

**Land North of The Drove Way,
Istead Rise**

Landscape and Visual Impact
Assessment

Ptarmigan Land A Ltd
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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This landscape and visual impact assessment has been prepared by tor&co on behalf of Ptarmigan Land A Ltd to assess the potential landscape and visual effects arising from the proposed development at land to the north of The Drove Way, Istead Rise, Gravesend for up to 100 residential dwellings (Class C3), including the formation of new accesses from The Drove Way, the provision of new areas of public open space and all other associated infrastructure and ancillary works (all detailed matters reserved other than means of access).
- 1.2 This standalone report and its associated figures and appendices are to be read in conjunction with information submitted as part of this planning application.

References and data sources

- 1.3 In preparing this report the published documents and plans set out in table 1 have been referred to. The application site is from this point on simply referred to as *the site*.

Table 1: References and data sources

Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, 2013, Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Assessment (3rd edition)
Landscape Institute, 2021, Assessing landscape value outside national designations Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 02/21
Landscape Institute, September 2019, Visual Representation of Development Proposals Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 06/19
Landscape Institute, August 2024, Notes and Clarification on Aspects of GLVIA, Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note LITGN-2024-01
Natural England, October 2014, An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment
Natural England, June 2019, An Approach to Landscape Sensitivity Assessment – to inform spatial planning and land management
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, December 2024, The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)
Natural England – National Character Area Profiles & Map - North Kent Plain 113
The Landscape Assessment of Kent, October 2004
Jacobs Babbie, The Landscape Assessment of Kent, October 2004
Jacobs Babbie, Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment, May 2009
Kent Downs AONB Landscape Character Assessment, 2023
Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2024 to 2039, March 2025
Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy, September 2014
Gravesham Local Plan Policies Map, September 2014
Gravesham Local Plan (1994) First Review Saved and Deleted policies September 2014
Regulation 19 – Gravesham emerging Local Plan
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, December 2024, The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
Gravesham Borough Council Open Space Assessment and Standards, April 2016
Gravesham Borough Council Playing Pitch Assessment, Strategy and Action Plan, August 2016
Fields in Trust Standards 2024
Gravesham Stage 2 Green Belt Study Final Report, August 2020
Gravesham Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study, March 2020
GBC Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) November 2020

2.0 Planning policy

Relevant planning policy documents

- 2.1 The site lies within the administrative area of Gravesham Borough Council (GBC). The site location is illustrated on figure 1 and the site and study areas topography is illustrated on figure 2. The key planning documents applicable to the study area are at the national scale, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) December 2024 and National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) and at the local scale, the Gravesham Local Plan adopted September 2014. There are also supplementary planning documents with more detailed policies which have been taken into consideration. A review of these documents has been carried out identifying the key landscape-related planning designations, as well as relevant nature conservation and cultural heritage designations that will also have an impact in terms of the landscape. The most relevant are listed below, and the environmental designations are illustrated on figure 3. Details of the most relevant Local Plan policies are included in Technical Appendix A1.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), December 2024

- 2.2 The NPPF sets out the government's planning policies for England, the following of which are relevant to the landscape and visual assessment:

Achieving sustainable development

- Paragraph 8 – achieving sustainable development

Promoting healthy and safe communities

- Paragraph 103 – planning policies promoting open space, sport and recreation facilities

Making effective use of land

- Paragraph 124 – planning policies and decisions promoting effective use of land
- Paragraph 125 – list of considerations for planning policies and decisions
- Paragraph 129 – list of considerations for supporting development
- Paragraph 130 – making optimal use of the potential of each site

Achieving well-designed places

- Paragraph 131 – the requirement for good design
- Paragraph 134 – use of local or national design guides and codes
- Paragraph 135 – list of considerations for developments
- Paragraph 136 – the important contribution of trees

Protecting green belt land

- Paragraph 142 – the fundamental aim of the green belt
- Paragraph 143 – purposes of the green belt
- Paragraph 151 – enhancing the beneficial use of green belt
- Paragraph 153 – inappropriate development

- Paragraph 154 – exceptions to inappropriate development
- Paragraph 155 – further exceptions to inappropriate development

Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

- Paragraph 164 – planning for new development
- Paragraph 166 – local authorities should expect new development to

Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

- Paragraph 187 – list of planning policies and decisions that contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment
- Paragraph 193 – determining habitat and biodiversity principles

Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

- Paragraph 202 – importance of the historic environment
- Paragraphs 207, 208 and 210 – proposals affecting heritage assets
- Paragraphs 212, 213, 214, 215 and 216 – considering potential impacts

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

2.3 The NPPG is a web-based resource that supports the NPPF and contains government guidance, the following of which are relevant to the landscape and visual assessment:

- Paragraph: 001 Ref ID: 26-001-20191001 – Design: Process and tools
- Paragraph: 008 Reference ID: 64-008-20250225 – Green Belt: Considering the impact on the remaining Green Belt in the plan area
- Paragraph: 009 Reference ID: 64-009-20250225 – Green Belt: Proposals on grey belt land
- Paragraph: 010 Reference ID: 64-010-20250225 Green Belt: Proposals on grey belt land
- Paragraph 005 Ref ID: 8-005-20190721 – Natural Environment: Green Infrastructure
- Paragraph 006 Ref ID: 8-006-20190721 – Natural Environment: Green Infrastructure
- Paragraph 019 Ref ID: 8-019-20240214 – Natural Environment: Biodiversity, geodiversity and ecosystems
- Paragraph 029 Ref ID: 8-029-20190721 – Natural Environment: Trees and woodland
- Paragraph 036 Ref ID: 8-036-20190721 – Natural Environment: Landscape
- Paragraph 037 Ref ID: 8-037-20190721 – Natural Environment: Landscape
- Paragraph 004 Ref ID: 37-004-20140306 – Open space, sports and recreation facilities: Public rights of way and national trails

Gravesham Borough Council

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (adopted September 2014)

- 2.4 The Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy was adopted in September 2014. Policies contained within the local plan that are relevant to the landscape and visual assessment are as follows:

Strategic Objectives

- SO2 – Provide sufficient new homes
- SO8 – Preserve the openness of the Green Belt
- SO9 – Conserve and enhance the diverse rural landscape including the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and its setting.
- SO11 – Provision & enhancement of services & facilities
- SO14 – Ensure new development has a positive contribution
- SO15 – Improve opportunities for recreation, sport & walking.

Core Strategy

- Policy CS01 – Sustainable Development
- Policy CS02 – Scale & distribution of Development
- Policy CS11 – Transport
- Policy CS12 – Green Infrastructure
- Policy CS13 – Green Space, Sport & Recreation
- Policy CS15 – Housing Density
- Policy CS16 – Affordable Housing
- Policy CS18 – Climate Change
- Policy CS19 – Development & Design Principles
- Policy CS21 – Heritage & Historic Environment

Gravesham Local Plan First Review Adopted November 1994 - Saved policies

- 2.5 Saved policies from the 1994 relating to the Countryside have been reviewed. Those that would have been most relevant to the LVIA are struck out.
- 2.6 On review of the current policies, the key landscape related policies relevant to this site and assessment are.

Design for Gravesham – Design Code (SPD)

- 2.7 The Design for Gravesham – Design Code (SPD) is a supplementary planning document produced by Gravesham Borough Council. It offers guidance to support the implementation of policies outlined in the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014), with specific focus on Policy CS19 Development and Design principles.

Gravesham Borough Council Regulation 18 Plan

- 2.8 The southern part of the site was identified as a draft site allocation (GB62) within the Council's Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Document Regulation 18 Consultation in December 2020 (Stage 2). The stated

capacity is 75 residential dwellings. The site was identified as being a 'developable site' within the Strategic Land Availability Assessment (2020) which informed the draft allocation.

- 2.9 This draft allocation was also supported by the Stage 2 Green Belt Assessment (August 2020) which included this site (Ref IR4). There have been no updates to this evidence base which has been published by GBC.

Gravesham Borough Council Regulation 19 Plan (Draft)

- 2.10 It had been anticipated that the draft allocation would be carried through to the Regulation 19 version of the draft local plan. However, in advance of a Cabinet Meeting held on 2nd February 2026, a draft version of the Regulation 19 document was published online which does not include the site as a site allocation. No justification has been given concerning the reason why the previous draft allocation (GB62) on the site has not been carried forward, despite the Green Belt evidence base remaining unchanged.

- 2.11 The Regulation 19 draft policies of most relevance to landscape & visual are listed below.

- Strategic Objective 6 – “Gravesham is a Green and Riparian Borough and will be a borough that enhances our blend between the river and our green and open green spaces ensuring that space is accessible to everyone.”
- LP7 – New development in the green belt & rural areas.
- LP8 – Green Infrastructure
- LP11 – Achieving High Quality Design, Sustainability & Placemaking
- LP18 – Supporting sustainable communities
- LP20 – Open Space Sports and Leisure

Gravesham Borough Council Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) November 2020

- 2.12 The SHLAA produced as part of the Regulation 18 Stage 2 Consultation identifies sites within across the borough that are potentially suitable for future development. Within the assessment, (page 124 of un-numbered document) Land North of Drove Way, Istead Rise is identified as Parcel GB62.

- 2.13 The SHLAA states that the site is '*within the wider Istead Arable Farmlands LCA and an area of medium-low landscape sensitivity. Subject to the retention and enhancement of landscape planting, and safeguarding the biodiversity value of the area of priority habitat in the south east corner and along the eastern site boundary, the site is considered suitable for development.*'

- 2.14 The SHLAA assessment concludes: '*Overall, the site is suitable for development however the site is located within the Green Belt and this designation would need to change.*'

Gravesham Borough Council Stage 2 Green Belt Study

- 2.15 The Gravesham Stage 2 Green Belt Study was prepared on behalf of Gravesham Borough Council by LUC and published in August 2020. The overall purpose of the study is to undertake an independent, robust and transparent assessment of the potential harm to the purposes of the Green Belt (as set out in National Planning Policy Framework) of releasing land from the Green Belt in Gravesham for development.
- 2.16 The site, Land North of Drove Way, Istead Rise has been reviewed as part of that assessment and is identified as parcel IR4 (Appendix A of that study).
- 2.17 The assessment finds that In relation to purpose 1: 'Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas', that the parcel's contribution would be 'Relatively Limited'.
- 2.18 With regard to Purpose 2: 'Prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another' it states the parcel's contribution is 'Limited, no contribution" .
- 2.19 For purpose 3: 'Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment' it states the parcel's contribution is 'Relatively Significant' but this is based on contradictory statements. The assessment states that the '*Site is related to Istead Rise, limited relationship to wider open landscape beyond*'. This statement appears accurate. However this first part of the assessment is entirely contradicted by the statement that follows: "*it is open and uncontained and therefore still has a stronger relationship with countryside than with the settlement.*" This final part of the assessment is clearly incorrect due to the mature field hedgerows and tree belts that enclose the site, cementing its relationship with the developed edge of Istead Rise and divorcing it from the open arable land beyond.
- 2.20 The overall assessment, presumably based on the contradictory statements, concludes that '*Release of the parcel would constitute relatively significant encroachment on the countryside and relatively limited impact on the Green Belt's role in preventing sprawl of the large built-up area. It would constitute a negligible weakening of the integrity of adjacent Green Belt land. Therefore, the harm to the Green Belt purposes of releasing this parcel would be moderate.*'
- 2.21 It is concluded that the overall assessment is unsound due to the contradictions outlined above and that the overall harm would be closer to 'Low' or 'Low - Moderate'
- 2.22 Further detail on the Green Belt Studies is provided within the tor&co Grey Belt Appraisal that accompanies this planning submission. The findings are that development of the site would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt.

Gravesham Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study 2016

- 2.23 The GLSCS was prepared on behalf of Gravesham Borough Council by LUC and published in March 2016. The purpose of this study is to provide an assessment of the landscape and visual sensitivities within defined assessment parcels around existing defined settlements and hamlets within Gravesham Borough, and from this to make judgements regarding the capacity of the landscape within the Borough to accommodate new built development. Within the study, The site forms part of the wider parcel IR2/GR9 (Figure 1.1 of that report) and sits at the southernmost edge of the parcel adjacent to existing

residential dwellings at The Drove Way, Istead Rise. The study finds that Parcel IR2 has Medium-High capacity for '*Small Scale Development*' which is defined in table 2.3 as '*Two-storey residential dwellings - either terraced, semi-detached or detached - with associated access roads, private gardens and garaging.*'

3.0 Methodology

Study area

- 3.1 A 5.0 km study area was chosen based on the zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV) of the proposed development (figure 14), as this extends the study area to the Kent Downs National Landscape, to ensure potential effects could be taken into account. Ordinarily for a proposal of this form, scale, nature and landscape context, a study area of 2.5km would be applied as the visibility beyond this distance would be limited and therefore the development is unlikely to have any significant effects beyond this area. Further information on defining the study area can be found in Technical Appendix A2.

Baseline data collection

- 3.2 Published and adopted landscape character assessments (LCA) prepared by relevant authorities at varying levels, from national through to local assessments, have been referred to in order to identify the baseline landscape character, resources and associated value. Detailed fieldwork carried out within the site and immediate surroundings was used to check how applicable the landscape character assessments are to the study area. Further information on identifying landscape character, elements and features can be found in Technical Appendix A2.
- 3.3 Computer generated mapping has been used in combination with fieldwork to assess the potential visibility of the development proposals. A ZTV (figure 14) was produced and was analysed on site to assist with identifying visual receptors. Fieldwork was confined to accessible parts of the site, public rights of way, transport routes and other publicly accessible areas. Following analysis of the ZTV and fieldwork, a series of viewpoints from which the proposals may be seen by the individual or groups of visual receptors were identified. Further information on identifying visual receptors and viewpoints can be found in Technical Appendix A2.

Assessment

- 3.4 The assessment judges the potential effects of the proposals on the landscape and visual receptors that have been identified. The significance of a landscape and visual effect is determined by consideration of the sensitivity of the landscape and visual receptors and the magnitude of the landscape and visual effect as a result of the proposals. This assessment follows the *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*, (GLVIA) 3rd Edition, Landscape Institute (LI) and Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) (2013). Further details of the methodology used in the assessment is set out in full in Technical Appendix A2 and in figures A2.1 to A2.6. Details of the methodology used in the photographic survey are set out in Technical Appendix A3.
- 3.5 Landscape effects arise either from direct changes as a result of development in the physical elements of the receiving landscape, or from indirect effects on the character and quality of the surrounding landscape. The significance of a landscape effect is determined by consideration of the sensitivity of the landscape and the magnitude of effects that it will undergo. The guidance in figures A2.1 and A2.2 has been used to arrive at an evaluation of landscape

sensitivity and the assessment of the magnitude of effects. The degree of significance of effects on the landscape resource has been considered from a combined evaluation of landscape sensitivity and magnitude of effect, using the matrix in figure A2.3. Effects that are moderate or above are considered to be significant.

- 3.6 Visual effects arise from the changes in character and quality of people's views arising from a development. The significance of an effect on visual amenity is determined by the consideration of the sensitivity of the receptor (the occupation or activity of people experiencing the view) and the magnitude of the change. The guidance in figures A2.4 and A2.5 has been used to arrive at an evaluation of the sensitivity of visual receptors and the assessment of the magnitude of effect. The degree of significance of effect has been determined from a consideration of receptor sensitivity and magnitude of effect, using the matrix in figure A2.6. Effects that are moderate or above are considered to be significant.

Limitations and assumptions

- 3.7 In undertaking the assessment of landscape and visual effects of the proposals, the following assumptions have been made:
- Professional judgement is an important consideration in the determination of the overall landscape and visual effects and even with qualified and experienced professionals there can be differences in the judgements made
 - The accuracy of the Digital Surface Model (DSM) used to prepare the zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV) falls within acceptable limits; however, there are potential discrepancies between the DSM and the actual landform where there are minor topographic features that are too small to be picked up. The DSM can pick up the majority of the woodland and buildings, although areas can be missed between the Lidar 1 m grid (see Technical Appendix A2).
 - During fieldwork, any significant discrepancies in the ZTV are recorded and the assessment takes account of any differences. Fieldwork was confined to accessible parts of the site, public rights of way, transport routes and other publicly accessible areas
 - Private views from residential properties have not been assessed within this LVIA, as the LI guidance states that if required this is to be assessed separately within a distinct Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA). However, representative or specific viewpoints from adjacent publicly accessible streets or areas have been assessed to take into consideration views that may be afforded from receptors of a residential street / area
 - To illustrate all potential viewpoints from which the proposals will be seen by the different visual receptors within the study area is not practical and is unnecessary for the purposes of the LVIA.

