

11. LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL

Introduction

- 11.1 The Chapter has been prepared by The Environmental Dimension Partnership Ltd as indicated in Table 11.1 below.

Table 11.1 – Technical Competence in Landscape and EIA

	Lead Authors	Technical Reviewer
Name	Matt Alebon / Matt Wilson	Will Gardner
Company	The Environmental Dimension Partnership Ltd	
Qualifications/Accreditations relevant to technical area	BA (Hons), MA / BSc(Hons), MA, CMLI	BSc (Hons), MSc, CMLI
Does the practitioner hold any IEMA qualification?	Chartered member of the Landscape Institute / No	Chartered member of the Landscape Institute
Company hold IEMA QMark?	Yes	
Years technical experience (in technical area)	6 years / 3 years	17 years
Number of EIA's delivered to date	2/1	13

- 11.2 This Chapter of the ES assesses the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development, outlined in red on **Figure 11.1 (included at the end of this Chapter with all Chapter 11 Figures)**, in terms of landscape and visual amenity and incorporates a summary of the Landscape and Visual Baseline provided in full at **Appendix 11.1 and 11.2**.
- 11.3 When classifying the criteria for the importance/sensitivity of receptors within this ES Chapter, a variation in the methodology set out in the intro Chapters of the ES is utilised. This comprises the addition of 'very high' and 'negligible' criterion to the importance/sensitivity of receptors table presented in **Table 11.2 and 11.3**.
- 11.4 In order to establish the baseline and potential limit of significant effects, it has been necessary to view the study area at two geographical scales.
- 11.5 A broad study area of up to 5km from the site has been adopted as the initial search area. This enables the geographical scope of the assessment to be defined and provides the wider geographical context of the study. Within this area, the search has focused on: identifying the local planning policy context; identifying national and local landscape designations and other relevant designations, for example, historic parks and gardens; and providing a general geographical understanding of the site and its broader context, in relation to landform, transport routes and the distribution and nature of settlement.

11.6 Following this initial analysis and subsequent field work, and having an appreciation of the development proposed, a refinement of the study area has been developed, which focuses on those areas and features that are likely to be affected by the proposals. The extent of this study area is 1km from the site boundary, although occasional reference may be made to features beyond this area where appropriate. This detailed study area is illustrated on **Figure 11.1**. This approach is in accordance with the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Third Edition LI/IEMA, 2013), which seeks a proportional approach to the assessment (paragraphs 5.2 and 6.2).

11.7 The Chapter should be read in conjunction with the following Technical Appendices (in **Volume 2 of the ES**) and Figures (**included at the end of Chapter 11**):

Technical Appendix 11.1: Landscape and Visual Baseline (and associated annexes) Prior's Farm, South Wokingham;

Technical Appendix 11.2: Landscape and Visual Baseline (and associated annexes) Pearce's Farm and Surrounding Land, Easthampstead Road, Wokingham;

Technical Appendix 11.3: Landscape and Visual Effects during Construction;

Technical Appendix 11.4: Landscape and Visual Effects during Operation;

Technical Appendix 11.5: Landscape and Visual Cumulative Effects;

Technical Appendix 11.6: Arboricultural Impact Assessment, Prior's Farm, South Wokingham;

Technical Appendix 11.7: Arboricultural Impact Assessment, Byway 30 Crossing;

Figure 11.1: Site Location and Boundaries

Figure 11.2: Soils Plan;

Figure 11.3: Geology Plan;

Figure 11.4: Topography Plan;

Figure 11.5: Environmental Planning Context;

Figure 11.6: Site Character and Local Context;

Figure 11.7: Published Landscape Character Assessment;

Figure 11.8: Findings of Visual Appraisal;

Figure 11.9 Summary of Opportunities;

Figure 11.10: Landscape Masterplan; and

Figure 11.11: Photoviewpoints

Legislative Planning Policy Framework

National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework 2023

- 11.8 At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development; this being the golden thread running throughout the document and the development of NPPF policies. Pursuing sustainable development involves seeking positive improvements in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment, as well as improving people's quality of life, including inter alia, moving from a net loss of bio-diversity to achieving net gains for nature, replacing poor design with better design and improving the conditions in which people live, work, travel and take leisure.
- 11.9 Considering this broad aim alongside the three dimensions to sustainable development, and in particular that relating to environmental matters, the role of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) is key in the creation of successful places in which to live and work. Through the development and design of integrated open space, allied to the protection or enhancement of the natural environment, the LVIA considers the challenges of the NPPF head-on.
- 11.10 Paragraph 180 states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by inter alia "protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan)" and "recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland".

Local Development Plan Policy

- 11.11 In order to properly assess the effects of the proposal in landscape terms, EDP has conducted a review of relevant planning policy and landscape designations to identify what 'value' the local authority places on the landscape. This review focuses on local plan policy, since such policy is (a) more specific to the site and (b) reflects the regional and national advice regarding landscape issues.

Wokingham Borough Core Strategy (Adopted January 2010)

- 11.12 The current Local Plan for WBC is comprised of a number of Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and cover the period from 2006-2026. The relevant policies to the historic environment, South Wokingham SDL Extension and Proposed Development are outlined below.
- 11.13 The adopted local plan is a collection of planning documents, including the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy, which includes over-arching general development policies, to which the development proposals should reflect. Policies that are specific to the site in landscape and visual terms are briefly summarised below.

- 11.14 Policy CP3: Landscape development that demonstrates the appropriate use of landscaping to contribute to the creation of sense of place.
- 11.15 Policy CP7: The appropriate conservation and retention of landscape features and biodiversity that are considered locally important.
- 11.16 Of note, the 'Proposals Map' for WBC records the South Wokingham SDL Extension to be located within the wider area encompassed by planning policy 'CP21 - South Wokingham Strategic Development Location'. Policy CP21 sets out the aim to deliver a sustainable, well-designed mixed-use development by 2026 to the south of Wokingham. Therefore, CP21 applies to the South Wokingham SDL Extension, which already agrees in principle residential development within the South Wokingham SDL Extension.

- 11.17 Policy CP21 states:

“Within the area identified at south Wokingham, a sustainable, well designed mixed use development will be delivered by 2026 including:

- 1. Phased delivery of around 2,500 dwellings including affordable in accordance with policy CP5;*
- 2. Appropriate retail facilities;*
- 3. Social and physical infrastructure (including provision for two new primary schools);*
- 4. Measures to maintain separation from Binfield/Bracknell, Crowthorne/Pinewood (Crowthorne) and Finchampstead North;*
- 5. Measures to protect and enhance pedestrian (including using mobility aids) access to the countryside from Wokingham town centre;*
- 6. Necessary measures to avoid and mitigate the impact of development upon the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area in line with Policy CP8 to meet the requirements of the Habitats Regulations and in accordance with Natural England’s latest standards. This will include sufficient Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (subject to monitoring of the quality and quantity standards).;*
- 7. Improvements to transport capacity along the A321 and A329 including the provision of south Wokingham relief road from the vicinity of the Coppid Beech roundabout to the Finchampstead Road;*
- 8. Measures to improve accessibility by non-car transport modes along the A321 and A329 corridors; and*
- 9. Measures to improve access by non-car modes to Wokingham town centre (including the station interchange).*

The development will be guided by a Development Brief Supplementary Planning Document produced with the involvement of stakeholders including all interested landowners in the area covered by the Strategic Development Location as defined on the Proposals Map.

A co-ordinated approach to the development of the Strategic Development Location will be required to deliver the necessary infrastructure, facilities and services to meet the needs of the expanded community."

- 11.18 The Managing Development Delivery Local Plan, adopted February 2014, provides additional information to the policies set out in the Core Strategy. Three relevant policies are detailed under the '*Landscape and Nature Conservation*' section of the DPD, comprising of Policies TB21-23.
- 11.19 The currently adopted Local Plan for WBC is in the process of being updated. The Local Development Scheme (LDS) 2023-2026 document details the updates, progress and timetable for the Local Plan Update. According to the LDS 2023-2026 document, a Local Plan Update is not anticipated to be formally adopted until December 2025.
- 11.20 Of note, the emerging Local Plan has not changed the outcome of the assessment.

Other Documents

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Documents listed within the evidence base for the Local Plan include the following:

Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment (Final Report 2003); and

Wokingham District Landscape Character Assessment (Final Report 2004).

Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment (Final Report 2003)

- 11.21 A county wide, Berkshire Landscape Character Area Statements was published in 2003, within which the site is located within Landscape Type K: Settled Farmlands. Type K is described as being a transitional landscape grading from the Open Clay Lowlands to the north and the Forested Sands to the south/east.

