Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

Land South of Longfield Road, Meopham

September 2025

TG Report No. 17740_R01a_MB_AW

Tyler Grange

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Section 1: Introduction

1.1. Tyler Grange Group Limited (TG) has been appointed by Richborough Estates Ltd to undertake a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) to accompany an outline planning application for the residential development on land south of Longfield Road, Meopham (hereby referred to as 'the Site'). The Site is located within the administrative area of Gravesham Borough Council (GBC).

1.2. The Site, as shown on **Plan 1: Site Location and Context**, extends to approximately 5.67 ha and comprises a single arable field located on the western edge of Hook Green, within the parish of Meopham. It is bounded by Longfield Road to the north, the Helen Allison School to the east, and open countryside to the south and west. The Site is partially enclosed by mature vegetation along its western boundary, with more limited vegetation along the northern and eastern boundaries. The landform is gently undulating, falling slightly towards the north.

1.3. The proposals seek outline planning permission for the erection of up to 120 residential dwellings, public open space and associated works. Approval is sought for the principal means of vehicular access from Wrotham Road and all other matters are reserved. The proposals are referred to as the 'Proposed Development' within this LVIA.

1.4. This LVIA is accompanied by a series of illustrative plans and photographs, included at the rear as follows:

- Appendix 1 – LVIA Figures;
  - Plan 1: Site Location and Context;
  - Plan 2: Landscape Planning Policy and Designations;
  - Plan 3: Topography;
  - Plan 4: Published Landscape Character;
  - Plan 5: Zone of Theoretical Visibility and Photoviewpoint Locations;
  - Plan 6: Illustrative Landscape Strategy.
- Appendix 3 – Proposed Site Layouts;
- Appendix 4 – Planning Policy Extracts;
- Appendix 5 – Landscape Character Area Extracts;
- Appendix 6 – Sensitivity of Receptors Tables;
- Appendix 7 – Photoviewpoint Sheets;
- Appendix 8 – Landscape Effects Assessment Tables; and
- Appendix 9 – Visual Effects Assessment Tables.

1.5. The location of the Site is identified within **Plan 1** and **Plan 2: Landscape Policy and Designations**. The area shown within 2km of the Site is referred to as the 'Study Area'. The Study Area has been derived through the use of Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) mapping, desktop analysis and on-site assessment work.

1.6. This is a standalone report and does not constitute a landscape chapter in the context of an Environmental Statement required by the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations. The scheme was screened out from requiring EIA by GBC. The approach taken in the preparation of this report is considered to be appropriate and proportional in the context of professional guidance published by the Landscape Institute.

1.7. This assessment has been prepared and reviewed by Chartered Members of the Landscape Institute (CMLI).

Section 2: Methodology and Scope

2.1. To assist the reader in understanding the purpose of undertaking landscape assessment work, the definition of 'landscape' from the European Landscape Convention (ELC, 2000) is provided below.

"Landscape" means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors. This definition applies to all landscapes—urban, peri-urban, rural, ordinary, degraded, outstanding, or protected, and underpins the inclusive and perceptual nature of landscape assessment".

2.2. The methodology used in this Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) is based on the *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*, Third Edition (GLVIA3), published by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA). GLVIA3 defines LVIA as:

"...the effects of change resulting from development on both the landscape as an environmental resource in its own right and on people's views and visual amenity"

2.3. In line with this definition, the assessment considers the likely effects of the Proposed Development in an objective and systematic manner, while recognising the inherently perceptual and therefore subjective nature of landscape experience. Although subjectivity cannot be entirely removed, a structured and transparent methodology enables robust and reasoned conclusions to be drawn.

2.4. The LVIA process addresses two interrelated but distinct aspects:

- **Landscape Character:** The effects of the Proposed Development on discrete landscape character areas and/or types, defined by recognisable patterns of elements and features; and
- **Visual Context:** The effects of the Proposed Development on views experienced by people (visual receptors), and the associated visual amenity.

2.5. GLVIA3 defines landscape character as:

"A distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse."

2.6. Changes to landscape character may arise from:

- Alterations to the physical fabric of the landscape, such as the loss or introduction of key elements; and
- Changes in how the landscape is perceived or experienced.

2.7. Changes to views will occur where there is:

- A change in the composition or content of the view;

- A change to the skyline; and/or
- A shift in the distribution or dominance of visual elements.

LVIA Methodology

2.8. The area shown within 2km of the Site boundary on **Plan 2** is referred to as the 'Study Area'. This LVIA relates to the Study Area and assesses both landscape and visual effects, which are interrelated but considered separately in accordance with best practice.

2.9. The assessment process is set out in further detail in **Appendix 2 - LVIA Methodology**. The methodology is based upon the GLVIA3 and has been legally reviewed and tested at planning appeals.

2.10. The assessment of effects arising from the Proposed Site Layout is based on the Parameters Plan and Building Heights Plan in **Appendix 3 - Proposed Site Layouts**..

Scope of Assessment

2.11. Two stages of scoping were undertaken as part of the assessment process. The first stage involved a desktop-based review to scope out receptors that would not be affected by the Proposed Development, or where effects were anticipated to be no greater than negligible adverse. This stage was informed by ZTV analysis (see **Plan 5 - Zone of Theoretical Visibility and Photoviewpoint Locations** in **Appendix 1**), alongside other desk-based sources.

2.12. To refine the focus of the assessment on receptors likely to experience effects greater than negligible adverse, a second stage of scoping was carried out following a detailed site visit. Visual receptors identified through the ZTV were reviewed in the field and scoped out where no views of the Proposed Development were possible. A comprehensive walkover survey of the Study Area was undertaken to establish the actual visual envelope of the Site. This enabled the exclusion of areas that, while identified in the ZTV as having theoretical visibility, were screened by intervening vegetation or built form. Several representative photoviewpoints have been included to illustrate 'no view' scenarios and to provide justification for the scoping out of certain receptors.

2.13. The scope of this LVIA was informed by pre-application discussions with Gravesham Borough Council. The Council expressed broad support for the landscape-led approach and the integration of green infrastructure and PRoW connections. This engagement provided confidence in the methodology and viewpoint selection, supporting the decision to scope out receptors where effects were anticipated to be negligible.

2.14. As detailed in Section 4 of this LVIA, the following landscape receptors have been **scoped out** of the assessment:

- Landscape character areas and types outside the ZTV;
- National Character Areas;
  - North Downs National Character Area (NCA);

- County Landscape Character Areas (LCAs);
  - Luddesdown: West Kent Downs LCA;
  - Southfleet Arable Lands LCA;
- National Landscape Character Areas LCAs;
  - West Kent Downs LCA 1A;
- Local Landscape Character Areas;
  - Harvel Wooded Downs LCA; and
  - Luddesdown Downs LCA.
- Kent Downs National Landscape and its setting.

2.15. As detailed in Section 5 of this LVIA, the following visual receptors have been **scoped out** of the assessment:

- Visual receptors beyond the 2km Study Area;
- Visual receptors outside the coverage of the ZTV (see **Plan 5**);
- Visual receptors located within the Kent Downs National Landscape;
- Users of PRoW SD238 and SD239;
- Users of PRoW NS192 (**Photoviewpoint 10**)
- Users of PRoW NS252 (**Photoviewpoint 11**);
- Users of PRoW NS307;
- Users of PRoW NS309;
- Users of Park Hill, Nurstead Lane, and Stony Cor (**Photoviewpoint 9**); and
- Users of Manor Road.

Section 3: Planning Policy and Evidence Base

3.1. The following section summarises the local planning policies relevant to landscape and visual matters, as well as adopted Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) and other published guidance and studies that are of particular relevance. A full extract of the national and local planning policies of relevance to the LVIA are contained within **Appendix 7 - Planning Policy Extracts**. Discussion around Green Belt and relevant policies is undertaken in **Section 8** of this report. The location of the Site in relation to relevant planning designations is illustrated on **Plan 2**.

3.2. At the local level, the Site lies within the administrative area of the GBC Local Planning Authority (LPA), and approximately 800m west of the boundary of the Kent Downs National Landscape.

Local Policy

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (Adopted September 2014)[1]

3.3. There is no standalone landscape-specific policy within the adopted Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy. However, relevant considerations are embedded within the policies below and detailed in **Appendix 4**:

- Policy CS02: Scale and Distribution of Development (Green Belt).
- Policy CS12: Green Infrastructure.
- Policy CS19: Development and Design Principles.

Local Plan Core Strategy Partial Review and Site Allocations (October 2020)[2]

3.4. The emerging Local Plan has progressed through Regulation 18 (Stage 2) consultation (October–December 2020). The Council is currently preparing the Regulation 19 submission draft, scheduled for consultation later in 2025. At this stage, the emerging policies carry very limited weight in decision-making but are noted here for context.

3.5. Policies within the emerging Local Plan relevant to landscape and/or visual matters are summarised below and detailed in **Appendix 4**:

- Policy GI5: Landscape Character.
- Policy GI1: Green Infrastructure.
- Policy GI2: Biodiversity and Habitat Connectivity.

[1] Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy - September 2014 - Google Drive
[2] Emerging Local Plan Partial Review, Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (Regulation 18 - Stage 2) Consultation - Gravesham Borough Council Planning Consultations

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Gravesham Stage 2 Green Belt Study (August 2020)[3]

3.6. The Stage 2 Study provides an assessment of the London Area Green Belt within Gravesham Borough, evaluating its performance against both national and local Green Belt purposes. It represents an update to previous Green Belt studies undertaken by the Council. As shown on **Plan 2**, the Site lies within the London Area Green Belt, which extends across the wider Study Area.

3.7. The findings of this Stage 2 Study supersede those of earlier assessments, incorporating the relevant amendments to the NPPF in effect at the time, alongside good practice guidance and relevant case law. It is acknowledged that this study was completed in 2020, prior to the most recent updates to the NPPF in December 2024, which introduced new provisions relating to the Green Belt, including the formal recognition of Grey Belt.

3.8. Although Green Belt is a spatial planning designation rather than a landscape designation, the LVIA includes a dedicated chapter on visual openness and Green Belt considerations. This is supported by a Grey Belt Study to assess the Site's suitability for redevelopment within the Green Belt context.

Gravesham Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study[4]

3.9. The Gravesham Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study (March 2016) provides an assessment of landscape and visual sensitivities around defined settlements in the Borough. The Site falls within Parcel HG4 – Hook Green South West, which is one of six parcels assessed around Hook Green.

3.10. As shown in **Figure 1** below, the Site is located in the northern part of Parcel HG4 and does not cover the full extent of the parcel.

3.11. The study identifies Parcel HG4 as having medium-high sensitivity to small-scale development. It notes that *"Development towards the northern edge of the parcel, to the west of the Helen Allison School, would relate more closely to the existing settlement form. It would have a more limited impact on setting and on public views, particularly if new planting was used to soften the development edge in the same way that trees screen the backs of the school buildings, but would constitute an adverse impact on the rural character of Longfield Road. Adverse landscape effects could therefore potentially still be significant, depending on the extent of development and consequent loss of views from the road."*

[3] Emerging Local Plan Partial Review, Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (Regulation 18 - Stage 2) Consultation - Gravesham Borough Council Planning Consultations

[4] Gravesham Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Studyw.pdf

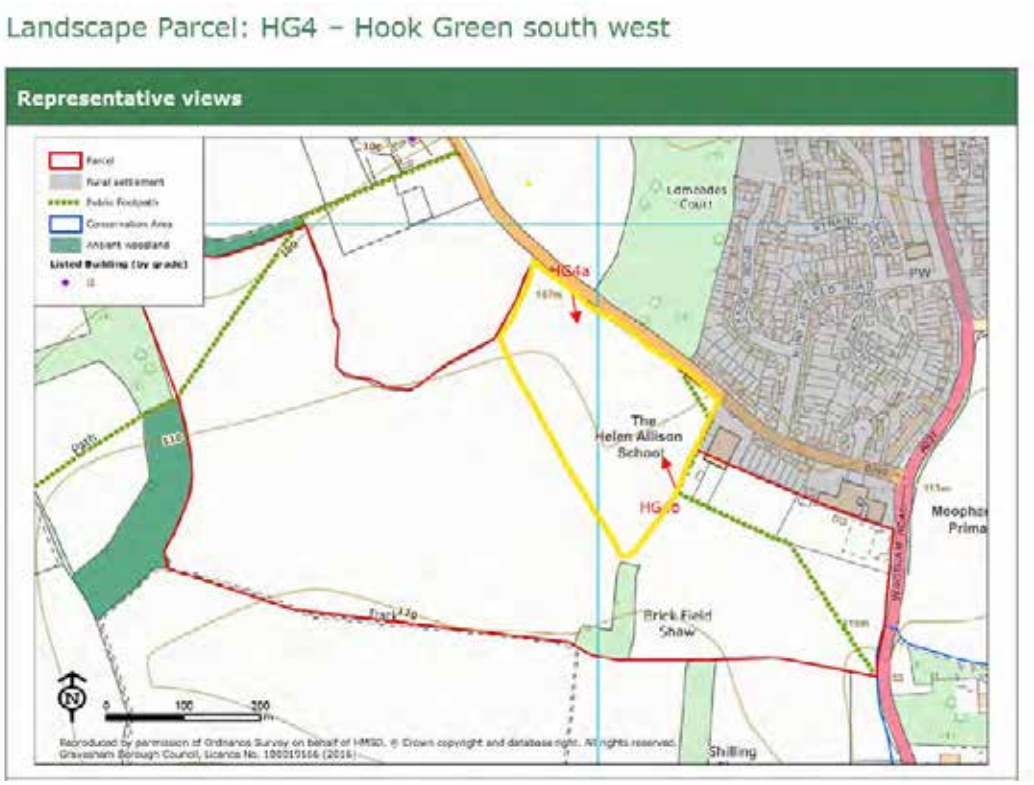


Figure 1: Extract from the Gravesham Green Belt Study highlighting the extents of parcel HG4. The site boundary is denoted by a yellow line.

Landscape Designations

3.12. As shown on **Plan 2**, the Site is not located within or adjacent to any national or local landscape designations.

3.13. The Site is located approximately 800 metres west of the Kent Downs National Landscape (NL), formerly designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The physical separation between the Site and the Kent Downs NL includes the settlement of Hook Green (Meopham) and large educational facilities, which contribute to physical and visual separation between the Site and Kent Downs NL. Desk-based studies and field assessments confirm that there is no intervisibility between the Site and visual receptors within the Kent Downs NL. As a result, the Site is not considered to form part of the setting of the Kent Downs NL. Consequently, potential changes to the Site are unlikely to affect the character or visual amenity of the Kent Downs NL. On this basis, the Kent Downs NL has been scoped out of this LVIA and will not be considered further.

Other Designations

3.14. As identified in *The Street, Meopham Rural Conservation Area Appraisal*[5], the 'The Street, Meopham' Conservation Area lies approximately 350m east of the Site (see **Plan 2)**. While Conservation Areas are not landscape designations, they can include published guidance on important views that may be relevant to LVIA. In this instance, the Meopham Conservation

[5] 8-The Street-Meopham.pdf - Google Drive

Area Appraisal does not identify any published views directed towards the Site. This LVIA therefore considers the Conservation Area only in terms of its visual context, with detailed assessment of setting addressed separately within the Heritage Assessment (ref. P25-0095).

3.15. Other environmental and heritage designations within the Study Area, such as ancient woodland, scheduled monuments, and listed buildings, are also shown on **Plan 2** for context, although they fall outside the scope of this LVIA.

Open Access and Rights of Way

3.16. All Public Rights of Way (PRoW) within the Study Area are shown on **Plans 1** and **2**.

3.17. One PRoW, NS253, enters the Site at the eastern boundary before extending north along the eastern edge and terminating at Longfield Road.

3.18. The long-distance footpath Weald Way lies approximately 1.4km east of the Site, while the North Downs Way is located approximately 4km to the south-east.

3.19. The primary vehicular and pedestrian route is Longfield Road, located along the northern boundary of the Site, which has a 30mph speed limit through the built-up area.

Section 4: Landscape Baseline

4.1. This section identifies the landscape receptors and sets out the existing landscape context in terms of:

- The landscape setting, features and character of the Site;
- The landscape character of the Study Area; and
- The sensitivity of the identified landscape receptors to the Proposed Development.

Landscape Context

4.2. As shown on **Plan 1**, the Site is located on the western edge of Meopham, with built development extending to the north-east and east. Immediately to the east lies the Helen Allison School, which comprises school buildings and hardstanding areas, enclosed by well-defined tree-lined hedgerow boundaries. To the north-east, the northern side of Longfield Road is predominantly lined with semi-detached houses.

4.3. Directly north of the Site, beyond Longfield Road, is woodland that provides a degree of visual containment and limits intervisibility with the wider surroundings. To the south and west, the landscape is characterised by open agricultural land, defined by established tree-lined hedgerows and boundary vegetation, interspersed with areas of woodland, scattered farmsteads, and individual residential dwellings set within mature, well-vegetated gardens.

4.4. The Site is semi-enclosed by mature vegetation and settlement to the north and east, which affords a degree of visual containment and reduces wider intervisibility. Nevertheless, the Site occupies a transitional zone between established residential and mixed-use development to the north-east and the broader landscape to the south-west.

Settlement and Land Use

4.5. As shown on **Plan 1**, the Site is bordered by existing settlement on its eastern side, with the Helen Allison School located immediately adjacent to the eastern boundary. A large farmstead lies just to the north-west of the Site. Within the wider Study Area, the principal settlements are Hook Green and Meopham, which are connected by Wrotham Road—a major north–south route through the area.

4.6. The Site comprises a single arable field (see **Plan 1**). Its western boundary is defined by a mature hedgerow with trees. The eastern boundary is predominantly defined by the school fence, with sporadic scrubby vegetation. A section of the eastern boundary extends through an arable field before connecting with a woodland block adjacent to the Site's south-eastern corner. The southern boundary also extends through arable land, while the northern boundary is formed by Longfield Road. The limited landscape features present within the Site are concentrated along its periphery, as the interior is largely devoid of features due to intensive agricultural use.

4.7. Beyond the developed edge, the surrounding landscape is predominantly agricultural, characterised by medium to large, irregularly shaped fields, primarily in arable use. Field boundaries are typically defined by tree lines and interspersed with woodland blocks, contributing to a varied and textured rural character.

Topography and Hydrology

4.8. The topography of the Study Area is illustrated on **Plan 3 – Topography**. Elevations range from approximately 80m AOD along the northern boundary adjacent to Longfield Road to around 125m AOD on the local ridgeline to the south. This reflects the transition between the gently undulating dip slope of the North Downs and the lower-lying agricultural land to the west.

4.9. The Site occupies a shallow bowl-shaped landform, with the lowest ground located near the northern boundary. From this point, the land rises gradually towards the southern boundary, creating a subtle local ridgeline that provides a degree of visual containment and limits long-distance views to the south. To the west, the landform falls away towards the Cobham Valleys, while to the east it shares similar contours to the Site before dropping towards Camer Park and the Kent Downs NL beyond.

Landscape Character Baseline

4.10. The landscape character appraisal process considers the broader landscape at a national level, then examines more detailed characteristics at the district and local levels. This is set within the context of site-specific land use, helping to define local distinctiveness and sense of place. Together, these elements form the baseline against which the potential impacts of development are assessed.

4.11. The characterisation process in a non-value judgement process; therefore, classifying landscapes into distinct areas does not suggest that one character is more sensitive than another or valued by people more or less.

4.12. The published landscape character areas within the Study Area for this LVIA are illustrated on **Plan 4 - Landscape Character**. The relevant character areas are summarised below with full details provided at **Appendix 5 - Landscape Character Study Extracts**.

National Landscape Character

4.13. The Site and Study Area lies within the North Downs National Character Area (NCA)[6], reference 119. NCA 119 extends from Surrey to the Kent coast. The area is characterised by a prominent chalk ridge with steep escarpments, dry valleys, and a gently undulating dip slope, supporting a mosaic of arable farmland, species-rich chalk grassland, and ancient woodland. Field patterns are typically defined by hedgerows and small woodland blocks, contributing to a textured and varied rural character.

4.14. While NCA profiles provide a broad overview of the wider landscape context, they are often too generalised to support a detailed assessment of the appropriateness of development

[6] Natural England Access to Evidence - National Character Areas

proposals at the site level. In contrast, more localised landscape character assessments—at the county, district, or borough scale—typically offer a finer grain of detail and a more accurate reflection of local landscape characteristics. As such, potential impacts on NCA 119: North Downs are considered likely to be no greater than negligible adverse and have therefore been scoped out of further assessment.

County Landscape Character

4.15. The Kent Landscape Assessment[7] (KLA) provides a strategic framework for understanding and managing the county's diverse landscapes. It consolidates existing landscape character assessments across Kent and aims to develop character-based strategies that maintain and enhance the distinctiveness of the county's varied landscape types. At the county scale, the KLA divides Kent into a series of LCAs, each representing a distinct combination of physical, ecological, historical, and aesthetic attributes specific to a particular location.