4.0 Landscape baseline

- 4.1 The purpose of the baseline study is to record the existing landscape conditions against which the effect of the proposed development will be assessed. As part of the desktop assessment, previous classifications and evaluations of the surrounding landscape within the study area have been examined. The purpose of this was to assess whether the site shares any of these common landscape characteristics and to assess how typical or unique the site is within the landscape context. It also helps to understand the landscape characteristics of the study area and how the site interacts with them. Topography, designations, public rights of way and character assessment areas are illustrated on figures 2 to 8.

National Landscape Character Areas (figure 5)

- 4.2 Natural England's online National Character Area Profiles provide a description of the landscape character of the study area and the site at its broadest level. The site is located within national character area 113 North Kent Plain, whilst the wider study area extends into National character areas 119 North Downs (South) & 81 Greater Thames Estuary (North).

North Kent Plain Character Area (113)

- 4.3 The key characteristics of the North Kent Plain landscape character area are:
- An open, low and gently undulating landscape, characterised by high quality, fertile, loamy soils dominated by agricultural land uses.
 - The area's geology is dominated by Palaeogene clays and sands, underlain by the Chalk.
 - Geologically a chalk outlier – and historically an island separated from the mainland by a sea channel – Thanet forms a discrete and distinct area that is characterised by its unity of land use, arising from the high-quality fertile soils developed in thin drift deposits over chalk.
 - A diverse coastline (both in nature and orientation), made up of cliffs, intertidal sand and mud, salt marshes, sand dunes and shingle beaches. Much of the coastal hinterland has been built on, and the coast itself has been modified through the construction of sea walls, harbours and piers.
 - Large arable/horticultural fields with regular patterns and rectangular shapes predominating, and a sparse hedgerow pattern.
 - Orchards and horticultural crops characterise central and eastern areas and are often enclosed by poplar or alder shelterbelts and scattered small woodlands.
 - Woodland occurs on the higher ground around Blean and in smaller blocks to the west, much of it ancient and of high nature conservation interest.

- The Stour and its tributaries are important features of the eastern part of the NCA, draining eastwards into the North Sea, with associated wetland habitats including areas of grazing marsh, reedbeds, lagoons and gravel pits. The River Medway cuts through the NCA as it flows into the Thames Estuary.
- Other semi-natural habitats include fragments of neutral, calcareous and acid grassland, and also heathland.
- The area has rich evidence of human activity from the Palaeolithic period. Key heritage assets include Roman sites at Canterbury, Reculver and Richborough; the Historic Dockyard at Chatham; military remains along the coast; and historic parks and buildings.
- Large settlements and urban infrastructure (including lines of pylons) are often visually dominant in the landscape, with significant development around Greater London and the Medway Towns, as well as around towns further east and along the coast. Major rail and road links connect the towns with London.

Greater Thames Estuary Character Area (81)

4.4 The key characteristics of the North Kent Plain landscape character area are:

- An open, low and gently undulating landscape, characterised by high quality, fertile, loamy soils dominated by agricultural land uses.
- Eastern edge of the London Basin with its underlying geology of the extensive London Clay, containing important sites for geodiversity including fossiliferous deposits, and overlain by productive loamy soils derived from intertidal alluvial muds.
- Geological contrast and variety along the coastline provided by Sheppey, a long, low island rising from a stretch of very flat marsh along the Swale Estuary in Kent with low, steep clay cliffs facing towards Essex, and Mersea Island in the Blackwater Estuary in Essex.
- Coastline of major geomorphological interest for its coastal processes. Accretion of material carried by the sea from the north recharges intertidal coastal habitats, which are subject to coastal squeeze from rising sea levels.
- Open grazing pastures patterned by a network of ancient and modern reed-fringed drainage ditches and dykes, numerous creeks and few hedges or fences, with tree cover a rarity.
- Traditional unimproved wet pasture grazed with sheep and cattle combined with extensive drained and ploughed arable land protected from floods by sea walls, with some areas of more mixed agriculture on higher ground.
- Strong feelings of remoteness and wilderness persist on extensive salt marshes, mudflats and reclaimed farmed marshland, which support

internationally important plants, invertebrates and populations of breeding and overwintering birds, notably overwintering Brent geese.

- Open mosaic habitats on brownfield sites support nationally important invertebrate assemblages and key populations of rare invertebrate species.
- Distinctive landmarks of coastal military heritage including Napoleonic military defences, forts and 20th-century pillboxes.
- Some of the least settled parts of the English coast with numerous small villages and hamlets on higher ground and marsh edges reflecting medieval patterns and the coastal economy.
- Highly urbanised areas within London and on marsh edges subject to chaotic activity of various major developments including ports, waste disposal, marine dredging, housing regeneration, mineral extraction and prominent power stations plus numerous other industry-related activities.
- Increasing development pressures around major settlements and especially towards London, with urban, industrial and recreational sites often highly visible within the low-lying marshes.
- Major historical and current transport link to Inner London provided by the River Thames, with an extensive network of road and rail bridges spanning its reaches within the city.

North Downs Character Area (119)

4.5 The key characteristics of the North Downs landscape character area are:

- Cretaceous Chalk forms the backbone of the North Downs. A distinctive chalk downland ridge rises up from the surrounding land, with a steep scarp slope to the south providing extensive views across Kent, Surrey and Sussex and across the Channel seascape to France.
- The broad dip slope gradually drops towards the Thames and the English Channel, affording extensive views across London and the Thames Estuary. The carved topography provides a series of dry valleys, ridges and plateaux.
- Chalk soils are predominant across the NCA, but the upper part of the dip slope is capped by extensive clay-with-flint deposits. Patches of clay and sandy soils also occur with coombe deposits common in dry valleys.
- The North Downs end at the dramatic White Cliffs of Dover, one of the country's most distinctive and famous landmarks. Most of the coast between Kingsdown and Folkestone is unprotected, allowing for natural processes. The cliffs are home to internationally important maritime cliff-top and cliff-ledge vegetation.

- The area is cut by the deep valleys of the Stour, Medway, Darent, Wey and Mole. The river valleys cut through the chalk ridge, providing distinctive local landscapes which contrast with the steep scarp slope.
- The south-facing scarp is incised by a number of short, bowl-shaped dry valleys, cut by periglacial streams and often referred to as combes. The undulating topography of the dip slope has also been etched by streams and rivers, today forming dry valleys, some of which carry winterbournes that occasionally flow in the dip slope, depending on the level of the chalk aquifer.
- The footslope of the escarpment supports arable cropping, the dominant land use within the NCA. In the east, the richer, loamy soils of the lower dip slope support large tracts of mixed arable and horticultural production.
- Woodland is found primarily on the steeper slopes of the scarp, valley sides and areas of the dip slope capped with clay-with-flints. Well wooded hedgerows and shaws are an important component of the field boundaries, contributing to a strongly wooded character. Much of the woodland is ancient.
- Tracts of species-rich chalk grassland and patches of chalk heath are important downland habitats and of international importance.
- Ancient paths, drove roads and trackways, often sunken, cross the landscape and are a distinctive feature of the dip slope. Defensive structures such as castles, hill forts and Second World War installations, and historic parks, buildings and monuments are found throughout.
- Small, nucleated villages and scattered farmsteads including oasts and barns form the settlement pattern, with local flint, chalk and Wealden brick the vernacular materials.
- In the western part of the area, around and to the west of Sevenoaks and into Surrey, there is increased urban development.

West Kent Downs – National Landscape (Figure 7)

- 4.6 The West Kent Downs LCA is located in the west of the Kent Downs AONB, between the Darent Valley LCA (to the west) and the Medway Valley LCA (to the east). To the south is the Kemsing Scarp and Vale LCA. The northern boundary follows the AONB boundary and includes Cobham Park and Shorne Wood.
- 4.7 The key characteristics of the West Kent Downs landscape character area are:
- Underlying geology of Cretaceous chalk, overlain with clay-with-flints, and occasional pockets of sand and gravel.
 - A dip-slope landform of dry valleys running roughly north-south, interspersed with broad undulating ridges and plateaux.
 - Very little surface water, limited to occasional pools where clay impedes drainage.

- Extensive blocks of woodland, as well as strips of woodland on valley sides. Luxuriant hedgerows and (in places) parkland trees add to the sense of enclosure and of a well-treed landscape.
- Arable agriculture is the predominant land use, with some pasture. Fields vary in shape and size but are generally hedged.
- Semi-natural habitats include ancient woodland, chalk grassland, scrub and occasional small quarry sites. Veteran trees occur in parkland and woodland.
- A strongly historic landscape, much of which has seen relatively little landscape change. Historic settlements and churches are linked by a network of ancient lanes, within a setting of fields, woodland and historic parkland.
- Main roads are limited to the periphery, and the lanes which run through it are generally narrow, quiet and lined with trees or hedges. Some are sunken, particularly where they cut through valley sides.
- In much of the area, the topography and/ or woodland restrict views, creating an insular and intimate feel, but with occasional long views along valleys.
- A peaceful, rural feel and a sense of isolation contrasts with the nearby urban areas and busy roads.
- Deciduous woodlands and trees create strong seasonal changes in the landscape, particularly in spring and autumn.
- Cobham Park, Ranscombe Farm Reserve, Ashenbank Woods and Shorne Woods Country park are popular places for local people to visit and enjoy the countryside.

County landscape character areas (figure 6)

The Landscape Assessment of Kent (KCC) – October 2004

- 4.8 At the county level, Kent County Council have further refined and subdivided these character areas in the Landscape Assessment of Kent. The Landscape Assessment of Kent is a landscape character-based study that draws together existing landscape character assessments of the county. It covers the landscape character assessments for all districts/boroughs within the county including Gravesham Borough within which the site and study area lie.
- 4.9 The following character areas fall wholly or partly within Gravesham Borough:
- Dartford and Gravesend Fringes
 - Southfleet Arable Land
 - Ash Downs
 - Shorne

- Hoo Peninsula
 - Eastern Thames Marshes
 - Western Thames Marshes
 - Cobham
 - Luddesdown
- 4.10 The site lies within character area Southfleet Arable Lands. The assessment identifies the key characteristics of Southfleet Arable Lands landscape character area as being:
- Good quality soils developed on the Tertiary Beds overlying the chalk. A generally open arable landscape.
 - Open landscape allowing transport routes, pylons and settlement to dominate many areas.
 - Remnant unkept hedgerows, shelterbelts and woodland copses giving a scruffy and unmanaged feel.
 - Long views to the busy A2 (T) and Kent Thames-side beyond
- 4.11 The assessment also notes several distinctive rural heritage features within the character area such as: Hedgerows, Shelterbelts, Orchards & Woodland copses.
- 4.12 The assessment evaluates the visual and sensory impact and perception and notes that the area a large-scale landscape which has become fragmented with redundant and diverse elements and denuded of characteristic features. It requires simplification, but also acknowledgment of new functions.
- 4.13 Overall, the KCC assesses the condition and strength of character of the Southfleet Arable Lands landscape character area as poor/moderate with opportunities for improving and conserving. The assessments strategy and guidelines for managing change are:
- *Create a simplified pattern within the landscape using large blocks of woodland, large areas of arable fields*
 - *Create an edge to the urban area - restore some enclosure, using characteristic rural features*
 - *Create functional agricultural features*
 - *Create ecologically rich corridors*
 - *Restore the positive impact of historic highway features*
 - *Restore open and controlled views across open farmland*

Local landscape character areas (figure 8)

- 4.14 At the most local level, the site and study area are covered by the Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (GLCA). The GLCA was produced for Gravesham Borough Council by Jacobs Babbie. The document was adopted in May 2009.
- 4.15 The Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (GLCA) subdivides the borough into a further 11 character areas as listed below:
- Shorne and Higham Marshes
 - Botany Marshes
 - Higham Arable Farmland
 - Shorne Woods
 - Ashenbank and Cobham Parklands
 - Istead Arable Farmlands
 - Gravesend Southern Fringe
 - Meopham Downs
 - Luddesdown Downs
 - Harvel Wooded Downs
 - Vigo Scarp-top Woodlands
- 4.16 The site lies within character area Istead Arable Farmlands
- 4.17 Within the study area, the Istead Arable Farmlands character area entirely surrounds the site and extends north to the A2 dual carriageway and west to the district boundary. To the north of the site beyond the A2 (Watling Street) lies the Gravesend Southern Fringe character area. To the south of the site beyond the Istead Rise settlement lies Meopham Downs & Harvel Wooded Downs character areas. To the east of the site lie the Higham Arable Farmland, Shorne Woodlands, Ashenbank and Cobham Parklands and the Luddesdown Downs character areas.

Baseline landscape character areas

- 4.18 The published character assessments generally provide a broad overview of the landscape context and do not necessarily identify the subtle variations and intricacies of the local landscape characteristics of the site and surrounding area. For the purposes of this assessment, it is considered appropriate for the GLCA character assessment to be used to set the basis for determining the baseline landscape character areas of the site and the study area to be assessed. This is then augmented by the relevant information in the national and county character assessment and tor&co's own assessment of the value of the landscape of the site and its surrounding context.

4.19 Using the ZTV and through site investigation, the baseline study has established that for many of the surrounding character areas, the degree of intervening screening and/or distance means that the proposals would result in at worst, negligible effects, so will not be considered any further in this assessment. The character areas that will be assessed are:

- The Site
- Istead Arable Farmlands

The Site - refer to site views (figures 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13)

4.20 Whilst the site lies within the landscape character area Istead Arable Lands, this assessment establishes that, at a local scale the site has its own defining characteristics. The site itself comprises of a relatively small arable field, enclosed on the eastern, northern and western boundaries by hedgerows and mature trees which screen views in and out of the site.

4.21 To the south lies the rural settlement of Istead Rise the site of which the northernmost residential dwellings and gardens enclose the southern boundary of the site.

4.22 The site rises gently from approximately 58m above ordnance datum (AOD) at the western and north western areas of the site to approximately 63m AOD at the south & south eastern boundaries of the site.

4.23 To the north, there is an expansive area of open arable fields and occasional hedgerows beyond. Electricity transmission towers and overhead lines are a dominant feature of the open landscape.

4.24 To the south east, an area of mature woodland separates the site and the Istead Rise community centre playing pitches and recently refurbished play area. The southern boundary of the site backs onto the northernmost residential dwellings & gardens of Istead Rise.

4.25 The existing boundary vegetation, southern residential boundary and woodland block to the south east form a key landscape feature and resource of the site and assist in creating a degree of separation between the site and the wider landscape setting.

4.26 The tree survey conducted to BS 5837:2012 standards shows the site densely screened by vegetation on most boundaries, characterized by a diverse population of 273 trees forming mature green corridors and woodland parcels. The existing tree stock includes 3 Category A and 41 Category B specimens. The majority are Category C (181) or Category U (48). The western and northern boundaries feature native species such as oak and field maple reaching up to 12m, though it is noted some elms throughout the site are suffering from Dutch Elm Disease. The eastern boundary and the significant W246 woodland belt contain taller specimens up to 18m, dominated by ash and oak; however, Ash Dieback is prevalent in these areas, necessitating individual tree management. Additionally, the south-eastern orchard has become largely overgrown with invasive species and diseased elm, though it presents a restoration opportunity if the infected trees are removed to improve light levels.

