be limited. Firstly, there would be no direct physical changes to the landscape as the proposals lie outside the character area. Secondly, in terms of geographical extent, as indicated on the ZTV mapping on figure 9, only a small proportion of the LCA would be affected by potential visibility of the proposals and within that limited area, the change in the view would be small to negligible; in most cases not readily perceptible. The magnitude of change is therefore assessed as small-negligible.

Predicted effects on visual amenity

- 1.77 The effects on visual amenity to specific receptors set out in table 1.2 are appraised in the following paragraphs. To illustrate the visual effects, a number of representative viewpoints have been used.
- 1.78 The site benefits from a good degree of visual enclosure from boundary vegetation and from the combined effects of topography and existing development. However, site observations confirm that there are some clear views into the site from some adjacent residential properties (including some listed properties), residential development south of the river, short sections of the A271 at both the western and eastern ends of the site and from the recreation ground. Naturally, there are open and extensive views from the public right of way that passes to the north of the site. The ZTV studies indicate some of the areas of potential visibility in the wider landscape.
- 1.79 Figure 9 shows the ZTV of the proposed development. In order to produce the ZTV of the proposals, selected points representing the buildings on the landscape strategy plan (figure 21) were imported into the digital surface model. The selected points were accorded 12.5m for apartment areas and 11m height values to reflect the predicted maximum proposed building heights. This is illustrated on

the submitted parameter plans. The height from which the proposed development would be visible was set at 1.6m. For full details of the heights and methodology used, refer to Appendix A part 2.

- 1.80 The ZTV is contained within a 2km radius from the site boundary. The ZTV illustrates the potential visibility of the proposed development and, with the exception of the site and its immediate setting, shows that views from within the surrounding landscape are restricted to an area of the Cuckmere River corridor extending to the south west and pockets of visibility on rising ground approximately 2km to the north east around Grove Hill.
- 1.81 Although not all potential visibility locations have or can practically be visited or are accessible, a good sample of potential areas of visibility were explored and photographed as part of this study. The conclusion is that intervening vegetation and development in the local area, combined with the effects of topography, would significantly limit its wider visibility. Where there are views of the site from the wider landscape, the proposals would not be a prominent feature, and in most cases would not be readily perceptible as those views are mostly restricted and filtered by intervening development and vegetation and in some cases feature other development in the same vector.
- 1.82 Ten representative viewpoints were chosen to represent views from a number of different receptors. The receptors considered are local residents, travellers on nearby vehicle routes with transitory views, pedestrians including public rights of way users, cyclists and persons at places of employment.
- 1.83 Local residents and people who frequent and are familiar with the area may experience views of the site as part of their daily activities which may involve travelling on the local road and PROW network. For these receptors, there will be varying changes in their views likely to be regarded as adverse, ranging from slight to large depending on the view location. However, the effects on these local receptors is extremely restricted to a limited area, so that for instance effects on local people's views in the wider surrounding area would be negligible or none. Whilst the benefits arising from the transformation of the vast majority of the site into a publicly accessible open space with a diverse range of habitats cannot be taken into account within the LVA process, local people would benefit from access to the open space provided as part of the new neighbourhood.
- 1.84 Public rights of way users have been an important consideration in assessing the effects of the proposals. Whilst the LVA finds that would be some inevitable effects on views from the footpath Hellingly 12/1 passing the site arising from the effects of the new developed area, for most of the routes, views are very localised and the landscape masterplan will ensure that additional planting will minimise the effects of development.

Residential receptors: Lower Horsebridge

- 1.85 There are a small number of properties adjacent or close to the northern boundary of the site at its western end. Detailed assessment of the impacts on individual residential properties is not within the scope of LVA. Four of the adjacent properties face towards the site and would have clearer views, others are side-on to the site and would have more oblique views. Vegetation within the gardens

and on the site boundary serves to screen views to a moderate degree. The existing views include the undeveloped field of the site in the foreground, with development visible along the A271, at Boship roundabout and beyond the river at Welbury Meadows and Solent Crescent. The A22 is also be glimpsed at the gaps in boundary vegetation.

- 1.86 As a residential receptor with a high degree of interest in their local area, this receptor group is assessed as high sensitivity. Due to the proximity of development and change in the extent and nature of the views from pasture land with some existing development to a significant increase in visible residential development, the magnitude of change would be large adverse. As planting in the proposed landscape area develops, the magnitude of change would reduce with a gradual lessening of the appearance of development. Although outside consideration in the LVA process, this group would particularly benefit from the enhanced accessibility into the site and the new green infrastructure provided.

Residential receptors: Residents of properties north west of the site, on the section of A271 between Lower Horsebridge and the Boship roundabout

- 1.87 There are six properties on the A271 between Lower Horsebridge and the Boship roundabout, all facing east onto the site. Detailed assessment of the impacts on individual residential properties is not within the scope of LVA. Vegetation on the site boundary is a relatively low hedge on this boundary which currently is not an effective screen. The existing views include the undeveloped field of the site in the foreground, with development visible but not prominent on the edges of Lower Horsebridge, and beyond the river at Welbury Meadows, Solent Crescent and Cuckmere Close. The busy A271 intervenes in the foreground of the view.
- 1.88 As a residential receptor with a high degree of interest in their local area, this receptor group is assessed as high sensitivity. Due to the proximity of development and change in the extent and nature of the views from pasture land with some existing development to a significant increase in visible residential development, the magnitude of change would be large adverse. However, although outside consideration in the LVA process, this group would particularly benefit from the new access into the site and the new green infrastructure provided. The planting strategy would include additional planting on the boundary with the A271 that would substantially screen the proposals from this receptor group.

Residential receptors: Residents of properties at Welbury Meadows, Solent Crescent and Cuckmere Close, Hailsham

- 1.89 There are three areas of small to medium sized residential development on the north western edge of Hailsham, Welbury Meadows, Solent Crescent and Cuckmere Close. All have some properties facing north east towards the site. Most of the properties away from the northern/western edges would have either no views or restricted views due to intervening development. Detailed assessment of the impacts on individual residential properties is not within the scope of LVA and so the degree of visibility for each property cannot be determined. However, it is probable that several properties would have views of the proposals. There is a significant area of planting in the open space areas that intervene between the site and Welbury Meadows and Solent Crescent. There is

also an area of mature woodland west of Cuckmere Close that effectively screens views westwards, so that this area of development would only have very limited visibility of the development. Development at Boship roundabout and on the section of A271 between the roundabout and Lower Horsebridge is more visible from the more westerly development area of Westbury Meadows, but there is some visibility from Solent Crescent, which also has some views of existing development at Lower Horsebridge, the electricity transfer station and development on the eastern section of the A271.

- 1.90 As a residential receptor with a high degree of interest in their local area, this receptor group is assessed as high sensitivity. Due to the moderate proximity of development and change in the extent and nature of the views from pasture land with some existing development to a significant increase in visible residential development, the magnitude of change would be medium-large adverse. However, although outside consideration in the LVA process, this group would benefit from the screening effects of the extensive planting on the southern part of the development.

Predicted effects on visual receptor group: Users of public transport routes close to site, including the A22 (Hailsham Bypass) and Boship roundabout.

- 1.91 This receptor group is assessed as low sensitivity as their main focus is on the route and immediate road corridor.
- 1.92 The proposed development will not be readily perceived from most of the section of A22 that passes the site boundary due to existing roadside vegetation. It is probable that in winter conditions, the roadside planting will be more transparent allowing the proposals to become more visible. There are also some small gaps in the section of A22 leaving the Boship roundabout eastwards, notably the bridge over the Cuckmere river, where there might be brief visibility of the site and development until new planting has matured sufficiently.
- 1.93 The context of the development will be that it is seen as part of the cluster of development at or near to the Boship roundabout and extending through Lower Dicker along the A22 westwards from Boship. The visibility of development would occur over a very short period of time and over a relatively very small part of the likely overall journey experience and also occur in an area which has existing development. The magnitude of change is therefore assessed as negligible-small adverse.

Predicted effects on visual receptor group: Users of public transport routes close to site, the A271 (western and eastern sections).

