



## West Winch Growth Area

Proposed Allocation of up to 4,000 New Homes

# LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL

APRIL 2023

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 General

1.1.1 This report has been prepared in connection with the proposed allocation of the West Winch Growth Area (WWGA) for an eventual total of up to 4,000 new dwellings, as part of the King's Lynn and West Norfolk Local Plan Review. The WWGA is an area of 192ha extending to the south from just to the south of the Hardwick Roundabout, to the south west of the A47 and the east of the A10, with some smaller areas also to the west of the A10, and links the existing settlement of West Winch with some smaller scattered areas of development alongside the A10 to its north.

1.1.2 The WWGA has been established as an appropriate location for strategic growth for some time, with its identification in the 2011 Core Strategy as a location for '*at least 1,600 new homes*' and its allocation in the 2016 Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan (the SADMP) under Policy E2.1 for (again) at least 1,600 new dwellings, with '*potential for further development beyond the plan period (subject to future development plans).*' The King's Lynn and West Norfolk Local Plan Review (the 'new Local Plan') is currently undergoing examination, and draft Policy E2.1 allocates the WWGA for at least 2,500 dwellings (together with associated facilities and infrastructure, including employment land) in the period to 2036, and up to 4,000 '*in the fullness of time*'.

1.1.3 The Inspectors for the examination adjourned the examination hearing on 11 January 2023 to enable the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk (BCKLWN) to prepare and submit further evidence on a number of topics, including the WWGA. The Inspectors' note accompanying their letter of 30 January 2023 asked BCKLWN to prepare a topic paper collating the evidence supporting the allocation of the WWGA for up to 4,000 dwellings, and said that the evidence should include:

*'A summary of the evidence assessing the cumulative impacts of the proposed additional growth on landscape character, heritage assets, biodiversity and ecology, flood risk (including surface water drainage), air quality, community infrastructure and amenity (i.e. residential living conditions), and any recommended mitigations. Where this evidence is not yet available, the necessary assessments should be commissioned and the results summarised in the topic paper.'*

1.1.4 BCKLWN then asked Jon Etchells Consulting (JEC) to carry out an assessment of the landscape effects of the proposed additional dwellings within the WWGA as part of the preparation of the requested topic paper. That assessment is set out in this report,

which sets out the results of a baseline assessment of existing local landscape character and quality, and an assessment of the likely landscape and visual effects which would result from the additional dwellings, in order to assist BCKLWN with their preparation of the topic paper. The Inspectors did not refer to potential visual effects, but they have been included in the assessment in general terms for completeness, and as there is a link between landscape and visual effects (see Section 1.3 below).

- 1.1.5 The assessment has been carried out by Jon Etchells Consulting (JEC), a Cambridgeshire based practice registered with the Landscape Institute, with extensive experience of landscape assessment in connection with residential development proposals at all scales. JEC has provided advice to a number of Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) in respect of their emerging Local Plans and the suitability in landscape terms of development proposals, including recent advice to City of York Council on the establishment of detailed inner Green Belt boundaries. JEC has also provided landscape evidence on behalf of North West Leicestershire District Council, South Lakeland District Council, Swale Borough Council, Canterbury City Council, Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council, City of York Council, North Somerset Council, Medway Council, BCKLWN and other LPAs (as well as a number of housing developers) in respect of numerous appeals for housing and other developments.
- 1.1.6 The work has been undertaken by Jon Etchells, a landscape architect with more than 35 years' experience of landscape and visual assessment, including the co-ordination of formal Environmental Impact Assessments and preparation of Environmental Statements for a variety of projects including major highways projects and large scale housing developments.

## **1.2 Structure and Content of this Report**

- 1.2.1 Section 2 of this report describes the baseline situation in terms of the character and quality of the landscape within and around the WWGA allocation, noting however that there are two current planning applications for development within the WWGA for a total of 1,610 dwellings. Those applications are well advanced in terms of their consideration by BCKLWN, and as they total approximately the number of dwellings already allocated to the area, and as the Inspectors have asked for an assessment of the effects of the additional dwellings, the 1,610 dwellings which would be provided by the two applications have been taken to be part of the baseline situation, and the assessment made in this report is of the additional 2,390 dwellings to make up the maximum total of 4,000 envisaged for the WWGA under the new Local Plan.

1.2.2 Section 3 then describes the extent and form of the development anticipated within the remainder of the WWGA allocation (outside the areas of the two current applications) in order to provide those additional dwellings, including the associated landscape, open space and infrastructure provision. The potential landscape and visual effects likely to result from that development are set out in Section 4, with a summary and conclusions in Section 5.

### **1.3 Methodology**

1.3.1 As there are no detailed proposals for the additional dwellings within the balance of the allocated area, a full and detailed Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment has not been carried out, and this report comprises a broader brush Landscape and Visual Appraisal, including a generalised assessment of likely landscape and visual effects, and will also consider the in-principle suitability of the area to accommodate the proposed overall level of development.

1.3.2 The methodology used for the assessment is based on that set out in the 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment', produced jointly by the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment and the Landscape Institute ('the GLVIA', 1995, revised 2002 and again in 2013). The GLVIA methodology is suitable for more general appraisals as well as for detailed LVIA's. The document 'Landscape Character Assessment, Guidance for England and Scotland, 2002' (The Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage) is also relevant, and stresses the need for a holistic assessment of landscape character, including physical, biological and social factors. The methodology which has been followed for the assessment is set out in Appendix A.

1.3.3 In landscape and visual assessments, a distinction is normally drawn between landscape effects (i.e. effects on the character or quality of the landscape, irrespective of whether there are any views of the landscape, or viewers to see them) and visual effects (i.e. effects on people's views of the landscape, from visual receptors such as residential properties, Public Rights of Way and other areas with public access). Thus, a development may have extensive landscape effects but few visual effects (if, for example, there are no properties or public viewpoints), or few landscape effects but significant visual effects (if, for example, the landscape is already degraded or the development is not out of character with it, but can clearly be seen from many residential properties). Consideration is given to any changes to the landscape fabric of the site itself, and also to changes to the character of the site and surrounding area.

- 1.3.4 Visual effects have been assessed in general, broad-brush terms, as there are no detailed proposals for development of the remainder of the WWGA allocated area at this stage (so it would be difficult to provide a meaningful assessment of effects on specific views and visual receptors) and as the Inspectors have requested information about effects on landscape character rather than on views.
- 1.3.5 The site visit for the assessment was undertaken in February 2023, when deciduous vegetation was not in leaf, so a judgement has been made where appropriate (based on observation of the vegetation within and around the site, and on experience of how views and visibility can vary with the seasons) about how the potential landscape and visual effects could vary in the summer, when views would in general be less open. Photographs were taken from publicly accessible points within and around the site.

## 2. THE BASELINE SITUATION

### 2.1 General

2.1.1 The baseline situation is that against which the effects of the proposed development under consideration are judged, and is not necessarily the same as the existing situation - where other change is already committed or likely it is often appropriate to include that change as part of the baseline situation. In this case it is relevant to note that the entire WWGA is allocated for development of at least 1,600 new dwellings (and the area is clearly capable - on the basis of area alone - of accommodating a significantly higher number) and the two current planning applications are for a total of up to 1,610 dwellings.

2.1.2 Those applications are well advanced in terms of their consideration by BCKLWN, and as they total approximately the number of dwellings already allocated to the area, the assumption has been made that the presently allocated dwellings for the WWGA are those which would be located within the areas of the two applications, if they are approved. The assumption was never (see the summary planning history in Section 2.8 below) that the allocated 1,600 dwellings would be spread very thinly over the entire WWGA allocation (which extends to 192ha) and the intention has always been for the area to provide for more than that number, so the 1,600 dwellings would have to be located within some more concentrated areas, and it is sensible to assume for the purposes of this report that they will be within the application areas (though the application totals are for the slightly different total of 1,610 dwellings). As the Inspectors have asked for an assessment of the effects of the additional dwellings, the 1,610 dwellings which would be provided by the two applications have been taken to be part of the baseline situation, and the assessment made in this report is of the additional 2,390 dwellings to make up the maximum total of 4,000 envisaged for the WWGA under the new Local Plan.

### 2.2 The Current Planning Applications

2.2.1 As noted above, there are two current planning applications for development within the WWGA, and the 1,610 dwellings which would be provided by those applications have been taken to be part of the baseline situation (see Figure 1 for the location and approximate extent of the two applications, relative to the extent of the WWGA).

- 2.2.2 The northern and larger application is by Hopkins Homes, and is referred to as 'Hardwick Green'. It is for up to 1,110 dwellings together with a primary school, local centre, open space, landscaping and access onto the A10 and A47. It occupies the northern, broadly triangular part of the WWGA, with the A10 and existing properties alongside it to the west and the A47 and Sheep's Course Wood to the east (see Photographs 1 to 3).
- 2.2.3 The Environmental Statement (ES, updated in 2016) for the development states that the majority of the developed area (other than a peripheral strip to the west, close to existing houses alongside the A10) would be of buildings up to 2½ storeys (a maximum of 12.5m) in height, which would occupy up to 30% of the area concerned.
- 2.2.4 The primary access would be from a new roundabout on the A47 at the north end of Sheep's Course Wood, and the new West Winch Housing Access Road (see below) would run to the south from that roundabout, along the eastern edge of the application area. The Illustrative Masterplan shows that there would be a large area of open space in the northern part of the site, a primary school and local centre in its central part and open space and playing fields along its southern edge, within the area where development is limited by the gas pipeline corridor (see Section 2.4 below).
- 2.2.5 The southern application is by Metacre, and is for up to 500 dwellings together with a neighbourhood centre, associated landscaping and infrastructure. It occupies an area to either side of the A10, just to the south and east of West Winch Church, and also includes part of a field on the west side of the A10 which is not included within the WWGA boundary (see Photographs 4 to 7). Access would be from the A10, from Rectory Lane to the north and via a link to the new West Winch Housing Access Road (see below) to the east.
- 2.2.6 The Density and Building Heights Plan submitted as part of the ES for the development shows that the majority of the developed area would comprise 2 storey dwellings with occasional 1 or 3 storey properties, and with rows of up to 3 storey buildings along each side of the A10 to the south of the church to create a focal point. There would also be a new village green just to the south of the church, an open space and play area to the south of Coronation Avenue and a large open space along the southern edge of the site, within the area where development is limited by the gas pipeline corridor.



### ***West Winch Housing Access Road***

- 2.2.7 This new road is being promoted by Norfolk County Council (NCC), and is proposed to run from a new roundabout on the A47 to the south along the eastern side of the WWGA to a new roundabout on the A10. The proposals also include dualling of the A47 between the Hardwick Roundabout and the new roundabout, and improvements to the Hardwick Roundabout.
- 2.2.8 The NCC briefing note for the proposals notes that the road is needed in order ‘to enable 4,000 new homes and to provide an alternative route for A10 traffic through West Winch’. Detailed design drawings for the road have not been prepared at this stage, but the preliminary drawings indicate that roundabout junctions would be provided for access to the new WWGA residential areas, and that land would be provided alongside the road for new planting to help screen and integrate the new road and the traffic passing along it.

## **2.3 The Development to be Assessed**

- 2.3.1 As noted above the development to be assessed in this report (relative to the baseline situation of the existing site together with the addition of the 1,610 dwellings provided by the two current planning applications as summarised above) is that of the further 2,390 dwellings envisaged for the WWGA (in the fullness of time) by the new Local Plan. Those additional dwellings would be within the balance of the allocated area, as indicated on the masterplan drawing, and further description of that development in terms of its layout and density is provided in Section 3.
- 2.3.2 The Inspectors’ note asked for an assessment of the cumulative impacts of the proposed additional growth for the WWGA, so this report will consider the effects of the additional 2,400 (or 2,390) dwellings as a standalone development relative to the baseline described above, and also consider what the overall cumulative effects of the eventual proposed total of 4,000 dwellings may be (i.e. the 2,400 additional dwellings plus the 1,600 currently allocated). This could be relevant if there were to be some kind of overall limit or capacity to accept development beyond which the effects would become more significant, though that would be more likely for topics such as traffic congestion or air quality.
- 2.3.3 The West Winch Housing Access Road is associated with the WWGA, as it would help to provide the required access for the new development, and the provision of the new dwellings is part of the business case for the road. However, the road is not part of the

development to be assessed in this report, as it is being promoted by the County Council, is not solely for the benefit of the WWGA, and because the Local Plan Examination inspectors have asked for an assessment of the effects of the additional dwellings proposed for the WWGA, rather than the dwellings and the road. It has been assumed for the purposes of this report that the road design and approval process will consider its landscape and visual effects and the appropriate mitigation required to render those effects acceptable.

- 2.3.4 The new road has not been taken to be part of the baseline landscape in the same way as the two planning applications (apart from those parts of the road proposals which form part of the Hardwick Green application), as its approval process is not so well advanced, and it has therefore been considered as a parallel development which is likely to take place in conjunction with the WWGA.

## **2.4 Landscape Context**

### ***WWGA Location and Surrounds***

- 2.4.1 As noted above, the WWGA is an area of 192ha extending to the south from just to the south of the Hardwick Roundabout, to the south west of the A47 and the east of the A10, with some smaller areas also to the west of the A10. The WWGA extends for around 3.5km from north to south, and is at its maximum (between the A10 and Sheep's Course Wood in its northern part) around 1km in width from west to east. The extent of the area designated under Policy E2.1 is shown outlined in red on Figure 1 on the following page, and that Figure also shows the approximate extent of the two current planning applications, hatched in blue - the maximum total of a further 2,390 dwellings would therefore be located within the remaining, unhatched parts of the WWGA within the red line.
- 2.4.2 As can be seen from the aerial photograph base on Figure 1, there is scattered settlement along both sides of the A10 as it passes through or alongside the WWGA, from the Hardwick Roundabout all the way to the southern edge of the allocation. This settlement ranges from isolated houses up to the substantial main residential area of West Winch around Hall Lane, and a smaller area to its north around Back Lane, to the west of the village church. There are also some small fields alongside the road, either in arable or grazing use, and some residential areas within the more rural area to the east of the A10, including the large, isolated block of post-war housing at Coronation Avenue. As a result the WWGA, especially alongside the A10, has a somewhat disjointed character, with no real sense of either being within a coherent settlement, or being in the countryside.