- 4.27 Ecological findings within the site are set out in the Ecology Impact assessment and are summarised as commonly found habitats including cropland, mixed scrub and lowland deciduous woodland. The only ecological effects/features taken through to assessment were effects on bats. The ecology report describes embedded mitigation measures to address these effects.
- 4.28 There are no cultural or ecological designations within the site. However, the site is within Green Belt land surrounding the rural settlement of Istead Rise. A green belt assessment was produced to support the local plan review by LUC in August 2020 and identifies the site as parcel IR4. Paragraphs 2.12 to 2.18 describes the review of that assessment which assessed harm to the Green Belt as 'Moderate'. It is concluded that the overall assessment is unsound due to the clear contradictions and that the overall harm would be closer to 'Low' or 'Low-Moderate'
- 4.29 Within the green belt assessment, the harm to 'green Belt Purposes' from release of land has been assessed and it is found to be of 'Moderate' harm. Described as *'Release of the parcel would constitute relatively significant encroachment on the countryside and relatively limited impact on the Green Belt's role in preventing sprawl of the large built-up area. It would constitute a negligible weakening of the integrity of adjacent Green Belt land. Therefore, the harm to the Green Belt purposes of releasing this parcel would be moderate.'*
- 4.30 A single right of way, footpath NU27, runs north-south through along the north eastern boundary of the site which connects between Gravesham and the rural settlement edge of Istead Rise, crossing the A2 & HS1 Rail corridor to the north of the site linking with the wider public footpath network and Wrotham Road to the north.
- 4.31 Whilst the site is defined by its own characteristics, it is influenced by some of the key characteristics of the Istead Arable Farmlands landscape character area within which it lies. Notably, it is strongly influenced by the adjacent urban area of Istead Rise, the gently undulating landform and fields divided by tracks, roads and occasional hedgerows.
- 4.32 A landscape sensitivity and capacity study produced by LUC on behalf of Gravesham Borough Council in March 2016 to support the development of the Gravesham Local Plan assesses the site as having medium-high capacity for development of the kind proposed (see paragraph 2.23 for additional detail)
- 4.33 The GLCA assessment (p34) states that *'The open character of the landscape and consequential high visibility across the character area provide a moderate level of sensitivity'*. Whilst this may be broadly true for the majority of the area, the enclosed nature of the site and its location adjacent to development means that its sensitivity would be lower than the overall level.
- 4.34 Since the publication of this document, the principle of development on the site has been further explored in the Strategic Land Availability Assessment (2020) which informed the draft allocation for the Regulation 18 emerging Local Plan in which the site was identified as being a 'developable site'.

Table 2: Landscape value assessment – The Site

Landscape value criteria	Prevalence in character area
Natural heritage	There are no statutory nature conservation designations relating to the site. The ecology report summarises the site habitats as <i>commonly found habitats including cropland, mixed scrub and lowland deciduous woodland</i>. The only species identified for taking through to assessment is bats. The majority of the site area is an open arable field used for agricultural use. Medium
Cultural Heritage	The site has no cultural heritage designations and is not overlooked by any local heritage assets beyond the site. Low
Landscape condition	Site condition appears to be reasonable, with mostly healthy hedgerows and woodlands, if a little unmaintained and with some gaps. Medium
Associations	The site has no known cultural associations Low
Distinctiveness	The sites underlying character is rural but development overlooking the site provides much of its setting and erodes its rural distinctiveness. Low
Recreational	The public right of way NU27 adjacent to the eastern boundary of the site and evidence of use of informal paths around the boundaries of the site. Medium
Perceptual (scenic)	The field itself retains some rural character but there is only a limited sense of the wider landscape beyond and the development to the south strongly detracts from the scenic qualities. Low
Perceptual (wildness and tranquillity/dark skies)	The woodland parcel within the site provides a limited degree of wildness but the close proximity of adjacent development reduces the tranquillity of the site and limits dark skies. Low
Functional	The site is made up of an agricultural field with mature boundary planting which also has ecological and biodiversity value. Additionally the site forms part of the green belt. Medium

**Landscape Value
Assessment
conclusion**

The site area is a field, but it is not located in a rural context due to the adjacent development of Istead Rise, that is a dominant visual element. It scores medium for some criteria but low for others. Therefore its overall value is assessed as:
Low-Medium

Istead Arable Farmlands

- 4.35 Istead Arable Farmlands lies to the south of Gravesend and the Channel Tunnel Rail Link (CTRL). It stretches from the western boundary of Gravesham Borough, to the edge of Cobham and Ashenbank Wood in the east. This character area includes the site. The site itself is described in paragraphs 4.20 to 4.34. The full extent of the character area is largely contained within the study area.
- 4.36 The topography is gently undulating, allowing wide, open views out towards the urban edge of Gravesend and the CTRL to the north. To the north west the landscape is dominated by open arable agricultural land, divided by tracks and roads. To the south east there are native hedgerows and occasional poplar shelterbelts. Fields are medium to large and form a regular pattern with boundaries running distinctly from north to south and east to west. A series of high points at approximately 35 to 70 m AOD run centrally along the character area with the land generally falling north towards the Thames estuary at 5m AOD.
- 4.37 The medium rural settlement of Istead Rise lies central to character area. The settlement edge of Northfleet Green, a small rural hamlet along Northfleet Green Road and Cobham also form part of the area's settlement pattern. Beyond this lie several isolated farmsteads scattered throughout the area. Whilst there are no conservation areas within the study area, the area does contain several listed buildings, notably Downs Hall which is located on the southwestern edge of Istead Rise to the south of the site.
- 4.38 The Istead Arable Farmlands has a generally rural, open agricultural character comprising of gently undulating topography with open arable fields divided by tracks, roads and occasional hedgerows. The area also features minor native woodland clumps and orchards to the east. The few roads, which are open in character, connect clusters of properties and farmsteads scattered throughout the area with the urban fringes of Gravesend to the north and Meopham to the south. Istead Rise, a modern housing development lies centrally to the character area and forms a strong visual buffer to the south edge of the character area.
- 4.39 Fields are medium to large and form a regular pattern with boundaries running distinctly from north to south and east to west. Minor clumps of native woodland appear sporadically across the landscape, reducing the vastness of the open arable landscape. To the east fruit orchards, with pollarded hedgerow boundaries, are the dominant land use. There is a stronger sense of enclosure within the orchards. The combination of tree lined field boundary hedgerows and woodland clusters restrict visibility within the area. Views across the Istead Arable Farmlands are confined by vegetation and the gentle landform. Longer distance views are only generally attained from the higher ground to the north along the CTRL corridor.

- 4.40 Pages 34 and 35 of the assessment set out guidelines to restore features and patterns of the landscape and creating elements that support the landscape character. Of these, the most relevant to the proposals is *'Create design standards in keeping with local character for new developments within the area.'*

Table 3: Landscape value assessment – Character Area: Istead Arable Farmlands (Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment May 2009)

Landscape value criteria	Prevalence in character area
Natural heritage	There are several sites designated 'Local Wildlife Sites' to the south east of Istead Rise, however the ecological integrity of the majority of the area is poor because of the dominance of arable land and limited amounts of hedgerow and woodland clumps. Low-Medium
Cultural Heritage	The Gravesham Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity study notes that 'the bridleway that crosses the landscape running from Gravesend to Istead Rise is an important local cultural feature, likely to have historic origins as one of the routes (Drove Ways) connecting the Thames to the Downs.' There are also a few isolated listed buildings within the character area between Istead Rise and Cobham. Low-Medium
Landscape condition	The pattern of elements within the landscape is coherent, with regular shaped fields and a network of tracks along field boundaries. However, other factors are consistent throughout the area, including the topography, infrequency of roads. Electricity pylons dominate the area and although there are few other detractors, the scale and frequency of the large pylons is a significant visual detractor within the landscape. Visual unity is interrupted. Low
Associations	There are no known cultural associations for the area Low
Distinctiveness	Distinct landscape elements comprise isolated buildings and farmsteads that contribute towards local distinctiveness through their traditional style and use of materials. Enclosure provided by ditch lines and remaining hedgerows provides historic features. However, many features and elements of the landscape are indistinct and recent, and overall there is a weak sense of place. Low

Recreational	A section of the Wealdway, a 129km national trail, linking Gravesend with Eastbourne, and 'the Drove Way' historic bridleway runs through the character area to the east of Istead Rise. A network of public footpaths crosses the land, often running diagonally across arable fields. Medium
Perceptual (scenic)	The open, rural and agricultural character that defines the area is somewhat diminished by the presence of large electricity transmission towers and overhead lines running north-west to south-east that form a dominant feature and are widely visible across the character area which detracts from the scenic qualities of the area. Low
Perceptual (wildness and tranquillity/dark skies)	The open field networks of heavily managed agricultural land detract from the sense of wildness within the area. The adjacent A2 & CTRL corridor and local settlements reduce tranquillity and also limit potential for dark skies across the majority of the character area. Low
Functional	The area lies within the green belt designation and whilst there is some fragmentation in terms of land use the majority of the area is under intensive arable use, fruit orchards dominate the eastern corner of the area. Roads are open yet infrequent and are all minor with the exception of the slightly busier A227 Wrotham Road that runs north south, linking Gravesend with Meopham and the A2 & CTRL corridors to the north. Medium
Landscape Value Assessment conclusion	The area mainly comprises of heavily managed active farmlands and orchards divided by infrequent roads, hedgerows and woodland clusters which is visually dominated by a network of large pylons traversing the landscape whilst sitting adjacent to the A2 & CTRL links. Therefore the overall value is assessed as: Low-Medium

Visual baseline

Views of the site

- 4.41 A computer-generated model of the zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV) in combination with fieldwork has been used to determine the potential visibility of proposed development from within the study area. The ZTV was checked during fieldwork accessing publicly accessible locations to ascertain its accuracy and aided identification of viewpoints. Figure 14 shows the ZTV of the

proposals. To produce it, the maximum building heights (10m; allowing for 9.5m building height and + or - 0.5m ground level changes) were imported into the digital surface model. The height from which the proposed development would be viewed was set at 1.5m. For full details of the methodology used, refer to Technical Appendix A2.

- 4.42 The following paragraphs describe the range of views identified using the ZTV and fieldwork and considers the degree of visibility of the site and the potential visibility of the proposals.
- 4.43 Twelve representative viewpoints have been selected within the study area to illustrate how the site is experienced by the identified visual receptors. The viewpoints chosen provide a representative selection of views from locations where the site is visible and cover a range of receptors from varying directions and distances. The viewpoint locations are illustrated on figure 15 and the photographic viewpoints are illustrated on figures 16 to 27. The viewpoints themselves are not assessed as they are intended to be representative of the range of views that could be experienced by the receptor. It is the impacts visual amenity experienced by people (the visual receptors) that is assessed. The assessment of visual effects is set out in Section 7.
- 4.44 Visual receptors that may be potentially affected by the development proposals are identified and set out in Table 4.
- 4.45 Site views S1, S2, S3 and S4 (figures 9-13) illustrate the strong visual enclosure of the site. The site is visually well-contained by strongly vegetated boundaries to the north, east and west. To the immediate south of the site, development on The Drove Way and, to a lesser extent, Fairview Road south west of the site effectively form a visual barrier, screening the site from the remaining settlement area of Istead Rise.
- 4.46 Views from the local landscape to the north are increasingly restricted with distance, by intervening vegetation. The clearest views towards the site are very localised, gained from Bridleway NU27 that passes adjacent to the east of the site (representative view R2) and crosses over the agricultural land between Istead Rise and Gravesend, north of the site. Representative viewpoint R1 shows the view from NU27 approximately 150m north of the site. The photograph of Viewpoint 1 in figure 16 shows the strong effect of the site boundary vegetation, screening the site and the existing edge of Istead Rise.
- 4.47 Representative view R5 (figure 20) is from PRow NU28, approximately 500m north west of the site. Even at these relatively close viewpoints the role of the site boundary vegetation combined with the intervening trees and hedgerows and rising topography screens the site and most of the existing development at Istead Rise, with the exception of development at Fairview Road, which is visible west of the site, but not prominent, being partly screened by vegetation.
- 4.48 Views from further to the north are very limited due to topography and intervening vegetation, but there are areas of potential visibility from the southern edge of Gravesham in the A2/CTRL corridor area. Representative view R7 (figure 22) from Hog Lane demonstrates the cumulative screening effects of intervening vegetation in views from this area, with the site and Istead Rise effectively imperceptible.

- 4.49 Views from the local area east of the site are very limited due to the woodland on and beyond the eastern part of the site and intervening development in the eastern area of Istead Rise. Representative viewpoint R3 from the recreation ground east of the site shows the effective screening effect of the woodland on the eastern side of the site.
- 4.50 Intervening vegetation and topography also limit views from the wider landscape to the east, with small pockets of potential visibility to the north east illustrated by representative View R8 (figure 23) from PRoW NU29 (part of the Weald Way long distance path). In this view, the eastern part of Istead Rise is visible as is the woodland east of the site, but the site itself is screened by the woodland and other vegetation.
- 4.51 Further to the east, the ZTV suggests pockets of visibility approximately 2.5-3.5km to the south east in the area of Jeskyns Community Wood and Round Street and Camer, but following site investigation (in those parts that are publicly accessible), the conclusion is that the amount of intervening development and vegetation, combined with topographic factors means that the proposals would either not be perceived or not be easily perceptible. In views from the north east. Views from this location on the western edge of the Kent Downs National Landscape are illustrated by representative View R10 (figure 25) from Camer Road near Camer Park.
- 4.52 From the local area to the south, there are restricted public views of the site from The Drove Way (the street immediately to the south of the site), with site vegetation being visible from cul de sac locations and occasionally seen through the gaps between houses. Representative view R4 (figure 19) illustrates one of the clearer views from the street towards the site. Views from private dwellings are not assessed as part of the LVIA process as explained in paragraph 3.7, but views experienced by local residents are taken account of as part of the assessment of views from roads and recreation routes that those residents would experience.
- 4.53 Areas of public visibility from further south within Istead Rise were not identified, mainly due to the density of intervening development.
- 4.54 The ZTV identifies areas of potential visibility from the area of landscape south of Istead Rise. Views from along the corridor of the A277 Wrotham Road are limited by roadside vegetation and for the few available views, the intervening development and vegetation screen the site. Views further to the south at Park Hill approximately 2km south of the site, are also very restricted by lane-side vegetation, but where clearer views are available, the intervening development and vegetation means the site is not perceived.
- 4.55 To the south west of the site, the ZTV indicates an area of potential visibility from an area of agricultural land on rising ground extending up to the settlement of New Barn. Representative view R9 (figure 24) from PRoW DN37 shows how the site lies behind the intervening area of existing development of Istead Rise. Development at Gravesend is visible in the distance. The site vegetation is visible.
- 4.56 From the west, the ZTV indicates potential visibility from Hook Green Road area approximately 2.5km to the west of the site. Representative view R11 (figure 26) from PRoW DR144 shows that a combination of topography and intervening vegetation results in the site being imperceptible.

- 4.57 The ZTV also indicates visibility from rising ground approximately 4km west of the site. Most of these areas of potential visibility are not publicly accessible, but Representative viewpoint R12 (figure 27) from PRoW DR24 east of Bean at the top of a ridge of high ground represents a probable 'worse case' view from this grouping of areas of visibility. In this view, the site is visible in the distance, lying north of the existing development at Istead Rise. The majority of the site area is screened by boundary vegetation, and it is a small component of the overall view.
- 4.58 Table 4 sets out the identified key visual receptors including an assessment of view value, considered in the LVIA.