Wokingham District Landscape Character Assessment (Final Report 2004)

- 11.22 At a local level, as illustrated on **Figure 11.3**, the site falls across two Landscape Character Areas, LCA N1 Holme Green Pastoral Sandy Lowland and LCA M1 Finchampstead Forested and Settled Sands. The majority of the site falls within area N1 This LCA "*is characterised by its predominantly pastoral land use with smaller areas of arable land. The landscape here is gently undulating, opening out into flatter areas east of Holme Green and is set within a partially wooded context created by the Settled and Forested Sands to the south and the urban areas of Wokingham in the north*".
- 11.23 The assessment acknowledges that whilst sparsely settled, the site is influenced by the settlement edge of Wokingham.
- 11.24 The key characteristics of this LCA are listed below, with those of greater relevance to the site and its immediate context emboldened for emphasis:

Shelving to gently undulating landform underlain by a sandy geology;

An agricultural landscape defined predominantly by pastoral farming contained within medium-sized and geometrically shaped fields and largely divided by post and wire and rough timber fencing;

Small scale 'hobby' farming including a number of equestrian paddocks and exercising areas bound by often unkempt fencing and supported by temporary looking facilities such as caravans and sheds;

Speciality farms, including 'Pick Your Own', Christmas trees and unusual breeds such as ostrich and guinea fowl farms;

Presence of small businesses indicates economic diversification aside from agriculture;

Scrubby vegetation including wooded tributaries, shelterbelts with gorse, bramble and bracken;

Dispersed settlement including large manors being used as educational establishments and hamlets

Recreational value in the form of a golf course and numerous **footpaths and bridleways**;

A landscape evoking a generally peaceful character

Views of the southern fringes of Wokingham with some areas of land providing an important break between Finchampstead and Wokingham; and

Pine clumps are a locally distinctive feature forming the approach to Wokingham.

11.25 The assessment judges an overall moderate condition which relates to the good condition of some elements set against the poor survival of historic patterns and habitats and the loss of field boundaries and untidy appearance of temporary structures/features within fields (such as caravans) leading to a sense of neglect.

11.26 LCA M1 Finchampstead Forested and Settled Sands "...is characterised by its densely wooded context, which creates a strong sense of enclosure throughout. The woodland character is varied with semi-natural areas and large areas of forestry plantations, which are tolerant of the underlying sandy and acidic soil conditions".

11.27 The assessment acknowledges that whilst accessible (for recreation), the landscape in this part of the site exhibits a "...distinctly remote character".

11.28 The key characteristics of this LCA are listed below, with those of greater relevance to the site and its immediate context emboldened for emphasis:

An elevated landscape comprising a shelving plateau, underlain by acidic sands strongly influencing land cover and ecological character;

A landscape dominated by interconnected forestry and woodland;

Large areas for public recreation space including California Country Park, Forestry Commission land and golf courses;

A predominant absence of farmland;

A strong sense of enclosure and disorientation afforded by the often-continuous swathes of large coniferous woodland mass;

Underlying, heathland character often typifying areas of woodland clearing such as at California Park;

A landscape of good public accessibility;

Long straight roads i.e. Nine Mile Ride projecting strong linear character to the landscape. Linear rides and private roads are also a feature;

Strong settlement character - with residential properties of post war and modern suburban character in a variety of styles, largely aligning the long linear rides;

Rich wildlife habitats associated with the acidic soils including numerous large lakes and bogs -containing notable and regionally restricted species; and

A landscape offering a sense of remoteness and solitude.

- 11.29 The assessment judges an overall higher quality than that of LCA N1, but of overall moderate condition, which broadly aligns with EDPs findings.

Assessment Methodology

- 11.30 Provided within this section is an abridged methodology for the LVIA. An unabridged version can be found at **Annex EDP 2** of **Appendix 11.1** and **11.2**, and a Glossary of Terms can be found in **Annex EDP 1** of **Appendix 11.1** and **11.2**.

Relevant Guidance

- 11.31 The assessment methodology for assessing landscape and visual effects prepared by EDP is principally based on the following best practice guidance:
- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment – Third Edition (LI/IEMA, 2013);
 - Landscape Character Assessment – Guidance for England and Scotland (Swanick & LUC, 2002) produced on behalf of the Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage; and
 - Photography and photomontage in landscape and visual impact assessment (Landscape Institute Advice Note 01/11)
- 11.32 The nature of landscape and visual assessment requires both objective analysis and subjective professional judgement. Accordingly, the following assessment is based on the best practice guidance listed above and information and data analysis techniques.

- 11.33 It uses subjective professional judgement and quantifiable factors wherever possible and is based on clearly defined terms (see Glossary of Terms, **Annex 1** of **Appendix 11.1** and **11.2**).

Landscape Assessment

- 11.34 Potential landscape effects derive from changes in the physical landscape fabric that may contribute to changes in its character and how this is experienced. These effects need to be considered in line with changes already occurring within the landscape, and which help define the character of it.
- 11.35 Potential effects upon the wider landscape resource, i.e. the landscape surrounding the development, requires an assessment of visibility of the proposals from adjacent landscape character areas, but this still remains an assessment of landscape character and not visual amenity.

Visual Assessment

- 11.36 The assessment of potential effects on visual amenity draws on the predicted effects of the Proposed Development, the landscape and visual context, and the visibility and viewpoint analysis. It considers the significance of the overall effects of the Proposed Development on the visual amenity of the main visual receptor types in the study area.

Identifying Landscape and Visual Receptors

- 11.37 This assessment has sought to identify the key landscape and visual receptors that may be affected by the changes proposed.
- 11.38 The assessment of effects on landscape (as a resource in its own right) draws on the description of the development, the landscape context and the visibility and viewpoint analysis to identify receptors, which, for the Proposed Development may include, but not be limited to, the following:
- a. The landscape fabric of the Application Site;
 - b. The key landscape characteristics of the local context;
 - c. The 'host' landscape character area, which contains the Proposed Development;
 - d. The 'non-host' landscape character areas where there is the potential for secondary effects beyond the host landscape character area (this is only undertaken where effects may extend beyond the host character area); and
 - e. Landscape designations on a national, regional or local level (where relevant).
- 11.39 The locations and types of visual receptors within the defined study areas are identified from Ordnance Survey (OS) maps and other published information (such as walking guides), from fieldwork observations and from local knowledge provided during the consultation process. Examples of visual receptors may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- a. Settlements and private residences;
- b. Users of National Cycle Routes and National Trails;
- c. Users of local/regional cycle and walking routes;
- d. Those using local rights of way – walkers, horse riders, cyclists;
- e. Users of open spaces with public access;
- f. People using major (motorways, A and B) roads;
- g. People using minor roads; and
- h. People using railways.

Assessment of Landscape and Visual Effects

11.40 The assessment of effects on the landscape resource includes consideration of the potential changes to those key elements and components that contribute towards recognised landscape character or the quality of designated landscape areas, these features are termed 'landscape receptors'. The assessment of visual amenity requires the identification of potential visual receptors that may be affected by the Proposed Development.

11.41 As noted above, following the identification of these various landscape and visual receptors, the effect of the Proposed Development on each of them is assessed through consideration of a combination of:

“Their overall sensitivity to the proposed form of development that includes the value attached to the receptor following the baseline appraisal, combined with the susceptibility of the receptor to the change proposed, determined during the assessment stage; and

The overall magnitude of change that will occur - based on the size and scale of the change, its duration and its reversibility.”

Defining Receptor Sensitivity

11.42 A number of factors influence professional judgement when assessing the degree to which a particular landscape or visual receptor can accommodate change arising from a particular development. Sensitivity is made up of judgements regarding the 'value' attached to the receptor, which is determined at baseline stage, and the 'susceptibility' of the receptor, which is determined at the assessment stage when the nature of the proposals, and therefore the susceptibility of the landscape and visual resource to change is better understood.

- 11.43 Susceptibility indicates “the ability of a defined landscape or visual receptor to accommodate the specific Proposed Development without undue negative consequences”¹. Susceptibility of visual receptors is primarily a function of the expectations and occupation or activity of the receptor. A degree of professional judgement applies in arriving at the susceptibility for both landscape and visual receptors and this is clearly set out in the technical annexes to this assessment.
- 11.44 A location may have different levels of sensitivity according to the types of visual receptors found there and any one receptor type may be accorded different levels of sensitivity at different locations.
- 11.45 Therefore, where the susceptibility of a receptor to the type of development proposed may result in a change to the ‘inherent’ value of that receptor or location, this is made explicit within the assessment text contained at **Appendices 11.3** and **11.4**.
- 11.46 **Table 11.2** (below) provides an indication of the criteria by which the overall sensitivity of a landscape receptor is judged within this assessment and considers both value and susceptibility independently.

Table 11.2 – Landscape Sensitivity

Category	Landscape Receptor Value Criteria	Landscape Susceptibility to Change Criteria
Very High	Nationally/internationally designated/valued countryside and landscape features; strong/distinctive landscape characteristics; absence of landscape detractors.	Strong/distinctive landscape elements/aesthetic/-perceptual aspects; absence of landscape detractors; landscape receptors in excellent condition. Landscapes with clear and widely recognised cultural value. Landscapes with a high level of tranquillity.
High	Locally designated/valued countryside (e.g. Areas of High Landscape Value, Regional Scenic Areas) and landscape features; many distinctive landscape characteristics; very few landscape detractors.	Many distinctive landscape elements/aesthetic/-perceptual aspects; very few landscape detractors; landscape receptors in good condition. The landscape has a low capacity for change as a result of potential changes to defining character.
Medium	Undesignated countryside and landscape features; some distinctive landscape	Some distinctive landscape elements/aesthetic/-perceptual aspects; few landscape detractors; landscape

¹ Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013) Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition Page 158.