Ash Downs Landscape Character Area

4.16. As illustrated on **Plan 4**, the Site lies within the Ash Downs LCA. This LCA is described as a predominantly rural landscape comprising a mix of grassland and extensive arable farmland, interspersed with fragmented patterns of small woodland blocks. The area is defined by a combination of landform, vegetation, and settlement patterns that contribute to its distinctive character. Full details of the LCA are found at **Appendix 5**, and characteristics relevant to the Site and Study Area are summarised below.

- *"A pleasant mix of deep, dry pastoral valleys enclosed by wooded ridges and species rich hedgerows, with broad plateau tops beyond.*
- *Small valley-bottom villages and large 20th century settlements on plateau.*
- *A winding network of narrow, historic lanes often eroded by traffic."*

District Landscape Character

4.17. At the district level, Gravesham Borough Council has prepared a Landscape Character Assessment (2009)[8], which provides a detailed understanding of the borough's landscape character and informs landscape planning and management decisions.

4.18. The Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment identifies 11 LCAs, three of which fall within the 2 km Study Area, as illustrated on **Plan 4**.

- Meopham Downs.
- Harvel Wooded Downs.
- Luddesdown Downs.

4.19. Although located within the Study Area, the Site is physically and visually separate from the Harvel Wooded Downs and Luddesdown Downs LCAs. As a result, it is considered that the Proposed Development would not give rise to any landscape effects on district level LCAs

[7] Kent's Landscape Assessment - Kent County Council
[8] Microsoft Word - Gravesham LCA May 09.doc

outside of the Site boundary greater than negligible adverse. Accordingly, LCAs Harvel Wooded Downs and Luddesdown Downs are scoped out of further detailed assessment within this LVIA.

Meopham Downs Landscape Character Area

4.20. The Site is located within the Meopham Downs LCA which is described as a gently undulating rural landscape characterised by a mix of arable and pasture farmland. The field pattern varies from small, square fields in the south to broader, irregular fields in the north. Native hedgerows and hedgerow trees define field boundaries, while small woodland clumps and remnants of orchards contribute to the area's texture. The landscape is interspersed with traditional settlements such as Meopham, Meopham Green, and Culverstone Green, all located along the A227.

4.21. Published characteristics of the LCA that are relevant to the Site and Study Area are summarised below, with full details provide at **Appendix 5**.

- *"Gently undulating topography with a mix of arable and pasture farmland.*
- *Neat pattern of small, square fields in the south.*
- *Broader, irregular-shaped fields to the north.*
- *Narrow lanes and roads lined with hedgerows.*
- *Three large settlements located along the A227.*
- *Traditional architecture surrounding village greens, contributing to local vernacular."*

LCA Condition

4.22. The Meopham Downs LCA is assessed as being in good condition. The landscape exhibits a coherent pattern of elements, with few visual detractors. Native hedgerows and small woodland clumps are generally well-maintained and provide ecological connectivity.

LCA Sensitivity

4.23. The LCA is considered to have 'moderate sensitivity'. The landscape's characteristics -historic field patterns, native hedgerows, and traditional village centres, relate to a more rural character

LCA Management Guidelines

4.24. The Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment outlines the following management objectives for the Meopham Downs LCA:

- Conserve and reinforce the traditional landscape structure; new elements should respect existing patterns;
- Conserve characteristic narrow, winding lanes and dense native hedgerows;

- Conserve the traditional built character through the use of local materials and techniques;
- Reinforce village identity and maintain separation between settlements;
- Conserve and enhance broadleaf woodland cover and wooded edges to arable plateaus;
- Support traditional land uses such as orchards and explore new horticultural opportunities;
- Conserve and reinforce agricultural land use.

Site-specific Landscape Character

4.25. Fieldwork was undertaken by Tyler Grange in March 2025 to assess the landscape character of the Site and the 2km Study Area. The Site is situated on the western settlement edge of Hook Green (Meopham), and occupies a transitional location between the established settlement edge and the wider landscape.

4.26. The Site comprises a small part of a single, large arable field, and is typical of the surrounding landscape. It is bounded by Longfield Road to the north, and the settlement edge to the east. The limited landscape features present within the Site are concentrated along its periphery, as the interior is largely devoid of features due to intensive agricultural use. Boundary features, comprising a mature hedgerow with trees are found along the western boundary. The remaining boundaries are predominantly void of vegetation, with sporadic sections of scrubby vegetation located along the northern and eastern boundaries. The undulating landform reflects the broader topographical character of the area. However, the proximity of nearby settlements and road infrastructure introduces urbanising influences that diminish the overall sense of rurality.

4.27. At a local level, the Site's character somewhat aligns with the Meopham Downs LCA, which is defined by gently undulating topography and arable farmland. However, the Site's immediate context reflects a more transitional and semi-rural character due to its proximity to settlement and infrastructure.

Summary of Landscape Receptors

4.28. As for reasons detailed above, the following landscape receptors have been **scoped out** for further assessment:

- National Character Areas;
  - North Downs NCA;
- County Landscape Areas;
  - Luddesdown: West Kent Downs LCA;
  - Southfleet Arable Lands LCA;
- Local Landscape Character Areas;

- Harvel Wooded Downs LCA; and
- Luddesdown Downs LCA.

4.29. The following landscape receptors have been identified for further assessment:

- Character of the Site; and
- Character of the local landscape within the Study Area as illustrated by Meopham Downs and Ash Down LCAs.

Landscape Value

4.30. TGN 02/21 identifies a range of factors that can assist in understanding the value of the landscape, which forms part of the understanding of its sensitivity. An assessment of the value of the Site and local landscape in accordance with TGN 02/21 is provided at **Appendix 6.**.

4.31. Having conducted an analysis in light of TGN 02/21, it is considered that the Site represents a **medium to low** landscape value overall and the wider Study Area is of **medium** value (see **Appendix 6** for details).

Sensitivity of Landscape Receptors

4.32. The full appraisal of sensitivity of landscape receptors is set out in Table A3.2 in **Appendix 6** and summarised below:

- Character of the Site (**Medium to Low**); and
- Character of the local landscape as illustrated by Meopham Downs and Ash Down LCAs (**Medium**).

Section 5: Visual Baseline

5.1. To assess the potential visual effects of the Proposed Development, it is essential to establish the existing visual context. This includes identifying the extent to which the Site is currently visible, the nature of available views, and the receptors (people) who may experience changes in their visual amenity. In accordance with Chapter 6 of the GLVIA3, the visual baseline should define:

- The area from which the Proposed Development may be visible;
- The groups of people (visual receptors) likely to be affected;
- The representative viewpoints that illustrate these views; and
- The character and quality of views from each viewpoint.

Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)

5.2. The visibility of the Site has been assessed through a combination of desk-based analysis and field verification. Initial analysis was informed by ZTV mapping (refer to **Plan 5**), which identifies areas within the surrounding landscape from which the Proposed Development may theoretically be visible. This was supplemented by fieldwork to confirm the actual extent of visibility and to refine the assessment.

5.3. The ZTV was generated using digital surface modelling software, based on a maximum proposed ridge height of 10.5 metres (equivalent to three storeys). The model assumes a receptor eye level of 1.6 metres and covers a 2km radius Study Area. The analysis uses 1m resolution LIDAR Digital Surface Model (DSM) data, which incorporates existing built form and vegetation to provide a realistic representation of potential visibility.

5.4. While LIDAR DSM data accounts for many intervening features, it represents a snapshot in time. Changes such as vegetation growth or clearance, or the construction or demolition of buildings, may not be reflected. Additionally, the ZTV may indicate theoretical visibility from elevated features such as rooftops or tree canopies, which are not accessible to the public. As such, ZTV outputs are indicative only and must be interpreted with caution.

5.5. To address these limitations, the ZTV was verified through a comprehensive site visit undertaken in March 2025. This fieldwork confirmed the actual extent of visibility and informed the selection of representative viewpoints. These viewpoints illustrate both areas where the Site is visible and locations where no views are available, despite theoretical visibility. The viewpoints are presented in **Appendix 7 - Photoviewpoint Sheets**. In accordance with GLVIA3, the visual baseline focuses on publicly accessible external spaces. Views from private properties are not assessed in detail but are considered where relevant and where visibility is confirmed.

Approach to Identification of Views

5.6. Photographs were captured from selected viewpoints using a digital camera with a 50mm focal length lens, approximating the human field of view. All photographs were taken at eye level (approximately 1.6 metres above ground level) to reflect a typical viewing experience. A total of 13 representative viewpoints were identified around the Study Area to assess the potential visual effects of the Proposed Development from a range of directions and receptor types. Locations are shown on **Plan 5**, and summarised in **Table 1: Photoviewpoint Locations** below. The Photographs are provided at **Appendix 7**.

5.7. The selected viewpoints are intended to be representative of the range of views available within the Study Area. However, they do not provide exhaustive coverage of all possible locations. In many cases, views are experienced sequentially or intermittently as people move through the landscape. Such transient or fleeting views are also considered within the assessment, particularly along transport corridors and PRoW routes. Several of the viewpoint locations also represent a 'no view' to provide evidence and transparency to this assessment.

5.8. All viewpoint photography was undertaken in March 2025, when vegetation was not in full leaf, under clear weather conditions, with very good to excellent visibility. This ensures that the assessment reflects a worst-case scenario in terms of potential visibility of the Proposed Development.

Table 1: Photoviewpoint Locations

Representative Photoviewpoint Number	Photoviewpoint Location	Photoviewpoint description
1	Along Longfield Road, adjacent to the north-west corner of the Site	View from Longfield Road to the north of the Site, looking south-east across the Site. Views include the entirety of the Site, with Meopham in the background.
2a and 2b	Along PRoW NS253	View from the PRoW in the north-east corner of the Site, looking west across the Site. Views include the entirety of the Site, and the vegetation along the western boundary. The edge of Meopham can be seen adjacent to the northern boundary
3	Along PRoW NS253	View from the PRoW to the east of the Site, looking north-west towards the Site. Due to topography, the internal field structure is not visible, but views across to the western boundary are possible, as well as the school buildings associated with Helen Allison School and Meopham Community Academy in the foreground.
4	Along Shipley Hills Road	View from the road to the south-east, looking north-west towards the Site. Intervening hedgerow and woodland obscure views of the Site, but views of adjacent schools are possible.

5	Along PRoW NS251	View from PRoW NS251 to the south-west of the Site, looking north-east towards the Site. The topography and intervening vegetation between the Site and PRoW obscure views of the internal structure of the Site, but views of the settlement edge to the east of the Site are possible.
6	Along PRoW NS251	View from the PRoW to the west of the Site, looking east towards the Site. Topography and vegetation along the western boundary obscure views of the Site.
7	Along Longfield Road, outside of settlement	View from Longfield Road to the west of the Site, looking east towards the Site. Rolling topography and field boundary vegetation curtail views of the Site.
8	Along Longfield Road, outside of settlement	View from Longfield Road to the west of the Site, looking east towards the Site. The undulating topography and intervening vegetation between the Site and road screens views of the Site.
9	Junction of Park Hill and Stony Cor	View from the roads to the north-west of the Site, looking south-east towards the Site. The undulating topography and intervening vegetation between the Site and road screens views of the Site.
10	Along PRoW NS192	View from PRoW NS192 to the north-east of the Site, looking south-west towards the Site. The undulating topography and intervening vegetation and settlement between the Site and PRoW screens views of the Site.
11	Along PRoW NS252	View from PRoW NS252 to the east of the Site, looking west towards the Site. The intervening vegetation and settlement between the Site and PRoW screens views of the Site.
12	Along PRoW NS283	View from PRoW NS283 to the south of the Site, looking north towards the Site. The local ridgeline located between the Site and PRoW obscure views of the internal field structure of the Site.
13	Along PRoW SD304	View from PRoW SD304 to the south-west of the Site, looking north-east towards the Site. The undulating topography and intervening vegetation and settlement between the Site and PRoW screens views of the Site.

Visual Receptor Study

5.12. The visibility of the Site is shaped by undulating topography, field boundary vegetation, and the proximity of settlement. While ZTV mapping indicates a broad theoretical extent of visibility across the 2 km Study Area, field verification confirms that actual views are more limited and fragmented due to intervening vegetation and the deeply rolling landscape beyond settlement edges. This section focuses on receptors within the public realm, with residential and retail receptors addressed separately.

Views from the North

5.13. A woodland block along the northern boundary restricts intervisibility. The landform also falls away towards the Cobham Valley (**Plan 3**), further limiting views. Where elevated ground affords wider views, these are filtered by woodland and field boundary vegetation (**Photoviewpoints 8** and **9**). To the north-east, settlement further obscures potential views (**Photoviewpoint 10**).

5.14. Visibility is largely confined to receptors adjacent to the northern boundary. Users of Longfield Road experience unobstructed views across the Site when passing along its northern edge (**Photoviewpoint 1**). Approaching from the north-east, views are generally screened by field boundary vegetation (**Photoviewpoint 8**), or by topography where the road descends into the Cobham Valley (**Photoviewpoint 7**).

Views from the East

5.15. The eastern boundary is largely defined by mature vegetation and the settlement edge, with school buildings beyond. These features screen views from most residents and road users to the east. Additional layers of settlement and vegetation further obscure views from more distant receptors (**Photoviewpoint 11**).

5.16. Visibility is therefore limited to local receptors where the eastern boundary is undefined or where receptors are located within the Site. A section of PRoW NS253 runs along the eastern boundary within the Site, offering internal views (**Photoviewpoint 2**). Outside the Site, the PRoW crosses arable fields, allowing partial views across the eastern boundary (**Photoviewpoint 3**), although the northern part of the Site is filtered by vegetation and school grounds.

5.17. Further east, views are filtered by vegetation. Users of Meopham Road experience glimpsed views through roadside vegetation. Users of Shipley Hills Road currently experience no views due to intervening vegetation; however, changes to the Site may be perceptible from a short section of this road (**Photoviewpoint 4**).

Views from the South

5.18. The landscape to the south of the Site is deeply undulating, with several ridgelines (**Plan 3**). This naturally limits intervisibility to receptors on higher ground. However, local high ground immediately south of the Site obscures views, even where the Site boundary adjoins fields. Currently, receptors to the south do not experience views of the Site, although future changes may be perceptible from some elevated locations. Screening is provided by the rolling landform and layers of vegetation (**Photoviewpoints 12** and **13**).

Views from the West

5.19. To the west, the land falls steeply towards the Cobham Valley, limiting visibility from lower ground. A woodland block further restricts views. Users of PRoW NS251, located east of this woodland, experience partial views of the Site. Field boundary vegetation along and beyond the western boundary filters these views (**Photoviewpoint 6**), with views available only from a short section of the PRoW near the southern boundary (**Photoviewpoint 5**).

Residential Receptors

5.20. While this LVIA focuses on publicly accessible views, residential receptors are considered separately due to their high susceptibility to visual change. Although private views are not protected under planning policy, they remain relevant in assessing potential effects on visual amenity.

5.21. The Site's visual influence on residential properties is moderated by mature vegetation, local topography, and dwelling orientation. Consequently, only a small number of properties in close proximity are likely to experience any visibility, which is typically filtered, partial, and within the context of the existing settlement edge.

5.22. Properties with potential views include:

- Longfield Road dwellings, particularly those immediately north-east of the Site. Roadside vegetation provides some filtering, but the open northern boundary and proximity afford views from several properties.
- Mellikar Farm, located to the north-west on lower ground. Views of the western boundary are possible, although farm outbuildings and horse paddocks provide screening.

5.23. Overall, the visual relationship between the Site and surrounding residential properties is constrained by existing landscape features and settlement. Where visibility occurs, it is limited in extent and character, and experienced within a semi-rural, edge-of-settlement context.

Summary of Visual Receptors

5.24. The following visual receptors have been **scoped out** for further assessment:

- Visual receptors beyond the 2km Study Area;
- Visual receptors outside the coverage of the ZTV (see **Plan 5**);
- Visual receptors located within the Kent Downs NL;
- Users of PRoW SD238 and SD239;
- Users of PRoW NS192 (**Photoviewpoint 10**)
- Users of PRoW NS252 (**Photoviewpoint 11**);
- Users of PRoW NS307;
- Users of PRoW NS309;
- Users of Park Hill, Nurstead Lane, and Stony Cor (**Photoviewpoint 9**); and
- Users of Manor Road.

5.25. The following visual receptors have been identified for further assessment:

- Users of PRoW NS251 (**Photoviewpoints 5** and **6**);

- Users of PRoW NS253 (**Photoviewpoints 2** and **3**);
- Users of PRoW NS283 (**Photoviewpoint 12**);
- Users of PRoW SD304 and SD305 (**Photoviewpoint 13**);
- Users of Longfield Road (**Photoviewpoint 1**);
- Users of Shipley Hills Road (**Photoviewpoint 4**);
- Users of Wrotham Road; and
- Residents associated with Longfield Road.

5.26. Residential receptors are analysed separately within this LVIA.

Visual Value

5.27. In visual terms, value relates to that attached to views experienced by receptors (people).

5.28. The Site is not visible from recognised/important viewpoints or designated landscapes (Kent Down NL), tourist destinations, designed views, nationally recognised routes (i.e. National Trail) or land with public access (i.e. Open Access Land).

5.29. Details of visual value for each type of receptor is found at **Appendix 6**.

Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

5.30. The sensitivity of visual receptors is a product of value and susceptibility, as set out in the methodology in **Appendix 2**. The assessment of sensitivity is set out in Table A3.3 in **Appendix 6**, and summarised as follows:

- High/Medium sensitivity:
  - Users of PRoW NS251, NS283, SD304, and SD305; and
  - Residents associated with Longfield Road.
- Medium sensitivity:
  - Users of PRoW NS253.
- Medium/low sensitivity:
  - Users of Longfield Road; and
  - Users of Shipley Hills Road.
- Low sensitivity:
  - Users of A227 Wrotham Road.

Section 6: Proposed Development and Mitigation

The Proposed Development

6.1. The Proposed Development comprises up to 120 residential dwellings, with access taken from Longfield Road to the north. All matters are reserved except for access. The scheme includes a series of Green Infrastructure (GI) components, including informal open space, structural planting, and sustainable drainage features, which together form the basis of the landscape strategy.

The Design Evolution

6.2. The design has evolved through an iterative process informed by landscape and visual sensitivities identified during baseline appraisal and consultation with the local authority. Constraints, such as the nearby Conservation Area and the undefined southern boundary, have shaped the layout and extent of development. The masterplan has responded by incorporating landscape buffers and varied building setbacks, that reinforce the transition between built form and countryside.

Design Review Panel Feedback

6.3. A Design Review Panel session was held to test the emerging masterplan. Recommendations included:

- Relocating the main area of Public Open Space (POS) to the southern boundary to create a softer, more informal transition to the countryside;
- Aligning primary routes with the natural contours of the site to reduce visual impact and improve legibility;
- Setting development back from the southern boundary to create a soft edge and informal build line;
- Providing a pedestrian link to the existing PRoW network to improve connectivity and access to the wider landscape; and
- Integrating drainage basins into the layout to manage surface water and contribute to the character of the open space.

6.4. These recommendations were reviewed in consultation with the various consultants in the design team. The following amendments were made:

- The main area of POS was relocated to the southern boundary to create a softer, more informal edge to the countryside and enhance views southward;
- Primary routes were aligned with the site's natural contours to reduce visual impact and improve legibility;
- Development was set back from the southern boundary, with an informal build line to soften the transition to open countryside; and

- Drainage basins were embedded within the open space strategy, contributing to both surface water management and landscape character.

Pre-Application Engagement

6.5. A pre-application meeting was held with GBC, where the lead planning officer for the application was present. While a formal written response is pending, the planning team was broadly supportive of the approach taken. The submitted statement outlined:

- The landscape-led design rationale;
- The integration of open space and green infrastructure;
- The retention and enhancement of PRoWs;
- The proposed access strategy, and active travel links; and
- The approach to heritage and visual sensitivity.

6.6. The Council acknowledged the scheme's alignment with emerging policy and its potential to deliver high-quality development within the context of the Green Belt and local housing need.

Landscape Strategy

Landscape Strategy

6.7. As shown on **Plan 6: Illustrative Landscape Strategy** in **Appendix 1,** the landscape design has been carefully developed to complement the surrounding landscape character and visual context. Given the compact nature of the site, landscaping is focused along the southern boundary and around the SuDS basin located at the northern edge. Structural planting along the southern boundary provides visual screening and defines a clear transition to the adjacent countryside, helping to soften the development edge. The northern SuDS basin is framed by new public open space and planting, and will function as a soakage basin, allowing for informal use of the space. Internally, streets will be tree-lined to break up built form.

6.8. The landscape strategy ensures the development is well integrated into its context, offering meaningful recreational and ecological benefits while maintaining a soft settlement edge.