Table 4 Visual receptors		
Visual receptor	Location	Identified viewpoint(s)
Residential streets/areas including public open spaces	From the residential street of The Drove Way Paragraph 4.52 describes the restricted views from the Drove Way. The receptor group experiencing these views is likely to include persons living in the local area or visiting the street. The value attached to the views is assessed to be low as the views are of limited scenic quality, are in a developed context and have no significant associations.	Viewpoint R4 figure 19
	From the Istead Rise recreation ground and community centre public open space east of the site Paragraph 4.49 describes the views from the recreation ground, illustrated by representative viewpoint R3. This receptor group is likely to include persons living in the local area using the local play, sport and community facilities and recreation amenities, as it is not a tourist or well-known recreation location outside the local area. The value attached to the views for users is assessed to be medium as the views of the enclosed recreation area are pleasant but of limited scenic quality. The views have no significant associations.	Viewpoint R3 figure 18
Recreational routes	Users of public rights of way adjacent to the site and in the local area north of the site (Bridleway NU27 and Footpath NU28) Paragraphs 4.46 and 4.47 describe views experienced by this receptor group which is likely to include persons living in the local area using the local PRoW network, as it is not a tourist or well-known recreation location The value attached to the views for recreational users is assessed to be low-medium as the views are mainly of agricultural land of limited scenic quality and whilst most of the sections of PRoW pass through fields, the visual amenity is in the context of an area where development and electricity transmission infrastructure is a strong component of the views. The views have no significant associations.	Viewpoint R1, R2 and R5, figures 16, 17 and 20
	Users of publicly accessible areas in the A2/CTRL corridor area including Bridleway NU48 (Hog Lane) approximately 1.1km to the north of the site	Viewpoint R7, figure 22

	Paragraphs 4.48 describes the limited views available from this area of publicly accessible land experienced by this receptor group. This receptor group is likely to include persons living in the local area using the local PRow network and recreation amenities, as it is not a tourist or well-known recreation location The value attached to the views for recreational users is assessed to be low as the views are of limited scenic quality and is in the context of an area where development and road, rail and electricity transmission infrastructure is a strong component of the views. The views have no significant associations.	
	Users of PRow NU29 (part of Weald Way) approximately 1.1km to the east of the site Paragraphs 4.50 describes the limited views available from this section of The Weald Way. The site in this view is screened by the woodland east of the site. The eastern part of Istead Rise is however clearly visible This receptor group is likely to include persons living in the local area using the local PRow network, as well as persons using it as part of the long-distance recreation route The value attached to the views for recreational users is assessed to be moderate as the views in this section of path are of limited scenic quality and is in the context of an area where development and road, rail and electricity transmission infrastructure are dominant components of the context of the view, but it is a view from a regional recreation asset.	Viewpoint R8, figure 23
	Users of public right of way approximately 1km to the south west of the site (Footpaths DN37, NU38 and DR142) Paragraph 4.55 describes the views from this area, illustrated by Representative View R9. This receptor group is likely to include persons living in the local area of New Barn using the local PRow network and recreation amenities, as it is not a tourist or well-known recreation location The value attached to the views for recreational users is assessed to be low-medium as the views are mainly of agricultural land of limited scenic quality and whilst most of the sections of PRow pass through fields, the visual amenity is in the context of an area where development and electricity transmission infrastructure is a strong component of the views. The views have no significant associations.	Viewpoint R9, figure 24
	Users of public right of way 2.5km to the west of the site (Footpath DR144). Paragraph 4.56 describes the views from this area, illustrated by Representative View R11 from PRow DR144. This receptor group is likely to include persons living in the local area of Hook Green/Southfleet/Longfield/New Barn using the local PRow network The value attached to the views for recreational users is assessed to be medium as the views are mainly of agricultural land of moderate scenic quality and where development and electricity transmission infrastructure is not a strong component of the views as is the case for other receptors. The views have no significant associations.	Viewpoint R11, figure 26
	Users of public right of way approximately 4km west of the site (footpaths DR24, DR25, DR28 and DR47) Paragraph 4.57 describes the views from this area, illustrated by Representative View R12 from PRow DR24.	Viewpoint R12 figure 27

	The value attached to the views for recreational users is assessed to be medium-high as the views are mainly of rural landscape of good scenic quality and where development and electricity transmission infrastructure is a not a strong component of the views as is the case for other receptors. The views have no significant associations.	
Kent Downs National Landscape	Persons on western edge of National Landscape Paragraph 4.52 describes the views from this area, illustrated by Representative View R10. This receptor group is likely to include persons living in the local area of New Barn using the roads, local PRoW network and recreation amenities. The value attached to the views is assessed to be high as the views are mainly of agricultural land of limited scenic quality and viewed from the edge of the National Landscape. The views have no significant associations.	Viewpoint R10 figure 25
Places of employment	Farmland in area of site There is farmland, farm buildings and employment buildings in the immediate area of the site. The ZTV indicates potential visibility of the proposals from parts of the farmland. The receptors will be predominantly farmworkers. The value attached to the views for people working in the area is assessed to be low to medium as the views are of limited scenic quality and mostly in a developed context and have no significant associations.	Viewpoints 1, 5, 6, 8 and 9

5.0 Development proposals

- 5.1 The proposal is for the provision of up to 100 residential dwellings (Class C3), including the formation of new accesses from The Drove Way, the provision of new areas of public open space and all other associated infrastructure and ancillary works.
- 5.2 The submitted Parameter Plan and the Design and Access Statement (DAS) together describe and illustrates the development proposals and should be read alongside this LVIA.
- 5.3 As part of this landscape assessment process, initial findings have informed the design of the development framework for the proposals. The main elements of the proposals that might result in potential landscape and visual effects and the mitigation measures that have been taken account of in the assessment are set out in the following paragraphs.

Primary and secondary mitigation

- 5.4 The potential impacts on the landscape and visual resources were a significant consideration from the outset of the design process and informed the site layout, building heights, and landscape proposals. The need to retain and accommodate key landscape elements such as the boundary hedgerows and trees, and the likely effect on receptors both within and beyond the development boundaries, influenced and guided the proposals. As a result, the scheme has been designed to retain and protect the landscape resources of the site and its landscape setting.
- 5.5 The landscape strategy has guided the development of a set of measures that will have a significant effect in removing, reducing or mitigating the limited landscape and visual effects. The proposals also seek to maximise the ecological and landscape value of the site's landscape resources. The planting proposals are designed to fit into and complement the local landscape and seek to enhance the habitat structure and biodiversity of the local area and have been informed by the ecological report.
- 5.6 Key primary measures to minimise the initial predicted impacts of the proposed development include the following:
- Retain, protect and enhance all of the existing hedgerows and trees on the site boundaries, with limited removal only where needed to enable essential access or other essential infrastructure.
 - Avoid development within the root protection zones of trees and hedgerows except where essential to enable the new vehicle and pedestrian/cycle accesses.
 - The planting proposals are designed to replicate and complement the local landscape character and seek to enhance the habitat structure and biodiversity of the local area and have been informed by the ecological report.
 - Building height restricted to 2-2.5 storeys (10m allowing for + or - 0.5m ground level changes) to limit visibility in the wider landscape and assimilate with prevailing local development form.

- 5.7 Secondary mitigation measures with potential to further reduce potential impacts will come forward during detailed design at the reserved matters application stage. Measures would reflect the planting strategy which is primarily designed to achieve the biodiversity net gain requirements, but would also contribute to providing an attractive setting, softening the effects of development and reinforcing the wooded appearance of the local landscape character. Specific measures would include:
- A minimum of 30 no. individual trees in the new open space, green infrastructure areas;
 - New areas of deciduous woodland established adjacent to existing boundary vegetation;
 - Open space areas managed mostly as species rich grassland providing a rich habitat for insects, mammals and nesting birds contributing to the rural edge landscape character of the proposals;
 - Existing retained grassland along the hedgerow margins will be managed to maximise wildlife connectivity;
 - The proposals seek to maximise the ecological and landscape value of the site's landscape resources with appropriate management and enhancement.

Predicted sources of landscape and visual effects

- 5.8 The principal sources of change to landscape resources and visual amenity arise from the introduction of new built forms and landscape elements. The changes that could occur to the landscape can be separated into temporary (that occur only during construction) and permanent changes that occur at both construction and post construction.
- 5.9 In terms of the changes some may be beneficial, resulting in an improvement in quality or landscape resources, while others may be adverse. Some changes may initially be perceived as adverse, but on establishment and maturity may result in a gradual improvement as new landscape resources replace or supplement the existing. This makes qualitative evaluation more difficult. Sudden change in a familiar landscape is almost always initially prominent, but its perceived significance soon fades with acceptance. The elements that will give rise to landscape and visual effects are summarised in the following paragraphs.

Predicted temporary effects during construction

- 5.10 The following activities will cause temporary changes to landscape and visual receptors during all phases of the construction period:
- Infrastructure provision – building access roads / connection to services / trenching operations
 - The erection of temporary protective and security fencing as well as hoarding to reduce noise impact
 - Site compounds and contractors' car parking
 - Site excavation and the movement of site soils for the construction of the new vehicular access

- Introduction of large construction plant and machinery such as cranes and their associated movement and noise, both to and from the site and around the site
- Temporary lighting and signage associated with construction works
- Changes to the surrounding roads due to the movement of additional heavy machinery during construction
- Construction related noise affecting local levels.

Predicted permanent effects both at construction and at completion (post-construction)

5.11 The following elements will result in permanent changes affecting landscape and visual receptors:

- Removal of 7 trees (6C category and 1 U category as detailed in the Arboricultural Impact Assessment) to enable vehicle and pedestrian/cycle access;
- Removal of field vegetation (grassland) in areas to be developed leaving grassland in root protection zones and retained areas of field margin intact except at access points where RPAs/margins are crossed;
- Minor site level changes, mainly involving foundations, creation of new road infrastructure and the creation of development platforms;
- Construction of a residential development of up to 100 dwellings (2-2.5 storeys) including access and open space infrastructure;
- Introduction of a new vehicular and an emergency access via The Drove Way;
- Introduction of new pedestrian/cycle links with PRow NU27;
- Introduction of lighting associated with residential development;
- Provision of new flood attenuation features;
- Creation of new informal open spaces, green infrastructure, footpath network and natural play features;
- Introduction of new trees, woodland and grassland;
- Ecological enhancements to the site's existing landscape features/resources.

6.0 Predicted effects on landscape character

- 6.1 The effects on the landscape resources identified in the baseline Section 4 are assessed in the following assessment sheets L1 and L2 for the two character areas identified for assessment; The site (L1) and character area Istead Arable Farmlands (L2).
- 6.2 The assessment has been undertaken with reference to the receptor sensitivity and magnitude of effects tables and the degree of significance of effects matrix in figures A2.1 to A2.6.

Assessment Sheet L1 - Landscape effects on the site

Sensitivity of the landscape receptor

Value of the landscape receptor

The value of the site landscape is assessed in Section 4, Table 2 of this report. The site value is assessed as **Low-Medium**

Susceptibility to change:

The intrinsic farmland character of the site is strongly compromised by the urbanising influences of neighbouring residential development which is of a similar nature and scale and therefore its susceptibility to change from farmland fields to residential area is moderated. The site is divorced from its wider landscape context of open fields by the strong vegetated boundaries to the north, east and west. The site's boundary vegetation and field margins contribute much of the value of the site, help define its character and are robust elements able to accommodate the development and remain as thriving hedgerows and trees subject to that development not encroaching on the root protection areas, as is the case for this proposal. These are retained with the exception of a very small proportion removed to enable access. The site resources to be removed are predominantly the agricultural field areas that are of limited landscape value. The most valued landscape elements of the site are therefore able to accommodate the proposed development and are retained and enhanced, but the field area element will be lost. In terms of policy, the key landscape policy is C12, Green Infrastructure. The proposals will provide the stated biodiversity elements, they do not affect designated sites, the elements of the site that contribute to biodiversity are retained and enhanced and the proposals will have only minor and localised impact on landscape character with no effect on valued landscape of National Landscape areas. The susceptibility of the landscape receptor to the proposed development is therefore considered to be **medium**.

<i>Sensitivity of landscape receptor</i>	Taking account of the Low-Medium value and Medium susceptibility, the landscape character of the site is judged to be of medium sensitivity.
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Landscape effects during construction

Size/scale:

A large degree of activity and disturbance will be evident during construction, with movement of machinery around the site and introduction of construction elements and removal of limited vegetation to enable access and removal of the majority of the agricultural field area. However, a moderate proportion of the field and margins will be retained and (with the exception of minor removal for access) the key areas of vegetation will not be affected. This would retain a strong degree of visual enclosure and an important component of the rural characteristics of the site

Geographical extent:

The effects during construction will influence the entire site, but physical removal will only affect part of the field area.

Duration:

The landscape effects during construction will be medium term and temporary.

Reversibility:

The landscape effects during construction will mostly not be reversible.

<i>Magnitude of landscape effect</i>	The magnitude of landscape effects during construction will be medium adverse and temporary.
<i>Significance of landscape effects</i>	The significance of landscape effect during construction will therefore be moderate adverse and significant .

Landscape effects at completion

Size/scale:

The proposals include the retention of the vast majority of the boundary vegetation with the exception of 7 trees (6C category and 1 U category as detailed in the Arboricultural Impact Assessment) to enable access into the site, so this element will remain unchanged. The scale and nature of the development will be similar to the existing development context in terms of height and residential nature but will be a large change in character from the developed parts of the current field area.

Geographical extent:

The effects of the proposals will influence much of the field area of site, but with significant outer areas of field and margin incorporated into open space areas and all of the boundary vegetation retained.

Duration:

The landscape effects at completion will be long term and beyond 25 years

Reversibility:

The landscape effects at completion will be permanent

Seasonal variation:

It is not anticipated that there would be a seasonal difference in the magnitude of effects.

<i>Magnitude of landscape effect</i>	The magnitude of landscape effects at completion will be medium adverse and permanent.
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<i>Significance of landscape effects</i>	The degree of significance of landscape effect at completion will therefore be moderate adverse and significant .
Night time landscape effects at completion	
Lighting will be introduced within the site, and this will be seen in the context of the existing light associated with the adjoining developed area.	
<i>Magnitude of landscape effect</i>	The magnitude of night-time landscape effects at completion will be medium adverse and permanent.
<i>Significance of landscape effects</i>	The degree of significance of landscape effect at night will therefore be moderate adverse and significant .
Landscape effects 15 years after completion	
After 15 years the additional proposed landscape planting in addition to the management and enhancement of existing boundary vegetation will ensure the vegetated nature setting of the site is maintained. However, although the planting will have matured there will continue to be the underlying change in character to the developed part of the field area.	
<i>Magnitude of landscape effect</i>	The magnitude of landscape effects 15 years after completion will be medium adverse and permanent.
<i>Significance of landscape effects</i>	The degree of significance of landscape effect 15 years after completion will therefore be moderate adverse and significant .

Assessment Sheet L2 - Landscape effects on landscape character area Istead Arable Farmlands (Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment May 2009)

The site is within LCA Istead Arable Farmlands and is assessed separately as a landscape resource in Assessment Sheet L1. To avoid 'double counting' of effects, the assessment of effects on LCA Istead Arable Farmlands relates to the area excluding the site.

Sensitivity of the landscape receptor

Value of the landscape receptor

The value assessment for Istead Arable Farmlands is set out in full in Section 4, Table 3 of this report. In summary, the area mainly comprises of heavily managed active farmlands and orchards divided by infrequent roads, hedgerows and woodland clusters which is visually dominated by a network of large pylons traversing the landscape whilst sitting adjacent to the A2 & CTRL links. The overall value is assessed as: **Low-Medium** Value

Susceptibility to change:

With the exception of the site itself, which is assessed in the receptor assessment under Assessment Sheet L1 (and therefore excluded from this receptor assessment), The area is not directly physically affected by the proposals. In relation to Green Infrastructure policy CS12, the policy aims to conserve, restore, and enhance landscape character. Whilst the proposals would result in some change, the part of the character area that would be affected by the appearance of the proposals is already influenced by visible existing development. The proposed additional development in the proposed form and location, mitigated by the retention and enhancement of the strong boundaries and well-considered design including height restriction which responds sympathetically to and assimilates with the setting and context of the LCA would alter the balance of development and open arable land to only a small extent, with resulting very limited harm. In relation to the other aspects of policy CS12, the proposals would be broadly compliant. Taking all the above into consideration, the receptor is assessed as: **Low** susceptibility.

Sensitivity of landscape receptor	The landscape receptor is therefore judged to be of low-medium sensitivity.
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Landscape effects during construction

Size/scale:

The effects arising from the construction stage would all be indirect, resulting from the visual appearance and sound of construction activities.

A moderate degree of activity and disturbance on the site will be evident from closer parts of the surrounding character area, but the effects will rapidly diminish with distance.

Geographical extent:

The effects during construction will be localised, probably to within 500m of the site, beyond which the sight and sound of construction would not be easily perceived.

Duration:

The landscape effects during construction will be medium term and temporary.

Reversibility:

The landscape effects during construction will be partially reversible.

Magnitude of effect	The magnitude of landscape effects during construction will be small adverse and temporary.
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Significance of landscape effects	The degree of significance of landscape effect during construction will therefore be slight adverse and not significant .
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Landscape effects at completion

Size/scale:

The completed proposals will be perceived from a localised area of the character area to the north and west of the site, but it is predicted that in the part of the character area that lies beyond 500m, the change in character will not be readily perceived.