Category	Landscape Receptor Value Criteria	Landscape Susceptibility to Change Criteria
	characteristics; few landscape detractors.	receptors in fair condition. Landscape is able to accommodate some change as a result.
Low	Undesignated countryside and landscape features; few distinctive landscape characteristics; presence of landscape detractors.	Few distinctive landscape elements/aesthetic/-perceptual aspects; presence of landscape detractors; landscape receptors in poor condition. Landscape is able to accommodate large amounts of change without changing these characteristics fundamentally.
Very Low	Undesignated countryside and landscape features; absence of distinctive landscape characteristics; despoiled/-degraded by the presence of many landscape detractors.	Absence of distinctive landscape elements/-aesthetic/perceptual aspects; presence of many landscape detractors; landscape receptors in very poor condition. As such landscape is able to accommodate considerable change.

11.47 For visual receptors, judgements of susceptibility and value are more closely interlinked considerations. For example, the most valued views are those that people go and visit because of the available view – and it is at those viewpoints that their expectations will be highest and thus most susceptible to change.

11.48 For this reason, the sensitivity of visual receptors is rated in a single step process, which combines both susceptibility and value as indicated by the criteria in **Table 11.3**.

Table 11.3 – Visual Sensitivity

Category	Visual Receptor Criteria
Very High	Designed (i.e. deliberately created) view (which may be to or from a recognised heritage asset or other important viewpoint), or where views of the surroundings are an important contributor to the experience. Key promoted viewpoint e.g. interpretative signs. References in literature and art and/or guidebooks tourist maps. Protected view recognised in planning policy designation. Examples may include views from residential properties, especially from rooms normally occupied in waking or daylight hours; national public rights of way (PRoW) e.g. National Trails and nationally designated countryside/landscape features with public access, which people might visit purely to experience the view; and visitors to heritage assets of national importance.

Category	Visual Receptor Criteria
High	View of clear value but may not be formally recognised e.g. framed view of high scenic value, or destination hill summits. It may also be inferred that the view is likely to have value e.g. to local residents. Examples may include views from recreational receptors where there is some appreciation of the landscape e.g. golf and fishing; local public rights of way, access land and National Trust land, also panoramic viewpoints marked on maps; road routes promoted in tourist guides for their scenic value, plus main roads within nationally important landscapes (e.g. AONBs or National Parks).
Medium	View is not promoted or recorded in any published sources and may be typical of the views experienced from a given receptor. Examples may include people engaged in outdoor sport other than appreciation of the landscape e.g. football and rugby, or road users on minor routes passing through rural or scenic areas.
Low	View of clearly lesser value than similar views experienced from nearby visual receptors that may be more accessible. Examples may include road users on main road routes (motorways/A roads) and users of rail routes or people at their place of work (where the place of work may be in a sensitive location). Also views from commercial buildings where views of the surrounding landscape may have some limited importance.
Very Low	View affected by many landscape detractors and unlikely to be valued. Examples may include people at their place of work, indoor recreational or leisure facilities or other locations where views of the wider landscape have little or no importance.

- 11.49 The Tables above offer a template for assessing overall sensitivity of any landscape or visual receptor, as determined by combining judgements of their susceptibility to the type of change or development proposed and the value attached to the landscape or view as set out at paragraph 5.38 of GLVIA 3rd Edition (2013).
- 11.50 However, the narrative in this report may demonstrate that assessment of overall sensitivity can change on a case-by-case basis. For example, a high susceptibility to change and a low value may result in a medium overall sensitivity, unless it can be demonstrated that the receptor is unusually susceptible or is in some particular way more valuable. A degree of professional judgement applies in arriving at the overall sensitivity for both landscape and visual receptors.

Magnitude of Change

- 11.51 The magnitude of any landscape or visual change is determined through a range of considerations particular to each receptor. The three attributes considered in defining the magnitude are:

Scale of change;

Geographical extent; and

Duration and reversibility/proportion.

- 11.52 Receptor locations from which views of the Proposed Development are not likely to occur will receive no change and therefore no effect. With reference to the Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) and site survey, the magnitude of change is defined for receptor locations from where visibility of the Proposed Development is predicted to occur.
- 11.53 **Table 11.4** provides an indication of the criteria by which the size/scale of change at a landscape or visual receptor is judged within this assessment.

Table 11.4 – Scale of Change Criteria

Category	Landscape Receptor Criteria	Visual Receptor Criteria
Very High	Total loss of or major alteration to key elements/features/characteristics of the baseline condition. Addition of elements which strongly conflict with the key characteristics of the existing landscape.	There would be a substantial change to the baseline, with the Proposed Development creating a new focus and having a defining influence on the view.
High	Notable loss of or alteration to one or more key elements/features/-characteristics of the baseline condition. Addition of elements that are prominent and may conflict with the key characteristics of the existing landscape.	The Proposed Development will be clearly noticeable and the view would be fundamentally altered by its presence.
Medium	Partial loss or alteration to one or more key elements/features/characteristics of the baseline condition. Addition of elements that may be evident but do not necessarily conflict with the key characteristics of the existing landscape.	The Proposed Development will form a new and recognisable element within the view, which is likely to be recognised by the receptor.
Low	Minor loss or alteration to one or more key elements/features/characteristics of the baseline landscape. Addition of elements that may not be uncharacteristic within the existing landscape.	The Proposed Development will form a minor constituent of the view being partially visible or at sufficient distance to be a small component.

Category	Landscape Receptor Criteria	Visual Receptor Criteria
Very Low	Barely discernible loss or alteration to key elements/features/characteristics of the baseline landscape. Addition of elements not uncharacteristic within the existing landscape.	The Proposed Development will form a barely noticeable component of the view, and the view whilst slightly altered would be similar to the baseline situation.

11.54 **Table 11.5** provides an indication of the criteria by which the geographical extent of the area will be affected within this assessment.

Table 11.5 – Geographic Extent

Landscape Receptors	Visual Receptor Criteria
Large scale effects influencing several landscape types or character areas.	Direct views at close range with changes over a wide horizontal and vertical extent.
Effects at the scale of the landscape type or character areas within which the proposal lies.	Direct or oblique views at close range with changes over a notable horizontal and/or vertical extent.
Effects within the immediate landscape setting of the site.	Direct or oblique views at medium range with a moderate horizontal and/or vertical extent of the view affected.
Effects at the site level (within the Application Site itself).	Oblique views at medium or long range with a small horizontal/vertical extent of the view affected.
Effects only experienced on parts of the site at a much localised level.	Long range views with a negligible part of the view affected.

11.55 The third, and final, factor in determining the predicted magnitude of change is a combination of duration and reversibility. Duration and reversibility are separate but linked considerations. Duration is judged according to the defined terms set out below, whereas reversibility is a judgement about the prospects and practicality of the particular effect being reversed in, for example, a generation. The categories used in this assessment are set out below:

Duration

Long term (20 years+);

Medium to long term (10 to 20 years);

Medium term (5 to 10 years);

Short term (1 year to 5 years); and

Temporary (less than 12 months).

Reversibility

11.56 Reversibility is defined as follows:

Permanent with unlikely restoration to original state, e.g. major road corridor, power station, urban extension etc.;

Permanent with possible conversion to original state, e.g. agricultural buildings, retail units;

Partially reversible to a different state, e.g. mineral workings;

Reversible after decommissioning to a similar original state, e.g. wind energy development;
or

Quickly reversible, e.g. temporary structures.

Assessment of Significance

11.57 The purpose of the EIA process is to identify the likely significant environmental effects (both beneficial and adverse) arising from development proposals. Schedule 4 to the EIA Regulations specifies the information to be included in all ES, which should include a description of:

“...the likely significant effects on the factors specified in regulation 4(2) should

cover the direct effects and any indirect, secondary, cumulative, transboundary, short-term, medium-term and long-term, permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects of the development. ...”

11.58 In order to consider the likely level of any effect, the sensitivity of each receptor is combined with the predicted magnitude of change, with reference also made to the geographical extent, duration and reversibility of the effect within the assessment.

11.59 Having taken such a wide range of factors into account when assessing sensitivity and magnitude at each receptor, the level of effect can be derived by combining the sensitivity and magnitude in accordance with the matrix in **Table 11.6**.

Table 11.6 – Level of Effects Matrix

Overall Sensitivity	Overall Magnitude of Change				
	Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low
Very High	Substantial	Major	Major/- Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/- Minor
High	Major	Major/- Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/ Minor	Minor
Medium	Major/- Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/- Minor	Minor	Minor/- Negligible
Low	Moderate	Moderate/- Minor	Minor	Minor/- Negligible	Negligible
Very Low	Moderate/- Minor	Minor	Minor/- Negligible	Negligible	Negligible/- None

11.60 Each effect is described and evaluated individually through the combination of all of the relevant factors and assessed as either significant or not significant. Landscape and visual effects identified at substantial, major, major/moderate or moderate levels (bold type within the matrix above) are generally considered to be significant, whereas those effects assessed at moderate/minor, minor, minor/negligible or negligible level are considered to be not significant.