Landscape Mitigation

6.9. To ensure the proposed development is sensitively integrated into its setting, a series of landscape mitigation measures have been incorporated into the design:

- **Boundary planting:** The undefined southern boundary has been transformed into a vegetated boundary, with development set back from this edge. The proposed planting is layered through hedgerows and trees to soften views and reinforce the transition to the rolling countryside south-west of the Site.
- **PRoW integration:** Existing routes retained, with new links into the Site.

Landscape Enhancement

6.10. The proposals deliver a range of enhancements that strengthen the Site's landscape character, ecological value, and sense of place:

- **Setback from boundaries:** Development is set back from boundary features to retain and enhance the landscape framework.
- **Strengthening vegetation:** Existing hedgerows and mature trees are retained and reinforced to improve structure, screening, and biodiversity.
- **New habitat creation:** Although the application is submitted in outline form, the parameters allow for the delivery of these mitigation and enhancement measures within the defined development areas and green infrastructure framework.
- **Improved habitat connectivity:** Green corridors and open spaces link existing and proposed habitats, enhancing ecological networks across the site.

Section 7: Assessment of Effects

7.1. This section of the LVIA assesses the potential effects of the Proposed Development upon the landscape and visual receptors identified through the baseline appraisal set out earlier in this report. This has included consideration of the effects arising at Year 1 and Year 15, i.e. before and after mitigation planting has become established.

7.2. The methodology and criteria tables at **Appendix 2** have been used to inform the judgements made.

Likely Landscape Effects

7.3. The assessment of the landscape effects at Year 1 and residual effects of the Proposed Development upon completion and maturation of the landscape planting (Year 15) is set out in full at **Appendix 8**. The findings are summarised in **Table 2** below.

Table 2: Likely effects upon landscape receptors

Landscape receptor	**Sensitivity of the receptor**	**Magnitude of effect**		**Importance of effect**	
		(Construction) / Year 1	**Year 15**	**(Construction) / Year 1**	**Year 15**
Character of the Site	Medium to Low	(Large) Large	Medium	**(Major / Moderate adverse) Major / Moderate adverse**	**Moderate adverse**
Local Landscape Character	Medium	(Small) Small	Negligible	**(Minor adverse) Minor adverse**	**Negligible adverse**

Likely Visual Effects

7.4. The assessment of visual effects at Year 1 and residual effects of the Proposed Development upon completion and maturation of the landscape planting (Year 15) is set out in full at **Appendix 9**. The findings are summarised in **Table 3** below.

Table 3: Likely effects upon visual receptors

Visual receptor	Sensitivity of the receptor	Magnitude of effect		Importance of effect	
		(Construction) / Year 1	Year 15	(Construction) / Year 1	Year 15
Users of PRoW NS251 – *Representative Photoviewpoint 5 and 6*	High to Medium	(Medium) Medium	Small / Negligible	**(Moderate Adverse) Moderate Adverse**	**Minor Adverse**
Users of PRoW NS253 – *Representative Photoviewpoint 2 and 3*	Medium	(Medium) Large	Medium	**(Major / Moderate Adverse) Major / Moderate Adverse**	**Moderate Adverse**
Users of PRoW NS283 – *Representative Photoviewpoint 12*	High to Medium	(Small) Small	Negligible	**(Minor Adverse) Minor Adverse**	**Negligible Adverse**
Users of PRoW SD304 and SD305 – *Representative Photoviewpoint 13*	High to Medium	(Negligible) Negligible	Negligible	**(Negligible Adverse) Negligible Adverse**	**Negligible Neutral**
Users of A227 Wrotham Road	Low	(Negligible) Negligible	Negligible	**(Negligible Adverse) Negligible Adverse**	**Negligible Adverse**
Users of Longfield Road – *Representative Photoviewpoint 1*	Medium to Low	(Medium) Medium	Small	**(Moderate Adverse) Moderate Adverse**	**Minor Adverse**
Users of Shipley Hills Road - *Representative Photoviewpoint 4*	Medium	(Small / Negligible) Small / Negligible	Negligible	**(Minor / Negligible Adverse) Minor / Negligible Adverse**	**Negligible Adverse**

7.5. This LVIA has focussed upon the analysis of views from publicly accessible locations. Views from private residential dwellings have not been tested in the field and therefore the nature of the change for these people is set out in full within **Appendix 9**. The findings are summarised in **Table 4** below.

Table 4: Magnitude of effects upon residential views

Receptor	Magnitude of effect	
	(Construction) / Year 1	Year 15

Residents associated with Longfield Road	(Large to Medium) Large to Medium	Medium to Small

Section 8: Green Belt Assessment

Introduction

8.1. This Green Belt Assessment (GBA) has been prepared to accompany the LVIA. It assesses the Site's contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, December 2024) and considers whether the Site meets the definition of Grey Belt introduced in the updated NPPF and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG, February 2025).

8.2. The GBA should be read alongside the LVIA and the Planning Statement (PP0022) accompanying this application:

- The LVIA provides detailed baseline information on landscape character, visual context, and designations, which this GBA cross-references to avoid duplication.
- The Planning Statement addresses matters relating to housing need, sustainability, and the "Golden Rules" in NPPF paragraphs 155(b)–(d). This GBA focuses on paragraph 155(a): whether development would fundamentally undermine the purposes of the remaining Green Belt.

Policy and Evidence Base

National Policy

NPPF (December 2024):

8.3. Paragraph 142: "The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence."

8.4. Paragraph 143: Sets out the five purposes of the Green Belt:

(a) To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.

(b) To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another.

(c) To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

(d) To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns.

(e) To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

8.5. Paragraphs 148 and 155: Introduce the concept of Grey Belt and criteria for considering development on such land.

PPG (February 2025):

8.6. Provides guidance on assessing Green Belt purposes and Grey Belt status, including criteria for determining whether land "does not strongly contribute" to purposes (a), (b), or (d).

Local Policy and Evidence Base

8.7. The Site lies within the London Area Green Belt as defined in the Gravesham Local Plan (see Plan 2).

Gravesham Green Belt Study Stage 1 (2018)

8.8. The Gravesham Stage 1 Green Belt Study (April 2018) provided a high-level assessment of the Green Belt across the Borough, dividing it into large strategic parcels and evaluating their contribution to the national purposes of Green Belt policy. The Site falls within this assessment, and the findings are summarised below:

- The Site is located within Parcel 19: East of Hook Green;
- Parcel 19 is assessed as causing significant harm to the purposes of the Green Belt if released as the entire parcel; and
- The Study assessed the following contributions of Parcel 19 to each purpose;
  - Purpose A (Check unrestricted sprawl): Minimal/No Contribution;
  - Purpose B (Prevent neighbouring towns merging): Minimal/No Contribution; and
  - Purpose C (Safeguard countryside from encroachment): Significant Contribution.

Gravesham Green Belt Study Stage 2 (2020)

8.9. The Gravesham Green Belt Study (GGBS) (Stage 2 Study, August 2020) provided a finer-grain assessment of harm to the purposes of the Green Belt from releasing land adjacent to inset settlements. The Site falls within this assessment, and the findings are summarised below:

- The Site is located within Parcel HG7 in the Meopham Green assessment area;
- Parcel HG7 is assessed as causing high harm to the purposes of the Green Belt if released as the entire parcel; and
- The Study assessed the following contributions of Parcel HG7 to each purpose;
  - Purpose A (Check unrestricted sprawl): Limited/No Contribution;
  - Purpose B (Prevent neighbouring towns merging): Limited/No Contribution; and
  - Purpose C (Safeguard countryside from encroachment): Significant Contribution.

Methodology

Purpose

8.10. This GBA provides an appraisal of the contribution the Site makes to the purposes of the Green Belt as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG, February 2025). It also considers the potential effect of its release on the integrity of the remaining Green Belt and identifies opportunities for mitigation.

Scope

8.11. The assessment focuses on Purposes (a), (b), and (c) as defined in the NPPF:

- (a) To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.
- (b) To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another.
- (c) To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

8.12. Purpose (d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns – is not relevant to this assessment. Neither Meopham nor Hook Green are historic towns in the context of the NPPF, and the Green Belt in this location does not contribute to the setting of any historic town. This approach is consistent with the GGBR, which concluded that *'no land within the Borough plays a role in fulfilling Purpose 4'.*

8.13. Purpose (e) – to assist in urban regeneration – is not assessed as all greenfield sites contribute equally.

8.14. A separate stage considers whether the Site meets the definition of Grey Belt under PPG (Feb 2025).

Assessment Process

8.15. he assessment combines desk-based analysis, site appraisal, and professional judgement informed by planning and landscape expertise. It follows these steps:

- Context Review: Identify the Site's location, boundaries, and relationship to settlements and open countryside.
- Assessment Against Green Belt Purposes: Each relevant purpose is assessed using a four-tier contribution scale, consistent with the terminology set out in the PPG:
  - Strong – Land plays a critical role in fulfilling the relevant Green Belt purpose.
  - Moderate – Land supports the purpose but with limiting factors such as partial enclosure or existing development.
  - Weak – Land offers limited support to the purpose due to physical or visual disconnection.
  - None – Land does not meet any criteria relevant to the purpose being assessed.

- Criteria include:
  - Purpose (a): Relationship to large built-up areas and potential to contain or enable sprawl.
  - Purpose (b): Role in maintaining separation between settlements, including spatial and visual gaps.
  - Purpose (c): Degree to which the land retains countryside character and resists encroachment.
- Openness and Boundary Strength: Evaluates whether the Site is visually and physically open, and whether a strong, permanent boundary exists or could be established to contain development.
- Effect on Remaining Green Belt: Considers whether the release of the Site would compromise the ability of adjacent Green Belt land to continue fulfilling its purposes.
- Overall Judgement: Synthesises findings to determine the Site's overall contribution to the Green Belt and the potential harm arising from its release.

Grey Belt Assessment

8.16. The PPG (Feb 2025) introduces the concept of Grey Belt: land that does not strongly serve purposes (a), (b), or (d). This assessment applies the published criteria to determine whether the Site qualifies as Grey Belt, recognising that Purpose (c) is not used in Grey Belt identification but remains relevant to Green Belt appraisal.

Site Context

8.17. A detailed description of the Site's physical, visual, and landscape context is provided in sections 4 and 5 of this LVIA. This section provides a brief summary for completeness.

8.18. The Site lies on the western edge of Hook Green within the London Area Green Belt. It comprises a small part of a larger arable field with a gently undulating landform, falling slightly northwards towards Longfield Road. The interior is intensively farmed, with vegetation confined to the western boundary and sporadic scrubby vegetation along the northern boundary. The eastern boundary is partially undefined, with the remainder delineated by school boundary fencing. The southern boundary is undefined and extends across arable field.

8.19. The Site forms a transitional edge between the built-up area and the wider landscape. It lies within the Meopham Downs Landscape Character Area, which is characterised by gently undulating farmland, hedgerows, and scattered woodland.

Assessment of the Contribution of the Site and proposals to the purposes of the Green Belt

8.20. Within **Table 5** below, an updated Green Belt review is provided in line with paragraph 143 of the NPPF (December 2024), taking into account the updated PPG (February 2025). It is therefore important to understand the contribution the Site makes to preventing physical,

perceptual and visual encroachment. The assessment of the Site against purposes (a-d) includes consideration of the ability of the remaining Green Belt to meet that purpose should the Site be developed.

Table 5: Contribution of the Site to Purposes of the Green Belt

NPPF Purpose (December 2024)	Discussion	Contribution
Purpose A: Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	The Site is located on the western edge of Hook Green, a small rural settlement not classified as a large built-up area within the Gravesham Stage 2 Green Belt Study. It is relatively contained by mature vegetation and settlement, and does not adjoin or lie in proximity to Gravesend or Strood, the only settlements considered to meet the definition of large built-up areas for the purposes of Green Belt assessment. As such, the site does not play a strategic role in preventing the outward expansion of a large built-up area. Its contribution to Purpose A is therefore considered to be none.	**None**
Purpose B: Prevent neighbouring towns margining into one another	The Site is not located within a strategic gap between neighbouring towns. As confirmed in the Gravesham Stage 2 Green Belt Study, the only settlements considered to meet the definition of "towns" for the purposes of Green Belt assessment are Gravesend and Strood. The Site is associated with Hook Green and Meopham Green, which are not classified as towns, and it is not located between Gravesend and Strood or any other settlements that would contribute to a merging scenario. The PPG (2025) clarifies that contribution to Purpose B is based on the role land plays in maintaining spatial and visual separation between towns. Given the Site's location and context, it does not perform a strategic function in preventing the merging of neighbouring towns. Its contribution to Purpose B is therefore considered to be none.	**None**
Purpose C: Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	The Site comprises a small part of a larger arable field on the western edge of Hook Green, forming a transitional zone between settlement and countryside. It retains an undeveloped character, consistent with the Meopham Downs Landscape Character Area, and is currently in agricultural use. The LVIA confirms that the Site is visually and physically enclosed on three sides by vegetation and adjacent settlement, with the southern boundary undefined. However, the local topography provides some separation between the Site and wider landscape. While the Site is influenced by surrounding built form and infrastructure, it nonetheless contributes to the perceptual and physical separation between settlement and countryside. Importantly, the proposed development includes an area of POS along the southern boundary, and a layered landscape buffer along the entirety of the southern boundary, which links with existing woodland to the south. This will reinforce the new settlement edge, reduce the Site's visual and physical relationship with the wider countryside, and help prevent further encroachment. As such, the Site is considered to make a moderate contribution to Purpose C.	**Moderate**
Purpose D: Preserve the	The Site does not form part of the setting of a historic town, nor does it have a visual, physical or experiential connection to the	**None**

setting and special character of historic towns	historic parts of Gloucester to the west or Cheltenham to the north-east.	
(e) To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	All greenfield sites contribute equally to this purpose.	**Not assessed**

Openness and Boundary Strength

8.21. The Site retains a degree of openness in spatial and visual terms, consistent with its current agricultural use. However, this openness is moderated by its edge-of-settlement location and the presence of surrounding development and mature vegetation.. The northern boundary is defined by Longfield Road, which provides a clear physical edge, while the eastern boundary adjoins the Helen Allison School and associated grounds, introducing urbanising influences. The western boundary is formed by a mature hedgerow with trees, offering strong visual containment in addition to the topography falling away from the Site. The southern boundary is currently undefined, extending into the wider arable field. However, increasing landform towards a localised ridgeline provides a sense of containment from the wider countryside.

8.22. The proposed development incorporates an area of POS along the southern boundary, combined with a layered landscape buffer of native hedgerows and tree planting (**Plan 6**). This will create a strong, permanent and defensible edge to the new settlement edge. These measures will reinforce containment, reduce the Site's visual and physical relationship with the wider countryside, and provide a clear transition between settlement and countryside.

8.23. Overall, the Site is considered to be partially open, with strong containment on three sides and the potential to establish a robust southern boundary through landscape-led design.

Effect on the Remaining Green Belt

8.24. The release of the Site would not undermine the ability of adjacent Green Belt land to continue fulfilling its purposes. The Site occupies a small part of Parcel HG7, which the GGBS identifies the entire parcel as performing a significant role in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. However, the western edge of the parcel, where the Site is located, is more enclosed and closely related to the settlement, with containment provided by existing development and mature vegetation. This part of the parcel is therefore less sensitive than the wider area.

8.25. The proposed development would form a logical and contained extension to the settlement, framed by existing strong boundaries to the north, east, and west, and a new , permanent and defensible boundary to the south. These measures ensure that the remaining Green Belt continues to function effectively, maintaining openness and preventing further encroachment. The Site does not form part of a strategic gap between towns, nor does it

contribute to the separation of major settlements. As such, its release would have limited impact on the strategic role or integrity of the wider Green Belt.

Grey Belt

8.26. Grey belt is addressed in paragraph 148 and 155 onwards of the NPPF (December 2024) and is defined within Annex 2 of the NPPF as:

"Land in the Green Belt comprising Previously Developed Land and/or any other land that in either case, does not strongly contribute to any purposes (a), (b), or (d) in paragraph 143."

8.27. Paragraph 148 states that development plans should consider grey belt before other previously undeveloped Green Belt land.

8.28. Footnote 55 states that development within the Green Belt should not be regarded as inappropriate *"in the case of development on previously developed land or grey belt land."* Paragraph 155 states that *"development in the Green Belt should also not be regarded as inappropriate where (inter alia) (a) the development would utilise grey belt and would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan".*

8.29. The February 2025 update to national PPG states in paragraph 006 that a site may be considered grey belt if it does not contribute strongly to purpose (a), (b) or (d) of the Green Belt, and is not covered by a footnote 7 designation other than Green Belt.

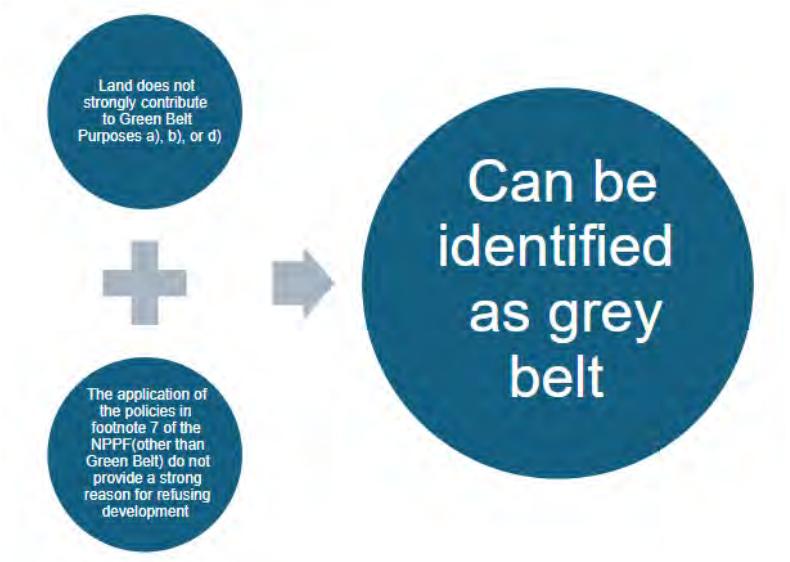


Figure 2: Paragraph (Reference 64-007-20250225) from updated PPG (February 2025)

Grey Belt Assessment

8.30. The various paragraphs and definitions in effect create a series of criteria for whether a site can be considered grey belt, and whether development within it may or may not be considered appropriate. For clarity, this is set out in the table below.

Table 6: Grey Belt Assessment

Criteria and reference	Discussion	Does it pass?
Is the Site covered by footnote 7, beyond its inclusion as Green Belt? ***NPPF Annex 2***	The Site does not form part of any footnote 7 designation beyond its inclusion of Green Belt. While it lies near the Kent Downs National Landscape, it is not within it, and the LVIA confirms there is no intervisibility or perceptual connection that would elevate its sensitivity.	Yes
Does the Site perform strongly against Green Belt purpose (a), (b) or (d)? ***NPPF Annex 2***	The Site was not assessed as performing strongly against any of the purposes in the TG assessment.	Yes

Overall Judgement

8.31. This Green Belt Assessment has been undertaken from a landscape perspective, with a focus on the Site's physical characteristics, containment, and relationship with the surrounding countryside. It has been prepared in coordination with the Planning Statement, which sets out the policy context and planning rationale for the proposed development. Together, these documents provide a consistent and integrated appraisal of the Site's performance against Green Belt purposes and its suitability for release.

8.32. This assessment concludes that the Site makes no contribution to Purpose A (checking sprawl), no contribution to Purpose B (preventing towns merging), and no contribution to Purpose D (historic towns). It makes a moderate contribution to Purpose C (safeguarding the countryside from encroachment), reflecting its current undeveloped state and transitional location between settlement and countryside. The Site is physically and visually contained on three sides, and the proposed development includes a landscape-led southern boundary with POS and structural planting, reinforcing containment and preventing further encroachment.

8.33. While the GGBS assigns Parcel HG7 an overall high harm rating if released in full, the Site represents a small, well-contained part of the parcel where harm would be significantly lower. Its release would not compromise the ability of adjacent Green Belt land to continue fulfilling its purposes. On this basis, the Site's development would result in limited harm to the Green Belt, mitigated by the creation of a strong, permanent boundary and the delivery of green infrastructure that enhances landscape structure and visual containment.

8.34. This Green Belt Assessment should be read alongside the Planning Statement, which sets out the policy rationale and planning justification for the proposed development. Together, they provide a coordinated and consistent appraisal of the Site's performance against Green and Grey Belt purposes and its suitability for release.

Section 9: Summary and Conclusions

Summary

9.1. This Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been prepared to accompany an outline planning application for residential development on land south of Longfield Road, Meopham. The assessment has been undertaken in accordance with GLVIA3 and relevant Technical Guidance Notes, and considers both landscape and visual effects arising from the Proposed Development.