- 1.94 This receptor group is assessed as moderate sensitivity as although their main focus is on the route and immediate road corridor, they are more likely to include a high proportion of local road users with greater sensitivity to and familiarity with their local environment.
- 1.95 The proposed development will be readily perceived from only a very limited 350m section of the A271 between the Boship Roundabout and Lower Horsebridge that approaches/passes the western site boundary. For most of that length, the site

boundary is a hedge less than 2m high allowing some views into the site. It is probable that in winter conditions, the roadside planting will be more transparent, allowing the site to become more visible. The proposed area of development will occupy the westernmost corner of the site and so will be clearly visible from this section of road.

- 1.96 The context of the development will be that it is seen as part of the cluster of development at or near to the Boship roundabout and extending through Lower Dicker along the A22 westwards from Boship. The visibility of development would occur over a very short period of time within most journeys. At the eastern end of the site, it is improbable that the proposals would be perceived from the adjacent short section of the A271. Taking these factors into account, the magnitude of change would be small adverse.

Predicted effects on visual receptor group: Users of public right of way (footpath Hellingly 12/1) passing at its closest within 25m north of the site

- 1.97 This receptor group is assessed as moderate sensitivity as it is not a long distance footpath or other footpath of national or regional importance.
- 1.98 Currently footpath users have clear views over the site grassland towards the area of proposed development approximately 100m south west of the closest section of footpath where it enters the site at the western end and approximately 600m distance from the eastern end. The proposed extensive areas of planting, including new hedgerows, areas of scrub and new woodland as well as several 'parkland' individual trees will over time substantially screen development from those views so that within 10 years it is probable that the development proposals would be largely screened by the new intervening landscape. However, it is probable that there would remain some views of development in occasional gaps in the planting or in winter conditions.
- 1.99 Similar softened views of development are already experienced towards the eastern end of the site where development at Solent Crescent and Cuckmere Close, only 150 and 100m distant from the PROW. These areas of visible developments are an established part of the character of the PROW route. Welbury Meadows is also visible, 350m from the closest section of PROW and also adds to that established component of the PROW's context.
- 1.100 The planting in the public open space at Welbury Meadows is believed to have been planted around 2014 and so has, together with assumed areas of retained established vegetation, achieved an effective degree of softening of the effects of development within 8 years and has potential to provide more effective screening with future growth. The planting proposed for the open space for the development will be similar and a similar effective softening and screening in a relatively small timescale is expected.
- 1.101 The assessment of magnitude of change in views from the footpath takes into account the existing context of visible residential development of a similar scale to the proposals and at a similar distance. There will be a loss in the view of open grassland in the west, but views towards the proposed development area have the Boship roundabout in the background and views from the footpath naturally

gravitate towards the more open and attractive views in the areas which will have landscape enhancement.

- 1.102 Although subjective, it is anticipated that most footpath users will find the proposed diversity of landscape in the landscape areas to be more attractive and a beneficial effect in comparison with the current relatively featureless grazed grassland. However, this assessment disregards that subjective aspect. The proposals will increase the amount of visible development, adding to the detracting effect of the existing developments, mainly from the western section of the footpath, the magnitude of change is assessed as moderate adverse initially, but as the planting develops this would reduce to slight adverse within ten years.
- 1.103 This group would however benefit greatly from the potential for a comprehensive network of new paths and access into the site which will provide a much more diverse range of experiences, including a new wild landscape to be established along the river corridor.

**Predicted effects on visual receptor group: Users of public right of way
(footpaths Hellingly 14/1 and 15/1) 400m west of site**

- 1.104 This receptor group is assessed as moderate sensitivity as it is not a long distance footpath or other footpath of national or regional importance.
- 1.105 Currently footpath users have a few restricted windows of views identified on the ZTV mapping, towards the site with the travelodge/service station/Boship roundabout and A271 development intervening between the viewer and the site. The view towards the site is incidental and not distinctive.
- 1.106 The proposed development will be perceptible at 400m distance but in the context of the aforementioned existing development at the intervening road junction and with no distinctive view obstructed, the magnitude of change would be small to negligible and with the growth of the planting on the edges of the development, the magnitude of change would be negligible after 15 years.

**Predicted effects on visual receptor group: Users of public rights of way
(Bridleway Hellingly 61/3 and Footpath 28/1) between Grove Hill and Shawpits Farm**

- 1.107 This receptor group is assessed as moderate sensitivity as it is not a long distance footpath or other PROW of national or regional importance.
- 1.108 Currently PROW users have a few restricted windows of views identified on the ZTV mapping, towards the site from rising ground. It is an attractive view and the distinctive poplars lining the Lower Horsebridge recreation ground southern boundary with the site can be seen in the distance approximately 2.15km to the south west. Developments are visible within the view as occasional rooflines but development is not a strong component of the views, which are predominantly rural.
- 1.109 The upper parts of proposed development will be theoretically visible at approximately 2.3km distance but unlikely to be perceptible due to the distance, intervening vegetation and moderate size of the development. The magnitude of

change would be negligible and with the growth of the planting on the edges of the development, the magnitude of change would be none after 15 years.

Predicted effects on visual receptor group: Users of public rights of way to the south of the site (Arlington 3/1)

- 1.110 This receptor group is assessed as high sensitivity as although likely to be predominantly used as a local footpath, it is also a part of the long distance recreational footpath The Weald Way.
- 1.111 The upper parts of the proposed development will be theoretically visible at a small number of points indicated by the ZTV mapping, ranging from 630m to the south on a section close to the A22, 935m to the south on the upper slopes of the Cuckmere river valley sides and approximately 1.69km to the south west near Bramble Grove. The proposals would not be readily perceptible from most of the restricted points of visibility except for the section near Hempstead Farm, where there is a view corridor between woodlands with views towards the Boship roundabout, the tall lighting columns of which are visible. It is probable that the upper parts of the development could be perceived in views from this restricted section of the footpath but it would not be a prominent element in the view. The proportion of footpath from which views are available and the minimal degree to which the development would be visible means that the overall magnitude of change would be negligible and with the growth of the planting on the edges of the development, the magnitude of change would be negligible to none after 15 years.

Summary of landscape and visual impacts

- 1.112 The site is on farmland on the Cuckmere river corridor, south of the village of Lower Horsebridge, which lies close to the site's northern boundary. The site comprises the proposed development area, which occupies approximately 40% the site and the remaining 60% is associated biodiversity area/public open space and structural landscape.
- 1.113 The A271 forms the north western boundary. Development and vegetation along the northern side of the A271 corridor provide a good visual barrier to the landscape lying further to the north west, effectively enclosing the site from the wider landscape to the north west.
- 1.114 Vegetation and development associated with the village of Lower Horsebridge provides effective enclosure of the site to the north east.
- 1.115 The eastern boundary is with another section of the A271 and vegetation beyond this boundary encloses the site to the east.
- 1.116 Land on the bank of the Cuckmere River 50m south east of the site forms a more open south eastern boundary, but vegetation along the river and further to the south of the river, together with development on the north western edge of Hailsham effectively enclosing the site to the south east.
- 1.117 The A22 and Boship roundabout has mature vegetation effectively enclosing the site to the south west. Development associated with Boship roundabout and the development extending from the roundabout into Lower Dicker provide additional robust enclosure to the west .
- 1.118 The high degree of enclosure described above is a key factor in the extremely limited extent of visibility of the site, limiting effects on the wider landscape and limiting effects on views to a very localised area.
- 1.119 The LVA studies find that although the site itself is predominantly an area of pasture grassland, it is significantly influenced by surrounding development and highways. This context reduces its sensitivity to development.
- 1.120 Due to the effective enclosure of the site, landscape effects are mostly restricted to direct effects on the site itself. The limited effects on the wider landscape are very localised occurring in the areas adjacent or close to the site.
- 1.121 The site is assessed as medium sensitivity and the magnitude of change arising from the proposed development is assessed as large adverse.
- 1.122 The surrounding character area is LCA E6 Hellingly. The site is part of this character area, but is assessed in its own right, so to avoid 'double counting' of effects, the appraisal assesses the part of the character area that lies beyond the site. This character area is assessed as medium sensitivity and the magnitude of change arising from the proposed development is assessed as small adverse.