- Approx. boundary of West Winch Growth Area (Policy E2.1).
- ||| Approx. boundaries of current planning applications (as labelled).

Note - boundaries are diagrammatic only and intended to show relative locations and extents - see Local Plan and applications for precise boundaries.

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**Landscape and Visual Appraisal**

Not to scale

- 2.4.3 The eastern part of the WWGA has a more rural character, though it is never more than 1km away from the A10 and is still influenced by it to some degree, and the busy A47 runs along the eastern boundary of the area in its northern part. The eastern boundary to the WWGA also approaches (but stops short of) the western side of the village of North Runcton (see Photographs 8 and 9).

#### ***Topography***

- 2.4.4 The WWGA and surrounding area are broadly flat with some very gentle undulations, and a general slope down from a local high point just to the south of Brook Farm on Rectory Lane on the eastern edge of the allocated area, where levels are around 20m AOD (above Ordnance Datum, or mean sea level). From that point the land falls gradually across the WWGA to the north west, to around 5m AOD at the Hardwick Roundabout, and also falls gently to the south west, where levels are also around 5m AOD in the south western part of the allocation, just to the south west of Hall Lane.

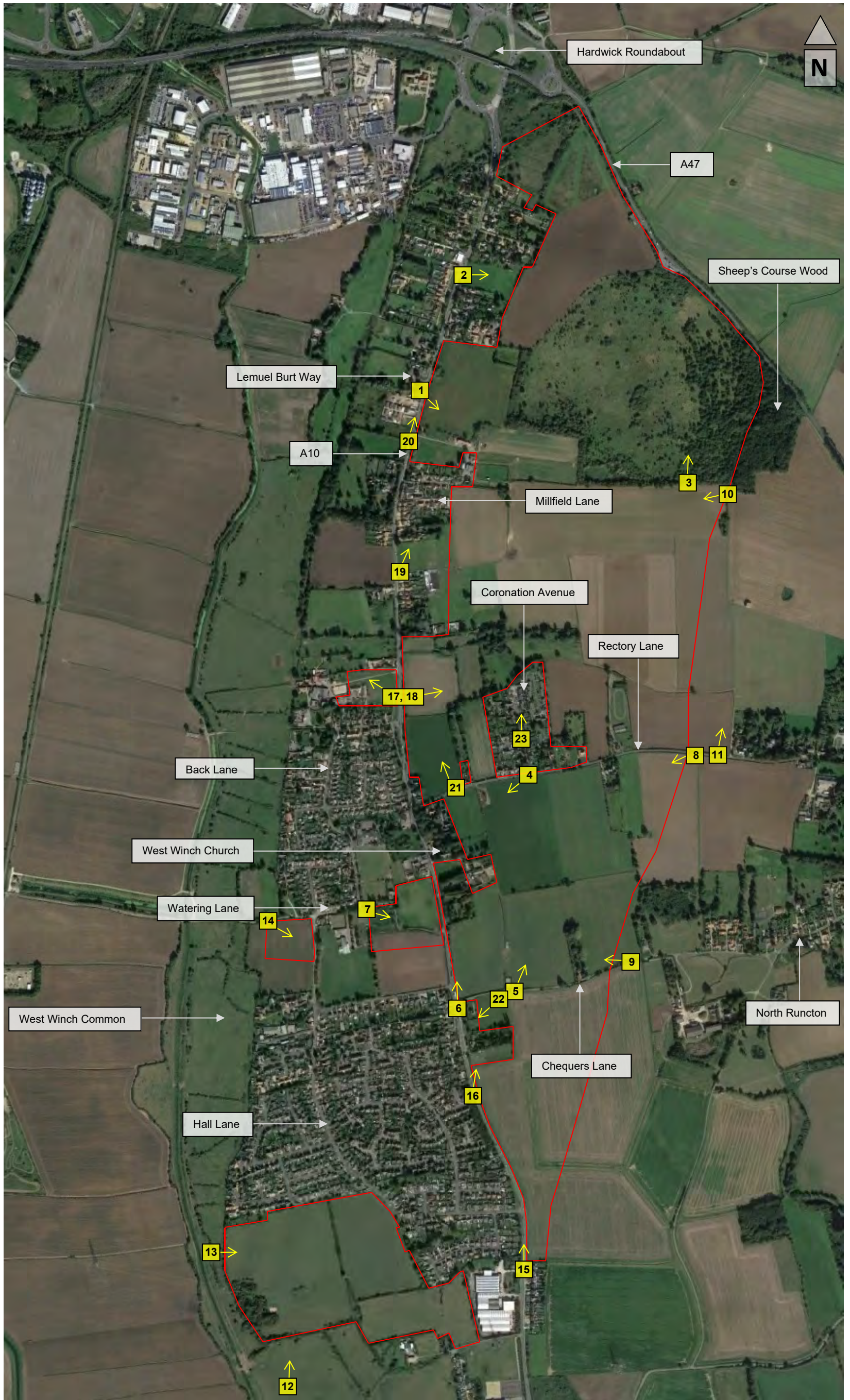
#### ***Public Rights of Way***

- 2.4.5 Given its size, it is surprising that there are no Public Rights of Way within the allocated area, and very few adjoining it. The only routes which run close to the WWGA are a short length of byway which runs to Watering Lane in West Winch from West Winch Common, a short footpath which runs from Back Lane to the A10 opposite West Winch Church and a byway which runs to the south, close to the eastern side of the WWGA, from the A47 through Sheep's Close Wood and continues to Rectory Lane (see Photograph 10). Further afield, a long public footpath runs from north to south through the narrow strip of access land to the west of the A10 which includes West Winch Common (see Photograph 11), and there are two further routes along each side of the River Nar further to the west (see Figure 2).

- 2.4.6 There are also a number of public roads within or adjoining the WWGA, including the A10 and the A47, and also Rectory Lane and Chequers Lane which run from west to east across the main body of the allocated area.

#### ***Infrastructure Constraints***

- 2.4.7 As shown on the Framework Masterplan drawing (see Appendix B), there are some significant infrastructure constraints within the WWGA, in the form of two high pressure gas mains and a high voltage overhead electricity transmission line. The northern gas main runs from west to east across the area to the south of the Hardwick Green application, and the southern pipeline also runs from west to east through the southern



— Approx. boundary of West Winch Growth Area (Policy E2.1).  
 Note - boundary is diagrammatic only - see Local Plan for precise boundary.

12 Photograph viewpoint and direction of view.

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**Landscape and Visual Appraisal**

Not to scale

part of the Metacre site, crossing Chequers Lane at one point. The overhead electricity transmission line cross the A10 at the southern end of the WWGA and runs to the west.

2.4.8 As set out in the North Runcton and West Winch Neighbourhood Plan (see Section 2.8), the gas pipelines have specific health and safety exclusion zones within which certain types of development are not permitted. The northern pipeline has an inner zone within which no new residential development is permitted, a middle zone which is only compatible with housing developments of limited scale and density and an outer zone within which consultation must be undertaken prior to any development. The southern pipeline has similar restrictions, and there is also an offset to either side of the overhead electricity transmission line within which new residential development cannot take place, all as indicated on the Framework Masterplan drawing.



1. View south west across the south western part of the Hardwick Green application area from the A10. Two images combined, February 2023.



2. View west towards the western part of the Hardwick Green application area from the A10 - the field in the foreground is not within the application area or the WWGA, but the application site extends across the view on the far side of that field. Two images combined, February 2023.



3. View north into the south eastern part of the Hardwick Green application area from its southern boundary - this part of the site has some areas of developing scrub and is proposed for open space and sports pitches. Two images combined, February 2023.



4. View south west from Rectory Lane across the north western part of the Metacre application area, with trees around West Winch church towards the right of the view and the line of pylons which crosses the southern end of the WWGA visible in the background. Two images combined, February 2023.



5. View north east from Chequers Lane across the south western part of the Metacre application area, with houses in Coronation Avenue visible on the far side of the field towards the left of the view. Two images combined, February 2023.





6. View north along the A10, with the southern parts of the Metacre application site to either side of the road at this point. The village shop can be seen in the distance just to the left of the road, and West Winch church is behind the trees to the right of the road. February 2023.



7. View south east across the western part of the Metacre site from just to the south of Watering Lane. Two images combined, February 2023.



8. View west from Rectory Lane just to the west of North Runcton, with the south eastern part of the WWGA (to the east of the Metacre site) to the left of the road. The new West Winch Housing Access Road would run across the foreground of the view. Three images combined, February 2023.



9. View west from Chequers Lane just to the west of North Runcton, with the south eastern part of the WWGA (to the east of the Metacre site) to the left of the road. The new West Winch Housing Access Road would run across the foreground of the view. Two images combined, February 2023.



10. View west from the byway to the south of Sheep's Course Wood, across the north eastern part of the WWGA just to the south of the Hardwick Green site. The open field in the view would form part of the broad area of new open space along the line of the northern high pressure gas main. Two images combined, February 2023.



11. View north along the line of the byway (indicated by the red arrow) from Rectory Lane - the route runs towards Sheep's Course Wood which can be seen on the skyline behind the arrow. The West Winch Housing Access Road would run across the view from just to the left of the wood. Two images combined, February 2023.



12. View north towards the south western part of the WWGA (to the west of the A10) from the public footpath which runs to the north through West Winch Common. Two images combined, February 2023.

## 2.5 Landscape Character

### ***National Landscape Character***

2.5.1 In terms of wider landscape character, the WWGA lies in the south western part of the 'North West Norfolk' National Character Area (NCA) - NCAs are identified by Natural England, and are described on their website as '*areas that share similar landscape characteristics, and which follow natural lines in the landscape rather than administrative boundaries, making them a good decision-making framework for the natural environment.*' A further NCA, 'The Fens', lies just to the west, on the far side of the River Nar. The North West Norfolk NCA covers a large area, extending from Downham Market in the south to Hunstanton in the north and Blakeney in the north east. The key characteristics of this NCA are stated to include the following:

- '*Open, rolling arable landscape, accentuated by the large geometric field pattern of the 18th century and offering frequent long views.*

- *Extensive arable cropping and some areas of mixed farming. Fertile and versatile light soils known as the 'Good Sands' in the east. The arable habitats support nationally important assemblages of farmland birds, including grey partridge and turtle dove..*
- *Smaller-scale, intimate pastoral character within river valleys..*
- *Dominant pattern of large-scale rectangular fields, with well-trimmed hawthorn hedges and mature hedgerow trees (predominantly oak and beech) away from the northern area. Scots pine rows are striking field boundary features in the west.*
- *Rivers are prominent in the west and north of the area where they contribute to a more intimate, pastoral character, with small areas of flood plain grazing marsh..*
- *There is a dispersed settlement pattern, often clustered around a green, common or pond, and linked by a few roads, straight and often with very wide verges, especially in the northern part of the area. Some of the villages attract large numbers of tourists and, in the case of Walsingham, pilgrims.'*

### **Borough Landscape Character Assessment**

2.5.2 The King's Lynn And West Norfolk Borough Landscape Character Assessment was produced for BCKLWN in 2007. The assessment divides the landscape of the Borough into 7 different landscape character types, with the WWGA being in the western part of the 'Farmland with Woodland and Wetland' landscape type, which occupies a broad swathe of land to the south east of King's Lynn. The key characteristics of the landscape type are stated to be:

- *'Mixed agricultural fields, interspersed with woodland and areas of open water create a medium scale landscape with a varied sense of enclosure.*
- *This landscape is flat to gently undulating - falling away towards the River Nar (on the southern boundary) and the Gaywood River (occurring to the north of the landscape).*
- *Much of the surface geology is defined by Sand and Gravel and previous and present day mineral extraction sites characterise much of the landscape.*
- *Restored workings are important for both recreation and biodiversity.*
- *Fields are irregular both in terms of size and shape and are bound by hedgerows that vary in terms of height, thickness and overall condition - evoking an inconsistent character.*
- *Settlement is concentrated on areas of higher ground and characterised by small-scale villages and hamlets of a linear arrangement. To the north west, views can be gained of the urban edge of King's Lynn.*

- *Wooded horizons frequently characterise the skyline views. Pylons are also prominent features on the - occurring within the north and south of the landscape. Masts and posts carrying overhead wires are also frequently in view.*
- *The landscape has very few points of focus - churches associated with settlement are the most prominent landmark features.*
- *Although some views into the landscape can be gained from adjacent character types, these are largely broken or filtered by the tree cover and landform.*
- *Away from main transport corridors the landscape has a peaceful character.'*

2.5.3 The evaluation of the landscape type notes that *'the landscape is fragmented, due to varying land uses and land cover pattern'*, and that *'Overall strength of character is considered to be moderate'*.