9.2. The Proposed Development has been informed by a landscape-led design rationale, with the layout shaped around existing boundary vegetation . This includes an area of POS along the southern boundary to create a softer transition to the adjoining countryside, retention and enhancement of existing hedgerows, and new structural planting along the southern and eastern edges. Internally tree-lined streets are proposed to break up built form and reinforce connectivity, with SuDS feature present along the northern boundary to form a focal point. These measures respond to the management guidelines of the Meopham Downs Landscape Character Area and align with Policy CS12 (Green Infrastructure) and Policy CS19 (Development and Design Principles) of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy.

9.3. At Year 1, the maximum level of landscape effect is judged to be Major/Moderate adverse at the Site level, reducing to Minor adverse on the surrounding landscape. By Year 15, following the establishment of mitigation planting and green infrastructure, the maximum level of landscape effect reduces to Moderate adverse at the Site level and Negligible adverse on the wider landscape.

9.4. Visual effects are greatest at Year 1 for users of PRoW NS253, which crosses the Site, where views result in Major/Moderate adverse effects. Users of PRoW NS251 experience Moderate adverse effects, while other PRoWs (NS283, SD304/305) experience Minor or Negligible adverse effects. By Year 15, the establishment of structural planting along boundaries reduces visibility across all routes, with effects reducing to Moderate or Minor adverse for the most affected receptors and Negligible elsewhere.

9.5. Road users along Longfield Road experience Moderate adverse effects at Year 1, reducing to Minor adverse by Year 15 as frontage planting establishes. Users of Shipley Hills Road experience Minor/Negligible adverse effects at Year 1, reducing to Negligible by Year 15. Effects are contained to localised receptors only, with no wider impacts on the surrounding visual context.

9.6. Residential receptors immediately north of the Site (Longfield Road) experience the most noticeable change, with large to medium magnitude at Year 1, reducing to medium to small by Year 15 as planting establishes.

Conclusions

9.7. The LVIA demonstrates that the Proposed Development has been sensitively designed to respond to the Site's landscape and visual context. The scheme retains and reinforces existing

landscape features, integrates open space (including a layered buffer along the southern edge), and reflects the settlement pattern and character of the surrounding area.

9.8. The landscape strategy aligns with published character guidance and local policy. The inclusion of native planting, sustainable drainage features, and PRoW integration ensures that the development contributes positively to landscape structure, ecological connectivity, and public access.

9.9. While some adverse effects are anticipated at the Site level and for nearby receptors, these are moderated by embedded mitigation and will reduce over time. The development does not alter the character or experience of the Kent Downs National Landscape, and effects on the wider landscape are minimal beyond the immediate context.

9.10. Overall, the Proposed Development is considered to be acceptable in landscape and visual terms. The design responds appropriately to the Site's transitional character and delivers a well-integrated scheme that supports the long-term resilience and quality of the local landscape.

Appendix 1: LVIA Figures

Plan 1: Site Location and Context

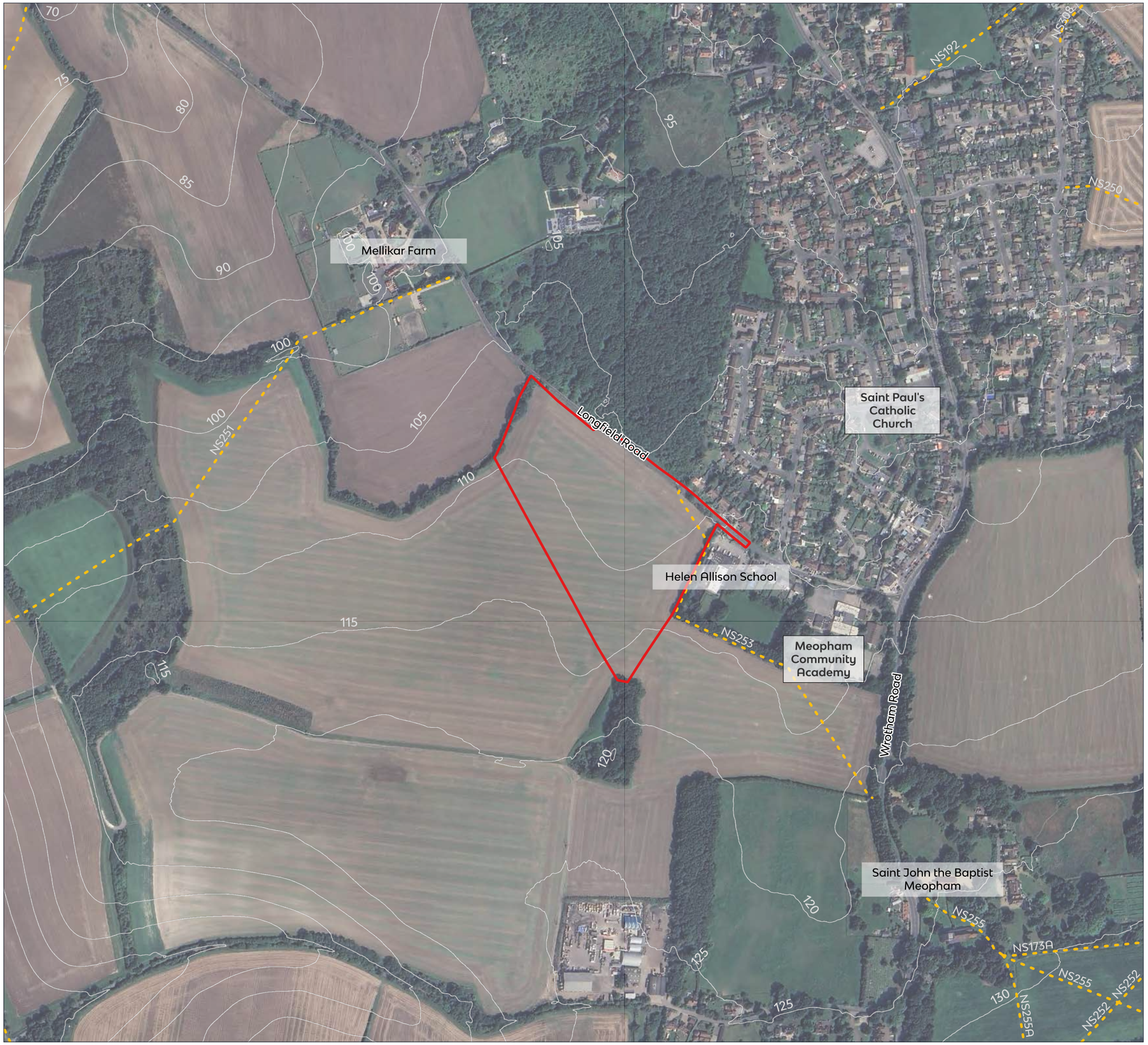
Plan 2: Landscape Planning Policy and Designations

Plan 3: Topography

Plan 4: Published Landscape Character

Plan 5: Zone of Theoretical Visibility and Photoviewpoint Location Plan

Plan 6: Illustrative Landscape Strategy



LEGEND

- Site Boundary
- 115 5m Contour
- Public Rights of Way (PRoW)

Revision	Description
-	First Issue

0 100 200 m

Project	Land South of Longfield Road, Meopham
Title	Plan 1: Site Location and Context
Scale	1:5,000 @ A3
Drawing No.	17740_P05
Date	SEPTEMBER 2025
Checked	IJ/

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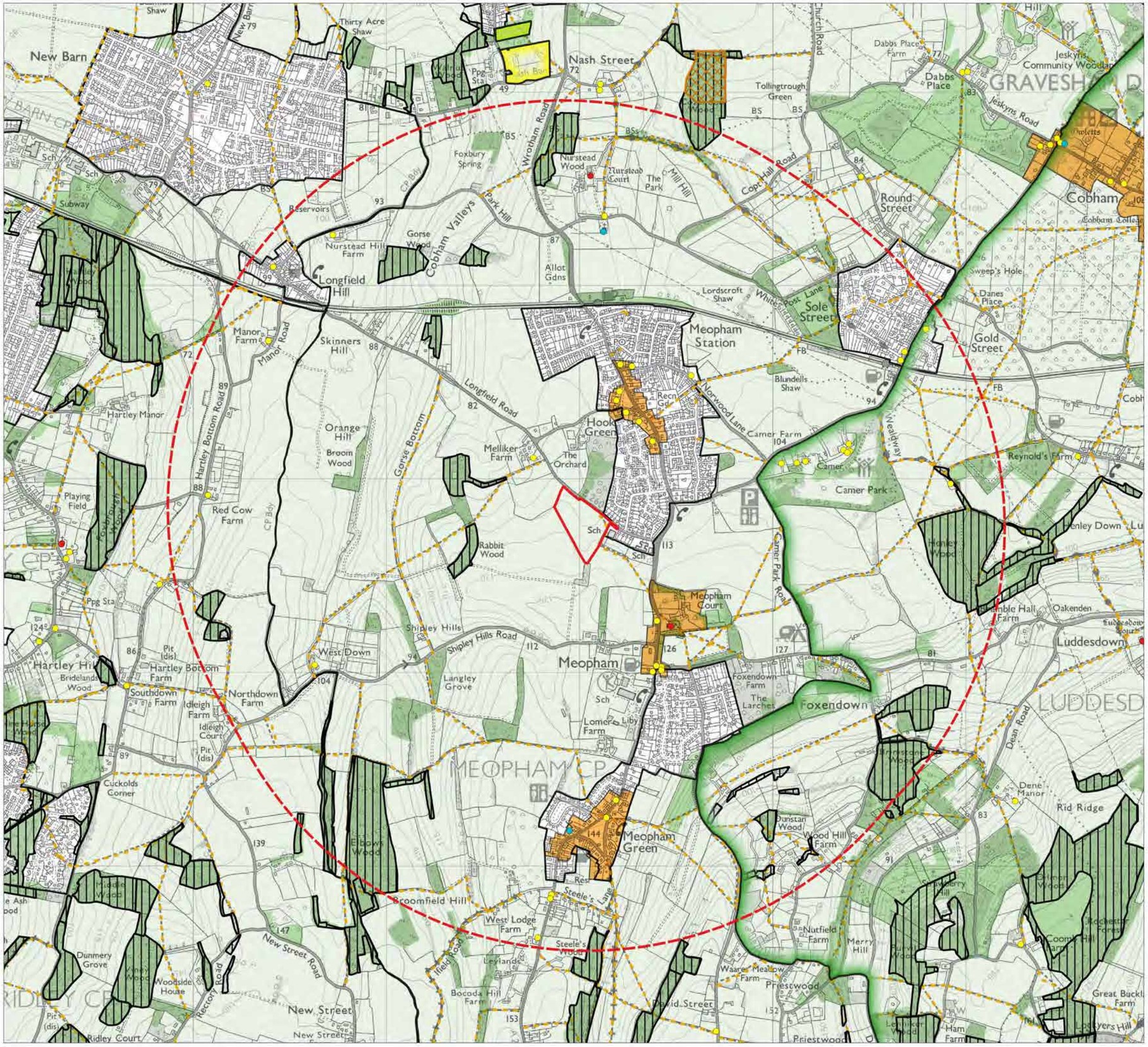

LEGEND

- Site Boundary
- 2km Study Area
- Public Rights of Way (PRoW)
- Ancient Woodland
- National Landscape Boundary
- National Forest Inventory
- England Green Belt
- CRoW Access Land
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- Scheduled Monuments
- Conservation Area

ListedBuildings

- I
- II*
- II

Revision	Description
-	First Issue

0 0.5 1 km

Project	Land South of Longfield Road, Meopham
Title	Plan 2: Landscape Planning Policy & Designations
Scale	1:20,000 @ A3
Drawing No.	17740_P06
Date	SEPTEMBER 2025
Checked	IJ/

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LEGEND

- Site Boundary
- 2km Study Area

Height(m) AOD

170

40

Revision	Description
-	First Issue

0 0.5 1 km

Project	Land South of Longfield Road, Meopham
Title	Plan 3: Topography
Scale	1:20,000 @ A3
Drawing No.	17740_P07
Date	SEPTEMBER 2025
Checked	IJ/

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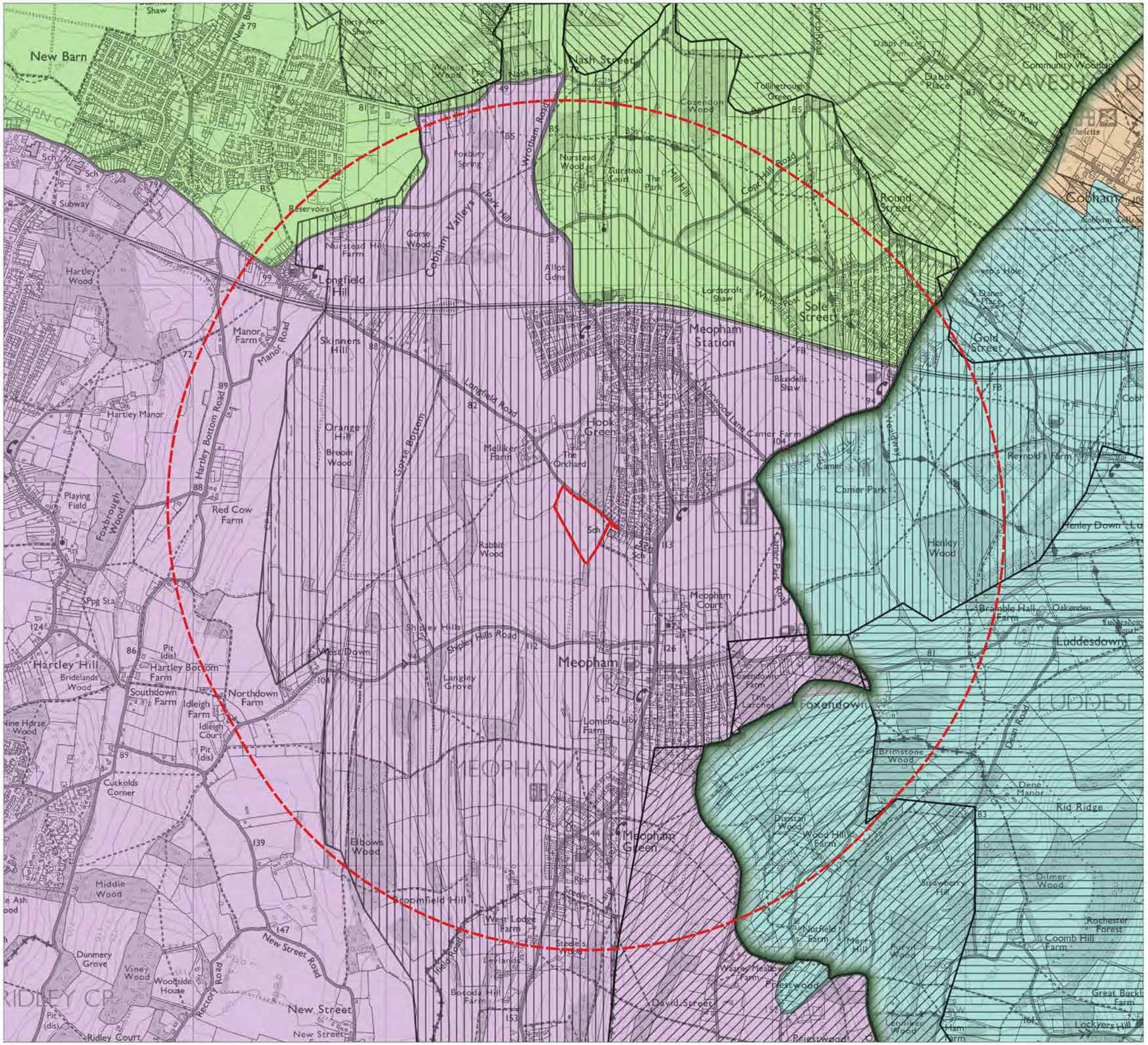

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LEGEND

- Site Boundary
- 2km Study Area

Kent Downs AONB Landscape Character Assessment

- LCA 1A: West Kent Downs

The Landscape Assessment of Kent

- Ash Downs
- Cobham-West Kent Downs
- Luddesdown-West Kent Downs
- Southfleet Arable Lands

Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment Areas

- Harvel Wooded Downs
- Istead Arable Farmlands
- Luddesdown Downs
- Meopham Downs

Revision	Description
-	First Issue

0 0.5 1 km

Project	Land South of Longfield Road, Meopham
Title	Plan 4: Published Landscape Character
Scale	1:20,000 @ A3
Drawing No.	17740_P08
Date	SEPTEMBER 2025
Checked	IJ

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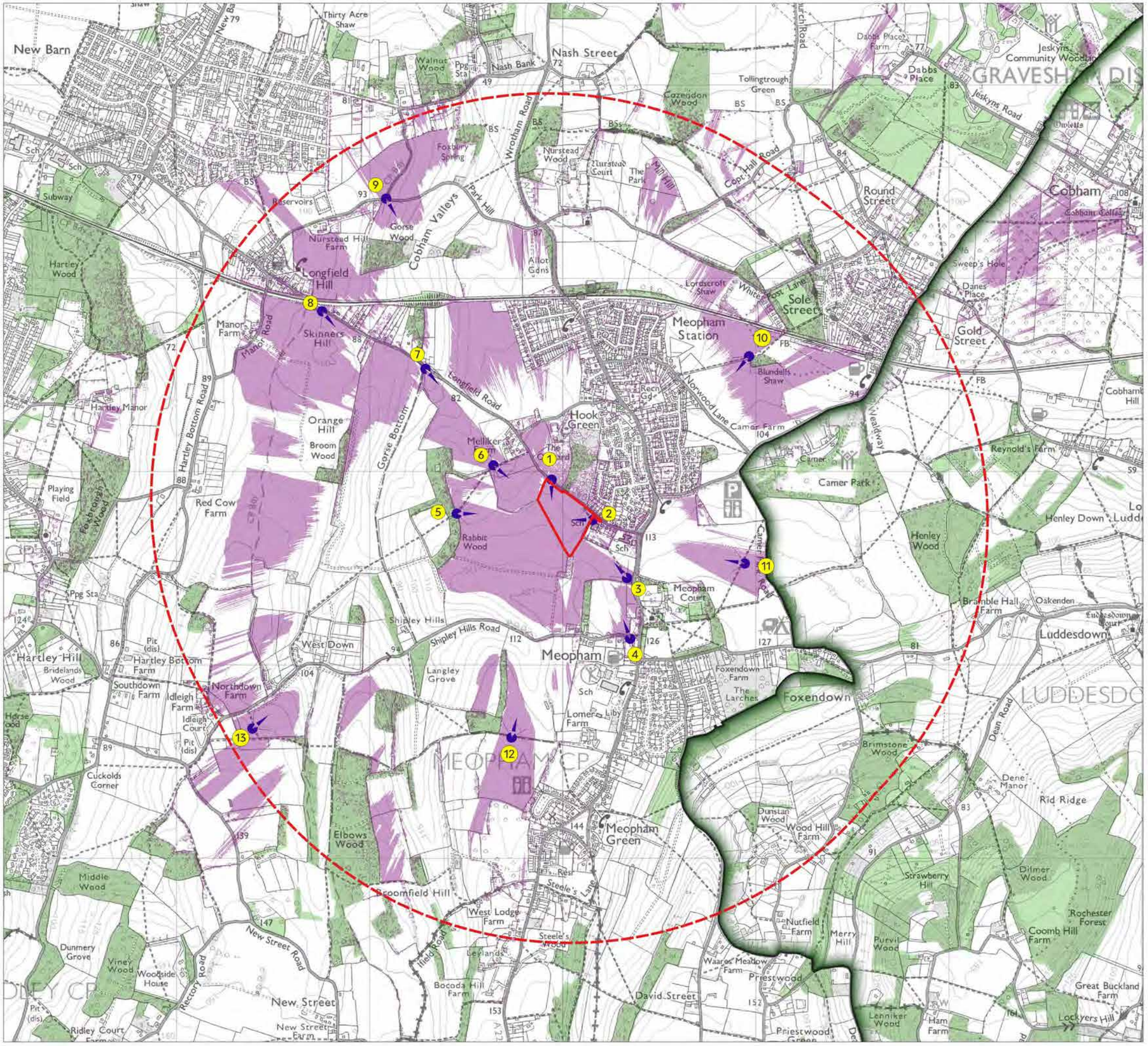

LEGEND

- Site Boundary
- 2km Study Area
- Kent Downs National Landscape extents
- National Forest Inventory
- Zone of Theoretical Visibility
- Viewpoint locations - 1-13

Notes:
The Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) illustrates the extent to which the proposed built form on site (based on a maximum height of 10.5m above ground level) is potentially visible within a 2km radius (to a 1.6m high receptor). The ZTV has been modelled using GIS computer software (QGIS) and LIDAR Composite First Return DSM 2022 2m Data, and as such, takes into account existing built form and vegetation present within the landscape surrounding the site. Field verification is required to refine the accuracy of the ZTV.