11.61 In certain cases, where additional factors may arise, a further degree of professional judgement may be applied when determining whether the overall change in the view will be significant or not and, where this occurs, this is explained in the assessment.

Definition of Effects

11.62 Taking into account the levels of effect described above, and with regard to effects being either adverse or beneficial, **Table 11.7** represents a description of the range of effects likely at any one receptor.

Table 11.7 – Definition of Effects Matrix

Effect	Definition
Substantial	Changes resulting in a complete variance with the landscape resource or visual amenity.
Major	Changes resulting in a fundamental change to the landscape resource or visual amenity.
Moderate	A material but non-fundamental change to the landscape resource or visual amenity.
Minor	A slight but non-material change to the landscape resource or visual amenity.

Negligible	A detectable but non-material change to the landscape resource of visual amenity.
None	No detectable change to the landscape resource or visual amenity.

Nature of Effect

- 11.63 Effects can be adverse (negative), beneficial (positive) or neutral. The landscape effects will be considered against the landscape baseline, which includes published landscape strategies or policies if they exist. Changes involving the addition of large scale man-made objects are typically considered to be adverse, as they are not usually actively promoted as part of published landscape strategies. Accordingly, landscape effects as a result of these aspects of the Proposed Development will be assumed to be adverse, unless otherwise stated within the assessment.
- 11.64 Visual effects are more subjective as people's perception of development varies through the spectrum of negative, neutral and positive attitudes. In the assessment of visual effects, the assessor will exercise objective professional judgement in assessing the level of effects and, unless otherwise stated, will assume that all effects are adverse, thus representing the worst-case scenario.

Cumulative Effects

- 11.65 Cumulative effects generally occur where there may be combined or sequential visibility of two or more developments of the same type and scale, or where the consideration of other schemes would increase an effect identified. Where other schemes are relevant, these are considered in conjunction with the proposed scheme. Of the nine site names / application references outlined in **Table 4.3** of this ES, only three are of relevance to the South Wokingham SDL Extension and this ES Chapter (i.e. application references: 191068, 190914 and 211033). This is due to the location and lack of intervisibility between the South Wokingham SDL Extension and remaining development proposals. In which, it is not anticipated that any cumulative or combined effects on sensitive receptors would occur.

Field Surveys

- 11.66 A number of field assessments of local site circumstances, including photographic survey of the character and visual context of the Application Site and its surroundings have been undertaken between September 2022 and January 2024 in order to gather robust baseline information. Field assessments were undertaken in near-winter conditions and have, therefore, been undertaken, as far as is practicable, in accordance with best practice guidance, which states that such assessments should be undertaken when the leaves are absent from the majority of trees/vegetation and visibility is at its greatest.
- 11.67 These field-based assessments were undertaken by a Landscape Architect, with appropriate experience of the relevant guidance.

Limitations and Assumptions

- 11.68 Baseline conditions have been established using existing assessments, available documentation and field assessment; it is important to note that this information may change before or during the construction and operation of the Proposed Development.
- 11.69 Within reasonable limits, the assessment is undertaken in consideration of the 'worst case' scenario for the development, i.e. those potential outcomes, situations or locations that would result in the most profound effect on landscape and visual receptors. It therefore identifies the greatest degree of change likely to accrue and may be subject to mitigating factors or alternative conditions that might reduce those effects. For example, visual effects are considered in both summer and winter contexts, although the level of effect is expressed for winter landscape conditions when trees are bare of leaf cover and the visibility of development is at its greatest. Where this is the case, the assessment identifies alternative conditions or further mitigation that might result in impacts being less pronounced.
- 11.70 The assessment of potentially significant effects applies a pre-determined methodology to arrive at its conclusions (**Appendix 11.1** and **11.2, Annex EDP 2**). This procedure brings a degree of objective, procedural rigour into what otherwise might be judged to be 'personal opinion'. Certainly, professional judgement still plays its part, but the purpose of adopting a methodology is to make the process as clear and logical as possible.

Consultations

- 11.71 Consultation with principally involved discussions regarding the selection of representative viewpoints, assessment methodology, photomontage selection, methodology and the landscape response.
- 11.72 During the EIA scoping process, South Wokingham were consulted on the methodology and associated terminology for undertaking the LVIA, representative viewpoint selection. This correspondence included the best practice by which EDP prepares all its assessments.
- 11.73 Furthermore, several workshops focusing on landscape matters have been undertaken as part of the formal pre-application process. These included a session focusing on the impact of the Proposed Development in landscape and visual terms.

Baseline Conditions

- 11.74 A detailed description of the baseline situation at and around the site is set out in **Appendices 11.1** and **11.2**, sections 4 (Landscape Resource) and 5 (Visual Baseline). Provided below is a summary of the baseline for the study area.

Site Description

- 11.75 The site boundary, outlined in red, is shown on **Figure 11.1** – The site is centrally located near Wokingham, whilst the majority of the site lies within Wokingham LPA jurisdiction a small section at the eastern boundary is within Bracknell Forest Council.
- 11.76 The site area comprises c. 64ha of greenfield land set within a mosaic of agricultural field parcels centrally located between Wokingham, Bracknell and Crowthorne. The site is divided

up into multiple field parcels of varying shapes and sizes and is dissected by Easthampstead Road, which runs in a north-west south-east orientation through the site.

- 11.77 Due to the nature of the site, the main area is typical of arable farmland; generally open with landscape features predominately located along field boundaries. The site boundaries are generally well vegetated with pockets of woodland, mature hedgerow and hedgerow trees. The site also includes some existing development in the form of farmsteads, residential properties, agricultural and commercial buildings.
- 11.78 A review of Soils (www.landis.org.uk), illustrated on **Figure 11.2** finds the site bridges two soil typologies: Soilscape 18 covering much as of the land to the north of Easthampstead Road, which is seasonally wet, slightly acid loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage; and Soilscape 6 to the south, a slightly acid loamy soil that is free draining.
- 11.79 The geology of the site (illustrated on **Figure 3**) is recorded as comprising bedrock of the London Clay Formation, a sedimentary bedrock of clay, silt and sand, formed between 56 and 47.8 million years ago during the Paleogene Period (BGS 2021). Superficially the site includes at least three distinct areas comprising:
- The northern part of the site records superficial River Terrace deposits of sand and gravel;
- Across the centre of the site, and following the course of the wet ditch, superficial sedimentary Head deposits of clay, silt and sand; and
- On the southern fields of the site no superficial deposits are recorded
- 11.80 The topographical context of the site and surrounds is illustrated on **Figure 4**, the site is generally flat with a gentle fall inwards towards a central wet ditch, which runs east to west through the centre of the site. Across the entire site, there is a c.15m difference in levels from approximately 65m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) to the north and south and 50m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) along the wet ditch which transects the site.
- 11.81 Within the site and the study area, the following heritage assets are components of the contemporary landscape:
- Three Grade II listed buildings form a group at Pearce's Farm located within the north-western part of the site;
- Two Grade II listed buildings and locally listed buildings at Sutton Court Farm;
- Lock's Farm, located to the north of the site; and
- The Grade II, Easthampstead Park located to the east of the site.
- 11.82 With the above points in mind, these heritage assets have been subject to further consideration within Chapter 12 of this statement.
- 11.83 Ecological matters are addressed elsewhere in this statement, however, the following matters are relevant to the scope of this LVIA:

The site contains and is adjacent to areas of woodland classified within the Priority Habitat Inventory as 'Deciduous Woodland' (including some classified as ancient woodland);

The site itself contains largely low value ecology habitats, namely agricultural cropland and modified grassland; and

The network of hedgerows, ditches, lines of trees and small areas of grassland are of higher ecology value.