2.5.4 The 'Management Strategy and Objectives' are stated to include:

- *'Seek opportunities to expand and create calcareous grassland habitats within and associated with core areas (such as SSSI's and CWS) and as part of minerals restoration strategies.*
- *Seek to conserve and manage large areas of woodland as striking landscape features and wildlife areas.*
- *Seek to restore hedgerows, where gappy, to enhance existing landscape pattern and improve their function as wildlife corridors throughout the type.'*

2.5.5 The assessment also categorises each landscape type into smaller landscape character areas, with the north eastern part of the WWGA within the 'Middleton' character area, and the remainder within the 'West Winch' landscape character area. The 'summary of visual character' for the Middleton character area includes the following:

*'Towards the west the more open landscape allows views to the western edge of King's Lynn, creating a more cluttered and busy skyline.*

*The A47 running east to west through the area towards King's Lynn provides a source of movement and noise, disturbing the otherwise strong sense of tranquillity generally present throughout the area.'*

2.5.6 The assessment notes the *'moderate to strong sense of tranquillity throughout the area'*, and the 'landscape planning guidelines' include:

- *'Seek to conserve the mostly rural character of the area.'*
- *Ensure that any new appropriate development responds to historic settlement pattern and is well integrated into the surrounding landscape.*
- *Conserve the landscape setting of existing small villages (such as Middleton).*
- *Seek to conserve and enhance the landscape setting of King's Lynn and seek to screen (where possible) harsh urban edges.*
- *Seek to conserve the largely undisturbed and tranquil nature of the area.'*

2.5.7 The summary of visual character for the West Winch character area includes the following:

*'This character area lies between the sprawling settlement of West Winch to the west and Blackborough End in the east. The area is characterised by a gently undulating mixture of urban sprawl, fields and woodland with scattered lakes and ponds. The west of the area lies within West Winch which forms a linear development along the A10 with groups of buildings and houses clustered together in groups separated by small fields and farms.'*

*The remaining landscape between these settlements encompasses a series of fields of varying sizes. The fields are predominantly arable with some paddocks around the village edges and between the clusters of houses in West Winch. Hedgerows and ditches demarcate field boundaries, with lakes and ponds scattered throughout the fields. Amongst the fields blocks of mixed woodland also contribute to landscape pattern. Setchey Common forms a linear grassland feature running south of North Runcton to Setch Road. West Winch Common is also a distinctive local landmark.*

*One of the busiest roads in the area is the A10 which links King's Lynn to Downham Market. Noise from this road disturbs the sense of tranquillity.'*

2.5.8 The evaluation for this character area notes the *'Very strong sense of remoteness and tranquillity throughout the character area'*, the *'Strong sense of openness'* and also the *'Predominantly isolated and rural character'*, though those observations seem to conflict with the earlier description of the *'sprawling settlement of West Winch'* and the influence of the A10.

### **Local Landscape Character**

2.5.9 The above landscape character assessments are quite general and also somewhat dated, so it is useful to also consider the character of the landscape of and around the WWGA in more detail. At the more local level, the landscape of and immediately around the WWGA has the following characteristics:

- It is (as noted for the West Winch character area) for the most part a '*gently undulating mixture of urban sprawl, fields and woodland*', but is more rural and less developed towards the east, apart from in the areas close to the A47, which are affected by traffic noise and movement.
- It is flat to gently undulating, and has a generally inconsistent character, with (as again noted for the West Winch character area) '*groups of buildings and houses clustered together in groups separated by small fields and farms*'.
- As noted above, there seems to be some contradiction in the description of the West Winch character area as having both a strong sense of remoteness and tranquillity and also being influenced by the A10 and the settlement of West Winch. The assessment undertaken for this report indicates that the WWGA itself does not have a strong sense of remoteness or tranquillity, though those descriptions do apply to a greater extent to the parts of the West Winch character area further to the south east.
- That judgement is consistent with the statement in the Borough Landscape Character Assessment that the Farmland with Woodland and Wetland landscape type has a peaceful character away from the main transport corridors (emphasis added) - the WWGA is bounded to the west and north east by two such corridors, the A10 and A47 respectively.

2.5.10 In summary the character of the WWGA and immediately surrounding landscape is somewhat disjointed, with no real sense of either being within a coherent settlement or being in the countryside, and is in parts a patchwork of small residential areas with residual fields between them. In its western part it is strongly influenced by the extended settlement of West Winch as it spreads along the A10, and also by traffic on that road. It has a more rural character further to the east, though as the WWGA is relatively narrow from west to east, most of it is influenced to some degree, and its eastern parts are also close to the smaller settlement of North Runcton and (to the north east) the busy A47.



## 2.6 Landscape Quality, Value and Sensitivity

### *Landscape Quality and Value*

- 2.6.1 The WWGA and the area around it are not covered by any national or local designations for landscape quality, and as noted it is influenced by adjacent urban areas and major roads, though its eastern part retains a more open and mainly agricultural character.
- 2.6.2 Using the definitions set out in Appendix A, the quality and value of the landscape of and immediately around the WWGA have been assessed as part of the preparation of this report. The WWGA and immediately surrounding area were assessed as being of overall **medium quality**, as the wider landscape is open and pleasant but with no particularly distinctive qualities, and the areas closer to the edge of West Winch and the major roads are of somewhat lower quality.
- 2.6.3 As noted in Appendix A, the concept of landscape value is also important, and is included in assessments in order to avoid consideration only of how scenically attractive an area may be, and thus to avoid undervaluing areas of strong character but little scenic beauty. Factors such as cultural association, recreational use and intangible qualities such as wildness are important in terms of determining landscape value, but do not apply to the WWGA and immediately surrounding area, so the landscape value of the area has been determined to be **medium**, in line with its quality.

### *Landscape Sensitivity*

- 2.6.4 Landscape sensitivity is judged according to the type of development proposed. In this case the development would (as described in Section 3 below) consist of extensive new residential areas (and also some large areas of new open space, chiefly along the gas pipeline and electricity transmission line corridors) totalling up to 2,390 new dwellings. The sensitivity of the WWGA and surrounding area to the proposed development has therefore been assessed as **medium** - this is because there would be some loss of openness and of existing landscape features (chiefly in the form of the open fields and other areas which make up the WWGA), and the new residential areas would be visible but would not be especially discordant in the context of the existing development and transport corridors within the local landscape.
- 2.6.5 The above assessment has been of the landscape within and around the WWGA as it presently stands. However, as noted above, the two applications have been taken to be

part of the baseline situation, and will in due course change the character, quality, value and sensitivity of that landscape to some degree.

2.6.6 The character of the landscape of the WWGA would inevitably become generally more urban with the introduction of the new residential areas resulting from the application developments, especially in its northern and southern parts. The landscape character of the proposed areas of open space would also change, from their existing largely rural character (with some urban fringe influences) to a mixture of sports pitches, new or extended woodland, grassland and parkland - the open spaces areas would remain undeveloped, but would no longer be farmed and would have a more recreational character.

2.6.7 The landscape assessments for each of the applications conclude that there would be long term minor adverse effects on the landscape of and around their respective sites. That will tend to change the overall sensitivity of the WWGA to further development as the present balance between urban and rural characteristics becomes tilted more strongly towards the urban. Taking into account the future presence of the two application developments the sensitivity of the remaining parts of the WWGA and the landscape around them to the proposed development has therefore been assessed as **low to medium**.

## 2.7 Visibility

2.7.1 The visibility of the proposed development (i.e. the further 2,390 dwellings within the balance of the WWGA) is considered in Section 4.2 below. Visibility of the WWGA in its current form is limited by the Hardwick Roundabout (and the employment buildings to its north and east) to the north, by Sheep's Course Wood and trees along the western side of North Runcton to the east, and by the largely continuous development alongside the A10 to the west, as well as the trees within and around West Winch Common further to the west. Visibility is also limited by the generally flat nature of the surrounding landscape, which means that there are no elevated areas with views down towards the WWGA, and even relatively low landscape features such as hedges can effectively screen ground level views.

2.7.2 The main points from which the WWGA can presently be seen are therefore:

- From the north there are some views towards the northern part of the WWGA (which is taken up by the Hardwick Green application) from the A47 roundabout, including the flyover element, but no significant views from any

further to the north as they are screened by the raised elements of the junction and the large scale buildings just to its north.

- From the north east there are some views towards the Hardwick Green application area from the open landscape to the east of the A47, though there are few receptors in that area and the land falls away to the north east, limiting visibility.
- From the east there are some open views from parts of the A47 to the south of Sheep's Course Wood and from the byway which runs to the south from the woodland to Rectory Lane (see Photograph 11). From further to the south there are some filtered views from properties on the western side of North Runcton, though groups and lines of trees along the edge of the village limit visibility, as do the lines of trees in the landscape between the south western part of the village and Setch Road (see Photographs 8 and 9). There are no significant views from any further to the east.
- From the south there are some views to the south western part of the WWGA (just to the west of Hall Lane) from the landscape to the north of Garage Lane and the public footpath which runs across it to the north west (see Photograph 12).
- From the west there are limited and variable views from West Winch Common and the public footpath which runs along its length (see Photograph 13) - these views are mostly screened by intervening houses and trees along the line of the A10, but there are some partial views (often above intervening hedgerows) to the parts of the WWGA to the west of the A10. There are also some views to the main body of the WWGA to the east of the A10 and the more isolated parts of the designated area to the west of the road from the A10 itself (see Photographs 15 to 20) and also from some of the properties within the residential areas scattered alongside the road.
- There are some views across the WWGA from the two roads which run through it (Rectory Lane and Chequers Lane - see Photographs 21 and 22) and also from the properties which lie within its boundaries, including properties within the substantial residential area of Coronation Avenue, which is indented into the designated area (see Photograph 23).
- From further afield there are also some more distant views towards the WWGA from the footpaths alongside the River Nar, though the surface of the land

within the allocated area is generally screened by intervening hedgerows and trees.

2.7.3 In general the WWGA has (despite its extent) relatively limited visibility within the local landscape, and is significantly visible only in short to medium distance views from the roads which run through or alongside it and from the properties which largely enclose it to the west, with much more limited views elsewhere. Where the WWGA is visible it is generally seen in the context of the existing residential areas strung out alongside the A10, the existing houses within it (including those at Coronation Avenue) and the edge of North Runcton to the east.

2.7.4 Visibility will in due course be further limited by the presence of the two application developments, which will tend to close down views (though they would also create new views from the new houses within them) and also by the West Winch Housing Access Road, which would limit visibility from the east (but would again open up some new views for people using the new road).



13. View east across the south western part of the WWGA (to the west of the A10) from the public footpath which runs to the north through West Winch Common - the line of pylons which crosses this part of the WWGA can be seen on the right of the view. Two images combined, February 2023.



14. View south east across the small part of the WWGA to the west of the A10 and west of Hall Lane. Two images combined, February 2023.



15. View north along the A10 at the southern end of the WWGA. The new A10/ West Winch Housing Access Road roundabout would be in the centre of the view. February 2023.



16. View from further to the north along the A10 near the southern end of the WWGA. Properties alongside the A10 to the south of Chequers Lane can be seen amongst the trees on the right of the view. February 2023.



17. View north west from the A10 just to the north of Chapel Lane, showing the small part of the WWGA to the west of the road at this point. Two images combined, February 2023.



18. View east across the A10 from the same point as Photograph 17, showing fields within the central part of the WWGA - note the enclosed nature of the landscape. Two images combined, February 2023.



19. View from further to the north along the A10 just to the south of Millfield Lane - the local landmark of the windmill can be seen to the left of centre in the view. The small field in the foreground is not within the WWGA. February 2023.



20. View from further to the north along the A10 to the south of Lemuel Burt Way. The open land to the right of the road is within the WWGA just to the south of the Hardwick Green site. February 2023.



21. View north west from Rectory Lane across part of the central area of the WWGA just to the east of the A10 - properties along the line of the A10 can be seen through the trees. Two images combined, February 2023.





22. View south west across the southern part of the WWGA from Chequers Lane - properties alongside the A10 can be seen extending across the view. Two images combined, February 2023.



23. View north from Coronation Avenue, showing the large area of post-war housing which is inset into the WWGA. February 2023.

## 2.8 Relevant Planning Context

### ***National Planning Policy***

2.8.1 The Government's national planning policy and guidance on various aspects of planning are set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, July 2021). The NPPF states that '*the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development*', and that in order to do so, the planning system must perform mutually dependent economic, social and environmental roles.

2.8.2 Paragraph 130 of the NPPF states (in part) that:

*'Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:*

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);*
- d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit.'*

2.8.3 Paragraph 174 of the NPPF states (in part) that:

*'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;*

2.8.4 The wording '*in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan*' in Paragraph 174 a) was an addition made in the July 2018 update of the NPPF, and shows that firstly landscapes which have an identified quality in the development plan should usually be regarded as valued, and secondly that the protection to be afforded to valued landscapes will vary with their status, with statutorily protected landscapes (Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks) receiving the highest level of protection, and landscapes recognised and protected by development plan policies protected at a lower level, but still above that of ordinary countryside. The WWGA is not designated for landscape quality at any level, adjoins existing built development along its western side, is already allocated for some residential development and has no positive physical attributes to set it apart from the area around it, and should therefore not be regarded as being a valued landscape in terms of Paragraph 174 of the NPPF.