Revision	Description
-	First Issue

0 0.5 1 km

Project	Land South of Longfield Road, Meopham
Title	Plan 5: Zone of Theoretical Visibility & Viewpoint Locations
Scale	1:20,000 @ A3
Drawing No.	17740_P03
Date	SEPTEMBER 2025
Checked	IJ/MB

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Existing trees and hedges to be retained

Informal play area along the footpath

Internal access roads will be planted with appropriate street trees, considering species diversity, resilience and eventual sizes for their location, in addition to pedestrian character and microclimate benefits. Tree pits design to support adequate soil volumes and growing conditions for establishment and future growth. Front gardens to be defined by a suitable mix of native and non-natives shrubs, considering seasonal character and biodiversity values such as nectar-producing species

Equipped play and seating area offering a range of play and seating opportunities, considering inclusive design principles

New native hedgerow along Longfield Road boundary

New native hedgerow with trees along the southern boundary, with tree planting located behind will create a strong, defensible boundary to the development

Community orchard, planted with local orchard tree varieties set within a species-rich grassland

Existing trees and hedges to be retained

Set back development and vegetated boundary with layered hedgerows and trees to soften views and reinforce the rural transition to the open rolling countryside south-west of the Site

VIEW TO ST JOHNS THE BAPTIST CHURCH

SuDS attenuation basins and swale features with planting which is tolerant of both wet and dry conditions;
Close mown path with seating around the SuDS attenuation basins

Shared surfaces to prioritise pedestrian walking experience in coordination with transport engineering advice. Integrating green infrastructure seating and signage at detailed design

Informal path through public green space

Key:

- Site boundary
- Existing boundary trees/woodland retained
- New native hedgerows
- New tree planting (Street trees)
- Boundary buffer planting
- Community orchard with local orchard tree varieties
- Primary road
- Footpath
- Secondary road / Parking Court
- Shared surface / Home zone
- Gravel footpath within public green space
- Close mown path within public green space
- Species rich grass
- Private amenity lawn
- SuDS Basin with wetland meadow mix and marginal planting
- Natural play and seating elements within attenuation basin
- PROW
- Long distance view

N

Project	Land South of Longfield Road Meopham
Drawing Title	Illustrative Landscape Strategy
Scale	A3: NTS
Drawing No	17740/P01a
Date	September 2025
Checked	LC / MB

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Appendix 2: LVIA Methodology

Appendix 2: Methodology

1.1. The methodology and guidelines used in the preparation of this assessment have been developed from the following document:

- An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment, Natural England, Second Version, October 2014[1];
- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA), Third Edition, LI and IEMA, 2013;
- Visual Representation of Development Proposals (TGN 06/19), LI, September 2019;
- Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations (TGN 02/21), May 2021; and
- Notes and Clarifications on Aspects of Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition (LITGN-2024-01), LI, August 2024.

1.2. To assist the reader in understanding the purpose for undertaking landscape assessment work, the definition of 'landscape' as defined by the European Landscape Convention (ELC, 2000) is set out below.

"'Landscape' means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors."

1.3. In the context of this definition the assessment process seeks to consider the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development on landscape and visual receptors in an objective and systematic manner whilst recognising the perceptual and therefore subjective response to the landscape. Whilst subjectivity can never be removed from the assessment process, by following a systematic and structured framework of assessment, a more robust assessment can be performed, and more rational and transparent conclusions drawn.

1.4. Furthermore, the LVIA process deals with the separate but interlinked issues of:

- Landscape Character: The effects of the Proposed Development upon discrete character areas and/or character types comprising features possessing a particular quality or merit; and
- Visual Context: The effects of the Proposed Development on views from visual receptors, and upon the amenity value of the views.

1.5. Landscape character is defined in the GLVIA3 as:

"A distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse."

[1] Natural England (2014) An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment. Second Edition

1.6. Changes to the landscape character can arise as a result of:

- Changes to the fabric of the landscape including either the loss of key elements or introduction of new features which alter the distinct character of the landscape; and
- Changes which alter the way in which the landscape is perceived or appreciated.

1.7. Changes to views will occur where there is alteration of the view in terms of elements present and their distribution or dominance. Such changes may or may not have a significant effect on the visual amenity of identified visual receptors.

1.8. The assessment process is set out in further detail below but involves the following steps:

- Baseline appraisal of landscape, visual and planning policy baseline;
- Identification of potential receptors to change and their sensitivity;
- Assessment of potential effects on identified receptors;
- Proposed mitigation measures.

Baseline Appraisal

1.9. The baseline appraisal process is a crucial part of any assessment and includes:

- A desktop and on-site appraisal of the landscape features and topography of the area;
- The identification of relevant designations at national and local level;
- The review of relevant planning policy and evidence base;
- The review of relevant published landscape character assessments;
- An on-site review of the character of the Site and its surroundings;
- Field work to determine the extent to which the Site can be seen from the wider area, taking into account any significant vegetation or built form which restricts or limits the extent of visibility; and
- Identification of representative viewpoints and determination of likely visual receptors.

Identification of Receptors and Their Sensitivity

1.10. The desktop and on-site appraisals are used to identify potential receptors to change. Landscape receptors may be individual landscape elements, such as trees and hedgerows, or landscape character. In order to avoid double counting, this methodology addresses the loss or enhancement of landscape elements in the round when dealing with changes to landscape character. Visual receptors are always people. The sensitivity of the identified receptors to change are then assessed.

Identification of Receptors

1.11. Receptors are identified through the baseline analysis as set out above. This is used to identify areas of landscape character and visual receptors that may be affected by the Proposed Development. Receptors that are identified but then deemed to not be affected by the Proposed Development are scoped out of the assessment in accordance with the GLVIA3.

1.12. Visual receptors are identified and refined at a number of stages. An initial desktop, often including a Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) model is used to identify potential visual receptors to change. These are verified on-site and any views which are unlikely to be affected are scoped out. Views representing receptor groups that may be affected are included as photosheets. Further scoping may be carried out to remove further visual receptor groups from the assessment. Effects on the remaining receptor groups are taken through the assessment.

Landscape Sensitivity

1.13. Landscape sensitivity is dependent on:

- The susceptibility of the landscape to the type of change proposed; and
- The value placed on the landscape.

1.14. As a general rule, those landscape resources which make a notable contribution to the character and cannot be replaced or substituted, or where the type of proposed development is inconsistent with the baseline situation will be of a high sensitivity. Those resources which are replaceable or contribute little to the overall character of the landscape, and where the type of proposals complement the baseline situation will be of low sensitivity.

1.15. Landscape susceptibility indicates the ability of a defined landscape receptor to accommodate the Proposed Development *"without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies."* (GLVIA, 3rd edition, para 5.40). An example of how susceptibility can be described at each end of the continuum of low to high is provided in Table 1 below.

1.16. Landscape Value is *"the relative value that is attached to different landscapes by society"* (GLVIA, 3rd edition, page 157). Box 5.1 (GLVIA 3rd version, page 84) sets out factors to be considered in the assessment of the value of designated landscapes, with TGN 02/21 relating to non-designated landscapes.

1.17. The value of the local landscape is assessed in Appendix 3.

Visual Sensitivity

1.18. The sensitivity of people (visual receptors) who may experience a change to views and visual amenity arising from the proposed development is a combination of the susceptibility of the receptor and the value of the view.

1.19. Susceptibility for visual receptors (people) relate to "the occupation or activity of people experiencing views at particular locations and the extent to which their attention may be focused on the views and the visual amenity they experience at a particular location." (GLVIA, 3rd edition, para 6.32). An example of how susceptibility can be described at each end of the continuum of low to high is provided in Table 2 below.

1.20. In visual terms, value relates to that attached to views experienced by receptors (people). An example of how value can be described at each end of the continuum of low to high is provided below for visual receptors in Table 2 below.

1.21. The assessment of sensitivity of receptors is included in Appendix 3.

Magnitude of Effects

1.22. The assessment of the magnitude of effects is undertaken in the knowledge of the scheme proposals and the existing baseline situation.

1.23. Scale of effect is assessed for both landscape and visual receptors and identifies the degree of change which would arise from the development. An example of how scale of effect can be described for landscape and visual receptors at each end of the continuum of small to large is provided in Tables 3 and 4 below.

1.24. Geographical extent of effect is assessed for both landscape and visual receptors and indicates the geographic area over which the effects will be felt. An example of how geographical extent can be described at each end of the continuum of low to high is provided in the tables below for both landscape and visual receptors.

1.25. Duration and reversibility of effect is assessed for all landscape and visual receptors and identifies the time period over which the change to the receptor would arise as a result of the development. An example of how duration and reversibility can be described at each end of the continuum of low to high is provided in the tables below for both landscape and visual receptors.

1.26. The above elements are combined using professional judgement to reach an assessment of the magnitude of effect.

1.27. It should be noted that visual effects are assessed on receptor groups and not viewpoints (TGN 24-01 6(7)), the latter of which are used as a visual aid to understand the nature of views experienced by receptor groups.

Level or Importance of Effects

1.28. The level of any landscape and visual effect is a function of the sensitivity of the affected landscape resources and visual receptors against the magnitude of change that they would experience. The GLVIA3 refers to this aspect as significance. However, this can cause confusion with what may be considered 'significant' when used in the context of an EIA. Therefore, the combination of the magnitude and sensitivity is referred to as the 'level of effect'.

1.29. Best practice guidelines stipulate that the level of any landscape or visual effect should be evaluated, both during the construction works and following completion of the development.

1.30. It is also important to note that the latest GLVIA (3rd Edition) places greater emphasis on professional judgement and the supporting narrative and less emphasis on a formulaic, mechanistic approach; a transparent assessment process should be evident.

1.31. Matrix 5 below indicates how the general relationship between sensitivity and magnitude of change determines the level of effect. The level of effect is rated within the range of Major – Major / Moderate – Moderate – Moderate / Minor – Minor – Negligible.

1.32. The assessment of magnitude and level/importance of effects is included in Appendices 8 and 9.

Nature of Effects

1.33. Landscape and visual effects are considered likely to arise during both the Construction and Operation phases of the Proposed Development. The changes will be judged to be positive (beneficial) or negative (adverse) in their overall consequences for identified receptors.

1.34. The following terms have been used to define landscape effects:

- Adverse: The Proposed Development may result in direct loss of physical landscape/townscape resources, weaken key characteristics or negatively affect the integrity of a landscape/townscape designation; and

- Beneficial: The Proposed Development may replace poor quality elements of the existing landscape/townscape or strengthen existing landscape/townscape characteristics.

1.35. Where there will be negligible or no change, the nature of effect can be considered 'Neutral'.

Mitigation Measures

1.36. The consideration of mitigation with the aim where possible, of avoiding, reducing or offsetting adverse landscape or visual effects is determined during the course of the assessment where this can be addressed through a suitably worded condition.

1.37. The evaluation of landscape and visual effects following mitigation, are known as residual effects.

Photography Methodology

1.38. Photographs were taken from selected viewpoints with a digital camera with an equivalent 50mm focal length lens at eye level (approximately 1600mm above ground). Photographs were stitched in Photoshop using the cylindrical method and presented on photosheets in accordance with the Landscape Institute TGN 06/19.

1.39. A total of 13 representative viewpoints have been chosen from locations surrounding the Site to enable the effects of the development to be assessed from all directions (see Plan 5 in Appendix 1 and Photoviewpoints 1-13 in Appendix 7).

Table 1: Sensitivity of Landscape Receptors

	Landscape Value **Characteristics and features as recognised in published landscape character assessments or policy (using the criteria set out in Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 02/21 for non-designated landscapes, and using Box 5.1 of the GLVA3 for designated landscapes).**	**Landscape Susceptibility** **The ability of a defined landscape to accommodate the specific proposed development without undue negative consequences**	
High ↕ **Low**	Landscape makes very strong contribution to criterion Landscape displays higher than average level of conformity with criterion. Landscape displays typical level of conformity with value criterion. Landscape displays below average conformity with or makes below average contribution to value criterion. Landscape makes little or not contribution to or has little or no conformity with value criterion.	The landscape is such that changes in terms of the proposed development would be entirely at odds with the character of the local area, related to matters including pattern, grain, use, scale and mass. The proposed development has a degree of consistency with the existing scale, pattern, grain, land use of the prevailing character, although mitigation may be appropriate to enhance assimilation. The proposed development is entirely consistent with the character of the local area, related to matters including pattern, grain, use, scale and mass.	**High** ↕ **Low**

Table 2: Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

	Value (attached to views)	**Visual Susceptibility** **The occupation or activity of people experiencing the view and the extent to which their attention or interest may be focused on the views and their visual amenity at particular locations**	
High	Recognised national / Important Viewpoints, including those identified within and protected by policy.	People visiting recognised viewpoints	**High**
	These viewpoints may be tourist destinations and marked on maps.	People using Public Rights of Way and Access Land	
	Designed views, including from within historic landscapes.		
	Users of nationally recognized routes e.g. National Cycle Network, National Trails.	Users of local roads where speeds are lower and where footways may be present	
	Land with public access (i.e. Open Access Land and National Trust Land).		
	Locally important views/ views.	People using recreational facilities or playing outdoor sports but for whom views are not the main focus.	
	Views from within locally designated landscapes e.g. Conservation Areas and local planning policy.		
	Views from local routes identified on maps	People travelling along major roads or using transport routes where the focus is not on the views and speeds are high	
	Permissive routes, not recognised by policy or identified on maps.		
Low	No designations present	People at places of work where attention is not on the views.	**Low**

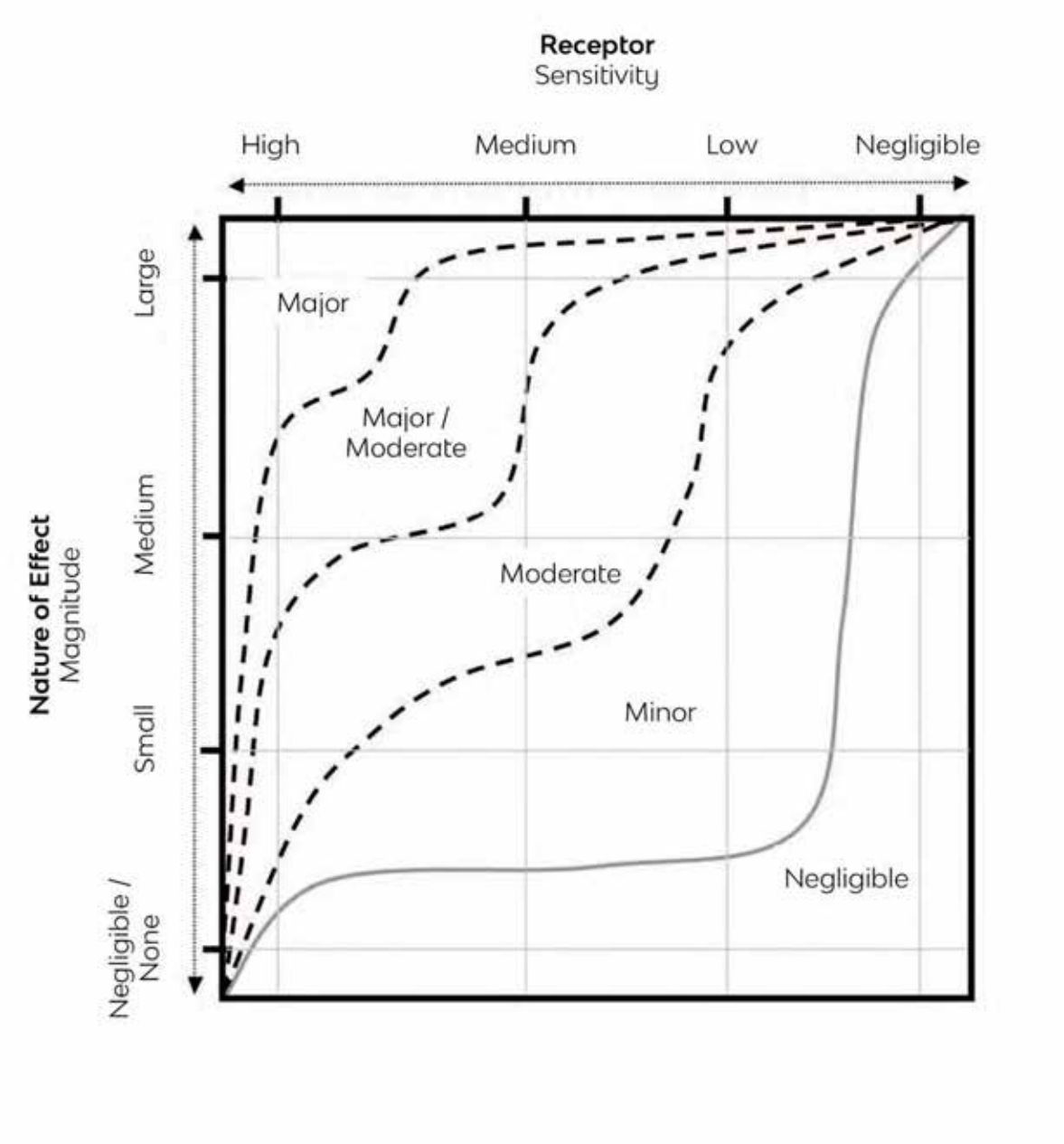
Table 3: Magnitude of Landscape Effects

	Scale **identifies the degree of change which would arise from the development**	**Geographical Extent** **Indicates the geographic area over which the effects will be felt**	**Duration and Reversibility** **Identifies the time period over which the change to the receptor would arise as a result of the development.**
Large	Highly noticeable change, affecting most key characteristics and dominating the experience of the Landscape/Townscape; introduction of highly conspicuous new development; and the baseline situation will be fundamentally changed.	Extensive, affecting the majority or all the character area / receptor.	Long-term or permanent, the change is expected to be in place for 10+ years and there may be no intention for it to be reversed or only partially reversed.
Medium	Partial alteration to key elements, features, qualities or characteristics, such that post development the baseline situation will be largely unchanged but noticeable despite discernible differences.	Partial, affecting a moderate amount of the character area / receptor.	Medium-term, the change is expected to be in place for 5-10 years and the effects may be reversed or partially reversed.
Small	Minor alteration to few elements, features qualities or characteristics resulting in a barely perceptible change.	Affecting the character area / receptor to a minor extent.	Short-term, the change is expected to be in place for 0-5 years and the effects are likely to be reversed.
Negligible / None	Negligible to no perceptible change	Affecting an extremely limited part of the character area/receptor.	

Table 4: Magnitude of Visual Effects

	Scale **identifies the degree of change which would arise from the development**	**Geographical Extent** **Wide, and/or within close proximity, and/or open views.**	**Duration and Reversibility** **identifies the time period over which the change to the receptor would arise as a result of the development.**
Large	Intensive/dominant or major alteration to key elements of the baseline view.	Changes perceived over wide area.	Long-term or permanent, the change is expected to be in place for 10+ years and there may be no intention for it to be reversed or only partially reversed.
Medium	Partial/noticeable or minor alteration to key elements of the baseline view.	Changed perceived by receptors over moderate to localised area.	Medium-term, the change is expected to be in place for 5-10 years and the effects may be reversed or partially reversed.
Small	Minor alteration to few elements of the baseline view.		
Negligible / None	Barely perceptible or no change to the baseline view.	Changes perceived by receptors over a localised or isolated extent e.g., a single viewpoint.	Short-term, the change is expected to be in place for 0-5 years and the effects are likely to be reversed.

Table 5: Landscape and Visual Significance Matrix (derived from IEMA 2011[2])



[2] IEMA (2011) Special Report – The State of Environmental Impact Assessment Practice in the UK

Appendix 3: Proposed Site Layouts

LEGEND

Site boundary

LAND USE PARAMETERS

- Indicative area of land required for the proposed access, not within the residential land use (subject to detailed design)
- Proposed residential development (Use Class C3) (including roads, footpaths, private drives, amenity and incidental open space and other associated infrastructure, subject to detailed design)
- Proposed open space (including amenity green space, children's play provision, orchard, landscaping, footpaths, drainage and other associated infrastructure, subject to detailed design)
- Potential school parking (subject to detailed design)

ACCESS PARAMETERS

- Proposed access/egress for all modes (subject to detailed design)
- Potential access/egress for cyclists and pedestrians only (subject to detailed design)
- Potential access/egress for pedestrians only (subject to detailed design)
- Existing public right of way access retained

Note: All features and areas are subject to detailed design and to a tolerance of 10m.

N

0 100m

REV B: Potential school parking area added (04.09.2025 CM)
REV A: Amended access and land use areas (02.09.2025 CM)
FIRST ISSUE: For client comment (27.08.2025 CM)

PEGASUS GROUP

Expertly Done.