It is considered that the proposals will assimilate in scale and form with the adjacent settlement which already influences the parts of the character area that would be most influenced by the proposals. and will be integrated into the wider landscape. The proposed additional development in the proposed form and location, mitigated by the retention and enhancement of the strong boundaries and well-considered design including height restriction which responds sympathetically to and assimilates with the setting and context of the LCA would alter the balance of development and open arable land to only a small extent, with resulting very limited harm.

Geographical extent:

The development proposals will influence a localised area within the character area to the north and west of the site. The extent of the effects at completion will be controlled by the intervening vegetation including the strong enhanced site boundary vegetation.

Duration:

The landscape effects at completion will be long term and beyond 25 years.	
<i>Reversibility:</i>	
The landscape effects at completion will be permanent.	
<i>Seasonal variation:</i>	
During summer the seasonal conditions from retained and proposed vegetation will reduce the effects on the landscape character.	
<i>Magnitude of effect</i>	The magnitude of landscape effects at completion will be small adverse and permanent.
<i>Significance of landscape effects</i>	The degree of significance of landscape effect at completion will therefore be slight adverse and not significant .
Night time landscape effects at completion	
The proposals will see an increase in built form and change of use and thus an introduction of lighting across the site. However, this will be experienced in the context of the existing lighting associated with Istead Rise.	
<i>Magnitude of effect</i>	The magnitude of night-time landscape effects at completion will be small / negligible adverse and permanent.
<i>Significance of landscape effects</i>	The degree of significance of landscape effect at night will therefore be slight adverse and not significant .
Landscape effects 15 years after completion	
After 15 years the proposed landscape planting of trees, hedgerows and scrub and enhancement and management of the existing boundary vegetation will assist in further screening and integrating the development into the surrounding landscape.	
<i>Magnitude of effect</i>	The magnitude of landscape effects 15 years after completion will be small adverse and permanent.
<i>Significance of landscape effects</i>	The degree of significance of landscape effect 15 years after completion will therefore be slight adverse and not significant .

7.0 Predicted effects on visual amenity

- 7.1 The effects on the visual amenity of receptors are assessed in the following assessment sheets V1 to V10. The assessment has been undertaken with reference to the receptor sensitivity and magnitude of effects tables and the degree of significance of effects matrix in figures A2.4 to A2.6. To illustrate the visual effects representative, viewpoints have been used to illustrate the potential views experienced by different types of visual receptors.
- 7.2 Section 4 (paragraphs 4.41-4.58) contains the visual baseline and outlines the preparation of the ZTV mapping (figure 14), extent of visibility and identification of visual receptors and representative viewpoints. Identified visual receptors are described in table 4 together with an assessment of the visual amenity value of the views experienced.

Assessment Sheet V1 - Visual effects on residential streets and open spaces - The Drove Way - refer to representative viewpoint R4, figure 19

Sensitivity of the visual receptor

Value attached to the view by the visual receptor:

The assessed value of this view is provided in table 4. The assessed value of the views is **low** as the views are of limited scenic quality, are in a developed context and have no significant associations.

Susceptibility to change:

The receptor group experiencing these views is likely to include persons living in the local area including residents of the street or persons visiting the street. The assessment of susceptibility of the receptor takes into account the proprietary interest of local residents who would probably form a large proportion of the receptor group and the proximity of the change to the area of that proprietary interest. The susceptibility of the visual receptor to specific change associated with the proposed development is therefore assessed as **high**.

<i>Sensitivity of visual receptor</i>	The visual receptor is judged to be of medium sensitivity.
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Visual effects during construction

Size/scale:

Construction activity is expected to be mostly of limited visible for this receptor group; chiefly seen through the gaps in development where the new accesses are proposed. However, there may be visibility of cranes and other taller construction plan above the rooflines of the properties that bound this residential street and between houses, at certain times during construction. There will also be an increase in construction vehicles using the street for site access and increase in noise arising from construction activities.

Geographical extent:

The visual effects during construction will be localised and visible from a limited number of points along the street.

Duration:

The visual effects during construction will be medium term and temporary.

Reversibility:

The visual effects during construction will be partially reversible.

<i>Magnitude of effect</i>	The magnitude of visual effects during construction will be medium adverse and temporary.
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<i>Significance of visual effects</i>	The degree of significance of effect during construction will therefore be moderate adverse and significant .
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Visual effects at completion

Size/scale:

The proposals will to be mostly of limited visible for this receptor group; chiefly seen through the new access points. However, there may be roofs above the rooflines of the properties that bound this residential street and between houses, although the limited building height will limit the degree of this visibility. There will also be an increase in vehicles associated with the proposals using the street for site access.

Geographical extent:

The visual effects during construction will be localised and visible from a limited number of points along the street.

Duration:

The visual effects at completion will be long term and beyond 25 years.

Reversibility:

The visual effects at completion will be permanent.

Seasonal variation

The existing vegetation within the existing properties rear gardens plus new vegetation in the new open space areas and streets will partially assist in filtering views of the proposed development during the summer.

<i>Magnitude of effect</i>	The magnitude of visual effects at completion will be medium adverse and permanent.
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<i>Significance of visual effects</i>	The degree of significance of effect at completion will therefore be moderate adverse and significant .
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Night time visual effects at completion

Whilst lighting will be introduced within the site, the receptors are currently influenced by the existing lighting associated with Istead Rise and The Drove Way. Lighting associated with the new development,

which will be illuminated to current efficient guidelines to minimise light spill and light pollution is expected to contribute only a small additional amount to the lighting already experienced.	
<i>Magnitude of effect</i>	The magnitude of night-time visual effects at completion will be small adverse and permanent.
<i>Significance of visual effects</i>	The degree of significance of effect at night will therefore be slight / moderate adverse and not significant .
Visual effects at 15 years after completion	
After 15 years the proposed planting will have matured and will assist in softening and integrating the effects of the development proposals. However, given the proximity of the development proposals the proposals will continue to be partially visible above intervening vegetation.	
<i>Magnitude of effect</i>	The magnitude of visual effects 15 years after completion will be medium adverse and permanent.
<i>Significance of visual effects</i>	The degree of significance of effect 15 years after will therefore be moderate adverse and significant .

Assessment Sheet V2 - Visual effects on residential streets and open spaces - From the Istead Rise recreation ground and community centre public open space east of the site- refer to representative viewpoint R3, figure 18

Sensitivity of the visual receptor

Value attached to the view by the visual receptor:

The assessed value of this view is provided in Table 4. The assessed value of the views is **medium** as the views of the enclosed recreation area are pleasant but of limited scenic quality. The views have no significant associations.

Susceptibility to change:

The receptor group experiencing these views is likely to include persons living in the local area. The assessment of susceptibility of the receptor takes into account the proprietary interest of local residents with an interest in the continued pleasant setting of the recreation ground and the proximity of the change to the area of that proprietary interest. Also taken into account is the relatively low height of the development in the context of the large area of intervening vegetation which would reduce the susceptibility. The susceptibility of the visual receptor to specific change associated with the proposed development is therefore assessed as **medium**.

<i>Sensitivity of visual receptor</i>	The visual receptor is judged to be of medium sensitivity.
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Visual effects during construction

Size/scale:

Construction activity is expected to be mostly of very limited visibility for this receptor group due to the intervening screening effect of the woodland east of the site. However, there may be visibility of cranes and other taller construction plant partially visible at certain times during construction. There will also be an increase in noise arising from construction activities.

Geographical extent:

The visual effects during construction will be localised to only parts of the recreation ground and only partly visible.

Duration:

The visual effects during construction will be medium term and temporary.

Reversibility:

The visual effects during construction will be partially reversible.

<i>Magnitude of effect</i>	The magnitude of visual effects during construction will be small adverse and temporary.
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<i>Significance of visual effects</i>	The degree of significance of effect during construction will therefore be slight adverse and not significant .
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Visual effects at completion

Size/scale:

The completed proposals are expected to be mostly of very limited visibility for this receptor group due to the intervening screening effect of the woodland east of the site. However, there may be partial visibility of some roofs through less dense sections of intervening vegetation.

Geographical extent:

The visual effects will be localised to only parts of the recreation ground and only partly visible.

Duration:

The visual effects at completion will be long term and beyond 25 years.

Reversibility:

The visual effects at completion will be permanent.

Seasonal variation

The existing intervening vegetation and new planting in the new open space on the east side of the proposals will filter views of the proposed development during the summer.

<i>Magnitude of effect</i>	The magnitude of visual effects at completion will be small adverse and permanent.
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<i>Significance of visual effects</i>	The degree of significance of effect at completion will therefore be slight adverse and not significant .
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Night time visual effects at completion

Whilst lighting will be introduced within the site, the receptors are currently influenced by the existing lighting associated with Istead Rise and The Drove Way. Lighting associated with the new development, which will be illuminated to current efficient guidelines to minimise light spill and light pollution is expected to contribute only a small additional amount to the lighting already experienced.

<i>Magnitude of effect</i>	The magnitude of night-time visual effects at completion will be small adverse and permanent.
<i>Significance of visual effects</i>	The degree of significance of effect at night will therefore be slight adverse and not significant .
Visual effects at 15 years after completion	
After 15 years the proposed planting will have matured and will assist in softening and integrating the effects of the development proposals.	
<i>Magnitude of effect</i>	The magnitude of visual effects 15 years after completion will be small adverse and permanent.
<i>Significance of visual effects</i>	The degree of significance of effect 15 years after will therefore be slight adverse and not significant .

Assessment Sheet V3 - Visual effects on users of recreational routes - users of public rights of way adjacent to the site and in the local area north of the site (Bridleway NU27 and Footpath NU28)- refer to representative viewpoint R1, R2 and R5, figures 16, 17 and 20

Sensitivity of the visual receptor

Value attached to the view by the visual receptor:

The assessed value of this view is provided in table 4. The assessed value of the views is **low-medium** as the views are mainly of agricultural land of limited scenic quality and whilst most of the sections of PRow pass through fields, the visual amenity is in the context of an area where development and electricity transmission infrastructure is a strong component of the views. Where a small section of NU27 passes in close proximity to the site, the views into the site field include clear visibility of the existing development at The Drove Way, overlooking the site. The views have no significant associations.

Susceptibility to change:

The receptor group experiencing these views is likely to include persons living in the local area. The assessment of susceptibility of the receptor takes into account the proprietary interest of local residents with an interest in the continued agricultural nature of the views but also an acceptance that the current view from a short section of NU27 is already strongly influenced by the visibility of development. This relatively small section of PRow with site visibility is balanced against the majority of routes from which views benefit from the screening effects of vegetation and the low height and nature of the development, assimilating with existing development experienced currently in views. These factors would reduce the susceptibility. The susceptibility of the visual receptor to specific change associated with the proposed development is therefore assessed as **low-medium**.

Sensitivity of visual receptor

The visual receptor is judged to be of **low-medium** sensitivity.

Visual effects during construction

Size/scale:

Construction activity will vary. For most of the views experienced by this receptor group, it is expected to be mostly of very limited visibility due to the intervening screening effect of the site boundary vegetation and other intervening vegetation in the wider landscape. For a short section of Bridleway NU27 adjacent to the site, the views will be clearer due to the reduced screening at the point where the PRow passes closest to the site boundary which would allow potential views of the construction site. There will also be an increase in noise arising from construction activities. The assessment of magnitude of effect takes into account that for most of the subject PRow network, users would experience very limited effects

Geographical extent:

The visual effects during construction will be localised to only limited parts of the PRow.

Duration:

The visual effects during construction will be medium term and temporary.

Reversibility:

The visual effects during construction will be partially reversible.

Magnitude of effect

The magnitude of visual effects during construction will be **small adverse** and temporary.

Significance of visual effects

The degree of significance of effect during construction will therefore be **slight adverse** and **not significant**.

Visual effects at completion

Size/scale:

The completed proposals are expected to be mostly of very limited visibility for this receptor group over the majority of the sections of the routes due to the intervening screening effect of the site boundary vegetation. However, there may be partial visibility of some roofs through less dense sections of intervening vegetation. For the section of PRow NU27 adjacent to the site, the proposed planting in the western part of the proposed open space would add additional screening and softening of views of the proposals.

Geographical extent:

The visual effects will be localised to only a small section of the PRow routes and only partly visible.

Duration:

The visual effects at completion will be long term and beyond 25 years.

Reversibility:

The visual effects at completion will be permanent.

Seasonal variation

The existing intervening vegetation and new planting in the new open space on the east side of the proposals will filter views of the proposed development during the summer.	
<i>Magnitude of effect</i>	The magnitude of visual effects at completion will be small adverse and permanent.
<i>Significance of visual effects</i>	The degree of significance of effect at completion will therefore be slight adverse and not significant .
Night time visual effects at completion	
Whilst lighting will be introduced within the site, the receptors are currently influenced by the existing lighting associated with Istead Rise. Lighting associated with the new development, which will be illuminated to current efficient guidelines to minimise light spill and light pollution is expected to contribute only a small additional amount to the lighting already experienced.	
<i>Magnitude of effect</i>	The magnitude of night-time visual effects at completion will be small adverse and permanent.
<i>Significance of visual effects</i>	The degree of significance of effect at night will therefore be slight adverse and not significant .
Visual effects at 15 years after completion	
After 15 years the proposed planting will have matured and will assist in softening and integrating the effects of the development proposals.	
<i>Magnitude of effect</i>	The magnitude of visual effects 15 years after completion will be small adverse and permanent.
<i>Significance of visual effects</i>	The degree of significance of effect 15 years after will therefore be slight adverse and not significant .

Assessment Sheet V4 - Visual effects on users of recreational routes - users of publicly accessible areas in the A2/CTRL corridor area including Bridleway NU48 (Hog Lane) approximately 1.1km to the north of the site)- refer to representative viewpoint R7, figure 22	
Sensitivity of the visual receptor	
<i>Value attached to the view by the visual receptor:</i> The assessed value of this view is provided in table 4. The assessed value of the views for recreational users is low as the views are of limited scenic quality and is in the context of an area where development and road, rail and electricity transmission infrastructure is a strong component of the views. The views have no significant associations. <i>Susceptibility to change:</i> The receptor group experiencing these views is likely to mainly include persons living in the Gravesham area in proximity to the area of the view. The assessment of susceptibility of the receptor takes into account the likely interest of local residents with an interest in the continued character of the views that include long views southwards over the agricultural land beyond the transport corridors, but also an acceptance that the current limited views from Hog Lane/NU48 include existing development. Visibility towards Istead Rise is largely governed by the orientation of the lane and bridges and Istead Rise is mostly peripheral to views. This and the low height and nature of the development, assimilating with existing development experienced currently in views. These factors would reduce the susceptibility. The susceptibility of the visual receptor to specific change associated with the proposed development is therefore assessed as low.	

<i>Sensitivity of visual receptor</i>	The visual receptor is judged to be of low sensitivity.
Visual effects during construction	
<i>Size/scale:</i> Construction activity will likely be virtually imperceptible for views experienced by this receptor group except for occasional appearance of taller plant such as cranes. This is due to the screening effect of the layers of intervening vegetation in the wider landscape. <i>Geographical extent:</i> The visual effects during construction (if visible at all) would occur to a very small part of the view. <i>Duration:</i> The visual effects during construction will be medium term and temporary. <i>Reversibility:</i> The visual effects during construction will be partially reversible.	
<i>Magnitude of effect</i>	The magnitude of visual effects during construction will be negligible adverse and temporary.
<i>Significance of visual effects</i>	The degree of significance of visual effect during construction will therefore be negligible adverse and not significant .
Visual effects at completion	
<i>Size/scale:</i> The completed proposals are expected to be imperceptible <i>Geographical extent:</i> The visual effects will be localised to only a small proportion of the view. <i>Duration:</i> The visual effects at completion will be long term and beyond 25 years. <i>Reversibility:</i> The visual effects at completion will be permanent. <i>Seasonal variation</i> The existing intervening vegetation and new planting in the new open space on the east side of the proposals will filter views of the proposed development during the summer.	
<i>Magnitude of effect</i>	The magnitude of visual effects at completion will be negligible adverse and permanent.
<i>Significance of visual effects</i>	The degree of significance of visual effect at completion will therefore be negligible adverse and not significant .
Night time visual effects at completion	
Whilst lighting will be introduced within the site, the receptors are currently influenced by the existing lighting associated with Istead Rise. Lighting associated with the new development, which will be illuminated to current efficient guidelines to minimise light spill and light pollution is expected to contribute only a negligible additional amount to the lighting already experienced.	
<i>Magnitude of effect</i>	The magnitude of night-time visual effects at completion will be negligible adverse and permanent.
<i>Significance of visual effects</i>	The degree of significance of visual effect at night will therefore be negligible adverse and not significant .
Visual effects at 15 years after completion	
After 15 years the proposed planting will have matured and will assist in softening and integrating the effects of the development proposals.	
<i>Magnitude of effect</i>	The magnitude of visual effects 15 years after completion will be negligible adverse and permanent.
<i>Significance of visual effects</i>	The degree of significance of visual effect 15 years after will therefore be negligible adverse and not significant .