2.8.5 The supporting Planning Practice Guidance to the NPPF (Paragraph 036 Reference ID: 8-036-20190721) 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.'*

### **Local Planning Policy**

2.8.6 The current Local Plan comprises the Core Strategy (2011) and the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan (2016). The Core Strategy contains the following relevant policies:

- Policy CS03: King's Lynn area. This policy states that the town will be a focus for growth and provide at least 7,510 new dwellings up to 2026, noting that:

*'The area south east of the town adjoining West Winch will contribute significantly both to current needs and also establishes a direction of future growth to meet anticipated need beyond the current plan period.'*

- Policy CS12: Environmental Assets, which states (in part) that:

*'Proposals to protect and enhance our historic environment and landscape character, biodiversity and geodiversity will be encouraged and supported.'*

*'Proposals for development will be informed by, and seek opportunities to reinforce the distinctive character areas and potential habitat creation areas identified in the King's Lynn and West Norfolk Landscape Character Assessment, the West Norfolk Econet*

*Map and other character assessments. Development proposals should demonstrate that their location, scale, design and materials will protect, conserve and, where possible, enhance the special qualities and local distinctiveness of the area (including its historical, biodiversity and cultural character), gaps between settlements, landscape setting, distinctive settlement character, landscape features and ecological networks.'*

2.8.7 The Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan contains the following relevant policies:

- Policy DM15: Environment, Design and Amenity. This policy states that:

*'Development must protect and enhance the amenity of the wider environment including its heritage and cultural value. Proposals will be assessed against their impact on neighbouring uses and their occupants as well as the amenity of any future occupiers of the proposed development.'*

- Policy E2.1: West Winch Growth Area Strategic Policy, which allocates the WWGA for 'at least' 1,600 new dwellings, to include (inter alia):

*'Three new distinct neighbourhoods to the east of the A10, with some smaller areas of development expanding the existing neighbourhoods to its west.'*

*'Open 'green' areas separating the three neighbourhoods, and aligned roughly with the two gas pipelines crossing the growth area. These 'green' areas may incorporate a mix of uses such as recreation, nature conservation, agriculture, landscaping, and foot /cycle/bridle paths.'*

*'Significant 'green infrastructure', including (separately and/or combination, as appropriate)*

- *Landscape planting to integrate the development within the local landscape, character and provide visual amenity within the growth area;*
- *Recreational open space of at least 9 hectares;*
- *Conservation and enhancement of local biodiversity;*
- *Measures to mitigate potential adverse recreational impacts on designated nature conservation sites (SPAs, SACs, Ramsar) outside the growth area.'*

- The supporting text for Policy E2.1 notes (in paragraph E.2.6) that:

*'Policy CS09 of the Core Strategy, 'Housing Distribution', provides for an allocation in this general area of at least 1,600 new homes, with supporting infrastructure. It also identifies this as establishing a direction for future growth beyond the plan period (i.e. beyond 2026). (Work by the Prince's Foundation for the Built Environment (sponsored by a major landowner and undertaken with the active involvement of local people),*

*together with sites and information put forward, suggests that a total of 3,000 to 3,500 additional dwellings could potentially be accommodated in the fullness of time.)'*

2.8.8 BCKLWN have also published a draft Supplementary Planning Document for the WWGA - the 'West Winch Growth Area Framework Masterplan', produced by WSP in November 2022. This document notes that the WWGA will '*deliver 2,500 new homes in the Local Plan period to 2038 and up to 4,000 new homes in the fullness of time*', and states on its page 8 that it reflects the proposals for the two current applications and also the West Winch Housing Access Road. The Framework Masterplan drawing is included as Appendix B to this report, and shows the broad arrangement of likely development on the balance of the WWGA (beyond the area of the two applications) which has been the subject of the assessment set out in this report. The drawing also shows the broad areas of open space between the new neighbourhoods, based on the corridors along the two gas pipelines.

### ***The New Local Plan***

2.8.9 As noted above, the emerging Local Plan is currently under examination, and the submitted version of the draft plan (the 'Local Plan Review Pre-Submission Document 2021') sets a plan period of 2016 to 2036. The draft plan includes the following relevant policies:

- Policy LP01: Spatial Strategy, which notes that the area to the south east of King's Lynn '*will contribute significantly to current needs and also towards establishing a direction of future growth to meet anticipated need beyond the current plan period*'.
- Policy LP18: Design and Sustainable Development', which seeks to achieve high quality design, conserve the natural and historic environment, respond to context and character and (where possible) enhance the special qualities and distinctiveness of the area.
- Policy LP19: Environmental Assets - Green Infrastructure, Landscape Character, Biodiversity and Geodiversity. This policy seems to protect and enhance landscape character, biodiversity and geodiversity and states that proposals for development '*will be informed by, and seek opportunities to reinforce the distinctive character areas and potential habitat creation areas identified in the King's Lynn and west Norfolk Landscape Character Assessment*'.

- Policy E2.1: West Winch Growth Area Strategic Policy. This policy updates that set out in the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan for the WWGA, and proposes: *'At least 2,500 new dwellings, together with associated facilities and infrastructure, including around 1ha of employment land, in the current plan period. Within the region of 3,500 to 4,000 new homes being delivered in the fullness of time'*. The policy goes on to set out requirements for *'three new distinct neighbourhoods'* with open space separating them, significant provision of green infrastructure, high standards of design and a range of densities. The supporting text (in paragraph 9.3.13) states that:

*'... the extent of the site, at some 192ha, is clearly sufficient to easily accommodate the 2,500 new homes in the Local Plan review period to 2036 and between 3,500 and 4,000 new homes in the fullness of time. The site area also allows for generous provision of landscaping together with recreational and other open space, a mix of areas of differing character, and space for the significant new road.'*

- 2.8.10 As part of the preparation for the new Local Plan, BCKLWN produced a Sustainability Appraisal for potential allocation sites as part of a broad brush sieving exercise to filter out unsuitable sites. The 'Site Scoring Matrix' for the WWGA considered a number of parameters against a scale ranging from very positive to very negative, and 'Landscape and Amenity' was given a positive score, with the notes stating that the impact *'should be positive through good design'*. The notes also state that *'positive impacts associated with 'landscape & amenity' and 'heritage' can be minimised through good design'*. That statement is obviously somewhat contradictory, and it has been assumed (given the earlier assessment of a generally positive effect) that the word 'minimised' was used in error, and should have read 'delivered'. See Section 4.2.11 below for a comparison of the Sustainability Appraisal assessment with the assessment made as part of this report.

### **Neighbourhood Plan**

- 2.8.11 The North Runcton and West Winch Neighbourhood Plan (2016 to 2026) covers the area of the two parishes, and notes that the WWGA forms part of the strategic planning policy for the BCKLWN area. The plan notes in its paragraph 4.8 that it will *'play an important role in shaping the proposals set out by the BCKLWN Local Plan documents, providing a more detailed framework within which development will come forward.'*

2.8.12 The Neighbourhood Plan includes the following relevant policies:

- Policy WA01: Protecting sites of local value, which seeks to protect a number of sites identified for their value in terms of landscape character (including views), sports, recreation and amenity value, and nature conservation value. Many of these sites are within or around the edges of the WWGA, but it is anticipated that forthcoming developments will take this policy into account in developing their proposals.
- Policy WA03: Protecting and replacing natural features - this policy seeks to retain landscape features such as trees, hedges and ponds, and to provide for compensatory features if they are to be lost to development.
- Policy WA07: Design to protect and enhance local character. This policy states that *'development proposals shall recognise, sustain and develop the distinctive village characteristics of the existing neighbourhoods in relation to building design, spatial layout, height, density, scale, lighting and use of materials.'*
- Policy GA01: Creating neighbourhoods, which seeks to ensure the creation of viable separate neighbourhoods within the WWGA.
- Policy GA02: Providing 'green infrastructure', which seeks to ensure that proposals within the WWGA *'provide or contribute towards the phased establishment of a comprehensive network of new public open spaces, sustainable urban drainage corridors, bridle paths, cycle paths, footpaths and other amenity and nature conservation areas that will benefit existing and new residential areas.'*
- The plan also contains a number of other policies intend to shape the detailed proposals for the component parts of the WWGA as they come forward.

## 3. THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

### 3.1 General

- 3.1.1 As set out above, Policy E2.1 of the emerging Local Plan proposes for the WWGA: *‘At least 2,500 new dwellings, together with associated facilities and infrastructure, including around 1ha of employment land, in the current plan period. Within the region of 3,500 to 4,000 new homes being delivered in the fullness of time’*. The policy goes on to set out requirements for *‘three new distinct neighbourhoods’* with open space separating them, significant provision of green infrastructure, high standards of design and a range of densities.
- 3.1.2 As also noted above, further information on the nature, extent and form of that development is provided in the ‘West Winch Growth Area Framework Masterplan’, produced by WSP in November 2022. The Framework Masterplan drawing is included as Appendix B to this report, and shows the broad arrangement of likely development on the balance of the WWGA (beyond the area of the two applications) which has been the subject of the assessment set out in this report. The drawing also shows the broad areas of open space between the new neighbourhoods, based on the corridors along the two gas pipelines.
- 3.1.3 WSP have confirmed (in the course of discussions in March 2023) that the balance of 2,390 dwellings for the WWGA can be accommodated within the remaining allocated area outside that covered by the two current planning applications, at net densities of around 35 to 40 dwellings per hectare (dph) within the orange coloured development parcels on the masterplan. They have also confirmed that those densities would typically result in a built form comprising mainly individual (detached or semi-detached) houses of 2 storeys in height, with some areas at 2½ storeys and limited use of 3 storeys where useful in terms of placemaking or creating local landmarks and character. Those parameters have been considered as part of the assessment set out in this report.
- 3.1.4 The development assessed in this report is therefore (relative to the baseline situation of the existing site together with the 1,610 dwellings provided by the two current planning applications as summarised above) that of the further 2,390 dwellings envisaged for the WWGA (in the fullness of time) by the new Local Plan. As the Inspectors’ note asked for an assessment of the cumulative impacts of the proposed additional growth for the WWGA, this report will also consider what the overall



cumulative effects of the eventual proposed total of 4,000 dwellings may be (i.e. the 2,400 additional dwellings plus the 1,600 currently allocated (or the 1,610 which are the subject of the two applications plus the balance of the 2,390 further dwellings - the differences between 1,600 and 1,610, and 2,390 and 2,400 would not be material).

## **3.2 Layout and Open Space Proposals**

3.2.1 The proposed layout and outline landscape proposals for the areas of the two applications are shown in the various drawings and documents submitted as part of those applications, as summarised in Section 2.2 above. The indicative layout and land uses for the remainder of the WWGA are shown on the Framework Masterplan (see Appendix B). The Framework Masterplan document states in terms of Green Infrastructure that:

*'The Framework Masterplan indicates that there will be significant areas of Open Space which are expected to be connected to one another by a network of green corridors. Together, this substantial area of Green Infrastructure provides for a range of formal and informal activities as well as providing pedestrian and cycle connections.'*

3.2.2 The Framework Masterplan drawing shows that there would be a broad area of open space to the south of the Hardwick Green application area, a further (but narrower) band of open space just to the south of the Metacre application, and a third area in the southern part of the overall WWGA, following the line of the overhead electricity transmission lines. The West Winch Housing Access Road would run along the eastern side of the allocated area, and land for mitigation planting and habitat creation alongside the road would form part of the detailed proposals.

3.2.3 The two main areas of open space along the lines of the high pressure gas mains help to divide and delineate the three '*new distinct neighbourhoods*' which would be created as part of the WWGA, with the Hardwick Green proposals consolidating the existing scattered development alongside the A10 in the northern part of the WWGA, the Metacre development creating a neighbourhood around the village church together with existing development around Back Lane, and the third neighbourhood in the south formed by the extension to the south and east of the existing main part of West Winch.

## 4. LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS

### 4.1 General

4.1.1 Before considering the likely landscape and visual effects of the proposed development, it is relevant to note the following important characteristics of both it and the landscape within which it would take place:

- The character of the WWGA and immediately surrounding landscape is somewhat disjointed, with no real sense of either being within a coherent settlement or being in the countryside, and is in parts a patchwork of small residential areas with residual fields between them. In its western part it is strongly influenced by the extended settlement of West Winch as it spreads along the A10, and also by traffic on that road. It has a more rural character further to the east, though as the WWGA is relatively narrow from west to east most of it is influenced to some degree, and its eastern parts are also close to the smaller settlement of North Runcton and (to the north east) the busy A47.
- Furthermore, that existing character will become generally more urban with the introduction of the new residential areas resulting from the two application developments, especially in its northern and southern parts. The landscape character of the proposed areas of open space would also change, from their existing largely rural character (with some urban fringe influences) to a mixture of sports pitches, new or extended woodland, grassland and parkland - the open spaces areas would remain undeveloped, but would no longer be farmed and would have a more recreational character.
- The proposed West Winch Housing Access Road will also (together with the planting alongside it) enclose the area to the east and bring movement and activity to the landscape, further changing its existing character.
- The WWGA and immediately surrounding area have been assessed in this report as of overall medium landscape quality and value. Taking into account the future presence of the two application developments, the sensitivity of the remaining parts of the WWGA and the landscape around them to the proposed development has been assessed as low to medium.

- The WWGA has relatively limited visibility within the local landscape, and visibility will in due course be further limited by the presence of the two application developments, which will tend to close down views (though they would also create new views from the new houses within them) and also by the West Winch Housing Access Road, which would limit visibility from the east (but would again open up some new views for people using the new road).
- The development itself would not be inherently discordant, as it would comprise new residential areas together with associated open space, access roads, schools, local centres and some employment areas, in the context of a local area which already includes all of those features - the completed development would not appear out of place within the local landscape and townscape context.
- However, the development would be extensive, and the areas proposed for development are currently green field, so some degree of adverse landscape and visual effects is to be expected - those effects are considered below.