- 11.84 Detailed Arboricultural Assessments have been prepared for the site (**Appendices 11.3, 11.4 and 11.5**). The following matters are relevant to the scope of this LVIA:
- 11.85 The site contains several TPOs located along the northern, eastern and western boundaries, including:
- TPO-1377-2011 (W0, W1, W2);
 - TPO-1377-2011 (T1, T2, T3, T4);
 - TPO-1377-2011 (G1); and
 - TPO-1376-2011 (T7).
- 11.86 A review of online mapping representing the definitive map reveals the following PRoW and open access land within the study area. PRoW are shown on **Figure 11.6**. As the site shares its eastern edge with the borough boundary, a separate review of online mapping representing the definitive map for Bracknell Forest has been carried out.
- 11.87 As previously noted, the site and the immediate surroundings within the Wokingham District Council jurisdiction are limited to the north, south and west and are contained by an urban arc extending from Wokingham to Crowthorne. Within this localised area, there is a moderate number of PRoWs, which when coupled with the local road network, provide a well-connected network linking the surrounding settlements.
- 11.88 The most relevant route is PRoW WOKW BW 30 I, as byway running along Holme Grange Lane in a north-east – south-west orientation. In a north-eastern direction, the route passes across the site, runs along part of the northern boundary, and continues to the north terminating at Waterloo Road.
- 11.89 PRoW WOKW FP 6/I is a footpath located to the south-east extending across the site from Easthampstead Road to the eastern boundary at Old Wokingham Road. A further two PRoWs (WOKW FP 7/I and WOKW FP 8/I) also cross the site from Easthampstead Road but in a south-westerly direction. The most southernly of the two routes is WOKW FP 8 I, a footpath that connects to Honey Hill, comprising mostly cross field routes as well as part of a private road. PRoW WOKW FP 7/I extends in a more easterly direction, connecting to Honey Hill via Redlake Drive and a private track.
- 11.90 Located c.340m to the north-west and running parallel to Holme Grange Lane is PRoW WOKW FP 5/I, a footpath running partly along the north-western boundary. The route passes

through an arable field and farmstead and then connects to Waterloo Road. A review of online mapping suggests recent works have been undertaken along Waterloo Road that would have impacted the route. Where the route runs in close proximity to the site boundary, a well-treed field boundary and small proportion of the host field provides clear separation.

- 11.91 Further to the south is the combined byways of WOKW BW 28/IV and WOKW BW 28/II that are aligned with Hatch Ride and an unnamed track respectively. These routes provide a strategic connection between Crowthorne and Wokingham and onto the wider rights of way network. Extending to the north is a collection of routes, WOKW FP 16/II, WOKW FP 12/I, WOKW FP 10/I and WOKW FP 10/II which provides a pedestrian connection to Wokingham, from which, two footpaths extend to the east towards the site. The site is therefore afforded sustainable routes into the settlement.
- 11.92 Beyond this, there are three additional routes with Gorrick Plantation. The remaining PRoWs are located within the urban context surrounding the site and whilst providing a level of connectivity are unlikely to be of relevance.
- 11.93 To the east of the site, with the jurisdiction of Bracknell Forest District Council, there are three PRoWs within the local vicinity. PRoW FP15 is orientated in a north-east to south west direction connecting Old Wokingham Road to Jannetts Hill, and areas of open space in Bracknell. The footpath passes through the Grade II Easthampstead Park, a historic house and ground that is now used as a conference/hotel complex. To the north of Easthampstead Park Road, the route is orientated to the south before then north-east into PRoW FP18.
- 11.94 Within the context of the site (South Wokingham SDL), there are a number of both permitted and 'in planning' proposals which would serve to increase the quantity and quality of walking and cycling routes, alongside informal active travel routes.

Landscape Character

- 11.95 At the national level, the character of England has been described and classified in the National Character Area (NCA) profiles published by Natural England. The site and its surroundings fall within NCA 129 'Thames Basin Heath'.
- 11.96 Given the size of the site and scale of likely effects, while such descriptions at the national level provide a broad understanding that informs this study, the description of landscape character undertaken at the sub-regional level is considered more relevant in establishing the landscape resource baseline. Of much greater use are the more localised, district and county-specific assessments described below.
- 11.97 A county wide, Berkshire Landscape Character Area Statements was published in 2003, within which the site is located within Landscape Type K: Settled Farmlands. Type K is described as being a transitional landscape grading from the Open Clay Lowlands to the north and the Forested Sands to the south/east.
- 11.98 At a local level, as illustrated on **Figure 11.7**, the site falls across two Landscape Character Areas, LCA N1 Holme Green Pastoral Sandy Lowland and LCA M1 Finchampstead Forested and Settled Sands. The majority of the site falls within area N1 This LCA "is characterised by

its predominantly pastoral land use with smaller areas of arable land. The landscape here is gently undulating, opening out into flatter areas east of Holme Green and is set within a partially wooded context created by the Settled and Forested Sands to the south and the urban areas of Wokingham in the north".

- 11.99 The assessment acknowledges that whilst sparsely settled, the site is influenced by the settlement edge of Wokingham.
- 11.100 The assessment judges an overall moderate condition which relates to the good condition of some elements set against the poor survival of historic patterns and habitats and the loss of field boundaries and untidy appearance of temporary structures/features within fields (such as caravans) leading to a sense of neglect.
- 11.101 LCA M1 Finchampstead Forested and Settled Sands "...is characterised by its densely wooded context, which creates a strong sense of enclosure throughout. The woodland character is varied with semi-natural areas and large areas of forestry plantations, which are tolerant of the underlying sandy and acidic soil conditions".
- 11.102 The assessment acknowledges that whilst accessible (for recreation), the landscape in this part of the site exhibits a "...distinctly remote character".
- 11.103 In summary, the site conforms to a limited degree with the prevailing LCA descriptions.
- 11.104 The overall character of the site is considered to be urban/rural edge, and therefore this assessment considers the local landscape character to be of medium value and able to accommodate some change as a result.

Landscape Designations

- 11.105 Landscape-related designations and policy considerations within 2km of the site are shown on **Figure 11.5**.

The site does not lie within a national or locally designated landscape; and

The emerging local plan proposals seek to designate areas of 'Valued Landscape', none of which apply to the site or immediate surrounds.

- 11.106 As noted, above, several boundary trees, hedgerows or plantation belts within the site are protected by TPO. Trees, hedgerows and plantation belts have the potential to be affected by road access proposals associated with the development of the site. Therefore, the masterplan has sought to protect and retain these features, incorporating them within the strategic landscape proposals for the development where pragmatic.

Visual Resource

- 11.107 The visual appraisal, discussed in more detail at **Appendix 11.1** and **11.2**, and as illustrated on **Figure 11.8** indicates that:

Were the site to be developed, the visual effects of greatest significance are predicted to be limited to changes to views from receptors immediately adjacent to, or within the site area itself;

In the vast majority of instances, such views are already affected, by a number of detractors including visible built elements of the urban area (housing and large-scale commercial/employment buildings), and associated features such as overhead powerlines/road infrastructure; and

The site is not readily visible from urban areas of Wokingham to the north, with the exception of those areas that immediately adjoin the site's western and southern boundary as part of the SDL.

Summary

11.108 The sites location and context at the southern fringe of Wokingham can be summarised as follows:

To the north, the site is bounded by the urban edge of Wokingham, which constitutes a variety of uses and exerts a strong influence over the site;

The site itself does not form part of the continuous open landscape and transition elsewhere. The site is well contained, and there is a strong relationship between the landscape fabric/land use, which together dictate differing perceptions of the southern limits of the Wokingham. The majority of the site will be set against a backdrop of urban development, which when viewed from key vantage points, highlight the role of woodland structure in integrating existing urban areas into the landscape; and

The existing trees and woodland blocks surrounding the site provide the main bulk of the existing Green Infrastructure, with the intra-site hedgerows and trees providing connectivity between the vegetated site boundaries. These mature and maturing landscape features serve to enclose the site and restrict views of the site to the local area. A combination of local topography combined with the presence of maturing landscape features both within the site and its immediate context provide an enclosed site character. This is predominantly experienced through a lack of longer distance outward views and the perceptual presence of maturing landscape features.

Potential Effects

Assessment of Effects (Construction Phase)

11.109 As a consequence of the wholesale change in land use, coupled with the limited time for growth and maturation of new landscape planting, construction activities will result in adverse landscape and visual effects on the fabric and character of the landscape, and on visual amenity, within a limited local area. Whilst construction activities introduce direct and indirect disturbance to both the fabric of the landscape and the surrounding area, which can be perceived by people living, working or travelling through it, these effects are temporary in nature, and can be partially mitigated.

11.110 Whilst indicative construction methods and timescales are estimated elsewhere in this ES, full details cannot be defined at this stage. The main elements of the construction operations, considered to be of importance to the landscape and visual assessment, are described below.

Construction-related traffic:

This includes vehicle movements associated with the import of building materials, machinery and labour using local roads:

Noise effects have the potential to affect landscape character, visual effects from existing (potentially diverted) rights of way and other routes, and residential amenity; and

Construction activities:

Subject to the preferences of individual contractors, it is expected that generic methods will be employed in the implementation of the scheme. Traditional residential building methods are anticipated, although the periodic use of large cranes and construction platforms (rising above the height of buildings) may be necessary.

- 11.111 Landscape and visual amenity effects resulting from the construction stages are considered to be consistently adverse, as there are few, if any, aspects of the process that could be considered positive in terms of promoted landscape strategies or in visual terms.
- 11.112 These effects will, however, be temporary and consistent with the progression of construction. **Appendix 11.3** (Tables 11.3.1, 11.3.2 and 11.3.3) describes the effects of the construction phase of the Proposed Development on landscape character, visual amenity and residential visual amenity respectively, with these summarised below. Effects on PRoWs, other recreational routes and public highways are described below with reference to the assessed representative viewpoints.