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- 1.123 The character area south of the site is LCA D6 Lower Dicker. This area is assessed as medium-high sensitivity and the magnitude of change arising from the proposed development is assessed as small to negligible adverse.
- 1.124 The LVA studies show that, like effects on landscape character, effects on views are also very localised due to the enclosing effects of local vegetation and development. The studies also highlighted that existing views often include elements of the existing developments and major roads that form part of the landscape in the local area so that in many cases, the proposed development would not be immediately noticeable or be at odds with the character of the wider views. Key receptors of views of the site were identified as local residents, people using the local roads and people using the local footpath network. Ten representative viewpoints were selected to illustrate views that these receptors might experience.
- 1.125 Residents living in the local area were identified as the most sensitive receptors as they are most likely to have a strong interest in change in their local area. Although assessments from individual properties is not in the scope of LVA, the effects on residents is assessed by considering the views from the streets, public open spaces and public rights of way that residents would use in the vicinity of their residence.
- 1.126 There are a small number of properties on the southern edge the village of Lower Horsebridge adjacent or close to the northern boundary of the site. Residents of these were assessed as a high sensitivity receptor. Due to the location and proximity of the proposals, the magnitude of change was assessed as large adverse.
- 1.127 Residents of six properties on the A271 between Lower Horsebridge and the Boship roundabout, all facing east onto the site were assessed as a high sensitivity receptor. Due to the location and proximity of the proposals, the magnitude of change was assessed as large adverse.
- 1.128 Residents of the three areas of small to medium sized residential development on the north western edge of Hailsham, Welbury Meadows, Solent Crescent and Cuckmere Close were assessed as high sensitivity and the magnitude of change was assessed as medium-large adverse.
- 1.129 For the limited numbers of resident visual receptors groups described above, in all cases, as it matures, the proposed planting associated with the landscape area of the proposals would have a significant effect in reducing and softening the identified visual effects over a timescale of 10-15 years.
- 1.130 The site is adjacent to the A22, a major dual carriageway; a major junction (the Boship roundabout) and is adjacent to the A271.
- 1.131 The majority of people travelling on the A22 and Boship roundabout are considered to be mainly transitory travellers with probably minor interest in the landscape in the location of the site. This group are therefore assessed as low sensitivity. The magnitude of change is assessed as negligible to small adverse due to the existing context and relatively small section of road that the site might be perceived from.

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- 1.132 Travellers on the A271 are assessed as moderate sensitivity as it is likely that a high proportion of users of this road will be local people with a greater interest in their local environment. The proposed development would be seen from a relatively short section of the overall journeys of most travellers and in the context of existing development seen from those sections of road where the proposals would be visible. The magnitude of change is therefore assessed as small adverse.
- 1.133 Public rights of way (PROW) users are an important receptor group as they are often more focussed on the landscape than road users, although the numbers of individuals using the PROWs is considerably less than those using the footpath network. The LVA identified a number of local PROWs where users either would or might experience changes in the views. The effects on these receptors is summarised as follows:
- 1.134 Footpath Hellingly 12/1 passes close to the site. Walkers using it are assessed as moderate sensitivity as it is a local footpath rather than a long distance one, used predominantly by local people who will be familiar with the current context of the developments and roads that influence the character of views from the footpath. The magnitude of change in views from the footpath, taken as a whole is assessed as medium adverse.
- 1.135 Footpaths Hellingly 14/1 and 15/1 pass 400m west of the site, with views towards the site partly screened by intervening development clustered around the Boship roundabout. Walkers using it are assessed as moderate sensitivity as it is a local footpath rather than a long distance one, used predominantly by local people who will be familiar with the current context of the developments and roads that influence the character of views from the footpath. The magnitude of change in views from the footpath, taken as a whole is assessed as small to negligible adverse.
- 1.136 Bridleway Hellingly 61/3 and footpath 28/1 are located at Grove Hill 2.15km to the north east of the site, with views towards the site screened by intervening vegetation. The receptor sensitivity is assessed as moderate. Although theoretically visible, the distance and intervening vegetation mean that the development would be difficult to perceive and so have no influence on the character of the view. The magnitude of change in views from the PROWs, taken as a whole is assessed as small to negligible adverse.
- 1.137 Footpath Arlington 3/1 passes along the south east side of the Cuckmere river in a valley area of farmland south of the A22. The ZTV identified some points of theoretical visibility along its route with the closest 630m to the south and the furthest 1.69km to the south west near Bramble Grove. As it is part of the long distance path, the Weald Way the receptor sensitivity is assessed as high. The distance and layers of intervening vegetation, mean that the development would be difficult to perceive in most of the identified theoretical views and so have no influence on the character of the view. In one view the proposed development would be perceptible but would not be a prominent element of the view. Overall, the magnitude of change in views from the PROWs, is assessed as small to negligible adverse.

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- 1.138 In conclusion, the effects on landscape and visual receptors will be very localised largely due to the enclosed nature of the site. Landscape effects would be limited to direct effects on the site itself where development would result in a large magnitude of change but indirect effects on the character of the wider landscape would be negligible. Effects on visual receptors would be restricted to the large, or in some cases medium to large adverse effects residents of the limited number of houses close to the developed area of the site and persons using the public footpath that passes close to the site. Visual effects on receptors in the wider landscape would be sometimes small, but mostly negligible to none.

Appendix A part 1: Planning policy

National planning policy

- A1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, came into effect on 24 July 2018 and was last updated in July 2021. It sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The NPPF provides a framework within which councils can produce their own local and neighbourhood plans. The relevant guidance on landscape and visual issues is stated below:

Achieving sustainable development

- A1.2 The purpose of the NPPF is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Paragraph 8 sets out three key objectives of the NPPF which are achieved through the application of core policies, a number of which are relevant to this application.

“Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):

a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;

b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and

c) an environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.”

Promoting healthy and safe communities

- A1.3 The NPPF in paragraph 98 states:

“Access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities, and can deliver wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change.. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision. Information gained from the assessments should be used to

determine what open space, sport and recreational provision is needed, which plans should then seek to accommodate.”

A1.4 The NPPF in paragraph 99 states:

“Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

a) an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or

b) the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or

c) the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.”

Making effective use of land

A1.5 The NPPF in paragraph 119 states:

“Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. Strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously-developed or ‘brownfield’ land.”

A1.6 The NPPF in paragraph 120 lists:

“Planning policies and decisions should:

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

b) recognise that some undeveloped land can perform many functions, such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, cooling/shading, carbon storage or food production;

c) give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs, and support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land;

d) promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained and available sites could be used more effectively (for example converting space above shops, and building on or above service yards, car parks, lock-ups and railway infrastructure); and

e) support opportunities to use the airspace above existing residential and commercial premises for new homes. In particular, they should allow upward extensions where the development would be consistent with the prevailing height and form of neighbouring properties and the overall street scene, is well designed (including complying with any local design policies and standards), and can maintain safe access and egress for occupiers.”

Achieving appropriate densities

A1.7 The NPPF in paragraph 124 lists:

“Planning policies and decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land, taking into account:

a) the identified need for different types of housing and other forms of development, and the availability of land suitable for accommodating it;

b) local market conditions and viability;

c) the availability and capacity of infrastructure and services – both existing and proposed – as well as their potential for further improvement and the scope to promote sustainable travel modes that limit future car use;

d) the desirability of maintaining an area’s prevailing character and setting (including residential gardens), or of promoting regeneration and change.”

A1.8 The NPPF in paragraph 125 lists:

“Area-based character assessments, design guides and codes and masterplans can be used to help ensure that land is used efficiently while also creating beautiful and sustainable places. Where there is an existing or anticipated shortage of land for meeting identified housing needs, it is especially important that planning policies and decisions avoid homes being built at low densities, and ensure that developments make optimal use of the potential of each site. In these circumstances:

a) plans should contain policies to optimize the use of land in their area and meet as much of the identified need for housing as possible. This will be tested robustly at examination, and should include the use of minimum density standards for city and town centres and other locations that are well served by public transport. These standards should seek a significant uplift in the average density of residential development within these areas, unless it can be shown that there are strong reasons why this would be inappropriate;

b) the use of minimum density standards should also be considered for other parts of the plan area. It may be appropriate to set out a range of densities that reflect the accessibility and potential of different areas, rather than one broad density range; and

c) local planning authorities should refuse applications which they consider fail to make efficient use of land, taking into account the policies in this Framework. In this context, when considering applications for housing, authorities should take a flexible approach in applying policies or guidance relating to daylight and

sunlight, where they would otherwise inhibit making efficient use of a site (as long as the resulting scheme would provide acceptable living standards)."