## 4.2 Landscape and Visual Effects

### *Views of the Proposed Development*

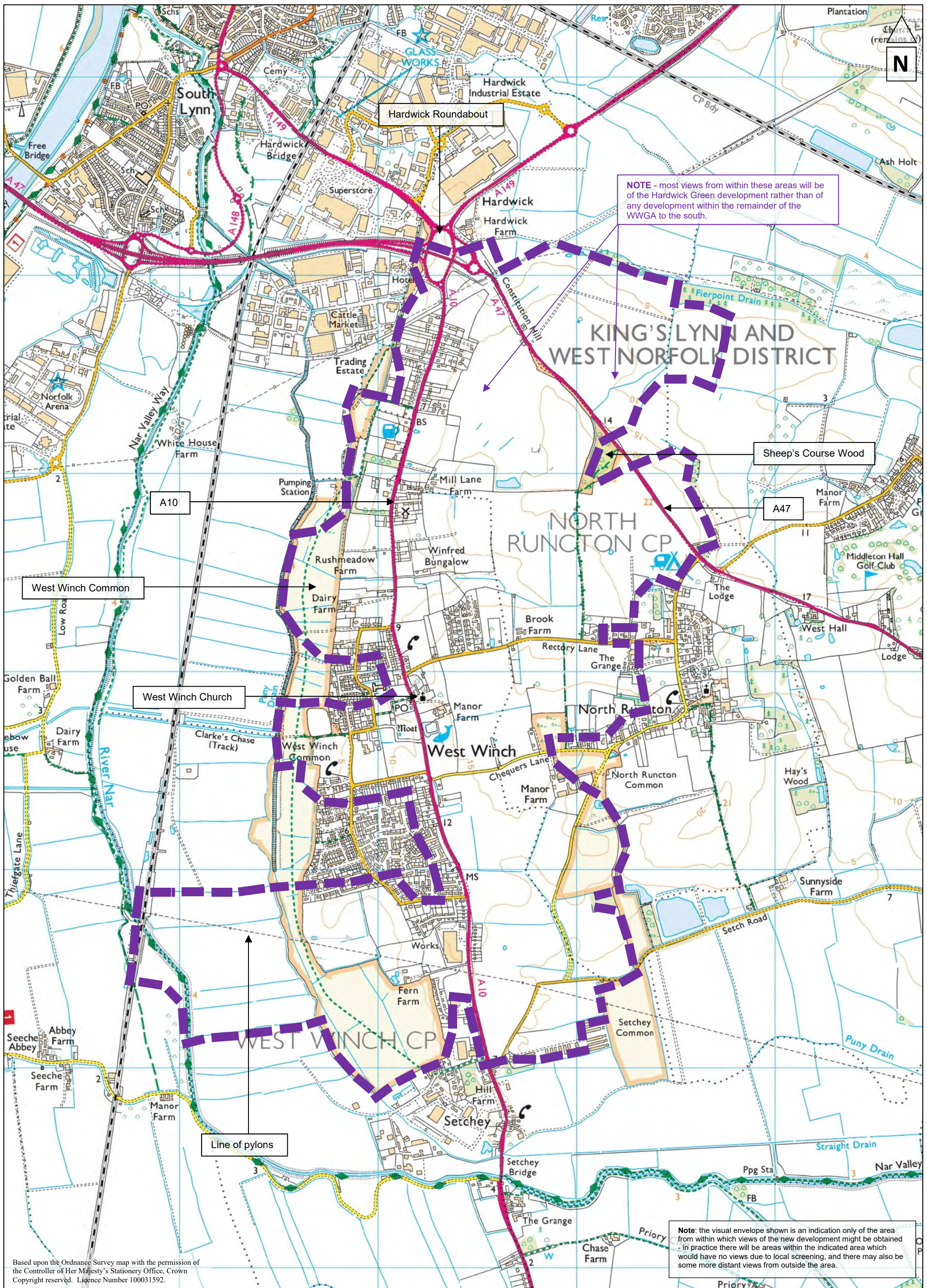
4.2.1 Visibility of the area of the proposed development as it presently stands has been described in Section 2.7 above. The addition of the proposed development would not significantly alter that degree of visibility, and the overall visibility of the completed development would (allowing for the future presence of the two application developments) be as set out below:

- From the north there would be some views of the broad area of open space along the line of the northern gas pipeline from the houses and playing fields in the southern part of the Hardwick Green development, but no significant views from any further to the north (or the area to the north east of the A47) as they would be screened by the remainder of the Hardwick Green development.
- From the east there would be some views towards the broad area of open space and the developed areas to its south from parts of the A47 to the south of Sheep's Course Wood and from the byway which runs to the south from the woodland to Rectory Lane, though those views would be at least partly screened by the new West Winch Housing Access Road and the planting alongside it once it is completed. Once the road is open there would also be

some views to the west for people passing along the new road. From further to the south there would be some filtered views from properties on the western side of North Runcton, though groups and lines of trees along the edge of the village limit visibility, and the new access road would also run between North Runcton and the development. There would be no significant views from any further to the east.

- From the south there would be some views to the development in the south western part of the WWGA (just to the west of Hall Lane) from the landscape to the north of Garage Lane and the public footpath which runs across it to the north west.
- From the west there would be some limited and variable views from West Winch Common and the public footpath which runs along its length - these views are mostly screened by intervening houses and trees along the line of the A10, but there are some partial views (often above intervening hedgerows) to the parts of the WWGA to the west of the A10.
- From further afield to the west there would also be some more distant and partial views towards the development from the footpaths alongside the River Nar, above intervening hedgerows and trees.
- There would also be some views to development in the main body of the WWGA to the east of the A10 and the more isolated parts of the designated area to the west of the road (some of which would be in the Metacre development as part of the baseline situation) from the A10 itself and also from some of the properties within the residential areas scattered alongside the road.
- There would be some views of the development from the two roads which run through the southern part of the WWGA (Rectory Lane and Chequers Lane), though some of that development would be within the Metacre site, and also views from the properties which lie within the WWGA boundaries, including properties within the substantial residential area of Coronation Avenue, which is indented into the allocated area to the north of Rectory Lane.

4.2.2 In general, the development would have relatively limited visibility in mainly short to medium distance views within the local landscape (see Figure 3), and where the development may be visible it would generally be seen in the context of the existing



█ Approx. boundary of visual envelope.

**West Winch Growth Area: Proposed Allocation of up to 4,000 New Homes**

**Landscape and Visual Appraisal**

Not to scale

(and proposed, as part of the two applications) residential and other urban land uses around it.

### ***Landscape Change***

- 4.2.3 Bearing the above in mind, the overall degree of change to the local landscape brought about by the proposed development would be **low to medium**. This is because, although the change would be extensive in terms of the area affected, it would not be at a high level in terms of its magnitude - there would be a limited loss of landscape characteristics, features or elements, chiefly in terms of the loss of the open fields which make up the majority of the area to be developed (though significant areas of land would be retained as open space). The principal change would be in terms of the presence of the new and extended residential areas and associated land uses, which would not appear unusual or discordant within the local partly urban context (which includes the 1,610 dwellings proposed under the two applications as part of the baseline situation), and the change would therefore be incremental in nature.

### ***Landscape Effects***

- 4.2.4 The landscape of and around the area to be developed has been assessed as of low to medium sensitivity to development of the type proposed, and the degree of change brought about by the development would also be low to medium. With reference to the criteria set out in Appendix A, the anticipated overall effects on the local landscape would therefore be **slight to moderate adverse**. This is because the proposals would cover a wide area, but their overall extent would not be visible from any one point, and also because where visible, the development would not appear intrusive or out of place in the context of the existing (and proposed, as part of the two applications) residential and other urban land uses around it. There would be some loss of or alteration to existing landscape features or elements, mainly in the form of the loss of the open fields which make up most of the area to be developed, though some of the open land would be retained as extensive areas of new open space as part of the development, and that provision of open space and the layout of the overall development within separate, coherent neighbourhoods would also help to limit the significance of the landscape effects.
- 4.2.5 These effects would be soon after completion, and would be expected to decrease over time as the proposed planting and extensive areas of open space become established and help to screen and integrate the areas of built development. The general effects on the local landscape would therefore become **slight adverse** only after around 10 to 15 years.

- 4.2.6 This is a similar conclusion to that reached in the assessments for the two application developments, both of which found that there would be long term minor adverse landscape effects for the landscape of and around their respective sites (there is some difference in terminology between the assessments for the two applications and this report, but the levels of effects identified are very similar). Some parity in the findings of the assessments is to be expected, as the receiving landscape is similar in each case (though as noted above, the sensitivity of the local landscape for the assessment set out in this report will in principle be slightly lower than the sensitivity identified by the assessments for the two applications, as this assessment assumes the presence of the two application developments within the local landscape), and as the developments in each case are also broadly of the same type and scale. There is nothing unusual or different about development within the balance of the WWGA which would make the effects significantly different from those identified in the assessments for the two application developments.
- 4.2.7 The area over which the above effects would be felt is indicated by the visual envelope shown in Figure 3, which does not extend for a significant distance beyond the WWGA boundaries - there would be no significant visibility of the development, and no landscape effects, outside the area indicated.

#### ***Effects of the Total WWGA Allocation***

- 4.2.8 The above assessment is of the landscape effects of the additional 2,400 (or 2,390) dwellings as a standalone development relative to the baseline situation of the presence within the local landscape of the two application developments. As the Inspectors' note asked for an assessment of the cumulative impacts of the proposed additional growth for the WWGA, the discussion below considers the effects of the eventual proposed total of 4,000 dwellings may be (i.e. the 2,400 additional dwellings plus the 1,600 currently allocated).
- 4.2.9 The broad overall conclusion is that in that eventuality the effects would be at roughly the same level in terms of their significance (i.e. the longer term effects would be mitigated by the proposed planting and open space provision to reduce to slight adverse after around 10 to 15 years), but that those effects would be felt over a wider area, simply because of the greater extent of the overall development in question. Any cumulative effects would therefore be in terms of the area affected, rather than the intensity or level of significance of the effects.

- 4.2.10 While the proposed location of up to 4,000 new dwellings within one strategic (and greenfield) growth area will inevitably tend to lead to some degree of adverse landscape effects over a significant area, the concentration of development does also create opportunities for strategic masterplanning and provision of extensive open space, and in this case has enabled the Framework Masterplan to be developed based around the creation of new neighbourhoods separated and defined by those large areas of new open space. It should also be noted that some degree of adverse landscape effects is likely to be inherent in the proposed development of any greenfield site, but for the WWGA the level of those effects has been limited by the relatively low sensitivity of the local landscape (which is already characterised by scattered residential development) and by the ability to masterplan the layout of the development at a strategic scale - provision of up to 4,000 new dwellings on a more ad hoc series of smaller sites would not have benefitted from the overall ability to masterplan the development, and would have been likely to lead to an overall greater level of adverse landscape effects.
- 4.2.11 The assessment of long term (but low level) adverse landscape effects differs from that made in the Sustainability Appraisal (see Section 2.8 above), which identified a generally positive effect in terms of Landscape and Amenity. However, the SA exercise was very broad brush, with no detailed landscape assessment to support it, and the judgement made was based to some degree on the benefits of the large areas of open space and the new pedestrian and cycle connectivity, but may not have taken enough account of the loss of open countryside.
- 4.2.12 The judgement made in this report is that, while there would be some beneficial effects in terms of the new planting and (especially) the provision of extensive areas of new open space and those beneficial effects would increase over time, they would not completely offset the landscape harm which would inevitably result from development of a greenfield site, and the longer term net landscape effects of the overall WWGA development, taking into account the proposed mitigation, would (as set out above) be slight adverse. However, to reiterate the point made above, some degree of long term landscape harm is likely to be inherent in the development of any greenfield site, and the proposal to focus a significant amount of development within the WWGA has helped to minimise the level of that harm.
- 4.2.13 The assessment set out in this report therefore shows that the WWGA is, in terms of its potential effects on the local landscape, suitable for the proposed eventual development total of up to 4,000 new dwellings.



## **Visual Effects**

4.2.14 Landscape effects are those affecting the landscape as a resource, while visual effects are those affecting a specific visual receptor. Visual receptors are normally taken to be people in their homes or at publicly accessible points, or moving along public highways or footpaths. It is not at this stage possible to predict visual effects in any detail, as there are no detailed proposals for the development or for any associated mitigation which may help to reduce the effects, and as visual effects for any one receptor would depend to a large extent on the precise location of individual new buildings. The following is therefore a generalised assessment of likely effects on groups of visual receptors:

- A. Properties alongside the A10 adjacent to the WWGA. Properties on the east side of the A10 adjacent to the northern part of the WWGA would be affected by the western part of the Hardwick Green development, but would have no significant views of development within the remainder of the WWGA, which is the subject of the assessment set out in this report. Properties further to the south around Mill Lane would have views mainly of the broad proposed area of open space to the south of the Hardwick Green site, and any visual effects for those properties would therefore be **limited**. To the south of Mill Lane properties on each side of the A10 would have some views of the proposed development, and effects would vary from **slight adverse up to moderate to high adverse**, depending on the nature and openness of their existing views and the presence and proximity of the proposed buildings within the view. Many of the existing views are across the busy A10, which would decrease the sensitivity of the receptors and hence the significance of any effects which they may experience. Properties to the south of West Winch church would have views mainly of the Metacre development, and would not be affected by development within the remainder of the WWGA. Finally, properties alongside the A10 to the south of Chequers Lane would have views of the development in the southern part of the allocated area across the A10, and effects would again vary from **slight adverse up to moderate to high adverse**.
- B. Properties within the wider WWGA. There are some properties within the wider allocated area, either indented into it (as for the houses at Coronation Avenue and also some smaller areas), or where the allocation washes over them. Some of those properties have open and rural views at the moment, and effects could (depending on the detailed design of the new development) be **up to high adverse**, as those open views could be lost entirely or

significantly reduced. Effects elsewhere, for properties with more limited views or adjacent to areas of proposed open space, would be at a lower level, between **slight adverse and moderate to high adverse**.