Assessment Sheet V5 - Visual effects on users of recreational routes - Users of PRoW NU29 (part of Weald Way) approximately 1.1km to the east of the site refer to representative viewpoint R8, figure 23

Sensitivity of the visual receptor

Value attached to the view by the visual receptor:

The assessed value of this view is provided in table 4. The assessed value of the views for recreational users is **medium** as the views in this section of path are of limited scenic quality and is in the context of an area where development and road, rail and electricity transmission infrastructure are dominant components of the context of the view, but it is a view from a regional recreation asset..

Susceptibility to change:

The receptor group experiencing these views is likely to mainly include persons living in the Gravesham area in proximity to the area of the view and persons using the section of path as part of the long-distance Weald Way regional asset. The assessment of susceptibility of the receptor takes into account the likely interest in the continued character of the views that include long views southwards over the agricultural land towards Istead Rise, but also an acceptance that the current limited views include existing development. This and the low height and nature of the development, assimilating with existing development experienced currently in views are factors would reduce the susceptibility. The susceptibility of the visual receptor to specific change associated with the proposed development is therefore assessed as **medium**.

<i>Sensitivity of visual receptor</i>	The visual receptor is judged to be of medium sensitivity.
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Visual effects during construction

Size/scale:

Construction activity will likely be virtually imperceptible for views experienced by this receptor group except for occasional appearance of taller plant such as cranes. This is due to the screening effect of the layers of intervening vegetation in the wider landscape, particularly the woodland east of the site.

Geographical extent:

The visual effects during construction (if visible at all) would occur to a very small part of the view.

Duration:

The visual effects during construction will be medium term and temporary.

Reversibility:

The visual effects during construction will be partially reversible.

<i>Magnitude of effect</i>	The magnitude of visual effects during construction will be negligible adverse and temporary.
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<i>Significance of visual effects</i>	The degree of significance of visual effect during construction will therefore be negligible adverse and not significant .
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Visual effects at completion

Size/scale:

The completed proposals are expected to be imperceptible for this receptor group due to the intervening screening effect of the site boundary vegetation and woodland east of the site.

Geographical extent:

The visual effects will be localised to only a small proportion of the view

Duration:

The visual effects at completion will be long term and beyond 25 years.

Reversibility:

The visual effects at completion will be permanent.

Seasonal variation

The existing intervening vegetation and new planting in the new open space on the east side of the proposals will filter views of the proposed development during the summer.

<i>Magnitude of effect</i>	The magnitude of visual effects at completion will be negligible adverse and permanent.
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<i>Significance of visual effects</i>	The degree of significance of visual effect at completion will therefore be negligible adverse and not significant .
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Night time visual effects at completion

Whilst lighting will be introduced within the site, the receptors are currently influenced by the existing lighting associated with Istead Rise. Lighting associated with the new development, which will be illuminated to current efficient guidelines to minimise light spill and light pollution is expected to contribute only a negligible additional amount to the lighting already experienced.

<i>Magnitude of effect</i>	The magnitude of night-time visual effects at completion will be negligible adverse and permanent.
<i>Significance of visual effects</i>	The degree of significance of visual effect at night will therefore be negligible adverse and not significant .
Visual effects at 15 years after completion	
After 15 years the proposed planting will have matured and will assist in softening and integrating the effects of the development proposals.	
<i>Magnitude of effect</i>	The magnitude of visual effects 15 years after completion will be negligible adverse and permanent.
<i>Significance of visual effects</i>	The degree of significance of visual effect 15 years after will therefore be negligible adverse and not significant .

Assessment Sheet V6 - Visual effects on users of recreational routes - Users of public right of way approximately 1km to the south west of the site (Footpaths DN37, NU38 and DR142)- refer to representative viewpoint R9, figure 24

Sensitivity of the visual receptor

Value attached to the view by the visual receptor:

The assessed value of this view is provided in table 4. The assessed value of the views for recreational users is **low-medium** as the views are mainly of agricultural land of limited scenic quality and whilst most of the sections of PRow pass through fields, the visual amenity is in the context of an area where development and electricity transmission infrastructure is a strong component of the views. The views have no significant associations.

Susceptibility to change:

The receptor group is likely to include persons living in the local area of New Barn using the local PRow network and recreation amenities, as it is not a tourist or well-known recreation location. The assessment of susceptibility of the receptor takes into account the likely interest of local residents with an interest in the continued character of the views that include long views northwards over the agricultural land, but also an acceptance that the current views include existing development including Gravesham in the distance and Istead Rise in the middle distance; are strong components of those views. This and the low height and nature of the development, its location on the far side of Istead Rise, assimilating with existing development experienced currently in views are factors would reduce the susceptibility. The susceptibility of the visual receptor to specific change associated with the proposed development is therefore assessed as **low**.

<i>Sensitivity of visual receptor</i>	The visual receptor is judged to be of low sensitivity.
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Visual effects during construction

Size/scale:

Construction activity will likely be virtually imperceptible for views experienced by this receptor group except for occasional appearance of taller plant such as cranes. This is due to the screening effect of the existing development that intervenes combined with layers of intervening vegetation in the wider landscape.

Geographical extent:

The visual effects during construction (if visible at all) would occur to a small part of the view and in a section of the view that is already developed.

Duration:

The visual effects during construction will be medium term and temporary.

Reversibility:

The visual effects during construction will be partially reversible.

<i>Magnitude of effect</i>	The magnitude of visual effects during construction will be negligible adverse and temporary.
<i>Significance of visual effects</i>	The degree of significance of visual effect during construction will therefore be negligible adverse and not significant .
Visual effects at completion	
<i>Size/scale:</i> The completed proposals are expected to be mostly of limited visibility for this receptor group due to the intervening screening effect of the intervening existing development at Istead Rise. <i>Geographical extent:</i> The visual effects would occur to a small part of the view and in a section of the view that is already developed. <i>Duration:</i> The visual effects at completion will be long term and beyond 25 years. <i>Reversibility:</i> The visual effects at completion will be permanent. <i>Seasonal variation</i> The existing intervening vegetation and new planting in the new open space of the proposals will filter views of the proposed development during the summer.	
<i>Magnitude of effect</i>	The magnitude of visual effects at completion will be negligible adverse and permanent.
<i>Significance of visual effects</i>	The degree of significance of visual effect at completion will therefore be negligible adverse and not significant .
Night time visual effects at completion	
Whilst lighting will be introduced within the site, the receptors are currently influenced by the existing lighting associated with Istead Rise. Lighting associated with the new development, which will be illuminated to current efficient guidelines to minimise light spill and light pollution is expected to contribute only a negligible additional amount to the lighting already experienced.	
<i>Magnitude of effect</i>	The magnitude of night-time visual effects at completion will be negligible adverse and permanent.
<i>Significance of visual effects</i>	The degree of significance of visual effect at night will therefore be negligible adverse and not significant .
Visual effects at 15 years after completion	
After 15 years the proposed planting will have matured and will assist in softening and integrating the effects of the development proposals.	
<i>Magnitude of effect</i>	The magnitude of visual effects 15 years after completion will be negligible adverse and permanent.
<i>Significance of visual effects</i>	The degree of significance of visual effect 15 years after will therefore be negligible adverse and not significant .

Assessment Sheet V7 - Visual effects on users of recreational routes - users of public right of way 2.5km to the west of the site (Footpath DR144). refer to representative viewpoint R11, figure 26

Sensitivity of the visual receptor

Value attached to the view by the visual receptor:

The assessed value of this view is provided in table 4. The assessed value of the views for recreational users is **medium** as the views are mainly of agricultural land of moderate scenic quality and where development and electricity transmission infrastructure is a not a strong component of the views as is the case for other receptors. The views have no significant associations.

Susceptibility to change:

The receptor group is likely to include persons living in the local area of Hook Green/Southfleet/ Longfield/ New Barn using the local PRoW network, as it is not a tourist or well-known recreation location. The assessment of susceptibility of the receptor takes into account the likely interest of local residents with an

interest in the continued character of the views that include long views northwards over the agricultural land, with no significant areas of non-rural development. The susceptibility of the visual receptor to specific change associated with the proposed development is therefore assessed as **medium-high**.

<i>Sensitivity of visual receptor</i>	The visual receptor is judged to be of medium-high sensitivity.
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Visual effects during construction

Size/scale:

Construction activity will be effectively imperceptible for views experienced by this receptor group except for occasional appearance of taller plant on the skyline such as cranes, although at a distance of 2.5km, even tall plant is unlikely to be readily perceived. This is due to the screening effect of the existing topography, farm buildings and vegetation that intervenes in the wider landscape.

Geographical extent:

The visual effects during construction (if visible at all) would occur to a small part of the view.

Duration:

The visual effects during construction will be medium term and temporary.

Reversibility:

The visual effects during construction will be partially reversible.

<i>Magnitude of effect</i>	The magnitude of visual effects during construction will be negligible adverse and temporary.
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<i>Significance of visual effects</i>	The degree of significance of visual effect during construction will therefore be negligible adverse and not significant .
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Visual effects at completion

Size/scale:

The completed proposals are expected to be imperceptible due to the intervening screening effect of vegetation, topography and development.

Geographical extent:

The visual effects will be localised to only a small proportion of the view.

Duration:

The visual effects at completion will be long term and beyond 25 years.

Reversibility:

The visual effects at completion will be permanent.

Seasonal variation

Due to the distance and context, it is probable that there would be no perceptible difference in summer conditions.

<i>Magnitude of effect</i>	The magnitude of visual effects at completion will be negligible adverse and permanent.
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<i>Significance of visual effects</i>	The degree of significance of visual effect at completion will therefore be negligible adverse and not significant .
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Night time visual effects at completion

Whilst lighting will be introduced within the site, the receptors are currently influenced by the existing lighting associated with Istead Rise. Lighting associated with the new development, which will be illuminated to current efficient guidelines to minimise light spill and light pollution is expected to contribute only a negligible additional amount to the lighting already experienced.

<i>Magnitude of effect</i>	The magnitude of night-time visual effects at completion will be negligible adverse and permanent.
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<i>Significance of visual effects</i>	The degree of significance of visual effect at night will therefore be negligible adverse and not significant .
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Visual effects at 15 years after completion

After 15 years the proposed planting will have matured and will assist in softening and integrating the effects of the development proposals.

<i>Magnitude of effect</i>	The magnitude of visual effects 15 years after completion will be negligible adverse and permanent.
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<i>Significance of visual effects</i>	The degree of significance of visual effect 15 years after will therefore be negligible adverse and not significant .
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Assessment Sheet V8 - Visual effects on users of recreational routes - users of public right of way approximately 4km west of the site (footpaths DR24, DR25, DR28 and DR47) refer to representative viewpoint R11, figure 26

Sensitivity of the visual receptor

Value attached to the view by the visual receptor:

The assessed value of this view is provided in table 4. The assessed value of the views for recreational users is **medium-high** as the views are mainly of rural landscape of good scenic quality and where development and electricity transmission infrastructure is not a strong component of the views as is the case for other receptors. The views have no significant associations.

Susceptibility to change:

The receptor group is likely to include persons living in the local area of Bean, Betcham and Westwood using the local PRoW network, as it is not a tourist or well-known recreation location. The assessment of susceptibility of the receptor takes into account the likely interest of local residents with an interest in the continued character of the views from east-facing higher ground that include extensive panoramic views eastwards over the agricultural land, with no significant areas of non-rural development for much of the view. The susceptibility of the visual receptor to specific change associated with the proposed development is therefore assessed as **medium-high**.

<i>Sensitivity of visual receptor</i>	The visual receptor is judged to be of medium-high sensitivity.
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Visual effects during construction

Size/scale:

Construction activity will be virtually imperceptible for views experienced by this receptor group except for occasional appearance of taller plant on the skyline such as cranes, although at a distance of 4km, even tall plant is unlikely to be readily perceived due chiefly to the distance.

Geographical extent:

The visual effects during construction (if visible at all) would occur to a small part of the view.

Duration:

The visual effects during construction will be medium term and temporary.

Reversibility:

The visual effects during construction will be partially reversible.

<i>Magnitude of effect</i>	The magnitude of visual effects during construction will be negligible adverse and temporary.
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<i>Significance of visual effects</i>	The degree of significance of visual effect during construction will therefore be negligible adverse and not significant .
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Visual effects at completion

Size/scale:

The completed proposals are expected to be not readily perceptible due to the distance.

Geographical extent:

The visual effects will affect only a small proportion of the view.

Duration:

The visual effects at completion will be long term and beyond 25 years.

Reversibility:

The visual effects at completion will be permanent.

Seasonal variation

Due to the distance and context, it is probable that there would be no perceptible difference in summer conditions.

<i>Magnitude of effect</i>	The magnitude of visual effects at completion will be negligible adverse and permanent.
<i>Significance of visual effects</i>	The degree of significance of visual effect at completion will therefore be negligible adverse and not significant .
Night time visual effects at completion	
Whilst lighting will be introduced within the site, the receptors are currently influenced by the existing lighting associated with Istead Rise and other development closer to the viewpoint . Lighting associated with the new development, which will be illuminated to current efficient guidelines to minimise light spill and light pollution is expected to contribute only a negligible additional amount to the lighting already experienced.	
<i>Magnitude of effect</i>	The magnitude of night-time visual effects at completion will be negligible adverse and permanent.
<i>Significance of visual effects</i>	The degree of significance of visual effect at night will therefore be negligible adverse and not significant .
Visual effects at 15 years after completion	
After 15 years the proposed planting will have matured and will assist in softening and integrating the effects of the development proposals.	
<i>Magnitude of effect</i>	The magnitude of visual effects 15 years after completion will be negligible adverse and permanent.
<i>Significance of visual effects</i>	The degree of significance of visual effect 15 years after will therefore be negligible adverse and not significant .

Assessment Sheet V9 - Visual effects on persons in Kent Downs National Landscape - refer to representative viewpoint R10, figure 25

Note the ZTV and fieldwork did not identify any verifiable views from the National Landscape. There is a cluster of potential visibility at Camer on the western edge of the National Landscape

Sensitivity of the visual receptor

Value attached to the view by the visual receptor:

The assessed value of this view is provided in table 4. The assessed value of the views is assessed to be **high** as whilst the views are mainly of agricultural land of moderate scenic quality, they are viewed from the edge of the National Landscape. The views have no significant associations.

Susceptibility to change:

The receptor group is likely to include persons living in the local area extending along the western edge of the National Landscape. The assessment of susceptibility of the receptor takes into account the likely interest of local residents and visitors to the area with an interest in the continued character of the views westwards from the NL over the agricultural land, with no significant areas of non-rural development. The susceptibility of the visual receptor to specific change associated with the proposed development is therefore assessed as **high**.

<i>Sensitivity of visual receptor</i>	The visual receptor is judged to be of high sensitivity.
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Visual effects during construction

Size/scale:

Construction activity will be effectively imperceptible for views experienced by this receptor group except for occasional appearance of taller plant on the skyline such as cranes, although at a distance of 2.5km, even tall plant is unlikely to be readily perceived. This is due to the screening effect of the existing topography, farm buildings and vegetation that intervenes in the wider landscape.

Geographical extent:

The visual effects during construction (if visible at all) would occur to a small part of the view.

Duration:

The visual effects during construction will be medium term and temporary.