Achieving well-designed places

A1.9 The NPPF in paragraph 126 confirms:

"The creation of high quality beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process."

A1.10 The NPPF in paragraph 129 confirms:

"Design guides and codes can be prepared at an area-wide, neighbourhood or site specific scale, and to carry weight in decision-making should be produced either as part of a plan or as supplementary planning documents. Landowners and developers may contribute to these exercises, but may also choose to prepare design codes in support of a planning applications for sites they wish to develop. Whoever prepares them, all guides and codes should be based on effective community engagement and reflect local aspirations for the development of their area, taking into account the guidance contained in the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code. These national documents should be used to guide decisions on applications in the absence of locally produced design guides or design codes."

A1.11 The NPPF in paragraph 130 states:

"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) optimize 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 places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience."*

A1.12 The NPPF in paragraph 131 states:

“Trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments, and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that new streets are tree-lined, that opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments (such as parks and community orchards), that appropriate measures are in place to secure the long-term maintenance of newly-planted trees and the existing trees are retained wherever possible. Applicants and local planning authorities should work with highways officers and tree officers to ensure that the right trees are planted in the right places, and solutions are found that are compatible with highways standards and the needs of different users.”

Protecting green belt land

A1.13 The NPPF in paragraph 137 states:

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

A1.14 The NPPF in paragraph 138 states:

“Green Belt serves five purposes:

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

A1.15 The NPPF in paragraph 145 states:

“Once Green Belts have been defined, local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance their beneficial use, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity; or to improve damaged and derelict land.”

Proposals affecting the belt land

A1.16 The NPPF in paragraph 147 states:

“Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.”

A1.17 The NPPF in paragraph 148 states:

“When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. ‘Very special circumstances’ will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.”

A1.18 The NPPF in paragraph 149 states:

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

- a) buildings for agriculture and forestry;*
- b) the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;*
- c) the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;*
- d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;*
- e) limited infilling in villages;*
- f) limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan (including policies for rural exception sites); and*
- g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would:*
 - not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or*
 - not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority.”*

A1.19 The NPPF in paragraph 150 states:

“Certain other forms of development are also not inappropriate in the Green Belt provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. These are:

- a) mineral extraction;*
- b) engineering operations;*
- c) local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location;*
- d) the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction;*

e) material changes in the use of land (such as changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation, or for cemeteries and burial grounds); and

f) development brought forward under a Community Right to Build Order or Neighbourhood Development Order.”

A1.20 The NPPF in paragraph 151 states:

“When located in the Green Belt, elements of many renewable energy projects will comprise inappropriate development. In such cases developers will need to demonstrate very special circumstances if projects are to proceed. Such very special circumstances may include the wider environmental benefits associated with increased production of energy from renewable sources.”

Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

A1.21 Paragraph 174 states:

“Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);*
- b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services– including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;*
- c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;*
- d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;*
- e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and*
- f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.”*

A1.22 Paragraph 175 states that:

“Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.”

A1.23 Paragraph 176 states that:

“Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads. The scale and extent of development within these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.

F1.1 Paragraph 177 states that:

When considering applications for development within National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, permission should be refused for major development other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:

- a) the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;*
- b) the cost of, and scope for, developing outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and*
- c) any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.”*

A1.24 Paragraph 178 states that:

“Within areas defined as Heritage Coast (and that do not already fall within one of the designated areas mentioned in paragraph 175), planning policies and decisions should be consistent with the special character of the area and the importance of its conservation. Major development within a Heritage Coast is unlikely to be appropriate, unless it is compatible with its special character.”

Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

A1.25 Paragraph 189 states:

“Heritage assets range from sites and buildings of local historic value to those of the highest significance, such as World Heritage Sites which are internationally recognised to be of Outstanding Universal Value. These assets are an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.”

A1.26 Paragraph 190 states that:

“Plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. This strategy should take into account:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- b) the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;*
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and*
- d) opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.”*

Proposals affecting heritage assets

A1.27 Paragraph 194 states that:

“In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.”

A1.28 Paragraph 195 states that:

“Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal.”

A1.29 Paragraph 197 states that:

“In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.”*

Considering potential impacts

A1.30 Paragraph 199 states that:

“When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.”

A1.31 Paragraph 200 states that:

“Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:

- a) Grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional;*
- b) Assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II listed buildings, grade I and II registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.”*

A1.32 Paragraph 201 states that:

“Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

- g) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and*
- h) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and*
- i) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and*
- j) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.”*

A1.33 Paragraph 202 states that:

“Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.”

A1.34 Paragraph 203 states that:

“The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a

balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset."

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

A1.35 The National Planning Practice Guidance contains government guidance, the following of which is relevant to this appraisal.

Design: process and tools

A1.36 Planning for well-designed places (paragraph: 001, reference ID: 26-001-20191001), revised 01.10.2019) states that:

"Well-designed places can be achieved by taking a proactive and collaborative approach at all stages of the planning process, from policy and plan formulation through to the determination of planning applications and the post approval stage. This guidance explains the processes and tools that can be used through the planning system and how to engage local communities effectively.

To be read alongside this guidance, the National Design Guide sets out the characteristics of well-designed places and demonstrates what good design means in practice.

As set out in paragraph 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework, 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. Conversely, where the design of a development accords with clear expectations in plan policies, design should not be used by the decision-maker as a valid reason to object to development.

Good design is set out in the National Design Guide under the following 10 characteristics

- *Context*
- *Identity*
- *Built form*
- *Movement*
- *Nature*
- *Public spaces*
- *Uses*
- *Homes and buildings*
- *Resources*
- *Lifespan*

The National Design Guide can be used by all those involved in shaping places including in plan-making and decision making."

Natural environment – Green Infrastructure

- A1.37 Importance of green infrastructure (paragraph: 005, reference ID: 8-005-20190721, revised 21.07.2019) states that:

“Green infrastructure is a natural capital asset that provides multiple benefits, at a range of scales. For communities, these benefits can include enhanced wellbeing, outdoor recreation and access, enhanced biodiversity and landscapes, food and energy production, urban cooling, and the management of flood risk. These benefits are also known as ecosystem services.”

- A1.38 Green infrastructure planning goals (paragraph 006, reference ID: 8-006-20190721, revised 21.07.2019) states that:

“Green infrastructure can help in:

Building a strong, competitive economy

Green infrastructure can drive economic growth and regeneration, helping to create high quality environments which are attractive to businesses and investors.

Achieving well-designed places

The built environment can be enhanced by features such as green roofs, street trees, proximity to woodland, public gardens and recreational and open spaces. More broadly, green infrastructure exists within a wider landscape context and can reinforce and enhance local landscape character, contributing to a sense of place and natural beauty.

Promoting healthy and safe communities

Green infrastructure can improve the wellbeing of a neighbourhood with opportunities for recreation, exercise, social interaction, experiencing and caring for nature, community food-growing and gardening, all of which can bring mental and physical health benefits. Outdoor Recreation Value (ORVal) is a useful online tool that can be used to quantify the recreational values provided by greenspace. Green infrastructure can help to reduce health inequalities in areas of socio-economic deprivation and meet the needs of families and an ageing population. It can also help to reduce air pollution and noise.

Mitigating climate change, flooding and coastal change

Green infrastructure can contribute to carbon storage, cooling and shading, opportunities for species migration to more suitable habitats and the protection of water quality and other natural resources. It can also be an integral part of multifunctional sustainable drainage and natural flood risk management.

Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

High-quality networks of multifunctional green infrastructure contribute a range of benefits, including ecological connectivity, facilitating biodiversity net gain and nature recovery networks and opportunities for communities to undertake conservation work.”

- A1.39 Consideration of green infrastructure in planning decisions (paragraph 008, Ref ID: 8-008-20190721, revised 21.07.2019) states that:

“Green infrastructure opportunities and requirements need to be considered at the earliest stages of development proposals, as an integral part of development and infrastructure provision, and taking into account existing natural assets and the most suitable locations and types of new provision.

Depending on individual circumstances, planning conditions, obligations, or the Community Infrastructure Levy may all be potential mechanisms for securing and funding green infrastructure.