- C. Properties in West Winch around Hall Lane. Properties along Hall Lane as it passes the south western part of the WWGA, and also those in Silvertree Way and Elmtree Grove to its north, would have some views of the proposed primary school and new dwellings. Many of these properties are screened to some extent by garden and boundary vegetation, and effects would vary from **slight adverse up to moderate to high adverse**, depending on the nature and openness of their existing views and the presence and proximity of the proposed buildings within the view.
- D. Properties in North Runcton. Some of the properties on the western edge of North Runcton would have filtered views of the parts of the development to the east of the Metacre site, over the new West Winch Housing Access Road and between the groups and lines of trees along the edge of the village. Views would in general be limited and effects would be **between slight and moderate adverse**.
- E. New properties within the Hardwick Green development. Some of the new properties in the southern part of this development would have views to the south to some of the new houses within the central part of the WWGA, across the proposed broad area of open space. Effects would be **up to moderate adverse** for those properties with the clearest views, but occupants of these newly built properties would have moved into them knowing that the area to the south was likely to be developed.
- F. New properties within Metacre development. Some of the new properties around the edges of this development would have relatively short distance views to the north, east and south to some of the new houses within the central and southern parts of the WWGA, and the views to the south would be across an area of open space. Effects would be **up to moderate to high adverse** for those properties with the clearest views, but occupants of these newly built properties would have moved into them knowing that the area around them was likely to be developed.
- G. Public Rights of Way: There would be some filtered views of the upper parts of some of the new houses in the central part of the WWGA from the byway which runs to the south from Sheep's Course Wood to Rectory Lane, though

those views would be at least partly screened by the new West Winch Housing Access Road and the planting alongside it once it is completed. There would be **up to moderate adverse effects** for people passing along the parts of the route with the clearest views, and lower level effects elsewhere. There would also be some limited and variable views from West Winch Common and the public footpath which runs along its length, above or between intervening trees and houses, with clearer views to the parts of the WWGA to the west of the A10 (and some views also from the short length of byway which runs to the east from this route). Effects would be up to **moderate adverse** for people passing along the parts of the route with the clearest and closest views, and lower level effects elsewhere along the footpath.

- H. Users of local roads. There would be some variable views of the development from the A10, and for some short stretches there would be new development to each side of the road. However, users of the A10 would generally be of relatively low sensitivity, and the overall experience of passing along the road would not change significantly - it would still pass through residential areas with some more open areas in between, and effects would be no more than **slight to moderate adverse**. The main effects for users of the A47 would arise from development within the Hardwick Green site, and views from the stretch of the A47 to the south east of Sheep's Course Wood would be more limited and would also include the new West Winch Housing Access Road and its traffic, so any effects arising from the development outside the two application sites on users of the A47 would be no more than **slight adverse**. There would be some clearer views for people passing along the West Winch Housing Access Road itself, but that road would be built in parallel with the new housing development, and people would be unlikely to find views of the new residential areas which it helps to serve harmful, so there would be **no significant visual effects**. Finally, there would also be some short distance views for people passing along Rectory Lane and Chequers Lane which run through the WWGA, though some of the visible development would be within the Metacre site, and that development would have already affected the character of these two lanes to some extent. Effects from the additional development within the remainder of the WWGA would be no more than **moderate adverse**.
- I. More distant views. From further afield to the west there would also be some more distant and partial views towards the development from the footpaths alongside the River Nar, above intervening hedgerows and trees. In these

views the new houses would be seen in the context of the existing properties in West Winch along the line of the A10, and there would be no significant change in the overall character and composition of the view, with no more than **slight adverse effects**.

- 4.2.15 As is the case for landscape effects, the above effects are those which would in principle be experienced soon after completion of the development, and the effects would in general be expected to decline over time as the new planting and areas of open space become established.

### **4.3 Effects During Construction**

- 4.3.1 The above assessment of effects has been of the completed development. There may also be additional effects during the construction stage, arising from the presence and movement of construction equipment, the exposure of soil during excavations and also because any proposed planting would not yet be in place (though it would be possible to achieve some advance planting within the main areas of proposed open space, where there would be no built development).

- 4.3.2 Effects would vary throughout the construction period, and would in principle be slightly greater than those identified for the completed development, but would be experienced for a relatively short time only in any one location.

### **4.4 Effects in Relation to Policy**

- 4.4.1 In respect of the range of national policies described in Section 2.8 above which seek in general to protect the landscape, this assessment has indicated that any adverse landscape effects would be at a relatively low level, would affect a limited area only and would gradually reduce over time - there would be some low level long term adverse effects, but such effects are a largely inevitable result of development on a greenfield site, and would need to be considered in the overall planning balance against the provision of new dwellings.

- 4.4.2 In terms of Local Plan policies, there would be some generalised and low level harm in respect of Policies CS12 and DM15 which seek to protect the environment, but again only at a level which would be likely to result from any development on a greenfield site.

4.4.3 Similar observations can be made in respect of draft Policy LP19 of the new Local Plan, and in relation to the new Local Plan the main effects of the proposed development would be to deliver the final total of up to 4,000 new dwellings set out in Policy E2.1.

## 4.5 Recommendations

4.5.1 As noted above, BCKLWN have produced the West Winch Growth Area Framework Masterplan SPD, which sets out in some detail how the overall WWGA should be developed, and the Framework Masterplan shows the broad disposition of areas to be developed and strategic areas of Green Infrastructure and open space. It is beyond the scope of this report to make any further recommendations in terms of the provision and layout of open space and landscape areas, but it would be beneficial in landscape and visual terms if two broad principles could be adopted as detailed designs are prepared:

- a) Existing vegetation, where in good condition, should be retained wherever possible and reinforced with new planting where appropriate, to help provide containment, structure and interest for the new developed areas. This would include woodland (though Sheep's Course Wood is the only significant area of woodland within or around the WWGA), hedgerows and trees, as well as any other features such as ponds, small watercourses or areas of potentially species-rich grassland.
- b) Consideration should be given to the possibility of establishing new areas of planting and open space at an early date, and in advance of the adjacent areas of development where possible. This would have the advantage of any new planting being better established and making a more significant contribution in terms of landscape structure and containment as the associated development proceeds, and would also have the benefit of the various areas of open space being available for use by the new (and existing) residents as soon as possible.

## 5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 This report has been prepared in connection with the proposed allocation of the West Winch Growth Area (WWGA) for an eventual total of up to 4,000 new dwellings, as part of the King's Lynn and West Norfolk Local Plan Review. The WWGA is an area of 192ha extending to the south from just to the south of the Hardwick Roundabout, to the south west of the A47 and the east of the A10, with some smaller areas also to the west of the A10, and links the existing settlement of West Winch with some smaller scattered areas of development alongside the A10 to its north.
- 5.2 The WWGA has been established as an appropriate location for strategic growth for some time, with its identification in the 2011 Core Strategy as a location for '*at least 1,600 new homes*' and its allocation in the 2016 Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan (the SADMP) under Policy E2.1 for (again) at least 1,600 new dwellings, with '*potential for further development beyond the plan period (subject to future development plans)*.' The King's Lynn and West Norfolk Local Plan Review (the 'new Local Plan') is currently undergoing examination, and draft Policy E2.1 allocates the WWGA for at least 2,500 dwellings (together with associated facilities and infrastructure, including employment land) in the period to 2036, and up to 4,000 '*in the fullness of time*'.
- 5.3 The Inspectors for the examination adjourned the examination hearing to enable the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk (BCKLWN) to prepare and submit further evidence on a number of topics, including the WWGA. The Inspectors' note accompanying their letter of 30 January 2023 asked BCKLWN to prepare a topic paper collating the evidence supporting the allocation of the WWGA for up to 4,000 dwellings, and said that the evidence should include evidence relating to the cumulative impacts of the proposed additional growth on (inter alia) landscape character.
- 5.4 This report therefore sets out an assessment of the landscape effects of the proposed additional dwellings within the WWGA, in order to assist BCKLWN with their preparation of the requested topic paper.
- 5.5 There are two current planning applications for development within the WWGA, and as those applications are well advanced in terms of their consideration by BCKLWN, and as they total approximately the number of dwellings already allocated to the area, the 1,610 dwellings which would be provided by those applications have been taken to be part of the baseline situation. The development assessed in this report is therefore that of the further 2,390 dwellings envisaged for the WWGA (in the fullness of time) by

the new Local Plan. Those additional dwellings would be within the balance of the allocated area, as indicated on the Framework Masterplan drawing.

- 5.6 The WWGA covers an area of 192ha extending to the south from just to the south of the Hardwick Roundabout, to the south west of the A47 and the east of the A10, with some smaller areas also to the west of the A10. There is scattered settlement along both sides of the A10 as it passes through or alongside the WWGA, from the Hardwick Roundabout all the way to the southern edge of the allocation. This settlement ranges from isolated houses up to the substantial main residential area of West Winch around Hall Lane. There are also some small fields alongside the road, either in arable or grazing use, and some residential areas within the more rural area to the east of the A10, including the large, isolated block of post-war housing at Coronation Avenue. As a result the WWGA, especially alongside the A10, has a somewhat disjointed character, with no real sense of either being within a coherent settlement, or being in the countryside.
- 5.7 The WWGA and the area around it are not covered by any national or local designations for landscape quality, and are influenced by adjacent urban areas and major roads, though the eastern part of the allocated area retains a more open and mainly agricultural character. The quality and value of the landscape of and immediately around the WWGA have therefore been assessed as part of the preparation of this report as medium.
- 5.8 The landscape assessments for each of the two current planning applications conclude that there would be long term minor adverse effects on the landscape of and around their respective sites. That will tend to change the overall sensitivity of the WWGA to further development as the present balance between urban and rural characteristics becomes tilted more strongly towards the urban. Taking into account the future presence of the two application developments the sensitivity of the remaining parts of the WWGA and the landscape around them to the proposed development has therefore been assessed as low to medium, as the new residential areas would be visible but would not be especially discordant in the context of the existing development and transport corridors within the local landscape.
- 5.9 The West Winch Growth Area Framework Masterplan shows the broad arrangement of likely development on the balance of the WWGA (beyond the area of the two applications) which has been the subject of the assessment set out in this report. The drawing also shows the broad areas of open space between the new neighbourhoods, based on the corridors along the two gas pipelines. The authors of the masterplan document have confirmed that the balance of 2,390 dwellings for the WWGA can be

accommodated within the remaining allocated area outside that covered by the two current planning applications, at net densities of around 35 to 40 dwellings per hectare. They have also confirmed that those densities would typically result in a built form comprising mainly individual (detached or semi-detached) houses of 2 storeys in height, with some areas at 2½ storeys and limited use of 3 storeys, and those parameters have been considered as part of the assessment set out in this report.

- 5.10 The overall degree of change to the local landscape brought about by the proposed development would be low to medium. This is because, although the change would be extensive in terms of the area affected, it would not be at a high level in terms of its magnitude - there would be a limited loss of landscape characteristics, features or elements, chiefly in terms of the loss of the open fields which make up the majority of the area to be developed (though significant areas of land would be retained as open space). The principal change would be in terms of the presence of the new and extended residential areas and associated land uses, which would not appear unusual or discordant within the local partly urban context (which includes the 1,610 dwellings proposed under the two applications as part of the baseline situation), and the change would therefore be incremental in nature.
- 5.11 The anticipated overall effects on the local landscape would therefore be slight to moderate adverse. This is because the proposals would cover a wide area, but their overall extent would not be visible from any one point, and also because where visible, the development would not appear intrusive or out of place in the context of the existing (and proposed, as part of the two applications) residential and other urban land uses around it. There would be some loss of or alteration to existing landscape features or elements, mainly in the form of the loss of the open fields which make up most of the area to be developed, though some of the open land would be retained as extensive areas of new open space as part of the development, and that provision of open space and the layout of the overall development within separate, coherent neighbourhoods would also help to limit the significance of the landscape effects.
- 5.12 These effects would be soon after completion, and would be expected to decrease over time as the proposed planting and extensive areas of open space become established and help to screen and integrate the areas of built development. The general effects on the local landscape would therefore become slight adverse only after around 10 to 15 years.
- 5.13 The above assessment is of the landscape effects of the additional 2,400 (or 2,390) dwellings as a standalone development relative to the baseline situation of the presence within the local landscape of the two application developments. As the



Inspectors' note asked for an assessment of the cumulative impacts of the proposed additional growth for the WWGA, consideration has also been given to the effects of the eventual proposed total of 4,000 dwellings may be (i.e. the 2,400 additional dwellings plus the 1,600 currently allocated). The broad overall conclusion is that in that eventuality the effects would be at roughly the same level in terms of their significance (i.e. the longer term effects would be mitigated by the proposed planting and open space provision to reduce to slight adverse after around 10 to 15 years), but that those effects would be felt over a wider area, simply because of the greater extent of the overall development in question. Any cumulative effects would therefore be in terms of the area affected, rather than the intensity or level of significance of the effects.

- 5.14 While the proposed location of up to 4,000 new dwellings within one strategic (and greenfield) growth area will inevitably tend to lead to some degree of adverse landscape effects over a significant area, the concentration of development does also create opportunities for strategic masterplanning and provision of extensive open space, and in this case has enabled the Framework Masterplan to be developed based around the creation of new neighbourhoods separated and defined by those large areas of new open space. It should also be noted that some degree of adverse landscape effects is likely to be inherent in the proposed development of any greenfield site, but for the WWGA the level of those effects has been limited by the relatively low sensitivity of the local landscape (which is already characterised by scattered residential development) and by the ability to masterplan the layout of the development at a strategic scale - provision of up to 4,000 new dwellings on a more ad hoc series of smaller sites would not have benefitted from the overall ability to masterplan the development, and would have been likely to lead to an overall greater level of adverse landscape effects.
- 5.15 The assessment set out in this report therefore shows that the WWGA is, in terms of its potential effects on the local landscape, suitable for the proposed eventual development total of up to 4,000 new dwellings.

## LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS

### 1 General

- 1.1 In landscape and visual assessments, a distinction is normally drawn between landscape effects (i.e. effects on the character or quality of the landscape, irrespective of whether there are any views of the landscape, or viewers to see them) and visual effects (i.e. effects on people's views of the landscape, principally from residential properties, but also from public rights of way and other areas with public access). Thus, a development may have extensive landscape effects but few visual effects (if, for example, there are no properties or public viewpoints), or few landscape effects but significant visual effects (if, for example, the landscape is already degraded or the development is not out of character with it, but can clearly be seen from many residential properties).
- 1.2 The core methodology followed is that set out in the 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment', produced jointly by the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment and the Landscape Institute ('the GLVIA', 1995, revised 2002 and 2013). The document 'Landscape Character Assessment, Guidance for England and Scotland, 2002' (The Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage) also stresses the need for a holistic assessment of landscape character, including physical, biological and social factors. This document notes that '*Landscape is about the relationship between people and place.*'
- 1.3 Further information is set out in 'An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment', October 2014 (Christine Tudor, Natural England) to which reference is also made. This paper notes that 'Landscape' is defined in the European Landscape Convention as: '*Landscape is an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors*'.
- 1.4 The GLVIA guidance is on the principles and process of assessment, and stresses that the detailed approach adopted should be appropriate to the task in hand. It notes that professional judgement is at the core of LVIA, and that while some change can be quantified (for example the number of trees which may be lost), '*much of the assessment must rely on qualitative judgements*' (GLVIA, section 2.23), and the Landscape Institute's Technical Committee has advised that the 2013 revision of the GLVIA '*places greater emphasis on professional judgement and less emphasis on a formulaic approach*'. The judgements made as part of the assessment were based on the tables set out below.
- 1.5 Assessment of the baseline landscape was undertaken by means of a desk study of published information, including Ordnance Survey mapping and landscape character assessments at national, county and local scales.

## 2 Methodology for this Assessment

2.1 For the purposes of this assessment, the guidance set out above was generally adhered to, with the following specific refinements:

1. Landscape and visual effects were assessed in terms of the magnitude of the change brought about by the development (also referred to in the GLVIA as the '*nature of the effect*', though as effects are the end product of the assessment, rather than one of the inputs to it, the term change is used to avoid confusion ) and also the sensitivity of the resource affected (also referred to in the GLVIA as the '*nature of the receptor*'). There is some confusion in the guidance about the term 'impact'; the overall process is known as Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, but what is actually assessed is more usually referred to as effects, and the GLVIA does also use the word 'impact' to mean the action being taken, or the magnitude of change. In order to avoid this source of confusion, this assessment does not use the word 'impact', but instead refers to the **magnitude of change** caused by the development, which results (in combination with the sensitivity of the resource affected) in landscape and visual **effects**.
2. Landscape and visual effects have been considered in terms of whether they are direct or indirect, short term/temporary or long term/permanent, and beneficial or adverse. It is also important to consider the area over which the effects may be felt, and to note that effects will generally tend to decline with distance from the development in question, so the scale at which the judgement is made will affect the level of significance of the effects.
3. The **magnitude of change** will generally decrease with distance from its source, until a point is reached where there is no discernible change. It will also vary with factors such as the scale and nature of the proposed development, the proportion of the view that would be occupied by the development, whether the view is clear and open, or partial and/or filtered, the duration and nature of the change (e.g. temporary or permanent, intermittent or continuous etc), whether the view would focus on the proposed development or whether the development would be incidental in the view, and the nature of the existing view (e.g. whether it contains existing detracting or intrusive elements).
4. In terms of **sensitivity**, residential properties were taken to be of high sensitivity in general, although this can vary with the degree of openness of their view (see Table 7 below). Landscapes which carry a landscape quality designation and which are otherwise attractive or unspoilt will in general be more sensitive, while those which are less attractive or already affected by significant visual detractors and disturbance will be generally less sensitive (see Table 4 below).
5. For both landscape and visual effects, the assessment is of the development **complete with the proposed mitigation measures**. Those measures are part of the proposed development, and there has therefore been no assessment of a hypothetical, unmitigated development. However, as the mitigation measures involve planting, they will take time to become effective, and the assessment therefore makes allowance for

this, considering an initial scenario in the winter of the first year after planting and then a future scenario where the planting has begun to mature.

6. The GLVIA suggests in section 3.32 that an assessment should distinguish between significant and non-significant effects (based on the fact that the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 require the assessment of '*direct and indirect significant effects*' on the environment). Where an assessment forms part of a wider EIA and is summarised in an Environmental Statement (ES), that judgment may be for the editor of the ES to make, but in an assessment which is not part of an EIA, it should be noted that the GLVIA makes it clear in section 3.34 that '*effects not considered to be significant will not be completely disregarded*', and therefore adverse landscape and visual effects of any level (other than no effect or negligible) should be carried forwards by the decision maker into the overall planning balance, as they still constitute harm (or benefit).

### LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

7. **Landscape change** was categorised as shown in Table 1 below, where each level (other than no change) can be either beneficial or adverse:

Table 1 ~ Magnitude of Landscape Change	
Category	Definition
<b>No change</b>	No loss or alteration of key landscape characteristics, features or elements.
<b>Negligible</b>	Very minor loss or alteration (or improvement, restoration or addition) to one or more key landscape characteristics, features or elements.
<b>Low</b>	Minor loss of or alteration (or improvement, restoration or addition) to one or more key landscape characteristics, features or elements.
<b>Medium</b>	Partial loss of or damage (or improvement, restoration or addition) to key characteristics, features or elements.
<b>High</b>	Total or widespread loss of, or severe damage (or major improvement, restoration or addition) to key characteristics, features or elements.

8. **Landscape quality** was judged on site by an experienced assessor, with reference to the criteria shown in Table 2 below. **Landscape condition** (i.e. the physical state of the landscape, including its intactness and the condition of individual landscape elements) can have a bearing on landscape quality, as indicated.

Table 2 ~ Criteria for Determining Landscape Quality	
Category	Typical Criteria <sup>1</sup>
Very high quality	National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty standard - the area will usually (though not necessarily, especially for small areas) be so designated. It is also possible that some parts of designated areas may be of locally lower quality, if affected by detractors. Will generally be a landscape in good condition, with intact and distinctive elements.
High quality	Attractive landscape, usually with a strong sense of place, varied topography and distinctive landscape or historic features, and few visual detractors. Will generally be a landscape in good condition, with intact and distinctive elements.
Medium quality	Pleasant landscape with few detractors but with no particularly distinctive qualities. Will generally be a landscape in medium condition, with some intact elements.
Low quality	Unattractive or degraded landscape, affected by visual detractors. Will generally be a landscape in poor condition, with few intact elements.

1. Note that the above criteria are indicators of the types of landscapes which may be judged to be of the given quality - they are not intended to be applied in full or literally in all cases.

9. The quality of the landscape is one element which goes into the consideration of **landscape value**, which also takes account of other factors, including rarity, representativeness, conservation interests, recreational value and perceptual aspects such as wildness or tranquillity - these are some of the factors listed for the consideration of landscape value in Box 5.1 of the GLVIA on its page 84.
10. Box 5.1 has come to be used as a default method for determining landscape value, and is frequently referenced. However, it should be noted that it appears in the GLVIA under the heading of 'Undesignated landscapes', and also predates the February 2019 NPPF, which states that valued landscapes should be protected and enhanced '*in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan*'. This shows that landscapes which have statutory protection (i.e. AONBs and National Parks) or an identified quality in the development plan should be regarded as valued, and secondly that the protection to be afforded to valued landscapes will vary with their status, with statutorily protected landscapes receiving the highest level of protection, and landscapes recognised and protected by development plan policies valued and protected at a lower level, but still above that of ordinary countryside. It is also often useful to include some consideration of the function that an area of landscape may have in determining its value, for example if it plays a role in the separation and setting of settlements.

11. The GLVIA considers landscape value as a measure to be assessed in association with landscape character, in order to avoid consideration only of how scenically attractive an area may be, and thus to avoid undervaluing areas of strong character but little scenic beauty. It is defined in the glossary of the GLVIA as:

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

Landscape value was judged on site by an experienced assessor, with reference to the above discussion and the criteria shown in Table 3 below.

<b>Table 3 ~ Criteria for Determining Landscape Value</b>	
<b>Category</b>	<b>Typical Criteria <sup>1</sup></b>
<b>Very High Value</b>	Often very high quality landscapes, usually in good condition, with intact and distinctive elements. Will often (though not necessarily, especially for small areas) be a statutorily designated landscape with strong scenic qualities. May have significant recreational value at national or regional scale and include recognised and/or popular viewpoints. May have a strong functional element, for example in providing an open gap between settlements. May also be a rare landscape type, or one with strong wildlife, cultural or other interests or connections.
<b>High Value</b>	Often high quality landscapes, usually in good condition, with some intact and distinctive elements. Will sometimes be a designated landscape with strong scenic qualities. May have significant recreational value at a local scale and include some recognised and/or popular viewpoints. May be a rare landscape type, or one with some wildlife, cultural or other interests or connections. May be a landscape of limited quality, but with a strong functional element, for example in providing an open gap between settlements.
<b>Medium Value</b>	Often pleasant, medium quality landscapes, usually in reasonable condition, with some intact or distinctive elements. Unlikely to be a statutorily or locally designated landscape, but may have some localised scenic qualities. May have some recreational value at a local scale or include some local viewpoints, or have a functional role, for example in providing an open gap between settlements. May have some wildlife, cultural or other interests or connections.
<b>Low Value</b>	Likely to be a lower quality landscape, usually in poor condition, with few intact or distinctive elements. Likely to have limited recreational value at a local scale with no significant viewpoints. Few if any wildlife, cultural or other interests or connections.

1. Note that the above criteria are indicators of the types of landscapes which may be judged to be of the given value - they are not intended to be applied in full or literally in all cases.

12. The assessment of landscape value is then carried forward into the determination of landscape sensitivity.
13. **Landscape sensitivity** relates to the ability of the landscape to accommodate change of the type and scale proposed without adverse effects on its character (i.e. its susceptibility to change), and also to the value of the landscape concerned. As noted in the GLVIA (section 5.39), sensitivity is '*specific to the particular project or development that is being proposed and to the location in question*'. Susceptibility is defined in the GLVIA as '*The ability of a defined landscape or visual receptor to accommodate the specific proposed development without undue negative consequences.*' Susceptibility is judged according to the criteria set out in Table 4 below.

<b>Table 4 ~ Criteria for Determining Landscape Susceptibility</b>	
<b>Category</b>	<b>Typical Criteria<sup>1</sup></b>
<b>High Susceptibility</b>	A landscape with a low capacity to accommodate change, either because the change in question would be large scale and/ or out of character with the existing landscape, or because the landscape has little capacity to accept or absorb that change which would be poorly screened and readily visible. The change would conflict with the existing character of the landscape.
<b>Medium Susceptibility</b>	A landscape with a moderate capacity to accommodate change, either because the change in question would be generally in scale and/ or character with the existing landscape, or because the landscape has some capacity to accept or absorb that change, which would be partially screened. The change would conflict with the existing character of the landscape to some extent.
<b>Low Susceptibility</b>	A landscape with a high capacity to accommodate change, either because the change in question would be small scale and/ or in keeping with the existing landscape, or because the landscape has a high capacity to accept or absorb that change which would be well screened. The change would complement the existing character of the landscape.

1. Note that the above criteria are indicators of the types of landscapes which may be judged to be of the given level of susceptibility - they are not intended to be applied in full or literally in all cases.

14. The judgement as to sensitivity combines judgements on susceptibility and value. A landscape of high sensitivity will tend to be one with a low ability to accommodate change and a high value, and vice versa. Landscape sensitivity was judged according to the criteria set out in Table 5 below, taking into account factors such as the presence or absence of designations for quality and the nature of the proposed change.

Table 5 ~ Criteria for Determining Landscape Sensitivity	
Sensitivity	Typical Criteria
<b>Very High</b>	<p>A landscape with a very low ability to accommodate change because such change would lead to a significant loss of valuable features or elements, resulting in a significant loss of character and quality.</p> <p>Development of the type proposed would be discordant and prominent.</p> <p>Will normally occur in a landscape of very high or high quality or value.</p>
<b>High</b>	<p>A landscape with limited ability to accommodate change because such change would lead to some loss of valuable features or elements, resulting in a significant loss of character and quality.</p> <p>Development of the type proposed would be discordant and visible.</p> <p>Will normally occur in a landscape of high quality or value, but can also occur where the landscape is of lower quality but where the type of development proposed would be significantly out of character.</p>
<b>Medium</b>	<p>A landscape with reasonable ability to accommodate change. Change would lead to a limited loss of some features or elements, resulting in some loss of character and quality.</p> <p>Development of the type proposed would be visible but would not be especially discordant.</p> <p>Will normally occur in a landscape of medium quality or value, a low quality/value landscape which is particularly sensitive to the type of change proposed, or a high quality/value landscape which is well suited to accommodate change of the type proposed.</p>
<b>Low</b>	<p>A landscape with good ability to accommodate change. Change would not lead to a significant loss of features or elements, and there would be no significant loss of character or quality.</p> <p>Development of the type proposed would not be readily be visible or would not be discordant.</p> <p>Will normally occur in a landscape of low quality or value.</p>

1. Note that the above criteria are indicators of the types of landscapes which may be judged to be of the given sensitivity - they are not intended to be applied in full or literally in all cases.