DESIGN | ECONOMICS | ENVIRONMENT | HERITAGE | LAND & PROPERTY | PLANNING | TRANSPORT & INFRASTRUCTURE

LONGFIELD ROAD, MEOPHAM | PARAMETER PLAN

TEAM/DRAWN BY: CM | APPROVED BY: JW | DATE: 27/08/2025 | SCALE: 1:2000 @ A3 | DRAWING REF: P25-0485_DE_2006 | SHEET: 1 | REV: B | CLIENT: RICHBOROUGH

KEY

- SITE BOUNDARY
- SITE ACCESS VIA LONGFIELD ROAD
- RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT
- PUBLIC OPEN SPACE
- PRIMARY STREET
- SECONDARY STREET
- TERTIARY STREETS
- FOCAL SPACES
- PRIVATE LANES
- EXISTING PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY
- ACTIVE TRAVEL / CYCLE ROUTES
- FOOTPATH LINK
- EXISTING TREES
- NEW STRUCTURAL PLANTING
- NEW TREE PLANTING
- PROPOSED PLAY
- SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE
- POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS TO EXISTING HIGHWAY FOR PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLE MOVEMENT
- PROPOSED TACTILE CROSSING AND FOOTWAY LINK
- SCHOOL DROP-OFF AREA

KEY PRINCIPLES

1. KEY ACTIVE TRAVEL ROUTES PROVIDING CONNECTIONS TO NEARBY MOVEMENT INFRASTRUCTURE;
2. KEY COMMONS PROVIDING EQUIPPED AREAS OF PLAY AND NODAL SPACES;
3. DEVELOPMENT EDGE TO RESPECT EXISTING DEVELOPMENT/ PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY LINE;
4. STRUCTURAL PLANTING ALONG SOUTHERN BOUNDARY TO SCREEN DEVELOPMENT EDGE;
5. OVERFLOW PARKING FOR SCHOOL DROP-OFF;
6. MAXIMUM OUTWARD FACING DEVELOPMENT OVER NEWLY CREATED PUBLIC OPEN SPACE; AND
7. VIEW TO ST JOHNS THE BAPTIST CHURCH FROM PROW EXITING SITE .

PEGASUS GROUP

Expertly Done.

DESIGN | ECONOMICS | ENVIRONMENT | HERITAGE | LAND & PROPERTY | PLANNING | TRANSPORT & INFRASTRUCTURE

LAND OFF LONGFIELD ROAD, MEOPHAM – **ILLUSTRATIVE DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK PLAN**

| PEGASUSGROUP.CO.UK | TEAM/DRAWN BY: RL | APPROVED BY: JW | DATE: 30.04.25 | SCALE: 1:1250@A2 | DRWG: P25-0485_DE_2003_E_1 | CLIENT: RICHBOROUGH |

Appendix 4: Planning Policy Extracts

Appendix 4: Landscape Planning Policy Extracts

1.1. This section sets out the relevant national and local landscape policy and evidence base as it pertains to landscape/visual matters and the Proposed Development.

National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)[1]

1.2. The NPPF was updated in December 2024 and sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

1.3. Footnote 7 of the NPPF identifies areas and assets of particular importance to which the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply. These include:

- Habitat sites (and those sites listed in paragraph 187); and/or
- Designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- Land designated as Green Belt, Local Green Space, a National Landscape (formerly known as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty), National Park (or within the Broads Authority) or defined as Heritage Coast;
- Irreplaceable habitats; designated heritage assets (and other heritage assets of archaeological interest referred to in footnote 72); and
- Areas at risk of flooding or coastal change.

1.4. At Paragraph 8, criterion 'c' describes the '*environmental objective' to "protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy*'.

1.5. Paragraph 20 states that strategic policies that should make sufficient provision for the conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes, and green infrastructure and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation

1.6. The NPPF Paragraph 131 states that *"The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities"*.

1.7. Paragraph 136 describes how trees make an *"important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments, and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change". It states how "new streets [should be] tree-lined"*, and "*that opportunities area taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments (such as parks and community orchards), that appropriate measures are in place to secure the long-term maintenance of newly-planted*

[1] National Planning Policy Framework

trees, and that existing trees are retained wherever possible". In respect to this matter, it is important to note that whilst this is an outline planning application, the requirements for tree lined streets have been considered at this stage.

1.8. Section 15: Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment specifies how planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. Given the Site's proximity to the Kent Downs National Landscape, the assessment has considered the potential for effects on its setting, including views to and from the designated area. This is in accordance with Paragraph 187 of the NPPF, which states that the protection and enhancement of "valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils" should be "in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan." It also notes that the "intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services" should be recognised.

1.9. Paragraph 188 further clarifies that there is a hierarchy to the importance and value attributed to landscapes, and that development plans should identify the quality of particular landscapes that are not subject to statutory protection. In respect of this, the LVIA has adopted the GLVIA3 Box 5.1 approach, guided by the Landscape Institute's Technical Guidance Note 02/21, to assess landscape value in a structured and transparent manner.

Local Planning Policy

1.10. At local level, the Site lies within the administrative area of the Gravesham Borough Council Local Planning Authority (LPA).

1.11. The following text summarises the planning policies relevant to landscape and visual matters, las well as adopted Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) and other published guidance and studies that are of relevance.

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (Adopted September 2014)[2]

1.12. Policies within the Local Plan Core Strategy relevant to landscape and/or visual matters include:

Policy CS02: Scale and Distribution of Development

- *"The development strategy for the Borough is to retain and improve the existing stock of housing and suitable employment land and to make provision for the Borough's objectively assessed need for at least 6,170 new dwellings delivered at a variable rate as follows; at least 325 dwellings per year for 2011/2012 – 2018/2019, at least 363 dwellings per year for 2019/2020 – 2023/2024, at least 438 dwellings per year 2024/2025 – 2027/2028, and at least 186,490 sq m gross employment floorspace (within use classes B1, B2 and B8) during the plan period.*

- *Development will be distributed throughout the Borough as follows: around 3,890 new dwellings and around 186,490 sq m gross employment floorspace (within use classes B1, B2 and B8) will be provided in the Opportunity Areas at Northfleet Embankment and Swanscombe Peninsula East; Gravesend Riverside East and North East Gravesend; Ebbsfleet (Gravesham) and Gravesend Town Centre and on land at the Coldharbour*

[2] Available at: Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy - September 2014 - Google Drive

Road Key Site; around 2,280 new dwellings will be provided on other sites in the urban area and rural settlements inset from the Green Belt.

The strategy prioritises development in the urban area as a sustainable location for development. This will be achieved by:

- *Promoting regeneration by prioritising the redevelopment and recycling of underused, derelict and previously developed land in the urban area. This will be principally through redevelopment of former industrial sites in the Opportunity Areas of Northfleet Embankment and Swanscombe Peninsula East, and Gravesend Riverside East and North East Gravesend to create new residential neighbourhoods and employment areas;*

- *The continued development of a new sustainable mixed use community in the Ebbsfleet (Gravesham) Opportunity Area, which will include the provision of high quality employment floorspace;*

- *Revitalising the Gravesend Town Centre Opportunity Area as a focal point for retail, leisure, cultural and tourism facilities and small scale office provision to serve the needs of the Borough whilst preserving and enhancing its character as a riverside heritage town; and*

- *Bringing forward a range of suitable sites in other parts of the urban area for residential and employment*

- *Development, including Land at Coldharbour Road Key Site.*

- *In the rural area, development will be supported within those rural settlements inset from the Green Belt and defined on the Policies Map. Development outside those settlements, including affordable housing and proposals to maintain and diversify the rural economy, will be supported where it is compatible with national policies for protecting the Green Belt and policies in this plan. The extent of the Green Belt is defined on the Policies Map. A strategic Green Belt boundary review will be undertaken to identify additional land to meet the housing needs up to 2028 and to safeguard areas of land to meet development needs beyond the plan period, while maintaining the national and local planning purposes of the Green Belt."*

Policy CS12: Green Infrastructure –

- *"A multifunctional linked network of green spaces, footpaths, cycle routes and wildlife stepping stones and corridors will be created, protected, enhanced and maintained. The network will improve access within the urban area, from the urban area to the rural area and along the River Thames. The key parts of the network are identified on Figure 19: Strategic Green Infrastructure Network.*

- *Sites designated for their biodiversity value will be protected, with the highest level of protection given to internationally designated Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation and Ramsar sites, followed by nationally designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest, followed by Local Wildlife Sites and then by other areas of more local importance for biodiversity.*

- *There will be no net loss of biodiversity in the Borough, and opportunities to enhance, restore, re-create and maintain habitats will be sought, in particular within the Biodiversity Opportunity Areas shown on the Strategic Green Infrastructure Network map and within new development.*

- *Where a negative impact on protected or priority habitats/species cannot be avoided on development sites and where the importance of the development is considered to*

outweigh the biodiversity impact, compensatory provision will be required either elsewhere on the site or off-site, including measures for ongoing maintenance.

- *The overall landscape character and valued landscapes will be conserved, restored and enhanced. The greatest weight will be given to the conservation and enhancement of the landscape and natural beauty of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and its setting. Proposals will take account of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan, the Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment, and the Cluster Studies where relevant."*

Policy CS19: Development and Design Principles –

- *"New development will be visually attractive, fit for purpose and locally distinctive. It will conserve and enhance the character of the local built, historic and natural environment, integrate well with the surrounding local area and meet anti-crime standards. The design and construction of new development will incorporate sustainable construction standards and techniques, be adaptable to reflect changing lifestyles, and be resilient to the effects of climate change. This will be achieved through the criteria set out below:*

  – *Using the collaborative approach advocated in Building for Life 12 and in line with the guidance set out in Kent Design, the design, layout and form of new development will be derived from a robust analysis of local context and character and will make a positive contribution to the street scene, the quality of the public realm and the character of the area. Account will be taken of the scale, height, building lines, layout, materials and other architectural features of adjoining buildings. Account will also be taken of the wider site context, including strategic views, site topography, the significance of heritage assets and features of townscape and landscape value which contribute to local character and sense of place;*

  – *New development will encourage sustainable living and choice through a mix of compatible uses which are well connected to places that people want to use, including the public transport network, local services and community facilities; encourage sustainable travel; enhance Green Grid links and encourage healthier lifestyles;*

  – *New development will be located, designed and constructed to:*

    • safeguard the amenity, including privacy, daylight and sunlight, of its occupants and those of neighbouring properties and land;

    • avoid adverse environmental impacts from pollution, including noise, air, odour and light pollution, and land contamination; and

    • not pose an unacceptable risk or harm to the water environment, including the quality and/or quantity of ground waters, surface waters, wetlands and coastal water systems;

    • The design and layout of new residential development, including conversions, will accord with the adopted Residential Layout Guidelines;

    • New development will be designed in an inclusive way to be accessible to all members of the community;

    • New development will provide appropriate levels of private and public amenity space;

    • New development will include details of appropriate hard and soft landscaping, public art, street furniture, lighting and signage and will ensure that public realm and

open spaces are well planned, appropriately detailed and maintained so they endure;

• Car parking will be well related to the development it serves;

• New development will protect and, where opportunities arise, enhance biodiversity and the Borough's Green Infrastructure network. Support will be given to environmental enhancements where opportunities arise;

• New development will be fit for purpose and adaptable to allow changes to be made to meet the needs of users;

• The design and layout of new development will take advantage of opportunities to build in resilience to the effects of climate change. This will include protection against flood risk, where relevant, delivering carbon reduction, provision for low carbon and renewable energy, and minimising energy consumption and water use;

• New development will incorporate appropriate facilities for the storage and recycling of waste; and

• The layout of new development will create a safe and secure environment and provide surveillance to minimise opportunities for crime and vandalism."

Kent County Council Supplementary Guidance[3]

1.13. Gravesham Borough Council have adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) produced by Kent County Council. The aim of the SPG is to supplement the policies and proposals of the adopted development plans so they can be better understood and effectively applied.

1.14. Section 2.10 of the SPG relates to Opportunities to Enhance Landscape Character states as follows:

"Development should, where possible, provide opportunities to enhance landscape character. For example by:

- *Ensuring that development and structures in the landscape are subject to a visual impact assessment appropriate to the scale of the development proposed and carefully designed to minimise their impact on the landscape character."*

Gravesham Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study[4]

1.15. The Gravesham Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study was issued on the 23rd of March 2016. The purpose of this assessment is to provide an assessment of the landscape and visual sensitivities within assessment parcels within Gravesham Borough.

1.16. Paragraph 1.2 AND 1.3 of the Gravesham Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study states as follows:

"The role of the study is not to address potential capacity in terms of the quantity of built development, as this would be dependent on a much wider range of considerations other

[3] Kent and Medway Structure Plan 2006
[4] Gravesham Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Studyw.pdf

than landscape and visual effects – such as highways impact, ecological effects, archaeological constraints and other environmental and sustainability factors.

It is intended that the assessment will help to inform:

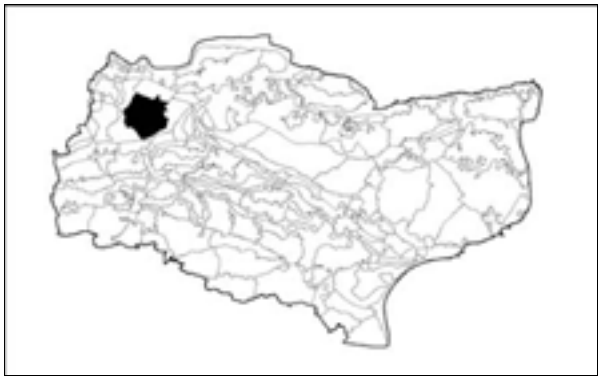
- Strategic decisions on the direction of future growth in the Borough;
- The allocation of sites in the updated Strategic Land Availability Assessment;
- The selection of sites for allocation in the forthcoming Local Plan Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Document; and
- Future Development Management decisions.

Appendix 5: Landscape Character Area Extracts

The Landscape Assessment of Kent

October 2004

ASH DOWNS



A mix of deep, dry valleys with wooded ridges and broad plateau tops, containing a mix of small villages and larger 20th century settlement, this landscape extends broadly from the A20 to the A227 in the east, and north past Horton Wood to the London to Chatham railway line, incorporating the settlements of Meopham and Longfield.

The land use is a mix of grassland with extensive arable farmland, notably on the plateau tops where larger machinery can be used and the hedgerows have been removed. Along the winding lane network the bushy hedgerows are largely intact which, with the remaining woodlands, helps retain the sense of this being an enclosed Downland landscape.

The fragmented pattern of small woodlands includes Horton Wood near Fawkham Green, an ancient woodland developed on the Clay-with-flints above the dry valley floor. Hartley Wood is also an ancient mixed broadleaf woodland, formally managed as coppice with standards and with old woodbanks.

Amongst this pattern of undulating landform and enclosing trees and hedgerows are contained many scattered farmsteads, villages and larger, more recent settlements such as New Ash Green and Hartley. Further away from the main roads such as the A20, in narrow wooded lanes, such as Scratcher's Lane, the effects of the concentration of this settlement can be seen in the erosion of the lane edges and the presence of scattered litter in the woodlands.

At New Ash Green, although the settlement is well-screened by the remaining woodland, the intensity of traffic has led to carriageway problems and pedestrian erosion of woodland edges. The village centre itself is developing a muddled appearance with some of the distinctive exposed aggregate surfacing replaced with bland concrete pavers. The village green too is disjointed by unsympathetic choices of brick.

Between New Ash Green and Longfield the mix of housing styles and eroded hedgerows, fences and lanes gives a more chaotic element to the landscape. From New Ash Green to Hartley and Longfield the lanes have become more degraded, being used for short-cuts. Occasional unsightly uses, such as car-breakers, are frequent but incongruous elements in the landscape.

In contrast to these 20th century settlements, the remaining historic villages are dispersed on the flat dip slope of the Downs, cut by its dry valleys. Fairseat is an attractive flint, brick and clapboard village. Stansted too, which is further down the same dry valley, is in a dramatic wooded setting enclosed by the steeply sloping valley sides.

Frequently, the winding lanes are closely wooded or enclosed with high bushy hedgerows containing Old Man's Beard, and a profusion of holly and hazel, hawthorn and field maple.

Further east, Meopham Green clusters around an historic core, a pre-Domesday settlement, birth-place of an Archbishop of Canterbury and the famous John Tradescant, traveller and collector, notably of plants overseas. The land use is a mix of grazing and arable fields, which after cultivation exposes the flinty soils. The fields are framed with attractive shaws and hangers of beech on the low ridge tops. As the land rises towards the scarp, nearer to the A20, the landscape flattens and opens out and there are occasional tremendous views north to the Queen Elizabeth II Bridge.

next >>

ASH DOWNS

PHOTOGRAPH

CONTEXT

Regional: North West Kent

Condition

	low	moderate	high
good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	**CONSERVE**
moderate	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
poor	CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE

Sensitivity

CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES

A pleasant mix of deep, dry pastoral valleys enclosed by wooded ridges and species rich hedgerows, with broad plateau tops beyond.
Small valley-bottom villages and large 20th century settlements on plateau.
A winding network of narrow, historic lanes often eroded by traffic

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Condition

The pattern of landscape elements is coherent and in most cases reflects the underlying landform. Some visual detractors such as commercial buildings and unsympathetic land uses intrude into some of the views. The high ecological value of the area in general, supported by the wooded network on ridges and shaws, is reduced by the intensity of arable cultivations on the plateau. The condition of heritage features such as field boundaries and vernacular buildings is good, however, much recent isolated development using unsympathetic materials has a negative impact. Overall, the area is considered to be in good condition.

Sensitivity

The characteristic features of this landscape are strongly represented and portray both an historic and ancient time-depth. Recent development of urban areas has a localised effect; the area retains local distinctiveness and a strong sense of continuity. The existing highways and the evidence of vernacular materials (such as flint) in historic buildings, in particular, enhance the sense of place. Visibility is moderate due to the intermittent tree cover.
The area is considered to be of high sensitivity.

LANDSCAPE ACTIONS

Conserve the small scale of the agricultural use of the valley slopes, retaining hedged enclosure and applying long-term management plans for this purpose.
Conserve the wooded edge to the arable plateau which encloses the landscape and contains the wider views.
Conserve and enhance the use of vernacular materials and the scale of historic built form.
Resist the intrusion of large-scale buildings or groups of buildings into the view.
Conserve the settlement pattern with isolated, small villages on valley bottoms and hamlets on the plateau.
Conserve the dominance of the broadleaf woodland in the landscape.

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS

Condition	**Good.**
Pattern of elements:	Coherent.
Detracting features:	Some.
Visual Unity:	Coherent.
Cultural integrity:	Good.
Ecological integrity:	Moderate.
Functional Integrity:	Strong.

Sensitivity	**High.**
Distinctiveness:	Characteristic.
Continuity:	Ancient.
Sense of Place:	Strong.
Landform:	Apparent.
Extent of tree cover:	Intermittent.
Visibility:	Moderate.

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

CONSERVE.

Conserve broadleaf woodland cover
Conserve small scale field pattern on valley sides
Conserve wooded edges to arable plateau
Conserve the impact of vernacular materials and the historic scale of built form
Conserve the enclosure of settlements within wooded areas
Conserve original highway characteristics

previous <<

Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment

May 2009

JACOBS

Gravesham Borough Council

8. Meopham Downs

Landscape Description

Meopham Downs is a large character area, stretching from the centre to the south of Gravesham Borough along the eastern edge of Sevenoaks District.

The majority of the geology comprises Upper Chalk and a wide band of Clay with Flint, stretching from north to south. An area of Blackheath / Oldhaven Beds sits beneath the large village of Meopham and an area of Claygate Beds sits west of the neighbouring village Meopham Green. Soils across the character area are silty, with loam to clay across high areas.

The topography is gently undulating with clear views across the immediate landscape and occasional wider views from the main road towards the residential settlements of Istead Rise and New Barn. The dominant land use is agricultural, with a mixture of grazed pasture and arable use. Small clumps of woodland, neglected orchards and commercial horticulture exist in parts. There is a presence of horse related activity scattered throughout the landscape.

Field shape and size differs, with a neat pattern of small square fields in the south and broader irregular shaped fields to the north. Field boundaries are distinctly formed by native hedgerows, with hedgerow trees.

The large village of Meopham is located to the north of the area, with Meopham Green located at the centre of the area and Culverstone Green to the far south. Traditional architecture surrounds village greens in both Meopham and Meopham Green, providing a strong sense of place and local vernacular. All three settlements comprise dense clusters of buildings that have formed along the A227 that runs from north to south and links all three villages. In addition the small recent settlement of South Street is located to the north-east.

Small traditional clusters of isolated farmsteads can be found to the east and west. Small traditional Victorian red brick architecture and elements of flint are common, reflecting their locality within the Kent landscape. Meopham Windmill, located along Wrotham Road, provides a unique and

Key Characteristics

- Gently undulating topography with a mixture of arable and pasture farmland
- Neat pattern of small square fields in the south
- Broader irregular shaped fields to the north
- Narrow lanes and roads lined with hedgerows
- Three large settlements located along A227 running east and west
- Traditional architecture surrounding village greens provide local vernacular

traditional attraction within the area. Overhead wires run across the landscape near the small settlement of Henley Street.