Green infrastructure will require sustainable management and maintenance if it is to provide benefits and services in the long term. Arrangements for funding need to be identified as early as possible, and factored into the design and implementation, balancing the costs with the benefits. Local community engagement can assist with management and tailoring provision to local needs.”

Natural environment – Trees and woodland

- A1.40 Consideration of trees within settlements (paragraph 029, Ref ID: 8-029-20190721, revised 21.07.2019) states that:

“Well-placed and well-chosen trees on streets and in urban spaces can provide a range of benefits: encouraging walking and enhanced physical and mental health; contributing to local environmental character and distinctiveness; providing habitats for wildlife; reducing noise and excessive heat; and supporting sustainable drainage. Changing climate, in particular hotter summers and more frequent periods of dry weather, and unknown pests and diseases, will place new pressures on green infrastructure in the long-term, so trees of the right species and age profile are essential.

The interaction of trees and tree roots with built infrastructure, transport networks, buildings and utility services is complex and requires detailed inter-disciplinary co-operation, with expert arboricultural or forestry advice. The selection of street trees needs to consider which species will best suit the highway environment in the long term, including associated infrastructure and utilities.”

Natural environment – Landscape

- A1.41 Planning policies to conserve and enhance landscapes (paragraph 036, Ref ID: 8-036-20190721, revised 21.07.2019) states that:

“The National Planning Policy Framework is clear that plans should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and that strategic policies should provide for the conservation and enhancement of landscapes. This can include nationally and locally-designated landscapes but also the wider countryside.

Where landscapes have a particular local value, it is important for policies to identify their special characteristics and be supported by proportionate evidence. Policies may set out criteria against which proposals for development affecting these areas will be assessed. Plans can also include policies to avoid adverse impacts on landscapes and to set out necessary mitigation measures, such as appropriate design principles and visual screening, where necessary. The cumulative impacts of development on the landscape need to be considered carefully.”

A1.42 Assessing landscape character (paragraph: 037 Ref ID: 8-037-20190721, revised 21.07.2019) states that:

“For a designated landscape, the relevant management plan will contain further information on the area’s particular character and beauty.

Where appropriate, landscape character assessments can be prepared to complement Natural England’s National Character Area profiles. Natural England provides guidance on undertaking these assessments.

To help assess the type o and scale of development that might be able to be accommodated without comprising landscape character, a Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment can be completed.”

Historic Environment

A1.43 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment (paragraph 002, Ref ID: 18a-002-20190723 revised 23.07.2019) states that:

“Conservation is an active process of maintenance and managing change. It requires a flexible and thoughtful approach to get the best out of assets as diverse as listed buildings in every day use and as yet undiscovered, undesignated buried remains of archaeological interest.

In the case of buildings, generally the risks of neglect and decay of heritage assets are best addressed through ensuring that they remain in active use that is consistent with their conservation. Ensuring such heritage assets remain used and valued is likely to require sympathetic changes to be made from time to time. In the case of archaeological sites, many have no active use, and so for those kinds of sites, periodic changes may not be necessary, though on-going management remains important.

Where changes are proposed, the National Planning Policy Framework sets out a clear framework for both plan-making and decision-making in respect of applications for planning permission and listed building consent to ensure that heritage assets are conserved, and where appropriate enhanced, in a manner that is consistent with their significance and thereby achieving sustainable development. Heritage assets are either designated heritage assets or non-designated heritage assets.

Part of the public value of heritage assets is the contribution that they can make to understanding and interpreting our past. So where the complete or partial loss of a heritage asset is justified (noting that the ability to record evidence of our

past should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted), the aim then is to:

- a) capture and record the evidence of the asset's significance which is to be lost*
- b) interpret its contribution to the understanding of our past;*
- c) and make that publicly available (National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 199)"*

A1.44 Duties of local planning authorities towards National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, paragraph: 039 Reference ID: 8-029-20190721, revision date 21st July 2019 states that:

"Section 11A(2) of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, section 17A of the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Act 1988 and section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 require that 'in exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land' in National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, relevant authorities 'shall have regard' to their purposes for which these areas are designated. A list of the public bodies and persons covered under 'relevant authorities' is found in Defra guidance on this duty, and Natural England has published good practice guidance.

This duty is particularly important to the delivery of the statutory purposes of protected areas. It applies to all local planning authorities, not just National Park authorities, and is relevant in considering development proposals that are situated outside National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty boundaries, but which might have an impact on their setting or protection."

A1.45 Development within the setting of National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, paragraph: 042 Reference ID: 8-029-20190721, revision date 21st July 2019 states that:

"Land within the setting of these areas often makes an important contribution to maintaining their natural beauty, and where poorly located or designed development can do significant harm. This is especially the case where long views from or to the designated landscape are identified as important, or where the landscape character of land within and adjoining the designated area is complementary. Development within the settings of these areas will therefore need sensitive handling that takes these potential impacts into account."

Open space, sports and recreation facilities, public rights of way and local green space– Public rights of way and National Trails

A1.46 Public rights of way and National Trails, paragraph: 004 Reference ID: 37-004-20140306, revision date 06th March 2014 states that:

"Local highway authorities hold information about the location of public rights of way in the areas they cover. They are required to record the existence and location of rights of way on a definitive map. Natural England also has information about public rights of way and National Trails.

Public rights of way form an important component of sustainable transport links and should be protected or enhanced. The Defra Rights of Way circular

(1/09) gives advice to local authorities on recording, managing and maintaining, protecting and changing public rights of way. It also contains guidance on the consideration of rights of way in association with development. The Circular also covers the statutory procedures for diversion or extinguishment of a public right of way."

Local planning policies

A1.47 On 19 February 2020, Wealden District Council formally withdrew its draft Wealden Local Plan 2019 following its Stage One examination process.

A1.48 The following saved policies in the **The Adopted Wealden District local Plan**, adopted in 1998 are relevant to the landscape and visual appraisal. The policy detail for the following headings can be found in Appendix A1:

1998 Saved Policy GD2 Development outside development boundaries –

1998 Saved Policy EN1 – Sustainable Development

1998 Saved Policy EN2 – Development Pattern

1998 Saved Policy EN8 – Low Weald

1998 Saved Policy EN12 – Protection of trees and woodlands

1998 Saved Policy EN13 – Ancient semi-natural woodlands

1998 Saved Policy EN14 – Landscaping

1998 Saved Policy EN15 – Nature Conservation sites

1998 Saved Policy EN27 – layout and design criteria

1998 Saved Policy EN29 – Light pollution

A1.49 On 19 February 2020, Wealden District Council formally withdrew its draft Wealden Local Plan 2019 following its Stage One examination process.

A1.50 On 19 February 2020, Wealden District Council formally withdrew its draft Wealden Local Plan 2019 following its Stage One examination process.

A1.51 The following policies in the **(Wealden District Core Strategy Local Plan) Plan**, adopted in (2013) are relevant to the landscape and visual assessment:

- **Policy WCS12 – Biodiversity)**
- **Policy WCS13 – (Green infrastructure)**
- **Policy WCS14– (Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development)**

Wealden - Direction of Travel

A1.52 The local plan is under review with the current programme of adopting a new local plan in 2023. As part of this process, Wealden District Council has published a consultation document titled 'Direction of Travel policy options' which is a strong indication of the future policy direction. Sections 10 and 11 of that document, respectively titled 'Our Natural Environment and 'Our Landscape, Heritage and Cultural Assets', lists the following policy options relevant to the landscape and visual appraisal. The policy detail for the following headings can be found in Appendix A1, but is also set out in full below as a strong indication of Wealden's current landscape and environmental approach:

Our Natural Environment

- *Provide a policy to seek biodiversity net gains onsite and only consider other avenues when this is not possible and it is supported by firm evidence;*
- *Provide a criteria based policy for allowing offsite biodiversity net gains to be delivered;*
- *Continue to resist development proposals that would be likely to adversely affect the biodiversity of the district including designated and non-designated sites as well as individual biodiversity features;*
- *Provide policies which support and encourage development that maintains, restores, enhances and where possible creates biodiversity and ecological networks;*
- *Look at the potential to establish a strategic network of areas/sites that could be identified and allocated for off-site biodiversity net gains and set this within policy;*