15. **Landscape effects** were determined according to the interaction between magnitude of change and sensitivity, as summarised in Table 6 below. As noted in the GLVIA (section 5.55):

*'... susceptibility to change and value can be combined into an assessment of sensitivity for each receptor, and size/scale, geographical extent and duration and reversibility can be combined into an assessment of magnitude for each effect [i.e. magnitude of change]. Magnitude and sensitivity can then be combined to assess overall significance.'*



<b>Table 6 ~ Significance Criteria for Landscape Effects</b>	
<b>Significance</b>	<b>Typical Criteria<sup>1</sup></b>
<b>No Effect</b>	<p>The proposals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• complement the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape</li> <li>• incorporate measures for mitigation to ensure that the scheme will blend in well with the surrounding landscape</li> <li>• avoid being visually intrusive and adverse effects on the current level of tranquillity of the landscape</li> <li>• maintain existing landscape character in an area which is not a designated landscape nor vulnerable to change.</li> </ul>
<b>Insignificant</b>	<p>The proposals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• generally fit the landform and scale of the landscape</li> <li>• have limited effects on views</li> <li>• can be mitigated to a reasonable extent</li> <li>• avoid effects on designated landscapes.</li> </ul>
<b>Slight Adverse</b>	<p>The proposals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• do not quite fit the landform and scale of the landscape</li> <li>• will impact on certain views into and across the area</li> <li>• cannot be completely mitigated because of the nature of the proposal or the character of the landscape</li> <li>• affect an area of recognised landscape quality or value</li> <li>• would lead to minor loss of or alteration to existing landscape features or elements, or introduce some minor new uncharacteristic elements.</li> </ul>
<b>Moderate Adverse</b>	<p>The proposals are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• out of scale or at odds with the landscape</li> <li>• visually intrusive and will adversely impact on the landscape</li> <li>• not possible to fully mitigate</li> <li>• will have an adverse impact on a landscape of recognised quality or value, or on vulnerable and important characteristic features or elements</li> <li>• would lead to loss of or alteration to existing landscape features or elements, or introduce some new uncharacteristic elements.</li> </ul>
<b>High Adverse</b>	<p>The proposals are damaging to the landscape in that they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are at variance with the landform, scale and pattern of the landscape</li> <li>• are visually intrusive and would disrupt important views</li> <li>• are likely to degrade or diminish the integrity of a range of characteristic features and elements and their setting</li> <li>• will be damaging to a high quality or value, or highly vulnerable landscape</li> <li>• cannot be adequately mitigated</li> <li>• would lead to significant loss of or alteration to existing landscape features or elements, or introduce some significant new uncharacteristic elements.</li> </ul>
<b>Major Adverse</b>	<p>The proposals are very damaging to the landscape in that they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are at considerable variance with the landform, scale and pattern of the landscape</li> <li>• are visually intrusive and would disrupt fine and valued views</li> <li>• are likely to degrade, diminish or even destroy the integrity of a range of characteristic features and elements and their setting</li> <li>• will be substantially damaging to a high quality or value, or highly vulnerable landscape, or would fundamentally alter a less valuable landscape</li> <li>• cannot be adequately mitigated</li> <li>• would lead to extensive loss of or alteration to existing landscape features or elements, or introduce some dominant new uncharacteristic elements.</li> </ul>

1. Note that the above criteria are indicators of the types of situation in which landscape effects of the given level of significance may be expected - they are not intended to be definitions to be applied in full or literally in all cases.
2. Effects in the 'Major Adverse' category are unlikely to occur with most forms of development, but the scale set out above is intended to cover all potential forms of development in all landscapes, so this category is likely to apply only where the landscape is extremely sensitive and/ or where the development is at a very large scale or of a very intrusive nature.

**Table 6 ~ Significance Criteria for Landscape Effects (continued)**

Significance	Typical Criteria <sup>1</sup>
<b>Slight Beneficial</b>	<p>The proposals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fit the landform and scale of the landscape</li> <li>• will improve certain views into and across the area to a limited extent</li> <li>• can be effectively mitigated</li> <li>• remove small scale unattractive or discordant features</li> <li>• benefit an area of recognised landscape quality or value</li> <li>• would introduce some minor new or restored positive and characteristic elements.</li> </ul>
<b>Moderate Beneficial</b>	<p>The proposals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fit the landform and scale of the landscape</li> <li>• will improve certain views into and across the area</li> <li>• can be effectively mitigated</li> <li>• remove significant unattractive or discordant features</li> <li>• benefit a landscape of recognised quality or value, or enhance vulnerable and important characteristic features or elements</li> <li>• would introduce some new or restored positive and characteristic elements.</li> </ul>
<b>High Beneficial</b>	<p>The proposals provide significant benefit to the landscape in that they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are in accord with the landform, scale and pattern of the landscape</li> <li>• will improve important views</li> <li>• are likely to enhance a range of characteristic features and elements and their setting</li> <li>• will lead to improvement to a high quality or value, or highly vulnerable landscape</li> <li>• need no significant mitigation</li> <li>• would introduce some significant new or restored positive and characteristic elements.</li> </ul>
<b>Major Beneficial</b>	<p>The proposals provide very significant benefit to the landscape in that they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are in accord with the landform, scale and pattern of the landscape</li> <li>• will improve expansive and/or fine and valued views</li> <li>• are likely to significantly enhance a range of characteristic features and elements and their setting</li> <li>• will lead to substantial improvement to a high quality or value, or highly vulnerable landscape</li> <li>• need no mitigation</li> <li>• would introduce some extensive or highly significant new or restored positive and characteristic elements.</li> </ul>

1. Note that the above criteria are indicators of the types of situation in which landscape effects of the given level of significance may be expected - they are not intended to be definitions to be applied in full or literally in all cases.
2. Effects in the 'Major Beneficial' category are unlikely to occur with most forms of development, but the scale set out above is intended to cover all potential forms of development in all landscapes, so this category is likely to apply only where the landscape is extremely sensitive and/ or where the development leads to some major or widespread landscape improvements.

## VISUAL EFFECTS

16. For **visual** effects, the GLVIA (in section 2.20) differentiates between effects on specific views and effects on *'the general visual amenity enjoyed by people'*, which it defines 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.'*

There is obviously some overlap between the two, with **visual amenity** largely being an amalgamation of a series of views. This assessment therefore considers effects on specific views, but then also goes on to consider the extent to which effects on those views may affect general visual amenity, taking into account considerations such as the number of views within which the development may be present, the magnitude of change to those views, the discordance of the development, the relative importance of those views, and also the number and importance of other views in which the development is not present.

17. In describing the nature and content of a view, the following terms may be used:
- No view - no views of the site or development.
  - Glimpse - a limited view in which the site or development forms a small part only of the overall view.
  - Partial - a clear view of part of the site or development only.
  - Oblique - a view (usually through a window from within a property) at an angle, rather than in the direct line of sight out of the window.
  - Fleeting - a transient view, usually obtained when moving, along a public right of way or transport corridor.
  - Filtered - views of the site or development which are partially screened, usually by intervening vegetation, noting the degree of screening/filtering may change with the seasons.
  - Open - a clear, unobstructed view of the site or development.
18. For the purpose of the assessment visual change was categorised as shown in Table 7 below, where each level (other than no change) can be either beneficial or adverse:

Table 7 ~ Magnitude of Visual Change	
Category	Definition
<b>No change</b>	No discernible change.
<b>Negligible</b>	The development would be discernible but of no real significance - the character of the view would not materially change. The development may be present in the view, but not discordant.
<b>Low</b>	The development would cause a perceptible deterioration (or improvement) in existing views. The development would be discordant (or would add a positive element to the view), but not to a significant extent.
<b>Medium</b>	The development would cause an obvious deterioration (or improvement) in existing views. The development would be an obvious discordant (or positive) feature of the view, and/or would occupy a significant proportion of the view.
<b>High</b>	The development would cause a dominant deterioration (or improvement) in existing views. The development would be a dominant discordant (or positive) feature of the view, and/or would occupy the majority of the view.

19. **Sensitivity** was also taken into account in the assessment, such that a given magnitude of change would create a larger visual effect on a sensitive receptor than on one of lesser sensitivity (see Table 8 below). As discussed above for landscape sensitivity, the sensitivity of visual receptors is determined according to the susceptibility of the receptor to change and the value attached to the view in question, with higher value views being those from specific or recognised viewpoints or those from Public Rights of Way where users would be expected to be using the route with the intention of enjoying the views from it.

Table 8 ~ Criteria <sup>1</sup> for Determining Visual Sensitivity	
Sensitivity	Typical Criteria
<b>Very High</b>	Visitors to recognised or specific viewpoints, or passing along routes through statutorily designated or very high quality landscapes where the purpose of the visit is to experience the landscape and views.
<b>High</b>	Residential properties <sup>2</sup> with predominantly open views from windows, garden or curtilage. Views will normally be from ground and first floors and from two or more windows of rooms in use during the day <sup>3</sup> .  Users of Public Rights of Way with predominantly open views in sensitive or unspoilt areas.  Non-motorised users of minor or unclassified roads in the countryside.  Visitors to heritage assets where views of the surroundings are an important contributor to the experience, or visitors to locally recognised viewpoints.  Users of outdoor recreational facilities with predominantly open views where the purpose of that recreation is enjoyment of the countryside - e.g. Country Parks, National Trust or other access land etc.
<b>Medium</b>	Residential properties <sup>2</sup> with views from windows, garden or curtilage. Views will normally be from first floor windows only <sup>3</sup> , or an oblique view from one ground floor window, or may be partially obscured by garden or other intervening vegetation.  Users of Public Rights of Way with restricted views, in less sensitive areas or where there are significant existing intrusive features.  Users of outdoor recreational facilities with restricted views or where the purpose of that recreation is incidental to the view.  Schools and other institutional buildings, and their outdoor areas.  Motorised users of minor or unclassified roads in the countryside.
<b>Low</b>	People in their place of work.  Users of main roads or passengers in public transport on main routes.  Users of outdoor recreational facilities with restricted views and where the purpose of that recreation is incidental to the view.

1. Note that the above criteria are indicators of the types of situation in which visual sensitivity of the given level may be expected - they are not intended to be definitions to be applied literally in all cases.
2. There is some discussion in the GLVIA as to whether private views from residential properties should be included within an LVIA, as they are a private (rather than a public) interest, but they have been included in this assessment on the basis that they are likely to matter most to local people. The appropriate weight to be applied to such views can then be determined by the decision maker.
3. When (as is usually the case) there has been no access into properties to be assessed, the assumption is made that ground floor windows are to habitable rooms in use during the day such as kitchens/dining rooms/living rooms, and that first floor rooms are bedrooms.

20. **Visual effects** were then determined according to the interaction between change and sensitivity (see Table 9 below), where effects can be either beneficial or adverse. Where the views are from a residential property, the receptor is assumed to be of high sensitivity unless otherwise stated.

Table 9 ~ Significance Criteria for Visual Effects	
Significance	Typical Criteria <sup>1</sup>
No Effect	No change in the view.
Insignificant	The proposals would not significantly change the view, but would still be discernible.
Slight	The proposals would cause limited deterioration (or improvement) in a view from a receptor of medium sensitivity, but would still be a noticeable element within the view, or greater deterioration (or improvement) in a view from a receptor of low sensitivity.
Moderate	The proposals would cause some deterioration (or improvement) in a view from a sensitive receptor, or less deterioration (or improvement) in a view from a more sensitive receptor, and would be a readily discernible element in the view.
High	The proposals would cause significant deterioration (or improvement) in a view from a sensitive receptor, or less deterioration (or improvement) in a view from a more sensitive receptor, and would be an obvious element in the view.
Major	The proposals would cause a high degree of change in a view from a highly sensitive receptor, and would constitute a dominant element in the view.

1. Note that the above criteria are indicators of the types of situation in which visual effects of the given level of significance may be expected - they are not intended to be definitions to be applied literally in all cases.

21. **Photographs** were taken with a digital camera with a lens that approximates to 50mm (some additional photographs were taken with a zoom lens to magnify some aspects of the view, but with a 50mm lens view also included). This is similar to a normal human field of view, though this field of view is extended where a number of separate images are joined together as a panorama. Photographs were taken in February 2023, and visibility during the site visits was generally good (by definitions set out on the Met Office website, i.e. visibility was between 10 to 20km).
  
22. The Landscape Institute have produced guidance on the use of visualisations (Technical Guidance Note 06/19, Visual Representation of Development Proposals, September 2019). As its title suggests, this guidance is largely to do with how a proposed development is illustrated, but does also contain sections on baseline photography. Section 1.2.7 states that '*Photographs show the baseline conditions; visualisations show the proposed situation*', though it does then also go on to provide guidance for what it refers to as 'Type 1 Visualisations', which are in fact baseline images - 'Annotated Viewpoint Photographs'. The detailed guidance for these images suggests that panoramic images should be presented at A1 size. As this guidance is extensive, and is intended for use where visualisations such as photomontages are also produced, it has been followed for this assessment in terms of its general recommendations regarding lens types, noting where images have been combined into panoramas and the use of annotations to describe the content of the photographs and the extent of the site within them, but not in terms of all of the recommendations for presentation of images. The photographs included within this assessment are intended as general representations of what can be seen from the viewpoints used, and are not a replacement for observing the site and the views on the ground - any decision maker making use of this assessment should visit the site, and the







photographs are simply an *aide-memoire* to assist consideration following a site visit, not a replacement for it.

23. A useful concept in considering the potential visual effects of a development is that of the visual envelope (or zone of visual influence, ZVI). This is the area from within which the development would be visible. Any significant visual effects will therefore be contained within this area, and land falling outside it need not be considered in terms of visual effects. The area from within which the various elements of the proposed development would be visible has therefore been estimated using the manual approach set out in the GLVIA (section 6.7), with map interpretation, rough cross sections where required, site observation using an eye height of 1.7m and visualisation of the potential visibility of the proposed development. The boundary shown for the visual envelope is an estimate - it is not a firm or absolute boundary, and should be taken as an indication of the area from within which views of the development are likely to be possible. In some cases, some limited views of parts of the new development may be obtained from areas outside the identified visual envelope, from more distant properties or from elevated, distant vantage points, above intervening vegetation or other screening features, and such views are referred to where appropriate in the assessment.

## APPENDIX B ~ Framework Masterplan Drawing



**FRAMEWORK MASTERPLAN**  
 Illustrating Indicative Land Uses

KEY	
	Masterplan Boundary
	Existing A10
	Proposed Access road
	Proposed Entry points
	Proposed Access road junction points
	Informal Foot / Cycle paths through Landscape Areas
	Proposed Residential Development
	Proposed Primary Schools
	Proposed Retail - Community Use
	Proposed Community Use
	Proposed Employment Area
	Proposed Mix Use - Community Use
	Proposed Playspace / Playing Fields
	Proposed Green Amenity Open Space
	Proposed Attenuation Ponds
	Existing high pressure gas pipe offsets
	Existing high voltage overhead powerline offsets