Reversibility:

The visual effects during construction will be partially reversible.	
<i>Magnitude of effect</i>	The magnitude of visual effects during construction will be negligible adverse and temporary.
<i>Significance of visual effects</i>	The degree of significance of visual effect during construction will therefore be negligible adverse and not significant .
Visual effects at completion	
<i>Size/scale:</i> The completed proposals are expected to be imperceptible due to the intervening screening effect of vegetation, topography and development. <i>Geographical extent:</i> The visual effects will be localised to only a small proportion of the view. <i>Duration:</i> The visual effects at completion will be long term and beyond 25 years. <i>Reversibility:</i> The visual effects at completion will be permanent. <i>Seasonal variation</i> Due to the distance and context, it is probable that there would be no perceptible difference in summer conditions.	
<i>Magnitude of effect</i>	The magnitude of visual effects at completion will be negligible adverse and permanent.
<i>Significance of visual effects</i>	The degree of significance of visual effect at completion will therefore be negligible adverse and not significant .
Night time visual effects at completion	
Whilst lighting will be introduced within the site, the receptors are currently influenced by the existing lighting associated with Istead Rise. Lighting associated with the new development, which will be illuminated to current efficient guidelines to minimise light spill and light pollution is expected to contribute only a negligible additional amount to the lighting already experienced.	
<i>Magnitude of effect</i>	The magnitude of night-time visual effects at completion will be negligible adverse and permanent.
<i>Significance of visual effects</i>	The degree of significance of visual effect at night will therefore be negligible adverse and not significant .
Visual effects at 15 years after completion	
After 15 years the proposed planting will have matured and will assist in softening and integrating the effects of the development proposals.	
<i>Magnitude of effect</i>	The magnitude of visual effects 15 years after completion will be negligible adverse and permanent.
<i>Significance of visual effects</i>	The degree of significance of visual effect 15 years after will therefore be negligible adverse and not significant .

Assessment Sheet V10 - Visual effects on persons in places of employment - farm workers on land surrounding site to the site - refer to representative viewpoints R1, R5, R6, R8 and R9, figures 16, 20, 21, 23 and 24

Sensitivity of the visual receptor

Value attached to the view by the visual receptor:

The assessed value of this view is provided in table 4. The assessed value of the views is **low-medium** as the views are mainly of agricultural land of limited scenic quality and whilst most of the sections of PRoW pass through fields, the visual amenity is in the context of an area where development and electricity transmission infrastructure is a strong component of the views. The views have no significant associations.

Susceptibility to change:

The receptor group experiencing these views is likely to include persons mainly living and working in the local area. The assessment of susceptibility of the receptor takes into account the occupation and likely reduced focus on the landscape. The susceptibility of the visual receptor to specific change associated with the proposed development is therefore assessed as **low-medium**.

<i>Sensitivity of visual receptor</i>	The visual receptor is judged to be of low-medium sensitivity.
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Visual effects during construction

Size/scale:

Construction activity will vary. For most of the views experienced by this receptor group, it is expected to be mostly of very limited visibility due to the intervening screening effect of the site boundary vegetation and other intervening vegetation in the wider landscape. The assessment of magnitude of effect takes into account that for most of the subject agricultural land, users would experience very limited effects

Geographical extent:

The visual effects during construction will be localised to only limited parts of the agricultural land.

Duration:

The visual effects during construction will be medium term and temporary.

Reversibility:

The visual effects during construction will be partially reversible.

<i>Magnitude of effect</i>	The magnitude of visual effects during construction will be small adverse and temporary.
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<i>Significance of visual effects</i>	The degree of significance of effect during construction will therefore be slight adverse and not significant .
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Visual effects at completion

Size/scale:

The completed proposals are expected to be mostly of very limited visibility for this receptor group over the majority of the surrounding agricultural land due to the intervening screening effect of the site boundary vegetation. However, there may be partial visibility of some roofs through less dense sections of intervening vegetation.

Geographical extent:

The visual effects will be localised to only part of the agricultural land and only partly visible.

Duration:

The visual effects at completion will be long term and beyond 25 years.

Reversibility:

The visual effects at completion will be permanent.

Seasonal variation

The existing intervening vegetation and new planting in the new open space of the proposals will filter views of the proposed development during the summer.

<i>Magnitude of effect</i>	The magnitude of visual effects at completion will be small adverse and permanent.
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<i>Significance of visual effects</i>	The degree of significance of effect at completion will therefore be slight adverse and not significant .
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Night time visual effects at completion

Whilst lighting will be introduced within the site, the receptors are currently influenced by the existing lighting associated with Istead Rise. Lighting associated with the new development, which will be illuminated to current efficient guidelines to minimise light spill and light pollution is expected to contribute only a small additional amount to the lighting already experienced.

<i>Magnitude of effect</i>	The magnitude of night-time visual effects at completion will be small adverse and permanent.
<i>Significance of visual effects</i>	The degree of significance of effect at night will therefore be slight adverse and not significant .
Visual effects at 15 years after completion	
After 15 years the proposed planting will have matured and will assist in softening and integrating the effects of the development proposals.	
<i>Magnitude of effect</i>	The magnitude of visual effects 15 years after completion will be small adverse and permanent.
<i>Significance of visual effects</i>	The degree of significance of effect 15 years after will therefore be slight adverse and not significant .

8.0 Summary of landscape and visual impacts

- 8.1 The extent and degree of landscape and visual effects is primarily restricted by the location of the proposals adjacent to existing development of a similar scale and form, the retention of the strong landscape structure that provides enclosure and screening of the site and the pattern of topography, vegetation and development in the wider landscape that reduces the visibility of the site.
- 8.2 The sensitivity of the landscape as a receptor is also a factor in determining the significance of effects. As part of the assessment process a number of documents were studied to provide evidence, in addition to field studies and the findings of these documents are described in the following paragraphs.
- 8.3 The landscape character of the site and its setting is described in Gravesham Borough Council's (GBC) Landscape Character Assessment Study as having a *moderate level of sensitivity* due to the open character of the landscape. However, this LVIA study finds that the site is an exception to this open character as it is well enclosed. A later study; GBC's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment described the site as being '*within the wider Istead Arable Farmlands LCA and an area of medium-low landscape sensitivity*'.
- 8.4 The conclusions of this LVIA that the site is of lower sensitivity is supported by the Gravesham Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study 2016, which found that the site had medium to high capacity for the type of development proposed.
- 8.5 Further evidence of the site's relatively is provided in GBC's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) November 2020 found that the site is '*within the wider Istead Arable Farmlands LCA and an area of medium-low landscape sensitivity. Subject to the retention and enhancement of landscape planting, and safeguarding the biodiversity value of the area of priority habitat in the south east corner and along the eastern site boundary, the site is considered suitable for development.*'
- 8.6 This LVIA and GBC's own studies show the local landscape character has limited sensitivity to and medium to high capacity to accommodate the proposed development and is suitable for development.
- 8.7 In relation to effects on visual receptors, the following paragraphs summarise the potential visibility of the site and proposals.
- 8.8 The site is visually well-contained by strongly vegetated boundaries to the north, east and west. To the immediate south of the site, development on The Drove Way and, to a lesser extent, Fairview Road south west of the site effectively form a visual barrier, screening the site from the remaining settlement area of Istead Rise.
- 8.9 Views from the local landscape to the north are increasingly restricted with distance, by intervening vegetation and topographical effects. The clearest views towards the site are very localised from a section of public right of way (bridleway) NU27 just north of the site.
- 8.10 Views from the local area east of the site are very limited due to the woodland on and beyond the eastern part of the site and intervening development in the

eastern area of Istead Rise. Intervening vegetation and topography also limit views from the wider landscape to the east.

- 8.11 From the local area to the south, there are restricted public views of the site from The Drove Way (the street immediately to the south of the site), with site vegetation being visible from cul-de-sac locations and occasionally seen through the gaps between houses. Areas of public visibility from further south within Istead Rise were not identified, mainly due to the density of intervening development. Views from the wider landscape further to the south are also very restricted by vegetation, but where occasional clearer views are available, the intervening development and vegetation means the site is not perceived.
- 8.12 From the west, there is potential visibility from the Hook Green Road area approximately 2.5km to the west of the site. However a combination of topography and intervening vegetation would result in the proposals being barely perceptible. There is also potential visibility from rising ground approximately 4km west of the site. Most of these areas of potential visibility are not publicly accessible, but probable 'worst case' view from this grouping of areas of visibility. In this view, the site is visible in the distance, and although the proposals would be perceptible it is a small component of the overall view, would assimilate with other development in the view.
- 8.13 The assessment sheets in Section 7 describe the assessment of effects on landscape receptors and visual receptors taking into account the primary mitigation as identified on the application parameter plan and described in the Design and Access Statement (DAS). The assessment takes into account effects during construction; at completion and 15 years after completion.
- 8.14 Table 5 summarises the predicted significant potential landscape and visual effects. Degrees of significance of effect are judged as very substantial, substantial, moderate, slight or negligible (or mid points between those terms). The definitions used are included in that figure. They are applied to both potential effects with primary mitigation and to residual effects. If the degree of significance of effect is moderate or greater, then the effect is considered to be significant in EIA terms. Effects assessed as less than moderate, i.e. slight-moderate, slight, slight-negligible or negligible effects are not considered to be significant for the purposes of this LVIA.

Table 5: Significant landscape and visual effects

Topic	Landscape and visual receptors (Significant effects only)	Sensitivity of receptor	Magnitude of effects	Significance of effects during construction	Significance of effects at completion (year 0)	Significance of effects at completion (year 15)
Landscape and visual effects	L1 Effects on the landscape character of the site	Medium	Medium	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
	V1 Visual effects on The Drove Way	Medium	Medium	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate

- 8.15 There will be no adverse significant effects from the following assessed landscape and visual receptors; (assessed significance in brackets):

- Landscape receptor L2: LCA Istead Arable Farmlands (slight)

- Visual receptor V2: Istead Rise recreation ground (slight)
- Visual receptor V3: users of public rights of way adjacent to the site and in the local area north of the site (slight)
- Visual receptor V4: users of publicly accessible areas in the A2/CTRL corridor area including Bridleway NU48 (Hog Lane) approximately 1.1km to the north of the site (negligible)
- Visual receptor V5: Users of PRow NU29 (part of Weald Way) approximately 1.1km to the east of the site (negligible)
- Visual receptor V6: Users of public right of way approximately 1km to the south west of the site (Footpaths DN37, NU38 and DR142) (negligible)
- Visual receptor V7: users of public right of way 2.5km to the west of the site (Footpath DR144) (negligible)
- Visual receptor V8: users of public right of way approximately 4km west of the site (footpaths DR24, DR25, DR28 and DR47) (negligible)
- Visual receptor V9: persons in Kent Downs National Landscape (negligible)
- Visual receptor V10: farm workers on land surrounding site to the site (negligible)

Secondary mitigation

- 8.16 Measures to minimise the landscape and visual effects have been a key consideration from the outset, with the landscape strategy guiding the development design process. The primary measures set out in Section 5 are integral to the outline proposals and have been taken into account in the assessment process.
- 8.17 Secondary mitigation measures described in Section 5 have some limited potential to further reduce potential impacts but are primarily aimed at biodiversity and place-making enhancements and will come forward during detailed design at the reserved matters application stage.

Technical Appendix A1: Most relevant Local Planning policy

Introduction

- A1.1 This appendix is restricted to setting out the most relevant current Local Plan landscape related policies:

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014

- A1.2 **Policy CS12** – Green Infrastructure, ensures the creation, protection, and enhancement of a multi-functional Green Infrastructure network.

Key Aspects of Policy CS12:

- **Green Infrastructure Protection:** Protects and maintains a network of green spaces, paths, and wildlife corridors.
- **Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG):** Seeks to ensure no net loss of biodiversity and promotes net gains, aligning with national policy.
- **Landscape Character:** Aims to conserve, restore, and enhance the landscape character of the borough.
- **Recreation and Wildlife:** Protects and enhances wildlife habitats while promoting opportunities for recreation and healthy living.
- **Integration with Development:** Ensures new developments incorporate green infrastructure improvements.

- A1.3 **Policy CS19** - Development and Design principles requires that all new development in the borough achieves a high standard of design, contributing to local distinctiveness, sustainable construction, and safety:

Key Principles of Policy CS19:

- **Design Quality:** New developments must respect the character of the surrounding area, focusing on layout, scale, materials, and landscaping.
- **Sustainability:** Structures should incorporate sustainable design principles, including energy efficiency and water management.
- **Safety and Security:** Design must promote safe environments, reducing crime through layout and natural surveillance.
- **Accessibility:** Ensuring development is accessible to all users

Technical Appendix A2: Methodology for the landscape and visual impact assessment

To be read with reference to figures A2.1 and A2.6

Introduction

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

LVIA guidelines

- A2.2 The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been carried out in accordance with the following best practice guidelines:
- *The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, (GLVIA) 3rd Edition, Landscape Institute (LI) and Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) (2013)*
 - *An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment, Natural England (October 2014)*
 - *Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 02/21, Assessing landscape value outside national designations*
 - *Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 06/19, Visual Representation of Development Proposals 17 September 2019*

Role of the LVIA

- A2.3 Paragraph 2.21 of the GLVIA states that there are two distinct components of the LVIA:

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

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

Definition of landscape

- A2.4 In describing landscape, paragraph 2.19 of the GLVIA states that:

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

Definition of visual amenity

- A2.5 The GVLIA glossary defines the meaning of visual amenity as:

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

- A2.6 The methodology for assessing both the landscape and visual effects are outlined in paragraphs A2.38 to A2.72.

Assessment process

- A2.7 The process of LVIA includes the following stages:

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

Professional judgement

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

- A2.9 Paragraph 2.23 of the GLVIA states that:

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

- A2.10 Paragraph 2.24 of the GLVIA states that:

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

Baseline assessment

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

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

Site familiarisation

- A2.12 The site and surrounding area were visited in February 2024 to obtain familiarity with the landscape. Field studies and desk studies of photographs, aerial photographs, map information, landscape character assessments and statutory and emerging planning policy documents have enabled the recording of landscape elements such as topography, drainage, land use, development, vegetation and other features.

Defining the study area

- A2.13 The study area defines the scope of the assessment. The study area includes the site itself and the wider area around it, within which the proposed development may have a significant influence. The extent of the study area has been established using the zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV) of the proposed development in combination with observations made on site. During the assessment process the study area may change as a result of fieldwork studies or changes to the proposals.
- A2.14 A 2.5 km study area was chosen and agreed with the local planning authority, as the visibility beyond this distance will become limited and the proposed development is unlikely to have any significant adverse effects. The extent of the study area is a matter of professional judgement as indicated in paragraph 6.11 of the GLVIA and has been agreed with Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council.

Identifying landscape character, elements and features

- A2.15 Published and adopted landscape character assessments (LCA) prepared by relevant authorities at varying levels, from national through to local assessments, have been referred to in order to identify the baseline landscape character, resources and associated value. These established assessments have been reviewed in terms of their status, scale and level of detail provided and therefore suitability for use within the LVIA. This review also took account of the date in which the assessments were carried out and how relevant the content is in relation to the current landscape characteristics.
- A2.16 National and county level LCA generally give a broad scale assessment which often provides an overview of the landscape context and setting but does not necessarily represent the local landscape characteristic of the site and surrounding area. Local LCA provide more detail on the types of landscape that occur in the study area. They are therefore considered appropriate as a basis for describing the key characteristics and are used to inform the description of the landscapes that may be affected by the proposals.

- A2.17 For the purposes of this assessment. It is considered appropriate for the Gravesham landscape character assessment to be used to set the basis for determining the baseline landscape character areas of the site and the study area to be assessed. This is then augmented by the relevant information in the national and county character assessments and tor&co's own assessment for judging the value of the landscape in which the site and surrounding area lies. As such, the assessment has been informed by all the relevant character assessments noted above.
- A2.18 Detailed fieldwork carried out within the site and immediate surroundings is used to check the applicability of the LCAs throughout the study area, and where variations in the landscape are identified since the LCA was adopted, modifications are made, or supplementary information is provided in the baseline assessment.
- A2.19 ZTV analysis and field studies have been carried out to determine which landscape character areas will be physically or perceptually affected by the proposals.