Our Landscape, Heritage and Cultural Assets

- *To continue to resist inappropriate loss of valued landscapes and approving proposals that will conserve or enhance landscape character and its wider benefits;*
- *Providing a criteria based policy for allowing development in the countryside; Consider a policy that protects green and blue corridors;*
- *Consider a policy which is specific to design within the landscape – designated and non-designated – and set out certain criteria;*
- *Develop a High Weald AONB specific policy requiring proposals to clearly demonstrate how they have regard to the objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan and High Weald Design Guide;*

- *Consider a policy which protects and enhances rural landscape features in their own right i.e. hedgerows, field patterns, settlement patterns, trees, water features; and*
- *Consider the inclusion of a dark night skies policy which will control lighting schemes in those parts of the district with the darkest skies.*

Hellingly Neighbourhood plan

A1.53 The Hellingly Neighbourhood Plan was adopted in February 2021. Policies contained within the local plan that are relevant to the landscape and visual appraisal are as follows:

- **Policy** (HNDP4) – (Flood risk assessments)
- **Policy** (HNDP5) – (related to the enhancement of green and blue infrastructure)
- **Policy** (HNDP6) – (for the protection and enhancement of biodiversity)
- **Policy** (LHB1) – (i) How it supports the preservation and enhancement of designated heritage assets and their settings.
- **Policy** (LHB1) – (ii) Acknowledgement of buildings that make a positive contribution to the settlement and its character and appearance through designation as locally listed buildings and show how the development has regard to the scale of loss or harm when balanced against the significance of the building.
- **Policy** (LHB1) – (iii) How the proposed development protects the historic development pattern and the key views and vistas as shown on Map 4.
- **Policy** (LHB1) - (iv) That there is no erosion of the sense of openness and rural character of the existing setting of the settlement.
- **Policy** (LHB1) – (v) How it promotes the use of locally distinctive materials including brick, tile hanging and plain tiled roofs together with use of or retention of traditional windows, doors, porches and shop fronts where they exist.
- **Policy** (LBH2) – (i) Designs that do not respect local character, identity and distinctiveness will not be supported
- **Policy** (LBH2) - (ii) New dwellings should not exceed two storeys in height
- **Policy** (LBH2) - (iii) Roofs should be pitched to no less than 40 degrees
- **Policy** (LBH2) – (iv) Front dormers and roof extensions should be resisted
- **Policy** (LBH2) – (v) Extensions to existing dwellings should clearly be subordinate to the host building

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- **Policy (LBH2) – (vi)** As a general principle gaps between existing buildings should be retained and not encroached upon or reduced
- **Policy (LBH2) – (vii)** Traditional features elements and proportions should be respected

Appendix A Part 2: Appraisal methodology

To be read with reference to figures 22 to 25

Introduction

- A2.1 The following paragraphs set out the methodology that has been followed in the baseline study of the existing landscape and visual amenity and the subsequent appraisal of the effects of the proposals.

LVIA Guidelines

- A2.2 The landscape appraisal has been carried out in accordance with the following best practice guidelines:
- The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, (GLVIA) 3rd Edition, Landscape Institute (LI) and Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) (2013)
 - An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment, Natural England (October 2014)
 - SNH Visual Representation of Wind Farms guidance, version 2.1 December 2014
 - Visual Representation of Development Proposals Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 06/19 17 September 2019
 - Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 02/21, Assessing landscape value outside national designations.
- A2.3 Whilst the above best practice guidelines primarily set out the principles and process of an LVIA, paragraph 1.11 of the GLVIA states that the guidelines ‘*can also be used to assist in the ‘appraisal’ of forms of land use change or development that fall outside the requirements of the EIA Directive and Regulations*’. Therefore this methodology follows the more informal process of a stand alone ‘appraisal’ but the essence of the approach of an LVIA still applies with exception of assessing the likely significance of effects.

Role of the LVIA (and LVA)

- A2.4 Paragraph 2.21 of the GLVIA states that there are two distinct components of the LVIA:

“Assessment of landscape effects: assessing effects on the landscape as a resource in its own right;

Assessment of visual effects: assessing the effects on specific views and on the general visual amenity experienced by people.”

Definition of landscape

- A2.5 In describing landscape, paragraph 2.19 of the GLVIA states that:

“Landscape results from the interplay of the physical, natural and cultural components of our surroundings. Different combinations of these elements and their spatial distribution create the distinctive character of landscapes in different places, allowing different landscapes to be mapped, analysed and described. Character is not just about the physical elements and features that make up a landscape, but also embraces the aesthetic, perceptual and experiential aspects of the landscape that make different places distinctive.”

Definition of visual amenity

A2.6 In the GVLIA glossary defines the meaning of visual amenity as:

“The overall pleasantness of the views people enjoy of their surroundings, which provides an attractive visual setting or backdrop for the enjoyment of activities of the people living, working, recreating, visiting or travelling through an area.”

Appraisal process

A2.7 The process of landscape and visual appraisal includes the following stages:

- **Project description** – Describes the proposed development, identifying the main features of the proposals, and establishes parameters such as maximum extents of the development or sizes of the elements.
- **Baseline studies** – Establishes the existing nature of the landscape and visual environment in the study area, including any relevant changes likely to occur independently of the development proposal. Includes information on the value attached to the different environmental resources.
- **Identification and description of effects** – Systematically identifies and describes the effects that are likely to occur, including whether they are adverse or beneficial.
- **Mitigation** if required – Makes proposals for measures designed to avoid / prevent, reduce or offset (or compensate for) any negative (adverse) effects.

Professional judgement

A2.8 Professional judgement is an important consideration in the determination of the overall landscape and visual effects and even with qualified and experienced professionals there can be differences in the judgements made.

A2.9 Paragraph 2.23 of the GLVIA states that:

“While there is some scope for quantitative measurement of some relatively objective matters, for example the number of trees lost to construction of a new mine, much of the assessment must rely on qualitative judgements, for example about what effect the introduction of a new development or land use change may have on visual amenity or about the significance of change in the character of the landscape and whether it is positive or negative.”

A2.10 Paragraph 2.24 of the GLVIA states that:

“In all cases there is a need for the judgements that are made to be reasonable and based on clear and transparent methods so that the reasoning applied at different stages can be traced and examined by others.”

Baseline

A2.11 The landscape and visual baseline conditions were established by:

Landscape	Visual
Identify elements and features Identify landscape character and key characteristics Consider value attached to landscape Identify landscape receptors	Identify extent of possible visibility (ZTV) Identify visual receptors (people) who may be affected Identify and select representative, illustrative and specific viewpoints

Site familiarisation

A2.12 The site and surrounding area were visited in June 2021 and March 2022 to obtain familiarity with the landscape. Field studies and desk studies of photographs, aerial photographs, map information, landscape character assessments and statutory and emerging planning policy documents have enabled the recording of landscape elements such as topography, drainage, land use, development, vegetation and other features.

Defining the study area

A2.13 The study area defines the scope of the appraisal. The study area includes the site itself and the wider area around it, within which the proposed development may have a significant influence. The extent of the study area has been established using a zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV) of the proposed development in combination with observations made on site. During the appraisal process the study area may change as a result of fieldwork studies or changes to the proposals.

A2.14 A 2km study area was chosen as the visibility beyond this distance will become limited and the proposed development is unlikely to have any substantial negative effects.

Identifying landscape character, elements and features

A2.15 Published and adopted landscape character assessments (LCA) prepared by relevant authorities at varying levels, from national through to local assessments, have been referred to in order to identify the baseline landscape character, resources and associated value. These established assessments have been reviewed in terms of their status, scale and level of detail provided and therefore suitability for use within the LVIA. This review also took account of the date in which the assessments were carried out and how relevant the content is in relation to the current landscape characteristics.

- A2.16 National and county level LCA generally give a broad scale assessment which often provides an overview of the landscape context and setting but does not necessarily represent the local landscape characteristic of the site and surrounding area. Local LCA provide more detail on the types of landscape that occur in the study area. They are therefore considered appropriate as a basis for describing the key characteristics and are used to inform the description of the landscapes that may be affected by the proposals.
- A2.17 Detailed fieldwork carried out within the site and immediate surroundings is used to check the applicability of the landscape character assessments throughout the study area, and where variations in the landscape are identified since the LCA was adopted, modifications or supplementary information are provided in the baseline appraisal.
- A2.18 ZTV analysis and field studies have been carried out to determine which landscape character areas will be physically or perceptually affected by the proposals.