The A227 is the areas largest highway and acts as a busy link between the north and south. Narrower, winding, hedge lined roads and lanes run east and west from the A227 into the adjacent landscape.

Condition: Good

The pattern of landscape elements is coherent, with few visual detractors. Established hedgerows and small woodland clumps limit the visual impact of detractors. Hedgerows are native and in good condition, providing ecological corridors along field boundaries. Woodland clumps are mostly native and mature and vary in condition, whilst the remains of orchards are in poor condition. In general the ecological integrity of the area varies.

Both Meopham and Meopham Green have Conservation Areas at their centres with traditional buildings and village greens. In general the uses of the landscape are traditional, however the quality of the landscape and land development to the south is of a lower quality than that to the north. Taking into consideration the traditional architecture, land use, coherent pattern of elements and the lack of visual detractors the condition of the landscape can be assessed as being good.

Sensitivity: Moderate

The key characteristic elements of the landscape are distinct, providing coherency and a strong sense of place within the landscape. Although woodland is restricted to small woodland clumps, hedgerows that run along field boundaries are historic and distinct. Both the settlements of Meopham and Meopham Green have distinct traditional village centres. In addition, traditional vernacular architecture can be found scattered across the landscape. The other two remaining settlements have more recent architecture that is less in keeping with the local vernacular. Strength of character and visibility are moderate, providing a moderate sensitivity overall.

Guidelines: Conserve and Reinforce

The key landscape elements characteristic of the Meopham Downs should be conserved and reinforced.

- Conserve and reinforce the traditional landscape structure and where necessary introduce new elements they should respect and enhance the pattern.

- Conserve characteristic narrow winding lanes and dense native hedgerows.

- Conserve traditional character of built environment by drawing on traditional building materials and techniques for new development.

- Reinforce village identity, keeping villages distinct and separate from one another.

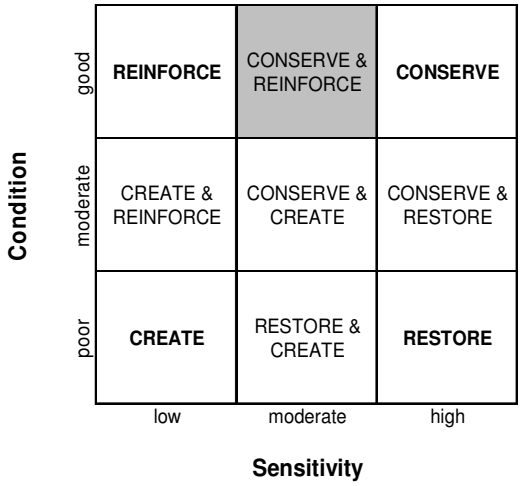
- Reinforce the enclosure of settlements within wooded areas.

- Conserve and reinforce broadleaf woodland cover and wooded edges to arable plateau.

- Encourage the use of local produce to support traditional land uses such as orchards.

- Explore new horticultural land uses.

- Conserve and reinforce agricultural land use.



Appendix 6: Sensitivity of Receptors Tables

Table A6.1: Value of Landscape Receptors

Criterion from TGN 02/21	Wider Study Area (Meopham Downs LCA)	The Site
Natural heritage *Landscape with clear evidence of ecological, geological, geomorphological or physiographic interest which contribute positively to the landscape*	As set out in the published LCA, the local landscape comprises gently undulating topography with a mix of arable and pasture farmland. Hedgerows, tree-lined lanes, and traditional village architecture contribute to a coherent rural character outside of larger settlement areas. **Medium**	The Site comprises a small part of a wider arable field with limited ecological features, as confirmed in the EcIA. Features include a treed hedgerow along the western boundary and pockets of trees and scrub along the northern boundary. **Medium to Low**
Cultural heritage *Landscape with clear evidence of archaeological, historical or cultural interest which contribute positively to the landscape*	The landscape to the north-east and east is influenced by modern infrastructure and development. The Kent Downs NL extends across a very small section of the Study Area, including the non-designated Camer Park Reserve to the east. The Meopham Downs LCA highlights the presence of Conservation Areas at Meopham and Meopham Green, with traditional buildings and village greens contributing to a strong sense of place. **Medium**	The Site contains no designated heritage assets (as confirmed in the Heritage Assessment). The Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AiA) confirms there are no ancient or veteran trees within or adjacent to the Site. **Low**
Landscape condition *Landscape which is in a good physical state both with regard to individual elements and overall landscape structure*	The Meopham Downs LCA describes the landscape as being in generally good condition, with coherent field patterns, intact hedgerows, and few visual detractors. Traditional village greens and vernacular architecture contribute to its cultural integrity. **High**	The Site is intensively farmed with limited internal structure. Landscape features are concentrated at the periphery, but remain sparse. Field margins are narrow (1–2m) and show limited evidence of active management. The AiA identifies several individual trees and hedgerows of moderate to low quality. **Low**

Criterion from TGN 02/21	Wider Study Area (Meopham Downs LCA)	The Site
Associations *Landscape which is connected with notable people, events and the arts*	The Meopham Downs LCA does not identify nationally significant cultural associations. However, it does highlight features of local cultural interest within the wider LCA. **Low**	There are no known cultural associations with the Site. **Low**
Distinctiveness *Landscape that has a strong sense of identity*	The Meopham Downs LCA describes the landscape as having a recognisable rural character with locally distinctive features such as hedgerows, small woodland clumps, and traditional village greens. These contribute to a coherent sense of place, though the landscape is not considered rare or exceptional in the wider context. **Medium**	The Site contains very limited distinctive features. The hedgerow along the western boundary contributes to the setting of the Site, but does not confer a strong sense of place. **Low**
Recreation Value *Landscape offering recreational opportunities where experience of landscape is important*	Public Rights of Way (PRoW) are present throughout the Study Area. These routes offer opportunities for walking and appreciation of the rural landscape. **Medium**	The Site has no formal public access, except for an approx. 20m section of PRoW (NS253) that extends along the eastern boundary. This provides limited recreational value. **Low**

Criterion from TGN 02/21	Wider Study Area (Meopham Downs LCA)	The Site
Perceptual (Scenic) *Landscape that appeals to the senses, primarily the visual sense*	The central and southern parts of the Study Area are influenced by residential and retail development. However, the rolling landform and vegetation somewhat screen built form. Scenic quality improves in the eastern and western parts of Study Area. **Medium to High**	The Site is visually influenced by nearby settlement and road infrastructure. It lacks scenic features and is typical of a working agricultural landscape. The Site is undeveloped, but the local ridgeline to the south obscures any long distance views across the Site to the wider landscape. Boundary vegetation provides some visual interest but does not elevate the Site's scenic value. **Medium to Low**
Perceptual (Wildness and Tranquillity) *Landscape with a strong perceptual value notably wildness, tranquillity and/or dark skies*	The published LCA notes limited tranquillity in the western parts of the Study Area tranquillity and sense of wildness due to infrastructure. **Medium to High**	The Site lacks perceptual qualities of wildness or tranquillity due to its proximity to roads and built development. Boundary vegetation provides some filtering of views but does not enhance perceptual value. **Low**
Functional *Landscape which performs a clearly identifiable and valuable function, particularly in the healthy functioning of the landscape*	The landscape to the north and east is more fragmented and influenced by development, with the west of the Study Area becoming deeply rolling landscape increasing in rurality. **Medium**	The Site functions as arable farmland and does not perform any notable ecological or hydrological function beyond this. **Medium to Low**
Summary Analysis value	**Medium**	**Medium to Low**

Table A6.2: Sensitivity of Landscape Receptors

Landscape Receptor	Value of the Receptor	Susceptibility of the Receptor	Sensitivity of the Receptor
Character of the Site	**Medium to Low**	The Site comprises a small part of a large arable field with limited internal features due to intensive agricultural use. Higher-quality elements, such as a mature hedgerow with trees, are concentrated along the boundaries. The southern and part of the eastern boundaries are undefined, but the Site is influenced by adjacent settlement and infrastructure, with vegetation providing a degree of containment. Given the Site's modified character, its association with the settlement edge, and the retention of features within the layout, the landscape is considered to have a medium susceptibility to the type of change proposed. **Medium**	**Medium to Low**
Landscape Character of the wider Study Area represented by the Meopham Downs LCA	**Medium**	The surrounding landscape includes post-war residential development and schools, which have influenced the immediate character, while the wider landscape retains historic field patterns, woodland shaws, and traditional boundary treatments. To the north, dense woodland provides strong containment, whereas to the south-west the landscape opens into a more rural, rolling character with limited urban influence. This wider Study Area includes the Meopham Downs LCA, which is assessed as having good condition and moderate sensitivity. The proposed development lies at the western edge of this character area. Given this mix of modified and rural characteristics, and the proximity of existing settlement, the surrounding landscape is considered to have medium susceptibility to the type of change proposed. **Medium**	**Medium**

Table A6.3: Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

Visual Receptor (*Representative Photoviewpoint Number*)	**Value of the Receptor**	**Susceptibility of the Receptor**	**Sensitivity of the Receptor**
Users of PRoW NS251 – *Representative Photoviewpoint 5 and 6*	The receptor is a pedestrian using a PRoW, which provides access to the landscape and is likely to be used for recreational walking. While the route is not nationally designated, it is publicly accessible and contributes to the local experience of the countryside. **Medium**	Users of PRoW are likely engaged in some form of recreational walking. The activity is likely to involve a high level of attention to the surrounding landscape and visual amenity. **High**	**High to Medium**
Users of PRoW NS253 – *Representative Photoviewpoint 2 and 3*	The receptor is a pedestrian using a PRoW, which provides access to the landscape and is likely to be used for recreational walking. While the route is not nationally designated, it is publicly accessible and contributes to the local experience of the countryside. **Medium**	Users of PRoW are likely engaged in some form of recreational walking that involves some appreciation of views. However, the route is located on the settlement edge and is influenced by urban features, reducing the degree to which users' attention is focused on the wider landscape. **Medium**	**Medium**
Users of PRoW NS283 – *Representative Photoviewpoint 12*	The receptor is a pedestrian using a PRoW, which provides access to the landscape and is likely to be used for recreational walking. While the route is not nationally designated, it is publicly accessible and contributes to the local experience of the countryside. **Medium**	Users of PRoW are likely engaged in some form of recreational walking. The activity is likely to involve a high level of attention to the surrounding landscape and visual amenity. **High**	**High to Medium**
Users of PRoW SD304 and SD305 – *Representative Photoviewpoint 13*	The receptor is a pedestrian using a PRoW, which provides access to the landscape and is likely to be used for recreational walking. While the route is not nationally designated, it is publicly accessible and contributes to the local experience of the countryside. **Medium**	Users of PRoW are likely engaged in some form of recreational walking. The activity is likely to involve a high level of attention to the surrounding landscape and visual amenity. **High**	**High to Medium**

Visual Receptor (*Representative Photoviewpoint Number*)	**Value of the Receptor**	**Susceptibility of the Receptor**	**Sensitivity of the Receptor**
Users of A227 Wrotham Road	The receptor is a driver travelling along an A road, where views are experienced intermittently and are incidental to the primary activity of travel. The route is undesignated and not recognised for scenic or recreational value. **Low**	The receptor is a driver travelling along an A road, where the primary activity is movement at speed and attention is focused on traffic and navigation. The route is not designed for landscape appreciation and views are typically experienced peripherally. **Low**	**Low**
Users of Longfield Road – *Representative Photoviewpoint 1*	The receptor is a driver travelling along a B road, where views are experienced intermittently and are incidental to the primary activity of travel. The route is undesignated and not recognised for scenic or recreational value **Medium to Low**	The receptor is a driver travelling along a B road, where speeds are generally lower and the route passes through a more rural setting. While the primary activity remains movement, there is greater opportunity for incidental appreciation of the surrounding landscape. **Medium to Low**	**Medium to Low**
Users of Shipley Hills Road - *Representative Photoviewpoint 4*	The receptor is a driver travelling along a B road, where views are experienced intermittently and are incidental to the primary activity of travel. The route is undesignated and not recognised for scenic or recreational value **Medium to Low**	The receptor is a driver travelling along a B road, where speeds are generally lower and the route passes through a more rural setting. While the primary activity remains movement, there is greater opportunity for incidental appreciation of the surrounding landscape. **Medium to Low**	**Medium to Low**
Residents associated with Longfield Road	The receptor is a private resident located within existing settlement. Residential receptors in settlement are typically considered to be of medium value, as views contribute to the enjoyment of the home environment and are locally appreciated in a more urbanised setting. **Medium**	Views from ground storey windows where the principle rooms of the house are likely to be located, where the appreciation of the view is a focus from the windows. **High**	**High to Medium**

Appendix 7: Photoviewpoint Sheets

View from Longfield Road, adjacent to the northern boundary in the north-east corner, looking south-west across the Site

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Marsden Estate, Rendcomb, Cirencester, GL7 7EX
T: 0121 828 4045 E: landscape@tylergrange.co.uk W: www.tylergrange.co.uk

When printed, cylindrical images need to be curved around the viewer to represent real-world viewing angles. Alternatively they could be viewed flat by moving the head to maintain a constant viewing distance across the panorama. (Ref: LI TGN 06/19)

0cm (Original image width 820mm) 10cm

Please note: To view this image digitally, calibrate this scale bar, on screen, for a correct scale representation and view the image at a comfortable arm's length

GPS Date:	19.03.25	**Field of View**	90 degrees	**Projection:**	Cylindrical	**Visualisation Type:**	Type 1	**Project No:**	17740_P02	**Date:**	12/08/25
GPS Number:	807	**Camera:**	Canon EOS 6D Mark II	**Lens:**	50mm	**Image Enlargement:**	96%	**Client:**	IJ/MB	**Project:**	Land South of Longfield Road, Meopham
Direction of View:	South West	**Distance to site:**	5m	**Visibility:**	Good	**Page Size:**	A1 width	**Status:**	Planning	**Title:**	Viewpoint 1

View from PRoW NS253, within the north-west corner of the Site, looking west, across the Site.

Tyler Grange
Marsden Estate, Rendcomb, Cirencester, GL7 7EX
T: 0121 828 4045 E: landscape@tylergrange.co.uk W: www.tylergrange.co.uk

When printed, cylindrical images need to be curved around the viewer to represent real-world viewing angles. Alternatively they could be viewed flat by moving the head to maintain a constant viewing distance across the panorama. (Ref: LI TGN 06/19)

0cm (Original image width 820mm) 10cm

Please note: To view this image digitally, calibrate this scale bar, on screen, for a correct scale representation and view the image at a comfortable arm's length

GPS Date:	20.03.25	**Field of View**	90 degrees	**Projection:**	Cylindrical	**Visualisation Type:**	Type 1	**Project No:**	17740_P02	**Date:**	12/08/25
GPS Number:	564146 , 166749	**Camera:**	Canon EOS 6D Mark II	**Lens:**	50mm	**Image Enlargement:**	96%	**Client:**	IJ/MB	**Project:**	Land South of Longfield Road, Meopham
Direction of View:	West	**Distance to site:**	0m	**Visibility:**	Good	**Page Size:**	A1 width	**Status:**	Planning	**Title:**	Viewpoint 2a

View from PRoW NS253, within the north-west corner of the Site, looking west, across the Site.

Tyler Grange
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When printed, cylindrical images need to be curved around the viewer to represent real-world viewing angles. Alternatively they could be viewed flat by moving the head to maintain a constant viewing distance across the panorama. (Ref: LI TGN 06/19)

0cm (Original image width 820mm) 10cm

Please note: To view this image digitally, calibrate this scale bar, on screen, for a correct scale representation and view the image at a comfortable arm's length

GPS Date:	20.03.25	**Field of View**	90 degrees	**Projection:**	Cylindrical	**Visualisation Type:**	Type 1	**Project No:**	17740_P02	**Date:**	12/08/25
GPS Number:	564146 , 166749	**Camera:**	Canon EOS 6D Mark II	**Lens:**	50mm	**Image Enlargement:**	96%	**Client:**	IJ/MB	**Project:**	Land South of Longfield Road, Meopham
Direction of View:	West	**Distance to site:**	0m	**Visibility:**	Good	**Page Size:**	A1 width	**Status:**	Planning	**Title:**	Viewpoint 2b

View from PRoW NS253 to the east of the Site, looking west towards the Site

Tyler Grange
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When printed, cylindrical images need to be curved around the viewer to represent real-world viewing angles. Alternatively they could be viewed flat by moving the head to maintain a constant viewing distance across the panorama. (Ref: LI TGN 06/19)

0cm (Original image width 820mm) 10cm

Please note: To view this image digitally, calibrate this scale bar, on screen, for a correct scale representation and view the image at a comfortable arm's length

GPS Date:	19.03.25	**Field of View**	90 degrees	**Projection:**	Cylindrical	**Visualisation Type:**	Type 1	**Project No:**	17740_P02	**Date:**	12/08/25
GPS Number:	564330 , 166461	**Camera:**	Canon EOS 6D Mark II	**Lens:**	50mm	**Image Enlargement:**	96%	**Client:**	IJ/MB	**Project:**	Land South of Longfield Road, Meopham
Direction of View:	West	**Distance to site:**	341m	**Visibility:**	Good	**Page Size:**	A1 width	**Status:**	Planning	**Title:**	Viewpoint 3

View from Shipley Hills Road to the south-east of the Site, looking north towards the Site

Tyler Grange
Marsden Estate, Rendcomb, Cirencester, GL7 7EX
T: 0121 828 4045 E: landscape@tylergrange.co.uk W: www.tylergrange.co.uk

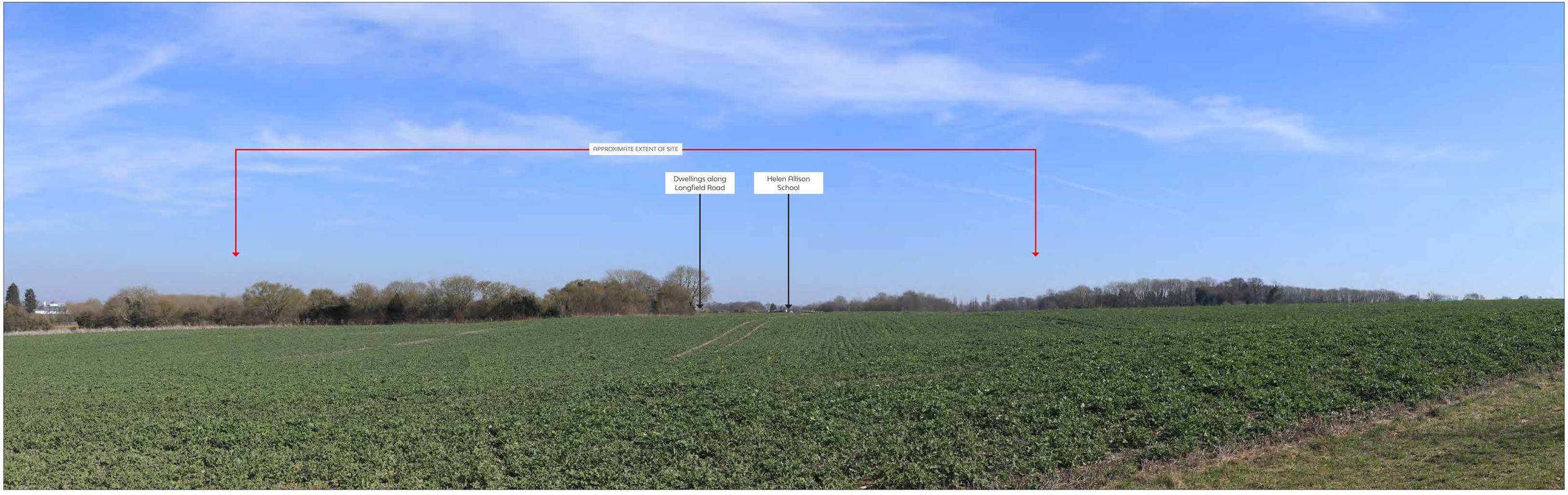
When printed, cylindrical images need to be curved around the viewer to represent real-world viewing angles. Alternatively they could be viewed flat by moving the head to maintain a constant viewing distance across the panorama. (Ref: LI TGN 06/19)

0cm (Original image width 820mm) 10cm

Please note: To view this image digitally, calibrate this scale bar, on screen, for a correct scale representation and view the image at a comfortable arm's length

GPS Date:	19.03.25	**Field of View**	90 degrees	**Projection:**	Cylindrical	**Visualisation Type:**	Type 1
GPS Number:	564342 , 166143	**Camera:**	Canon EOS 6D Mark II	**Lens:**	50mm	**Image Enlargement:**	96%
Direction of View:	West	**Distance to site:**	584m	**Visibility:**	Good	**Page Size:**	A1 width