Onsite Landscape Character

- 11.113 Invariably, the development proposals on a 'greenfield' site, and at the scale proposed at the site, will result in the unavoidable loss of open farmland and removal of characteristic landscape features, in particular agricultural land, at a level that materially alters the character of the receiving environment. In essence, there will be a wholesale change at this stage from an operational agricultural landscape to a construction site.
- 11.114 As detailed in **Appendix 11.3**, this change will result in a very high magnitude of change in a medium sensitivity landscape, which will generate a major/moderate, short term, reversible and locally significant adverse effect. This is not the effect upon the wider landscape character area, but solely reflective of the site-based change.

Landscape Character Areas

- 11.115 The landscape resource as defined within the Landscape Character Assessment for Wokingham is assessed as being of medium sensitivity.
- 11.116 Construction activities would not directly affect the wider landscape character area (but would indirectly affect it), as the physical effects of construction (i.e. changes to fabric and character) would be contained within the site, as described above. However, indirect, perceptual effects would occur, principally in relation to lighting, noise, vibration and the movement of materials to/from the Proposed Development, generally in close proximity. Generally, noise/vibration effects would be most acutely perceived by residents adjacent to

the site during the early stages of construction, or by those using recreational resources (e.g. PRow) nearby.

- 11.117 The effect upon this 'host' LCA within the wider context, as a result of the construction activities expected to occur, would be minor adverse, short-term and reversible, and not significant. Effects would extend only a limited distance to the south and east of the Application Site in areas that are currently open countryside.
- 11.118 In consideration of non-host landscape character areas, there would be no significant effects during the construction stage.
- 11.119 During construction and demolition, trees to be retained would be protected in accordance with those measures outlined at **Appendix 11.6** and **7**. As a result, whilst some hedgerows and trees would be lost as a result of the Proposed Development, no additional tree stock would be lost due to construction or demolition practices.

Residences and Settlements

- 11.120 By its nature, the urban fringe location of the application site means it is in close proximity to existing settlement, and so the Proposed Development will subsequently generate effects on nearby residences and places of work.
- 11.121 The residential receptors that have the greatest potential to be affected by the Proposed Development are set out in **Appendix 11.1** and **11.2** (see also **Figure 11.4**); the effects on the residential amenity of these receptors during construction phases would be as described in **Appendix 11.3**.
- 11.122 The assessment shows that, during the construction phases, there would be significant adverse effects on those residences that lie adjacent, or in close proximity, to the site.
- 11.123 The effect on visual amenity of nearby residences varies between moderate and major adverse and would be significant. The worst of the effects during construction (i.e. the movement and activity of construction vehicles and operations) would be short term in duration, reversible and local. These effects would be short-term on the basis that in any one location the construction would be apparent (in the worst case, i.e. close range) for less than 5 years.

Public Rights of Way

- 11.124 As shown on **Figure 11.8**, there are a number of views from public rights of way on the site, and the immediate context. There are a number of public rights of way in the rural landscape to the south and west of the site, these are represented by **Photoviewpoints 1, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13** and **17**. In instances where the receptors is immediately on or adjacent to the site there would be a worst case major/moderate or major adverse effect at a significant level.

Roads

- 11.125 Those local road network receptors that have the greatest potential to be affected by the Proposed Development are set out in **Appendix 11.1** and **2**, whilst the effects on the visual

amenity of these receptors during construction phases would be as described in **Appendix 11.4** through the assessment of representative viewpoints.

- 11.126 The assessment has shown that, during the construction phase, there would be (worst case) major/moderate (significant) level adverse effects on the local road network, but only in close proximity to the site, and specifically where routes are contiguous with, or in very close proximity to the site boundary, such as is shown at **Photoviewpoints 6, 7 and 8** (medium sensitivity and very high magnitude and major/moderate effect). The changes would result from a revision from open agricultural land to a landscape characterised by construction activities and operations. Effects would be major/moderate and adverse in nature, short-medium term and local. Whilst most effects will be short term, there may be instances for road users where access points will be used throughout the construction period.
- 11.127 Other routes, as represented by **Photoviewpoints 3 and 18** will have either a not significant (adverse) effect or a moderate (adverse) effect.

Mitigation during Construction

- 11.128 The hierarchical approach towards mitigation (prevent, reduce, offset) has been to avoid, where possible, any effects through the overall design of the Proposed Development, the disposition of its elements (prevent), and, subsequently through careful siting of the different elements of the Proposed Development and its required infrastructure (reduce) as described in Chapter 3 of this ES.
- 11.129 Embedded mitigation provides a form of preventative mitigation, and as discussed above, is that which has been considered as an integral part of the overall design and locational strategy for the Proposed Development. It is not an 'add-on' measure to ameliorate significant environmental effects, but part of the positive and pro-active approach whereby mitigation has been assessed and considered at all stages of the project to prevent or reduce the occurrence of potentially significant environmental effects.
- 11.130 The Proposed Development has been conceived and designed with reference to published Landscape Character Assessments and the Landscape Masterplan (**Figure 11.10**) for the Proposed Development, as well as site-specific advice regarding landscape and visual matters, thus ensuring mitigation proposed is in line with Local Authority policy, guidance and strategy.
- 11.131 The principal element of the mitigation to address landscape and visual effects will be to secure conditions that ensure the delivery of appropriate controls on parameters and detailed design at the Reserved Matters stage.
- 11.132 Those mitigation measures pertinent to landscape and visual matters are detailed with reference to the different stages of the Proposed Development below.

Demolition and Construction

- 11.133 The following measures should be implemented during the construction phase of the Proposed Development:

The adoption of an approved Construction and Environment Management Plan including mitigation designed to avoid significant ecological effects (see Chapter 13 Ecology and Nature Conservation), including those on key landscape features;

The adoption of an approved Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) incorporating best practice guidance set out in British Standard 5837: '2012 Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction' will ensure retained trees and other vegetation is not adversely affected during the construction process. Further guidance pertaining to arboricultural matters is contained within **Appendix 11.6** and **11.7** of this document;

The use of visual screening, such as hoardings for more sensitive visual receptors in proximity to the Application Site, including residential receptors that have the greatest potential to be affected by the Proposed Development, as set out in **Appendix 11.1** and **2**;

Existing residents that live adjacent to the Application Site would be more sensitive to construction lighting due to the proximity, direction and type of receptor. Mitigation measures for construction lighting are likely to include directional fittings and restricted hours of operation; and

For reasons of public safety, any informal use of the site for dog walking, etc. should be established, and where evident, would need to be prevented during the construction phase of the development. This would be achieved using protective fencing.

Summary of Effects (Construction Phase)

11.134 Generally, the landscape and visual effects during the construction phases of the Proposed Development would be difficult to mitigate due to the nature of these operations. However, as described above, the adoption of approved best practice construction methods will aid in reducing the perception of construction activities for those receptors most likely to be affected.

11.135 Notwithstanding the adoption of these measures, and whilst the significance of the effect at some receptors would reduce to a limited degree, at no receptor that would experience a significant unmitigated effect would mitigation reduce the effect to a non-significant level.

11.136 The critical issue in considering construction effects is their temporary nature, and thus the short time period for which landscape and visual amenities would be affected to a significant degree.

11.137 To summarise, residual significant effects would apply to the following receptors during the construction stage of the project:

Landscape character and fabric within the site;

A number of the residences surrounding the site;

A number of roads in close proximity to the site; and

A number of the public rights of way and roads and publicly accessible locations within the immediate site surrounds.

Table 11.8 – Predicted Construction Phase Effects

Receptor	Predicted Significance of Effect
Landscape Character Assessment for South Wokingham (2004)	
Landscape Character and Fabric of the Application Site (Direct Effects)	Major/ moderate Adverse Temporary Local Significant
Landscape Character Area 'LCA N1 Holme Green Pastoral Sandy Lowland'	Minor Adverse Temporary Regional Not Significant
Landscape Character Area 'LCA M1 Finchampstead Forested and Settled Sands'	Minor Adverse Temporary Regional Not Significant
Photoviewpoint 1:	Major Adverse Temporary Local Significant
Photoviewpoint 2:	Major Adverse Temporary Local Significant
Photoviewpoint 3:	Minor Adverse Temporary Local Not Significant
Photoviewpoint 4:	Major/Moderate Adverse Temporary Local Significant

Receptor	Predicted Significance of Effect
Photoviewpoint 5:	Major/Moderate Adverse Temporary Local Significant
Photoviewpoint 6:	Major/Moderate Adverse Temporary Local Significant
Photoviewpoint 7:	Major/Moderate Adverse Temporary Local Significant
Photoviewpoint 8:	Major/moderate Adverse Temporary Local Significant
Photoviewpoint 9:	Major/moderate Adverse Temporary Local Significant
Photoviewpoint 10:	Major/moderate Adverse Temporary Local Significant
Photoviewpoint 11:	Major/moderate Adverse Temporary Local Significant
Photoviewpoint 12:	Moderate Adverse Temporary Local Significant

Receptor	Predicted Significance of Effect
Photoviewpoint 13:	Moderate Adverse Temporary Local Significant
Photoviewpoint 14:	Moderate Adverse Temporary Local Significant
Photoviewpoint 15:	Moderate/Minor Adverse Temporary Local Not Significant
Photoviewpoint 16:	Major/moderate Adverse Temporary Local Significant
Photoviewpoint 17:	Moderate Adverse Temporary Local Significant
Photoviewpoint 18:	Moderate Adverse Temporary Local Significant

Assessment of Effects (Operational Phase)

11.138 The following is an assessment of the post-completion (i.e. at Year 1 before the full effects of mitigation measures are realised) on the landscape resource, visual effects are considered separately below. This section describes the anticipated effects of the Proposed Development during its operational lifetime and assesses the significance of those effects in landscape and visual amenity terms.