Identifying possible extent of visibility (ZTV)

- A2.19 Computer generated mapping has been used in combination with fieldwork, to assess the potential visibility of the proposals. The extent of visibility over which the proposed development may theoretically be seen, Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV), is provided in figure 9.
- A2.20 The ZTV has been derived from a Digital Surface Modelling. The DSM used was based on a 2m grid provided by Bluesky. This uses photogrammetrically derived information during summer that provides a highly detailed three-dimensional model of the landscape and townscape. Topographic features including landform, woodland, settlements, individual buildings, isolated trees, copses, hedgerows, embankments and other minor topographic features, out to a distance of 4km from the application boundary, are all modelled. The accuracy of the DSM falls within acceptable limits; however, there are potential discrepancies between the DSM and the actual landform where there are minor topographic features that are too small to be picked up. The Bluesky data can pick up the majority of the woodland and buildings, although areas can be missed between the 2m grid.
- A2.21 For this project, the ZTV has been generated using the DSM and the following proposed building height parameters:
- Apartment building areas 12.5m
 - Houses 11m
- A2.22 The height from which the proposed development would be seen was set at 1.6m (mid way between the average heights for men and women given in the GLVIA). A professional judgement has been made for this appraisal that approximately 2 km is the distance beyond which proposals of this scale, nature and context would not have a significant negative effect on either landscape character or views. The resulting ZTV, figure 9, illustrates the extent to which any part of the proposals (large or small) is potentially visible from the surrounding area.

A2.23 During fieldwork, any significant discrepancies in the visual envelope and ZTV are recorded and later amended. Fieldwork was confined to accessible parts of the site, public rights of way, transport routes and other publicly accessible areas.

Identifying visual receptors

A2.24 The baseline study will have determined the individuals and/or defined groups of people who have the potential to be affected by the proposals. These are referred to as visual receptors.

A2.25 Paragraph 6.13 of the GVLIA states that visual receptors may include:

“...people living in the area, people who work there, people passing through the landscape on road, rail or other forms of transport, people visiting promoted landscapes or attractions, and people engaged in recreation of different types”.

Identifying viewpoints

A2.26 Following analysis of the ZTV and fieldwork, a series of viewpoints from which the proposals will be seen by the individual or groups of visual receptors were identified. To illustrate all potential viewpoints from which the proposals will be seen by the different visual receptors within the study area is not practical and is unnecessary. Therefore viewpoints selected for inclusion in the LVA broadly fall into three groups:

- **Representative** viewpoints (represent the experience of different types of visual receptors). For example, certain points may be chosen to represent the views of users from a particular public right of way.
- **Specific** viewpoints (a particular view from a key or promoted viewpoint). For example, viewpoints with a particular cultural landscape associations.
- **Illustrative** viewpoints to demonstrate a particular effect/issue. For example, the restricted visibility at a certain location.

A2.27 Generally viewpoints are selected from publicly accessible land and/or the transport routes. Representative or specific viewpoints from these areas can take into consideration that similar views may be afforded from receptors of residential properties.

Description of proposals

A2.28 This report summarises the elements that are likely to give rise to landscape or visual effects. The effects on landform and on existing landscape features such as vegetation are also described. Proposals for landscape measures such as new planting are set out.

Mitigation measures

A2.29 The GLVIA describes three forms of mitigation measures. These are:

- *“Primary measures, developed through the iterative design process, which have become integrated or embedded into the project design;*

- *Standard construction and operational management practices for avoiding and reducing environmental effects;*
- *Secondary measures, designed to address any residual adverse effects remaining after primary measures and standard construction practices have been incorporated into the scheme."*

A2.30 The first two forms are referred to as primary mitigation, while the last is referred to as secondary mitigation.

A2.31 Secondary mitigation measures are those that have not been designed into the proposals that form part of this application. Potential secondary mitigation measures are described and considered in the assessment. Where significant adverse effects remain after secondary mitigation, these are referred to as residual effects.

Landscape appraisal

A2.32 This appraisal judges the potential landscape effects of the proposals through consideration of the sensitivity of the landscape receptors and the magnitude of the landscape effect. These are defined in the following paragraphs.

Criteria for assessing potential landscape effects

Sensitivity of landscape receptor

A2.33 The sensitivity of the landscape is assessed by combining the considerations of two factors:

- Value
- Susceptibility to specific change.

A2.34 The **value** of the landscape receptor is defined in the GLVIA (paragraph 5.19) as:

"The relative value that is attached to different landscapes by society, bearing in mind that a landscape may be valued by different stakeholders for a whole variety of reasons."

A2.35 The value of the landscape receptor is established at the baseline stage and considers two key categories as highlighted in paragraph 5.44 of the GLVIA:

- *"The value of the landscape character types or areas based on review of any designations at both national and local levels, and, where there are no designations, judgements based on criteria that can be used to establish landscape value;*
- *The value of individual contributors to landscape character, especially the key characteristics, which may include individual elements of the landscape, particular landscape features, notable aesthetic, perceptual or experiential qualities, and combinations of the contributors."*

A2.36 Landscape designations should not be over relied upon to signify the value of the landscape receptors. It is also important to remember that the fact that an

area of landscape is not designated either nationally or locally does not mean that it does not have any value.

A2.37 In attributing value to a landscape, the information provided under Table 1 of the *Assessing landscape value outside national designations, Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note, 02/21*, should be read in conjunction with the GLVIA. The factors provided in the GLVIA, Box 5.1 used to help identify landscape value have been revised in this technical note with the following changes:

- “*Conservation interests*’ is separated into *natural heritage* and *cultural heritage* factors (reflecting the approach in *NatureScot’s guidance on local landscape designations* and *Natural England’s Guidance for assessing landscapes for designation as National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in England*);
- The term ‘*landscape condition*’ is used in place of ‘*landscape quality* (condition)’;
- ‘*Rarity*’ and ‘*representativeness*’ are combined into a newly-named factor ‘*distinctiveness*’; and
- A new factor, ‘*function*’ is included which addresses the value attached to landscapes which perform a clearly identifiable and valuable functional.”

A2.38 The factors that can help in the identification of valued landscapes provided in GLVIA, Box 5.1 and Table 1 of the *Assessing landscape value outside national designations, Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note, 02/21* include:

- Natural heritage – Landscape with clear evidence of ecological, geological, geomorphological or physiographic interest which contribute positively to the landscape
- Cultural heritage - Landscape with clear evidence of archaeological, historical or cultural interest which contribute positively to the landscape
- Landscape condition – Landscape which is in a good physical state both with regard to individual elements and overall landscape structure
- Associations – Landscape which is connected with notable people, events and the arts
- Distinctiveness – Landscape that has a strong sense of identity
- Recreational – Landscape offering recreational opportunities where experience of landscape is important
- Perceptual (Scenic) – Landscape that appeals to the senses, primarily the visual sense
- Perceptual (Wildness and tranquillity) - Landscape with a strong perceptual value notably wildness, tranquillity and/or dark skies
- Functional – Landscape which performs a clearly identifiable and valuable function, particularly in the healthy functioning of the landscape.

A2.39 In the absence of a formal landscape designation or landscape character area, judgement on the value of a landscape is based on the criteria set out in the preceding paragraphs.

A2.40 The landscape receptors **susceptibility** to specific change is defined in the GLVIA (paragraph 5.40) as follows:

“The ability of the landscape receptor (whether it be the overall character or quality/condition of a particular landscape type or area, or an individual element and/or feature, or a particular aesthetic and perceptual aspect) to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and /or achievement of landscape planning policy and strategies.”

A2.41 Paragraph 5.42 of the GLVIA also states that:

“Since landscape effects in LVIA are particular to both the specific landscape in question and the specific nature of the proposed development, the assessment of susceptibility must be tailored to the project.”

A2.42 Factors for judging susceptibility to change include:

- Vulnerability or robustness of elements of the landscape
- The tolerance, i.e. the extent to which elements of the landscape can be replaced, restored or may be altered
- The level or role elements of the landscape have in defining the character of the landscape
- The landscape sensitivity to the specific type of development proposed.