Project No:	17740_P02	**Date:**	12/08/25
Client:	IJ/MB	**Project:**	Land South of Longfield Road, Meopham
Status:	Planning	**Title:**	Viewpoint 4



View from PRoW NS251 to the west of the Site, looking north-east towards the Site

Tyler Grange
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T: 01211 828 4045 E: landscape@tylergrange.co.uk W: www.tylergrange.co.uk

When printed, cylindrical images need to be curved around the viewer to represent real-world viewing angles. Alternatively they could be viewed flat by moving the head to maintain a constant viewing distance across the panorama. (Ref: LI TGN 06/19)

0cm (Original image width 820mm) 10cm

Please note: To view this image digitally, calibrate this scale bar, on screen, for a correct scale representation and view the image at a comfortable arm's length

GPS Date:	19.03.25	**Field of View**	90 degrees	**Projection:**	Cylindrical	**Visualisation Type:**	Type 1	**Project No:**	17740_P02	**Date:**	12/08/25
GPS Number:	563460 , 166780	**Camera:**	Canon EOS 6D Mark II	**Lens:**	50mm	**Image Enlargement:**	96%	**Client:**	IJ/MB	**Project:**	Land South of Longfield Road, Meopham
Direction of View:	North West	**Distance to site:**	564m	**Visibility:**	Good	**Page Size:**	A1 width	**Status:**	Planning	**Title:**	Viewpoint 5

View from PRoW NS251 to the west of the Site, looking east towards the Site

Tyler Grange
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T: 0121 828 4045 E: landscape@tylergrange.co.uk W: www.tylergrange.co.uk

When printed, cylindrical images need to be curved around the viewer to represent real-world viewing angles. Alternatively they could be viewed flat by moving the head to maintain a constant viewing distance across the panorama. (Ref: LI TGN 06/19)

0cm (Original image width 820mm) 10cm

Please note: To view this image digitally, calibrate this scale bar, on screen, for a correct scale representation and view the image at a comfortable arm's length

GPS Date:	19.03.25	**Field of View**	90 degrees	**Projection:**	Cylindrical	**Visualisation Type:**	Type 1	**Project No:**	17740_P02	**Date:**	12/08/25
GPS Number:	563654 , 167025	**Camera:**	Canon EOS 6D Mark II	**Lens:**	50mm	**Image Enlargement:**	96%	**Client:**	IJ/MB	**Project:**	Land South of Longfield Road, Meopham
Direction of View:	East	**Distance to site:**	273m	**Visibility:**	Good	**Page Size:**	A1 width	**Status:**	Planning	**Title:**	Viewpoint 6

View from PRoW NS307 to the west of the Site, looking east towards the Site

Tyler Grange
Morsden Estate, Rendcomb, Cirencester, GL7 7EX
T: 0121 828 4045 E: landscape@tylergrange.co.uk W: www.tylergrange.co.uk

When printed, cylindrical images need to be curved around the viewer to represent real-world viewing angles. Alternatively they could be viewed flat by moving the head to maintain a constant viewing distance across the panorama. (Ref: LI TGN 06/19)

0cm (Original image width 820mm) 10cm

Please note: To view this image digitally, calibrate this scale bar, on screen, for a correct scale representation and view the image at a comfortable arm's length

GPS Date:	19.03.25	**Field of View**	Single Image	**Projection:**	Planar	**Visualisation Type:**	Type 1	**Project No:**	17740_P02	**Date:**	12/08/25
GPS Number:	563296 , 167523	**Camera:**	Canon EOS 6D Mark II	**Lens:**	50mm	**Image Enlargement:**	96%	**Client:**	IJ/MB	**Project:**	Land South of Longfield Road, Meopham
Direction of View:	East	**Distance to site:**	871m	**Visibility:**	Good	**Page Size:**	A1 width	**Status:**	Planning	**Title:**	Viewpoint 7

View from Longfield Road to the north-west of the Site, looking south-east towards the Site

Tyler Grange
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T: 0121 828 4045 E: landscape@tylergrange.co.uk W: www.tylergrange.co.uk

When printed, cylindrical images need to be curved around the viewer to represent real-world viewing angles. Alternatively they could be viewed flat by moving the head to maintain a constant viewing distance across the panorama. (Ref: LI TGN 06/19)

0cm (Original image width 820mm) 10cm

Please note: To view this image digitally, calibrate this scale bar, on screen, for a correct scale representation and view the image at a comfortable arm's length

GPS Date:	19.03.25	**Field of View**	Single Image	**Projection:**	Planar	**Visualisation Type:**	Type 1	**Project No:**	17740_P02	**Date:**	12/08/25
GPS Number:	562760 , 167822	**Camera:**	Canon EOS 6D Mark II	**Lens:**	50mm	**Image Enlargement:**	96%	**Client:**	IJ/MB	**Project:**	Land South of Longfield Road, Meopham
Direction of View:	South East	**Distance to site:**	1.5km	**Visibility:**	Good	**Page Size:**	A1 width	**Status:**	Planning	**Title:**	Viewpoint 8

View from Park Hill / Stony Cor juntion to the north-west of the Site, looking south towards the Site.

Tyler Grange
Marsden Estate, Rendcomb, Cirencester, GL7 7EX
T: 0121 828 4045 E: landscape@tylergrange.co.uk W: www.tylergrange.co.uk

When printed, cylindrical images need to be curved around the viewer to represent real-world viewing angles. Alternatively they could be viewed flat by moving the head to maintain a constant viewing distance across the panorama. (Ref: LI TGN 06/19)

0cm (Original image width 820mm) 10cm

Please note: To view this image digitally, calibrate this scale bar, on screen, for a correct scale representation and view the image at a comfortable arm's length

GPS Date:	19.03.25	**Field of View**	Single Image	**Projection:**	Planar	**Visualisation Type:**	Type 1	**Project No:**	17740_P02	**Date:**	12/08/25
GPS Number:	563096 , 168406	**Camera:**	Canon EOS 6D Mark II	**Lens:**	50mm	**Image Enlargement:**	96%	**Client:**	IJ/MB	**Project:**	Land South of Longfield Road, Meopham
Direction of View:	South	**Distance to site:**	1.7km	**Visibility:**	Good	**Page Size:**	A1 width	**Status:**	Planning	**Title:**	Viewpoint 9

View from PRoW NS192 to the north-east of the Site, looking west towards the Site

Tyler Grange
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T: 0121 828 4045 E: landscape@tylergrange.co.uk W: www.tylergrange.co.uk

When printed, cylindrical images need to be curved around the viewer to represent real-world viewing angles. Alternatively they could be viewed flat by moving the head to maintain a constant viewing distance across the panorama. (Ref: LI TGN 06/19)

0cm (Original image width 820mm) 10cm

Please note: To view this image digitally, calibrate this scale bar, on screen, for a correct scale representation and view the image at a comfortable arm's length

GPS Date:	20.03.25	**Field of View**	90 degrees	**Projection:**	Cylindrical	**Visualisation Type:**	Type 1	**Project No:**	17740_P02	**Date:**	12/08/25
GPS Number:	564808 , 167543	**Camera:**	Canon EOS 6D Mark II	**Lens:**	50mm	**Image Enlargement:**	96%	**Client:**	IJ/MB	**Project:**	Land South of Longfield Road, Meopham
Direction of View:	West	**Distance to site:**	1.1km	**Visibility:**	Good	**Page Size:**	A1 width	**Status:**	Planning	**Title:**	Viewpoint 10

View from PRoW NS252 to the east of the Site, looking west towards the Site.

Tyler Grange
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T: 01211 828 4045 E: landscape@tylergrange.co.uk W: www.tylergrange.co.uk

When printed, cylindrical images need to be curved around the viewer to represent real-world viewing angles. Alternatively they could be viewed flat by moving the head to maintain a constant viewing distance across the panorama. (Ref: LI TGN 06/19)

0cm (Original image width 820mm) 10cm

Please note: To view this image digitally, calibrate this scale bar, on screen, for a correct scale representation and view the image at a comfortable arm's length

GPS Date:	19.03.25	**Field of View**	90 degrees	**Projection:**	Cylindrical	**Visualisation Type:**	Type 1	**Project No:**	17740_P02	**Date:**	12/08/25
GPS Number:	564935 , 166537	**Camera:**	Canon EOS 6D Mark II	**Lens:**	50mm	**Image Enlargement:**	96%	**Client:**	IJ/MB	**Project:**	Land South of Longfield Road, Meopham
Direction of View:	West	**Distance to site:**	865m	**Visibility:**	Good	**Page Size:**	A1 width	**Status:**	Planning	**Title:**	Viewpoint 11

View from PRoW NS283 to the south of the Site, looking north towards the Site

Tyler Grange
Monsden Estate, Rendcomb, Cirencester, GL7 7EX
T: 01211 828 4045 E: landscape@tylergrange.co.uk W: www.tylergrange.co.uk

When printed, cylindrical images need to be curved around the viewer to represent real-world viewing angles. Alternatively they could be viewed flat by moving the head to maintain a constant viewing distance across the panorama. (Ref: LI TGN 06/19)

0cm (Original image width 820mm) 10cm

Please note: To view this image digitally, calibrate this scale bar, on screen, for a correct scale representation and view the image at a comfortable arm's length

GPS Date:	20.03.25	**Field of View**	90 degrees	**Projection:**	Cylindrical	**Visualisation Type:**	Type 1	**Project No:**	17740_P02	**Date:**	12/08/25
GPS Number:	563694 , 165640	**Camera:**	Canon EOS 6D Mark II	**Lens:**	50mm	**Image Enlargement:**	96%	**Client:**	IJ/MB	**Project:**	Land South of Longfield Road, Meopham
Direction of View:	North	**Distance to site:**	1.1km	**Visibility:**	Good	**Page Size:**	A1 width	**Status:**	Planning	**Title:**	Viewpoint 12

View from PRoW SD304 to the south-west of the Site, looking north-east towards the Site

Tyler Grange
Morsden Estate, Rendcomb, Cirencester, GL7 7EX
T: 0121 828 4045 E: landscape@tylergrange.co.uk W: www.tylergrange.co.uk

When printed, cylindrical images need to be curved around the viewer to represent real-world viewing angles. Alternatively they could be viewed flat by moving the head to maintain a constant viewing distance across the panorama. (Ref: LI TGN 06/19)

0cm (Original image width 820mm) 10cm

Please note: To view this image digitally, calibrate this scale bar, on screen, for a correct scale representation and view the image at a comfortable arm's length

GPS Date:	20.03.25	**Field of View**	Single Image	**Projection:**	Planar	**Visualisation Type:**	Type 1	**Project No:**	17740_P02	**Date:**	12/08/25
GPS Number:	563694 , 165640	**Camera:**	Canon EOS 6D Mark II	**Lens:**	50mm	**Image Enlargement:**	96%	**Client:**	IJ/MB	**Project:**	Land South of Longfield Road, Meopham
Direction of View:	North East	**Distance to site:**	1.9km	**Visibility:**	Good	**Page Size:**	A1 width	**Status:**	Planning	**Title:**	Viewpoint 13

Appendix 8: Landscape Effects Assessment Tables

Table A8.1 Magnitude and Importance of Landscape Effects

			Construction		Year 1		Year 15 (Residual Effects)	
Receptor	**Sensitivity of landscape receptor (see Appendix 6)**	**Predicted Change**	**Magnitude of Effects**	**Importance of Effects**	**Magnitude of Effects**	**Importance of Effects**	**Magnitude of Effects**	**Importance of Effects**
Character of the Site	Medium to Low	**Construction** During construction, temporary, visually discordant elements such as plant and hoarding will be introduced, resulting in a short-term, adverse effect on landscape character. **Year 1** At completion, the introduction of built form will permanently change the Site from an arable field to a residential environment with streets, dwellings, and associated infrastructure. The design retains the mature hedgerow along the western boundary and introduces new native planting along the southern and eastern edges to reinforce the landscape structure. An area of Public Open Space (POS) is positioned along the southern boundary to create a softer transition to the countryside and maintain a sense of localised openness. Additional green infrastructure, including SuDS features and tree-lined streets, will break up built form and improve connectivity. **Year 15** By Year 15, the establishment of new planting will create a more robust and resilient landscape framework, and the southern POS will provide a well-integrated settlement edge and enhanced Green Infrastructure links. While the overall character of the Site will remain fundamentally altered, these measures will ensure the development is assimilated as sensitively as possible within the local landscape context.	Large	**Major / Moderate** **Adverse**	Large	**Major / Moderate** **Adverse**	Medium	**Moderate** **Adverse**
Local Landscape Character as represented by Meopham Downs LCA	Medium	**Construction** During the construction phase, temporary and visually discordant elements such as machinery, hoarding, and site activity will be introduced, resulting in a short-term, adverse effect on local character. These effects will be perceptible only from a limited number of very localised viewpoints. **Year 1** The Proposed Development will introduce new built form into a very small area in northern edge of the Meopham Downs Landscape Character Area, which is defined by gently undulating farmland, hedgerow-enclosed fields, and a semi-rural settlement pattern. The change will be permanent but contained by the existing settlement edge and local topography, limiting its influence on the wider character area. The design approach includes structural planting and open space to create a softer transition to the countryside, aligning with LCA management objectives to conserve hedgerows and maintain settlement separation. **Year 15** While the development will alter the landscape at the settlement edge, the wider character area will continue to exhibit its published characteristics, including the rolling landform, traditional field patterns, and wooded horizons. Over time, new planting will reinforce the landscape framework and help integrate the development, ensuring that the overall pattern and function of the Meopham Downs LCA remains legible and resilient.	Small	**Minor** **Adverse**	Small	**Minor** **Adverse**	Negligible	**Negligible** **Adverse**

Appendix 9: Visual Effects Assessment Tables

Table A9.1 Magnitude and Importance of Visual Effects

			Construction		Year 1		Year 15 (Residual Effects)	
Receptor (Representative Photoviewpoint Number)	**Sensitivity of visual receptor (see Appendix 6)**	**Visual Change**	**Magnitude of Effects**	**Importance of Effects**	**Magnitude of Effects**	**Importance of Effects**	**Magnitude of Effects**	**Importance of Effects**
Users of PRoW NS251 – *Representative Photoviewpoint 5 and 6*	High to Medium	**Construction:** Construction activity will be visible from short sections of the route where vegetation does not fully screen the Site, introducing temporary elements such as plant and hoarding. Hedgerow vegetation along the western boundary provides partial filtering, but gaps allow intermittent visibility. **Year 1 (Completion):** The upper storeys of built form will be noticeable in filtered views through gaps in vegetation and where the southern boundary is undefined. The change will be most apparent where the route runs closest to the Site, although the built form has been set back from the southern boundary to reduce views, and the retained vegetation and local ridgeline to the south of the Site will continue to provide filtering qualities. **Year 15 (Residual):** By Year 15, structural planting along the southern boundary and within the Site will be established, forming a layered vegetation belt with depth, breaking up built massing and reducing its prominence. Views of upper storeys and rooflines may be possible but heavily filtered, with the settlement edge appearing softer and more contained.	Medium	**Moderate Adverse**	Medium	**Moderate Adverse**	Small / Negligible	**Minor Adverse**
Users of PRoW NS253 – *Representative Photoviewpoint 2 and 3*	Medium	**Construction:** Construction activity will be clearly visible along the on-site section of the PRoW, introducing prominent temporary elements such as plant, hoarding, and material storage. **Year 1 (Completion):** Built form will occupy the foreground of views along the on-site section, replacing the current field with housing and infrastructure. Retained vegetation around the school boundary will provide some screening from sections of the PRoW off-site. **Year 15 (Residual):** By Year 15, layered planting along the southern and eastern boundaries will be established, breaking up built form and reducing its prominence. Views of built form from the section of PRoW within the Site will remain noticeable due to proximity, but views of the development from the remainder of the PRoW will reduce and be seen in the context of existing settlement.	Large	**Major / Moderate Adverse**	Large	**Major / Moderate Adverse**	Medium	**Moderate Adverse**
Users of PRoW NS283 – *Representative Photoviewpoint 12*	High to Medium	**Construction:** Construction activity may be glimpsed from elevated sections of the route, introducing minor temporary elements into distant views. These will be intermittent and heavily filtered by intervening vegetation and landform. **Year 1 (Completion):** Built form may be perceptible in distant views, although intervening landform and vegetation will limit visibility to roof lines only. **Year 15 (Residual):** Established planting along the southern boundary will further reduce visibility, resulting in negligible change.	Small	**Minor Adverse**	Small	**Minor Adverse**	Negligible	**Negligible Adverse**

			Construction		Year 1		Year 15 (Residual Effects)	
Receptor (Representative Photoviewpoint Number)	**Sensitivity of visual receptor (see Appendix 6)**	**Visual Change**	**Magnitude of Effects**	**Importance of Effects**	**Magnitude of Effects**	**Importance of Effects**	**Magnitude of Effects**	**Importance of Effects**
Users of PRoW SD304 and SD305 – *Representative Photoviewpoint 13*	High to Medium	**Construction:** Construction activity is unlikely to be visible due to distance and intervening vegetation. **Year 1 (Completion):** Built form may be perceptible in distant views, but visibility will be limited and heavily filtered, at most, to roof lines. **Year 15 (Residual):** Established planting along the southern boundary will further reduce visibility, resulting in negligible change.	Negligible	**Negligible Adverse**	Negligible	**Negligible Adverse**	Negligible	**Negligible Neutral**
Users of A227 Wrotham Road	Low	**Construction:** Construction activity will be heavily filtered by roadside vegetation and settlement, with views towards the Site oblique to the direction of the road. **Year 1 (Completion):** Existing vegetation and settlement will continue to heavily filter views of the development. **Year 15 (Residual):** Planting along the southern and eastern boundaries will have established, adding an additional layer of vegetation and reducing views towards the Site from Wrotham Road..	Negligible	**Negligible Adverse**	Negligible	**Negligible Adverse**	Negligible	**Negligible Adverse**
Users of Longfield Road – *Representative Photoviewpoint 1*	Medium to Low	**Construction:** Construction activity will be visible from sections of the road adjacent to the Site, introducing temporary elements such as plant and hoarding. **Year 1 (Completion):** Built form will be visible along the short section of the road that extends adjacent to the Site, replacing the current field with housing and infrastructure. Views will remain along the northern edge, although softened by retained vegetation and existing settlement either side of the Site as distance increases. **Year 15 (Residual):** Planting along the northern edge and within the Site will soften views and reduce the prominence of built form, resulting in a more integrated settlement edge, with views of the development contained to the short section of Longfield Road that extends pass the Site.	Medium	**Moderate Adverse**	Medium	**Moderate Adverse**	Small	**Minor Adverse**

			Construction		Year 1		Year 15 (Residual Effects)	
Receptor (Representative Photoviewpoint Number)	**Sensitivity of visual receptor (see Appendix 6)**	**Visual Change**	**Magnitude of Effects**	**Importance of Effects**	**Magnitude of Effects**	**Importance of Effects**	**Magnitude of Effects**	**Importance of Effects**
Users of Shipley Hills Road - *Representative Photoviewpoint 4*	Medium	**Construction:** Construction activity may be glimpsed above existing field boundary vegetation, from elevated sections of the road, introducing temporary elements into distant views. The majority of the road is sunken below roadside vegetation, which curtails views towards the Site **Year 1 (Completion):** The upper storeys of built form will be perceptible in distant views, although intervening vegetation and landform will limit visibility. **Year 15 (Residual):** P Planting along the southern and eastern boundaries will have established, adding an additional layer of vegetation and reducing views towards the Site.	Small / Negligible	**Minor / Negligible Adverse**	Small / Negligible	**Minor / Negligible Adverse**	Negligible	**Negligible Adverse**

Table A9.2 Magnitude of Effects upon Residential Views

This LVIA has focussed upon the analysis of views from publicly accessible locations. Views from private residential dwellings have not been tested in the field and therefore the following commentary is based upon professional judgement.

			Construction	Year 1	Year 15 (Residual Effects)
Receptor (Representative Photoviewpoint Number)	**Sensitivity of visual receptor**	**Visual Change**	**Magnitude of Change**	**Magnitude of Change**	**Magnitude of Change**
Residents associated with Longwater Road	High to Medium	**Construction:** Construction activity will be visible from properties immediately north of the Site, particularly where properties front onto Longfield Road. Temporary elements such as plant and hoarding will be noticeable in close-range views, although existing settlement and vegetation will provide partial filtering. **Year 1 (Completion):** Built form will be clearly visible from properties closest to the Site, replacing the current field with housing and internal streets. Retained vegetation and settlement will provide partial filtering, but direct views into the Site will be possible. **Year 15 (Residual):** By Year 15, planting along the northern edge and within the Site will be established, softening the appearance of built form and reducing its prominence.	Large to Medium	Large to Medium	Medium to Small

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