11.139 In practical terms, the 'operational lifetime' of the Proposed Development is measured in decades, as it will result in a permanent change to the character of the Application Site.

Given that the Proposed Development includes landscape proposals that will take time to mature, and that all new development can seem 'raw' until it has 'settled' into its landscape context, the assessment of operational effects for specific areas and views will consider the effects at two distinct points in time:

At the completion of the Proposed Development (referred to here as Year 1); and

15 years after completion of the Proposed Development (such that mitigation planting may have matured, and materials weathered).

- 11.140 It is normally the case that initial (Year 1) effects will be more considerable than those at Year 15 due to the limited initial effect of the strategic landscape proposals incorporated into the Proposed Development during the design process. In combination with the phasing described in earlier sections of this ES, by Year 15 substantial growth should have occurred and these features should be fulfilling their roles more effectively. Furthermore, enhanced mitigation should be achieved in future years as trees, in particular, reach mature size. As a general rule of thumb, vegetation growth of around 300mm per annum can be expected in the early years of establishment, realising upwards of 3-4m of growth after 15 years.

On-site Landscape Character

- 11.141 Invariably, a development on a 'greenfield' site, and at the scale proposed, will result in the unavoidable loss of open farmland and necessary removal of some characteristic landscape features, in particular some hedgerows and/or hedgerow trees in order to create access into the site, or to allow for development of built form and infrastructure, at a level that has the potential to materially alter the character of the receiving environment. There will also be some level changes to allow for the Sustainable Drainage Scheme as described in Chapter 9 of this ES.
- 11.142 However, in the case of this site, few existing landscape features will be affected by the proposed development; indeed, the potential exists to deliver a net gain in the number of trees, and the quality of hedgerows, although at Year 1 these would not have achieved their full potential value.
- 11.143 Effects on the landscape character at Year 1 post-completion of the Proposed Development would be as described in **Appendix 11.1** and **11.2** with reference to **Appendix 11.3** and **Figure 10.8**.
- 11.144 The assessment shows that, at Year 1, there would be major/moderate (significant) adverse, permanent effects across the Application Site, arising from a medium sensitivity and very high magnitude. However, the effects would reduce very rapidly with distance and represent a small change to the setting of limited parts of the wider LCA context (indirect effects as described below).

Landscape Character Areas

- 11.145 The landscape character areas potentially indirectly affected include 'LCA N1 Holme Green Pastoral Sandy Lowland' and 'LCA M1 Finchampstead Forested and Settled Sands' (as defined within the LCA 2004).

- 11.146 The Proposed Development would inevitably extend the settlement of Wokingham into the agricultural landscape to the south of the city, and also along the main route of approach from settlements in Bracknell Forest. This would tend to increase the perception of 'urban character', but the masterplan has been carefully conceived, as have the proposed landscape mitigation measures, to ensure the impacts are moderated, and retained as localised impacts.
- 11.147 Whilst the Proposed Development will result in some indirect change to the perception of the LCA, the extent of change, both in terms of the perceived effects and the extent of the LCA indirectly affected, the overall effects on the host landscape character will be minor to moderate/minor adverse (not significant), and will decrease rapidly with distance from the Application Site boundary, and where intervening development, vegetation and landform provide screening.
- 11.148 This limitation in effects results from the changes experienced within the Application Site boundary being limited geographically (beyond the site boundary) by the existing and proposed landscape mitigation, as well as the proposed layout, which attempts through good design to achieve a successful integration with the existing settlement pattern and the wider woodland landscape. Essentially, the Proposed Development will only exert a limited influence on the wider LCA when considered as a whole.

Residences and Settlements

- 11.149 The Parameter Plans indicate that the Proposed Development will respect the privacy and visual amenity of existing private residences along the eastern boundary of the site by the incorporation of a wide vegetative buffer, generous separation distances and a restriction on building heights, achieving a balance between development density and minimising impacts on neighbouring residential areas.
- 11.150 The assessment shows that, following completion, at Year 1 there would remain significant adverse, permanent effects on some residences that lie adjacent or in close proximity to the site. The effect upon the visual amenity of nearby residences varies between major (significant) and minor (not significant). Effects on more distant residences would remain generally not significant. Sensitivity ranges between high and very high, with magnitude of change ranging between high and very high also, with this being a worst-case level for the groups of receptors assessed. Such effects relate only to the extent of visual change and are inevitable for receptors with high sensitivity; such effects are not necessarily therefore material with the resulting effect being moderate or moderate/minor.

Public Rights of Way and Long Distance Recreational Routes

- 11.151 As shown on **Figure 11.8**, there are views from public rights of way on the site, and, in the immediate context. There are a number of public rights of way in the rural landscape to the south of the site.

Mitigation (During Operation)

- 11.152 Mitigation during the operational (post-completion) stage comprises embedded (avoidance) mitigation and additional mitigation proposed to reduce the significance of likely effects

(reduction mitigation). These different mitigation measures are discussed below with reference to the Proposed Development.

Embedded Mitigation

- 11.153 The site currently comprises a series of medium to large scale irregular agricultural fields enclosed by a network of hedgerows and hedgerow trees, tree belts and woodland, and is influenced across its northern parts by the existing settlement edge of Wokingham.
- 11.154 Despite the unavoidable loss of some open farmland, the current condition and key characteristics of the landscape have been considered throughout the design of the Proposed Development and integrated into the layout where possible. For example, a hierarchy of hedgerows retained with preference for those of greatest value and connectivity, and woodland blocks are retained and incorporated into the wider landscape Infrastructure for the site.
- 11.155 The careful design of the Proposed Development and its interface with areas to the north, south and east, particularly in relation to views from the settlement approach, also provides for a distinct and legible urban edge, which has been designed to best use the land within the site, especially in relation to areas of open space.
- 11.156 Building heights in the central, have been considered such that the potential for impacts upon the sensitive receptors is reduced, and the development has a more sensitive approach to integrating with existing residential areas.
- 11.157 In terms of the arboricultural resource, the detailed masterplanning of the development layout has ensured that, where possible, trees and hedgerow loss would be minimised through integration of these features into the residential and/or employment areas and the areas of open space. The Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA – **Appendix 11.6** and **11.7**) details the value of the tree stock on site and makes recommendations for future retention.

Additional Mitigation

- 11.158 The landscape and visual mitigation strategy is a key, and fully-integrated, component of the Proposed Development. As illustrated on the parameter plans, the Proposed Development incorporates public open space (both formal and informal) and other landscape enhancements, which include:
- An over-arching landscape strategy for the site;
 - The provision of green spaces throughout the site, offering recreational value and a community resource; and
 - The creation of surface water attenuation and detention features, incorporated within the areas of open space.
- 11.159 In addition to these site-wide measures, along the eastern and southern site boundaries (i.e. adjacent to the open countryside), a large area of SANG will be managed and reinforced to contain the development, providing site security, screening and habitat enhancement, along

with aiding the integration of the development into its landscape context when viewed from further afield.

- 11.160 As part of the wider Green Infrastructure, as illustrated within the Green Infrastructure Parameter Plan, public open spaces, both formal and informal, will be designed to provide high quality and traffic free green space, which satisfies a number of objectives, including:

Public open space for formal and informal use;

Amenity and recreational space, including Local Equipped Areas of Play (LEAP) and Neighbourhood Equipped Areas of Play (NEAP);

Community uses, such as the provision of orchards and allotments;

Contribution to green networks and enhance habitat connectivity; and

Facilitated SuDS and connectivity with the existing blue network.

- 11.161 In summary, the landscape elements specific to the detailed design of the proposals include enhancements that would provide:

Visual screening, containment and filtering of the proposed development;

Public and private amenity; and

Ecological value.

Summary of Effects (Operational Phase)

- 11.162 Generally, the landscape and visual effects during the operational phases of the Proposed Development would be difficult to mitigate due to the nature of these operations. However, as described above, the adoption of approved best practice construction methods will aid in reducing the perception of construction activities for those receptors most likely to be affected.

- 11.163 Notwithstanding the adoption of these measures, and whilst the significance of the effect at some receptors would reduce to a limited degree, at no receptor that would experience a significant unmitigated effect would mitigation reduce the effect to a non-significant level.

- 11.164 The critical issue in considering operational effects is that the mitigation strategies are yet to be fully established. To summarise, residual significant effects would apply to the following receptors during the operational stage of the project:

Landscape character and fabric within the site;

A number of the residences surrounding the site;

A number of roads in close proximity to the site; and

A number of the public rights of way and roads and publicly accessible locations within the immediate site surrounds.