A2.43 The guidance set out in figure 22 has been used in this appraisal to arrive at an overall evaluation of landscape sensitivity. Both susceptibility to change and value are judged as high, medium, low or negligible based on the criteria shown. There may be circumstances where the weighting given to some criteria may be greater than others. The combination of susceptibility and value produces an overall evaluation of landscape sensitivity, which is ultimately a matter of professional judgement, and is defined in this report as high, medium, low or negligible.

Magnitude of landscape effect

A2.44 The magnitude of effect is assessed in terms of:

- Size/scale
- Geographical extent
- Duration
- Reversibility.

A2.45 The **size or scale** of an effect is assessed by determining the degree of change that would arise from the proposals. The effect of both loss and addition of new features is judged as major, partial, minor or very minor based on the criteria set out in figure 23. The judgements may take into account:

- The extent of existing landscape elements that will be lost (this may be quantified)
- The degree to which aesthetic or perceptual aspects of the landscape are altered through the loss of or addition of landscape resources / elements. For example removal of hedges may change a small-scale intimate landscape into a large scale, open one.

- Whether the effect changes any of the key characteristics which are distinctive to the landscape character.

A2.46 The **geographical extent** of effects is assessed by determining the area over which the landscape effects will be felt. The effect is considered across varying scales of wide, intermediate, localised or limited based on the criteria set out in figure 23. In general, the effects will vary according to the nature of the project and may not be relevant on every occasion.

A2.47 The **duration** of effects is assessed by the period of time over which the degree of change to the landscape would arise from the development. Duration is judged as long term, medium term or short term based on the criteria set out in figure 23.

A2.48 The **reversibility** of an effect assesses the prospects or practicality of the effect being reversed. The effect is judged as reversible, partially reversible or permanent as set out in figure 23.

A2.49 Duration and reversibility can be considered together so that a temporary or partially reversible effect is linked to definition of how long that effect may last.

A2.50 The guidance notes and criteria set out in figure 23 have been used to make a judgement on the magnitude of landscape effect for this appraisal. The magnitude of landscape effect is determined by combining the judgements of the four individual factors of size/scale, geographical extent, duration and reversibility. There may be circumstances where the weighting given to some criteria may be greater than others. The combination of all four factors produces an overall evaluation of magnitude of landscape effect, which is ultimately a matter of professional judgement, and is defined in this appraisal as large, medium, small or negligible. The GLVIA also states that thought must be given to whether the likely visual effects are judged to be positive (beneficial) or negative (adverse). It may also be possible for the effects to be neutral.

Visual appraisal

A2.51 This appraisal judges the potential visual effects of the proposals through consideration of the sensitivity of the visual receptors and the magnitude of the visual effect. These are defined in the following paragraphs.

Criteria for assessing potential visual effects

Sensitivity of visual receptors

A2.52 A visual receptor is a particular person or group of people who would be experiencing the view or are likely to be affected at a specific viewpoint.

A2.53 The sensitivity of the visual receptor is assessed by combining the judgements of two factors:

- Value attached to views
- Susceptibility of visual receptors to change

A2.54 The GLVIA suggests that when judging the **value** attached to the views experienced (paragraph 6.37), account should be taken of:

- *“recognition of the value attached to particular views, for example in relation to heritage assets, or through planning designations;*
- *indicators of the value attached to views by visitors, for example through appearances in guidebooks or on tourist maps, provision of facilities for their enjoyment and references to them in literature or art”*

A2.55 The value attached to the views experienced is established at the baseline stage and considers these two key categories:

- The quality of the view/visual experience i.e. attractive unspoilt landscape
- The associations which contribute to the visual experience i.e. cultural/historical/ecological interests and planning designations

A2.56 The visual receptors' **susceptibility** to change is defined in the GLVIA (paragraph 6.32) as follows:

- *“the occupation or activity of people experiencing the view at particular locations; and*
- *the extent to which their attention or interest may therefore be focused on the views and the visual amenity they experience at particular locations.”*

A2.57 The guidance set out in figure 24 has been used in this appraisal to arrive at an overall evaluation of the sensitivity of the visual receptors. Both susceptibility to change and value are judged as high, medium, low or negligible based on the criteria shown. There may be circumstances where the weighting given to some criteria may be greater than others. The combination of susceptibility and value produces an overall evaluation of visual receptor sensitivity, which is ultimately a matter of professional judgement, and is defined in this report as high, medium, low or negligible.

Magnitude of visual effect

A2.58 The magnitude of visual effect is assessed in terms of:

- Size/scale
- Geographical extent
- Duration
- Reversibility

A2.59 The **size or scale** of a visual effect is assessed by determining the degree of change that would arise from the proposals. The effect of loss, addition or change to the composition of the view through the introduction of development is judged as major, partial, minor or very minor based on the criteria set out in figure 25. The GLVIA (paragraph 6.39) suggests that when judging the visual effects the following be taken account of:

- *“the scale of the change in the view with respect to the loss or addition of features in the view and changes in its composition, including the proportion of the view occupied by the proposed development;*
- *the degree of contrast or integration of any new features or changes in the landscape with the existing or remaining landscape elements and characteristics in terms of form, scale and mass, line, height, colour and texture;*
- *the nature of the view of the proposed development, in terms of the relative amount of time over which it will be experienced and whether views will be full, partial or glimpses.”*

A2.60 The **geographical extent** of visual effects is assessed by determining the area over which the visual effects will be seen. The visual effect is considered across varying scales of wide, intermediate, localised or limited based on the criteria set out in figure 25. The GLVIA (paragraph 6.40) suggests that extent is likely to reflect:

- *“the angle of view in relation to the main activity of the receptor;*
- *the distance of the viewpoint from the proposed development;*
- *the extent of the area over which the changes would be visible.”*

A2.61 The **duration** of effects is assessed by the period of time over which the degree of change to the visual receptor would arise from the development. Duration is judged as long term, medium term or short term based on the criteria set out in figure 25.

A2.62 The **reversibility** of an effect assesses the prospects and the practicality of the effect being reversed. The effect is judged as reversible, partially reversible or permanent as set out in figure 25.

A2.63 The guidance notes and criteria set out in figure 25 have been used to make a judgement on the magnitude of visual effect for this appraisal. The magnitude of visual effect is determined by combining the judgements of the four individual factors of size/scale, geographical extent, duration and reversibility. There may be circumstances where the weighting given to some criteria may be greater than others. The combination of all four factors produces an overall evaluation of magnitude of visual effect, which is ultimately a matter of professional judgement, and is defined in this appraisal as large, medium, small or negligible. The GLVIA also states that thought must be given to whether the likely visual effects are judged to be positive (beneficial) or negative (adverse). It may also be possible for the effects to be neutral.

Taking account of effects throughout the life of the project

A2.64 The degree of landscape and visual effects can vary considerably during the life cycle of the project. Within the appraisal a description of the development is provided at each stage in the life cycle of the project to assist in understanding the scheme and the predicted landscape and visual effects of the development. The description of effects considers the following project stages:

- At completion (post construction - year 0)

**LAND SOUTH OF THE A271 AND EAST OF THE A22,
LOWER HORSEBRIDGE**

Landscape and Impact Appraisal

Hertfordshire Holdings Ltd

- Year 15 of operation.

Appendix A part 3: Photographic images methodology

Photographic survey

- A3.1 The following methodology is in accordance with the Visual Representation of Development Proposals Landscape Institute Technical guidance Note 06/19, 17 September 2019.
- A3.2 **The photographic equipment used to survey the viewpoints includes:**
- Topocon RTK equipment
 - DSLR camera (EOS 6d) with fixed lens (50mm, images captured in portrait format to include vertical extent of the scenes)
 - Mount/tripod (Manfrotto MT055 CX Pro 3 with levelling base) to photograph panoramic views
- A3.3 The photographs are taken at approximately 1.5m above ground level using a tripod with a Pano head which provides a 15 degree angle between adjacent shots.
- A3.4 GPS (in built in the camera) is used to provide a six-figure National Grid reference for the view. The accuracy of this device can vary (depending on factors such as satellite coverage, proximity of buildings, tree coverage etc.) so these figures are then checked on detailed OS survey plans to give a more accurate reference.
- A3.5 All photographic representations are to be viewed at a comfortable arm's length. The A1 images are provided in cylindrical projection and the A3 images are provided in planar projection.