Identifying possible extent of visibility (ZTV)

- A2.20 Computer generated mapping has been used in combination with fieldwork, to assess the potential visibility of the proposals. The extent of visibility over which the proposed development may theoretically be seen, the Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV), is provided in figure 14.
- A2.21 The ZTV has been derived from a Digital Surface Model (DSM). The DSM used was based on a 1 m grid provided by Lidar. This uses first return derived information during winter that provides a highly detailed three-dimensional model of the landscape and townscape. Topographic features including landform, woodland, settlements, individual buildings, isolated trees, copses, hedgerows, embankments and other minor topographic features, out to a distance of 2.5 km from the application boundary, are all modelled. The accuracy of the DSM falls within acceptable limits; however, there are potential discrepancies between the DSM and the actual landform where there are minor topographic features that are too small to be picked up. The Lidar data can pick up the majority of the woodland and buildings, although areas can be missed between the 1 m grid.
- A2.22 For this project, the ZTV has been generated using the DSM and by setting the proposed maximum building height at 9.5m. Allowing for an additional +/- 0.5 m to take account of any potential variation associated with earth modelling, the height used for the modelling was 10m above Ordnance Datum (AOD).
- A2.23 The height from which the proposed development would be seen was set at 1.5 m (as set out in the GLVIA). A professional judgement has been made for this assessment that although approximately 2.5 km is the distance beyond which proposals of this scale, nature and context would not have a significant effect on either landscape / townscape character or views, a study area of 5km was applied to account for the location of the development on relatively high ground and to capture potential visibility that might arise in the Kent Downs National Landscape. The resulting ZTV, figure 14, illustrates the extent to which any part of the proposals (large or small i.e. it could just be the very top of the panels or buildings) is potentially visible from the surrounding area. The ZTV does not

include any landscape mitigation therefore illustrates the worst case potential visual effects during winter.

- A2.24 During fieldwork, any significant discrepancies in the ZTV are recorded and later amended. Fieldwork was confined to accessible parts of the site, public rights of way, transport routes and other publicly accessible areas.

Identifying visual receptors

- A2.25 The baseline study will have determined the individuals and/or defined groups of people who have the potential to be affected by the proposals. These are referred to as visual receptors.

- A2.26 Paragraph 6.13 of the GVLIA states that visual receptors may include:

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

Identifying viewpoints

- A2.27 Following analysis of the ZTV and fieldwork, a series of viewpoints from which the proposals will be seen by the individual or groups of visual receptors were identified and agreed with Welwyn Hatfield borough council. To illustrate all potential viewpoints from which the proposals will be seen by the different visual receptors within the study area is not practical and is unnecessary for the purposes of the EIA. Therefore, viewpoints selected for inclusion in the LVIA broadly fall into three groups:

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

- A2.28 Generally, viewpoints are selected from publicly accessible land and/or the transport routes. Private views from residential receptors have not been taken; however, representative or specific viewpoints from adjacent areas can take into consideration that similar views may be afforded from receptors of residential streets/ areas.

Description of proposals

- A2.29 The planning application drawings and design and access statement provide a description of the proposals. The proposals are described in planning supporting statement, while this chapter summarises the elements that are likely to give rise to landscape or visual effects. The effects on landform and on existing landscape features such as vegetation are also described. Proposals for landscape measures such as new planting are also set out.

Mitigation measures

A2.30 The GLVIA describes three forms of mitigation measures. These are:

- *“Primary measures, developed through the iterative design process, which have become integrated or embedded into the project design;*
- *Standard construction and operational management practices for avoiding and reducing environmental effects;*
- *Secondary measures, designed to address any residual adverse effects remaining after primary measures and standard construction practices have been incorporated into the scheme.”*

A2.31 The first two forms are referred to as primary mitigation, while the last is referred to as secondary mitigation. At all stages of the iterative design development, the purpose has been to prevent/avoid, reduce and where possible offset, remedy or compensate potential adverse effects by including primary mitigation measures and standard construction and operational management practices. The proposals illustrated on the masterplan, building heights plan and detailed landscape general arrangement plan incorporate these primary measures and have been used to assess predicted potential effects.

A2.32 Secondary mitigation measures are those that have not been designed into the proposals as part of an outline application. Potential secondary mitigation measures are described and considered in the assessment where relevant. Where significant adverse effects remain after secondary mitigation, these are referred to as residual effects. However, due to the detailed nature of the proposals and the type of application submitted, secondary mitigation is not applicable.

Landscape assessment

A2.33 The landscape assessment judges the potential effects of the proposals on the landscape receptors that have been identified. The significance of a landscape effect is determined by consideration of the sensitivity of the landscape receptors and the magnitude of the landscape effect as a result of the proposals. These are defined in the following paragraphs.

Criteria for assessing potential significance of landscape effects

Sensitivity of landscape receptor

A2.34 The sensitivity of the landscape is assessed by combining the considerations of two factors:

- Value
- Susceptibility to specific change.

A2.35 The **value** of the landscape receptor is defined in the GLVIA (paragraph 5.19) as:

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

A2.36 The value of the landscape receptor is established at the baseline stage and considers two key categories as highlighted in paragraph 5.44 of the GLVIA:

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

A2.37 Landscape designations should not be over relied upon to signify the value of the landscape receptors. It is also important to remember that the fact that an area of landscape is not designated either nationally or locally does not mean that it does not have any value.

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

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

A2.39 In the absence of a formal landscape designation or landscape character area, judgement on the value of a landscape is based on the criteria set out in paragraph A2.43.

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

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

maintenance of the baseline situation and /or achievement of landscape planning policy and strategies.”

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

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

A2.42 Factors for judging susceptibility to change may include:

- *Vulnerability or robustness of elements of the landscape*
- *The tolerance, i.e. the extent to which elements of the landscape can be replaced, restored or may be altered*
- *The level or role elements of the landscape have in defining the character of the landscape*
- *The landscape sensitivity to the specific type of development proposed*
- *Scale/field pattern/complexity and enclosure*
- *Landform*
- *Landcover*
- *Historic landscape features/character*
- *Aesthetic, perceptual and experiential qualities (scenic quality and character, remoteness/tranquility*
- *Visual – skylines and settings, movement, key vistas, views to and from important landscape and cultural heritage features*
- *Landscape condition/quality*
- *Settlement pattern and edges*
- *Settlement setting and separation*
- *Rural character*
- *Man-made influence*

A2.43 The guidance set out in figure A2.1 has been used in this assessment to arrive at an overall evaluation of landscape sensitivity. Both susceptibility to change and value are judged as high, medium, low or negligible based on the criteria shown. There may be circumstances where the weighting given to some criteria may be greater than others. The combination of susceptibility and value produces an overall evaluation of landscape sensitivity, which is ultimately a matter of professional judgement, and is defined in this chapter as high, medium, low or negligible or any combined intermediate judgements.

Magnitude of landscape effect

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

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

A2.45 The **size or scale** of an effect is assessed by determining the degree of change that would arise from the proposals. The effect of both loss and addition of new features is judged as major, partial, minor or very minor based on the criteria set out in figure A2.2. The judgements may take into account:

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

A2.46 The **geographical extent** of effects is assessed by determining the area over which the landscape effects will be felt. The effect is considered across varying scales of wide, intermediate, localised or limited based on the criteria set out in figure A2.2. In general, the effects will vary according to the nature of the project and may not be relevant on every occasion.

A2.47 The **duration** of effects is assessed by the period of time over which the degree of change to the landscape would arise from the development. Duration is judged as long term (10-25 years), medium term (5-10 years) or short term (less than 5 years) based on the criteria set out in figure A2.2.

A2.48 The **reversibility** of an effect assesses the prospects or practicality of the effect being reversed. The effect is judged as reversible, partially reversible or permanent as set out in figure A2.2.

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

A2.50 The guidance notes and criteria set out in figure A2.2 have been used to make a judgement on the magnitude of landscape effect for this assessment. The magnitude of landscape effect is determined by combining the judgements of the four individual factors of size/scale, geographical extent, duration and reversibility. There may be circumstances where the weighting given to some criteria may be greater than others. The combination of all four factors produces an overall evaluation of magnitude of landscape effect, which is ultimately a matter of professional judgement, and is defined in this chapter as large, medium, small or negligible or any combined intermediate judgements.

Judging the overall significance of landscape effect

A2.51 The degree of significance of the effects on the landscape resources is considered from a sequentially combined evaluation of the landscape sensitivity and the magnitude of effect. The matrix in figure A2.3 has been used to guide this judgement and the degrees of significance of effect are judged as very substantial, substantial, moderate, slight or negligible (or mid points between those terms). The definitions used are included in that figure. They are applied to both potential effects with primary mitigation and to residual effects. If the degree of significance of effect is moderate or greater, then the effect is considered to be significant in EIA terms. Effects assessed as less than moderate, i.e. slight-moderate, slight, slight-negligible or negligible effects are

not considered to be significant for the purposes of this LVIA. The GLVIA guidance also states that thought must be given to whether the likely significant landscape effects are judged to be positive (beneficial) or negative (adverse). It may also be possible for the effects to be neutral in their consequences for the landscape where it is considered there are no effects i.e. like for like replacement. The GLVIA (paragraph 5.37) suggests that when judging the effects to be adverse or beneficial the factors to be considered should include, but not be restricted to the following:

- *“The degree to which the proposal fits within the existing landscape character*
- *The contribution to the landscape that the development may make in its own right, usually by virtue of good design, even if it is in contrast to existing character.”*

Visual assessment

A2.52 The visual assessment judges the potential effects of the proposals on the visual receptors that have been identified. The significance of a visual effect is determined by consideration of the sensitivity of the visual receptors and the magnitude of the visual effect on visual amenity. These are defined in the following paragraphs.

Criteria for assessing potential significance of visual effects

Sensitivity of visual receptors

A2.53 A visual receptor is a particular person or group of people who would be experiencing the view or are likely to be affected at a specific viewpoint.

A2.54 The sensitivity of the visual receptor is assessed by combining the judgements of two factors:

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

A2.55 The GLVIA (paragraph 6.37) suggests that when judging the **value** attached to the views experienced, account should be taken of:

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

A2.56 The value attached to the views experienced is established at the baseline stage and considers these two key categories:

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

A2.57 The visual receptors' **susceptibility** to change is defined in the GLVIA (paragraph 6.32) as follows:

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

A2.58 The guidance set out in figure A2.4 has been used in this assessment to arrive at an overall evaluation of the sensitivity of the visual receptors. Both susceptibility to change and value are judged as high, medium, low or negligible based on the criteria shown. There may be circumstances where the weighting given to some criteria may be greater than others. The combination of susceptibility and value produces an overall evaluation of visual receptor sensitivity, which is ultimately a matter of professional judgement, and is defined in this chapter as high, medium, low or negligible or any combined intermediate judgements.

Magnitude of visual effect

A2.59 The magnitude of visual effect is assessed in terms of:

- Size/scale
- Geographical extent
- Duration
- Reversibility

A2.60 The **size or scale** of a visual effect is assessed by determining the degree of change that would arise from the proposals. The effect of loss, addition or change to the composition of the view through the introduction of development is judged as major, partial, minor or very minor based on the criteria set out in figure A2.5. The GLVIA (paragraph 6.39) suggests that when judging the visual effects the following should be taken account of:

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

A2.61 The **geographical extent** of visual effects is assessed by determining the area over which the visual effects will be seen. The visual effect is considered across varying scales of wide, intermediate, localised or limited based on the criteria set out in figure A2.5. The GLVIA (paragraph 6.40) suggests that extent is likely to reflect:

- *“the angle of view in relation to the main activity of the receptor;*
- *the distance of the viewpoint from the proposed development;*

- *the extent of the area over which the changes would be visible.”*

A2.62 The **duration** of effects is assessed by the period of time over which the degree of change to the visual receptor would arise from the development. Duration is judged as long term (20-25 years), medium term (5-10 years) or short term (less than 5 years) based on the criteria set out in figure A2.5.

A2.63 The **reversibility** of an effect assesses the prospects and the practicality of the effect being reversed. The effect is judged as reversible, partially reversible or permanent as set out in figure A2.5.

A2.64 The guidance notes and criteria set out in figure A2.5 have been used to make a judgement on the magnitude of visual effect for this assessment. The magnitude of visual effect is determined by combining the judgements of the four individual factors of size/scale, geographical extent, duration and reversibility. There may be circumstances where the weighting given to some criteria may be greater than others. The combination of all four factors produces an overall evaluation of magnitude of visual effect, which is ultimately a matter of professional judgement, and is defined in this chapter as large, medium, small or negligible or any combined intermediate judgements.

Judging the overall significance of visual effects

A2.65 The degree of significance of the effects on the visual receptor is considered from a sequentially combined evaluation of the visual receptor sensitivity and the magnitude of effect. The matrix in figure A2.6 has been used to guide this judgement and the degrees of significance of effect are judged as very substantial, substantial, moderate, slight or negligible (or mid points between those terms). The definitions used are included in that figure. They are applied to both potential effects with primary mitigation and to residual effects. If the degree of significance of effect is moderate or greater, then the effect is considered to be significant in EIA terms. Effects assessed as less than moderate, i.e. slight-moderate, slight, slight-negligible or negligible effects are not considered to be significant for the purposes of this LVIA.

A2.66 The GLVIA guidance also states that thought must be given to whether the likely significant visual effects are judged to be positive (beneficial) or negative (adverse). It may also be possible for the effects to be neutral in their consequences for the landscape where it is considered there are no effects i.e. like for like replacement. This is based on professional judgement as to whether the effects will affect the quality of the visual experience for those people who will see the proposed development, given the nature of the existing views. The GLVIA (paragraph 6.44) suggests that when judging the effects to be adverse or beneficial the factors to be considered should include but not be restricted to the following:

- *“Effects on people who are particularly sensitive to changes in views and visual amenity are more likely to be significant*
- *Effects on people at recognised and important viewpoints or from recognised scenic routes are more likely to be significant*
- *Large-scale changes which introduce new, non-characteristic or discordant or intrusive elements into the view are more likely to be significant than small changes or changes involving features already present within the view.”*

Taking account of effects throughout the life of the project

A2.67 The degree of landscape and visual effects can vary considerably during the life cycle of the project. Within the assessment a description of the development is provided at each stage in the life cycle of the project to assist in understanding the scheme and the predicted landscape and visual effects of the development. The description of effects considers the following project stages:

- During construction
- At completion (post construction - year 0 during winter) including seasonal variation and night time
- Year 15 post construction

Technical Appendix A3: Photographic images methodology

Photographic survey

- A3.1 The aim is to recreate as closely as possible what the human eye can see. 50 mm is a traditionally agreed focal length for matching a photograph to the actual view seen, but a range between 45 mm to 55 mm is often used.
- A3.2 For this assessment, a DSLR Canon EOS 6D camera was used in conjunction with a fixed 50 mm prime lens (images captured in landscape format). To capture the photographs, a Manfrotto MT055 CX Pro 3 with levelling base mount and tripod have been used. The EOS 6D employs a sensor of similar size to a traditional SLR therefore the 50 mm lens used results in a focal length of 50 mm as no modification factor is applied. This methodology is in accordance with the LI Advice note *06/19, Visual Representation of Development Proposals*, 17 September 2019.
- A3.3 In this assessment, the photographs are taken at approximately 1.5 m above ground level using a tripod with a Pano head which provides a 15-degree angle between adjacent shots.
- A3.4 The viewpoints have been surveyed using GPS (in built in the camera) to provide a six-figure National Grid reference for the viewpoints. The accuracy of this device can vary (depending on factors such as satellite coverage, proximity of buildings, tree coverage etc.) so these figures are then checked on detailed OS survey plans to give a more accurate reference. Where relevant to generate visualisations, the viewpoints have been surveyed in accordance with paragraph A3.5

Baseline photographs

- A3.5 The baseline panorama shows the existing view and captures the overall landscape and visual context. Images are captured in landscape format shooting from left to right covering at least 180 degrees where applicable. The camera may be mounted in portrait orientation to capture a greater vertical field of view where required. For panoramic photographs, individual shots are stitched together seamlessly using Lightroom Classic.
- A3.6 All photographic representations are type 1 and are to be viewed at a comfortable arm's length. The baseline images are provided in cylindrical projection at 100% and should be viewed curved.