Table 11.9 – Predicted Operational Phase Effects

Receptor	Predicted Significance of Effect
Landscape Character Assessment for South Wokingham (2004)	
Landscape Character and Fabric of the Application Site (Direct Effects)	Major/ moderate Adverse Permanent Local Significant
Landscape Character Area 'LCA N1 Holme Green Pastoral Sandy Lowland'	Minor to moderate/minor Adverse Permanent Regional Not Significant
Landscape Character Area 'LCA M1 Finchampstead Forested and Settled Sands'	Minor to moderate/minor Adverse Permanent Regional Not Significant
Photoviewpoint 1:	Major Adverse Permanent Local Significant
Photoviewpoint 2:	Major Adverse Permanent Local Significant
Photoviewpoint 3:	Minor Adverse Permanent Local Not Significant
Photoviewpoint 4:	Major/Moderate Adverse Permanent Local Significant

Receptor	Predicted Significance of Effect
Photoviewpoint 5:	Major/Moderate Adverse Permanent Local Significant
Photoviewpoint 6:	Major/Moderate Adverse Permanent Local Significant
Photoviewpoint 7:	Major/Moderate Adverse Permanent Local Significant
Photoviewpoint 8:	Major/Moderate Adverse Permanent Local Significant
Photoviewpoint 9:	Major/moderate Adverse Permanent Local Significant
Photoviewpoint 10:	Major/moderate Adverse Permanent Local Significant
Photoviewpoint 11:	Major/moderate Adverse Permanent Local Significant
Photoviewpoint 12:	Moderate Adverse Permanent Local Significant

Receptor	Predicted Significance of Effect
Photoviewpoint 13:	Moderate Adverse Permanent Local Significant
Photoviewpoint 14:	Moderate Adverse Permanent Local Significant
Photoviewpoint 15:	Moderate/Minor Adverse Permanent Local Not Significant
Photoviewpoint 16:	Major/moderate Adverse Permanent Local SignificantSignificant
Photoviewpoint 17:	Moderate Adverse Permanent Local Significant
Photoviewpoint 18:	Moderate Adverse Permanent Local Significant

Residual Effects

11.165 The following is an assessment of the residual effects of the Proposed Development following mitigation employed during the construction phase (to reduce the effects of construction activities) and after completion, at Year 15, once embedded mitigation measures have matured and building materials have weathered.

11.166 The Proposed Development has been designed to consider the sensitivity of the landscape and views within and around the Application Site. With the exception of further evolution of the Green Infrastructure Strategy, no further landscape mitigation is proposed subsequent to

the delivery of the Proposed Development. The 'residual' effects of the scheme are considered to be those that persist once the effects of mitigation – be that strategic planting or the softening of the Proposed Development provided by internal planting and areas of open space – have become established. In planning terms, these are the effects to which most 'weight' should be attached, since they represent the long-term effect on the landscape and visual baseline.

- 11.167 The residual effects following the implementation of the mitigation strategies are detailed in **Appendix 11.4** and summarised in **Table 11.10**. Only those residual effects that have reduced and/or ameliorated likely significant effects as described above are discussed.

During Construction

- 11.168 Generally, the landscape and visual effects during the construction phases of the Proposed Development would be difficult to mitigate due to the nature of these operations. However, as described above the adoption of approved best practice construction methods will aid in reducing the perception of construction activities for those receptors most likely to be affected.
- 11.169 Notwithstanding the adoption of these measures, and whilst the significance of the effect at some receptors would reduce to a limited degree, at no receptor that would experience a significant unmitigated effect would mitigation reduce the effect to a non-significant level.
- 11.170 The critical issue in considering construction effects is their temporary nature, and thus the short time period for which landscape and visual amenities would be affected to a significant degree.
- 11.171 To summarise, residual significant effects would apply to the following receptors during the construction stage of the project:

Landscape character and fabric within the site;

A number of the residences surrounding the site; and

A number of the public rights of way and roads surrounding the site.

After Completion

On-Site Landscape Character Identified by EDP

- 11.172 Following completion, and as mitigation measures mature, by Year 15, the magnitude of change would reduce slightly. However, given the degree and permanence of change (from open fields to a residential area), the level of effect would remain major adverse and significant, resulting from a medium sensitivity and a high magnitude of change. However, with time, the development would be perceived as part of the wider suburban margins of Wokingham (to which its use would be consistent), which would result in a further lowering of the level of effect. Over the long term, references to the magnitude of change and levels of effect would become irrelevant, as the development will become perceived as an integral part of Wokingham, rather than a 'new' development.

Landscape Character Areas

- 11.173 Invariably, a mixed-use development on a 'greenfield' site, and at the scale proposed, will result in the unavoidable loss of open farmland and necessary removal of some characteristic landscape features, in particular some hedgerows and/or hedgerow trees in order to create access into the site, or to allow for development of built form and infrastructure, at a level that has the potential to materially alter the character of the receiving environment. However, in the case of this site, few existing landscape features will be affected by the Proposed Development; indeed, there would be a net gain in the number of trees and the quality of hedgerows through the site, and the addition of a large area of open space managed for biodiversity. An assessment of the impact of the development on the sites hedgerows (and linear tree groups) has been undertaken, the findings of which as presented within the biodiversity Chapter of this ES.
- 11.174 The overall effects on the host landscape character would reduce to minor adverse (not significant), resulting from a medium sensitivity and a low magnitude of change, and would decrease rapidly with distance from the Application Site boundary, and where intervening development, vegetation and landform provide screening. Whilst there would remain effects in the long term, it is important to consider that the masterplanning and layout of the development, in accordance with the landscape strategy, would ensure that it would become, and appear, a natural and logical extension to the southern edge of Wokingham. This is as opposed to representing a 'new' development within an undeveloped context. The development would appear rational in a landscape sense, and with good design and appropriate mitigation and management, it would represent a sensitive addition to this part of the town, where the spread of effects, geographically, would be limited.

Designated Landscapes

- 11.175 There would be no effect on any designated landscape.

Arboricultural Resource

- 11.176 The effects on the vegetative fabric of the Application Site would benefit from maturing trees and other 'green' enhancements, culminating in a minor positive or beneficial change from the condition at Year 1.

Residences and Settlements

- 11.177 Following completion, and as mitigation measures mature, by Year 15 the magnitude of change would generally reduce for the majority of residential receptors, reflecting the success of the scheme mitigation, and the early establishment of strategic planting belts through and along the boundaries of the Application Site.
- 11.178 For those instances where the level of effect would reduce, it would still remain significant, with varying degrees of sensitivity and magnitude of change).
- 11.179 Although a (worst case) significant residual effect is predicted for all of the residential areas adjacent to the site, subject to the establishment and maturation of landscape proposals and the general acceptance of new development areas over longer timeframes, none of these

effects are considered such that the Proposed Development will have an overbearing influence on the amenity of the properties.

11.180 Furthermore, it is not all residences that would experience such an effect, but only those where an open view is available, and where existing and proposed vegetation does not form a screen between properties and the Proposed Development. Such instances are very limited, meaning the overall community effect (i.e. considering all of the residences together) would not be at a significant level.

11.181 Finally, the assessment of a significant effect results primarily from the assignment of a very high sensitivity of such receptors, rather than a large degree of predicted change. In a visual amenity sense, this would (if it occurred) be subject to greater material consideration, due to the increased likelihood for an overbearing effect.

Public Rights of Way and Long Distance Recreational Routes

11.182 As shown on **Figure 11.8**, there are views from public rights of way on the site, and, in the immediate context. There are a number of public rights of way in the rural landscape to the surrounding the site.

11.183 In instances where the receptor is not on the site, there would be a moderate/minor adverse effect at a not significant level. In general terms, and in the case of all effects upon all routes, it is true that over the longer term, and as the development becomes an accepted part of the view, references to the magnitude of change and levels of effect would be immaterial as the development becomes part of the local context.

Public Highways

11.184 During the construction phases and early life of the Proposed Development, there would be significant effects on the road network within close proximity to the Application Site, as detailed previously. Generally, by Year 15, the magnitude of change would reduce for road all receptors, and this is discussed with reference to the main road receptors in the study area in **Appendix 11.4**.

11.185 Over the longer term, and as the development becomes an accepted part of the view from these roads, references to the magnitude of change and levels of effect would become irrelevant in the local context.

11.186 For the remaining road network, where screening, the existing character of views and the low sensitivity generally of road receptors plays an important role in limiting effects, there would be no residual significant effects.

Table 11.10 – Predicted Residual Phase Effects

Receptor	Predicted Significance of Effect
Landscape Character Assessment for South Wokingham (2004)	

Receptor	Predicted Significance of Effect
Landscape Character and Fabric of the Application Site (Direct Effects)	Moderate Adverse Permanent Local Significant
Landscape Character Area 'LCA N1 Holme Green Pastoral Sandy Lowland'	Minor Adverse Permanent Regional Not Significant
Landscape Character Area 'LCA M1 Finchampstead Forested and Settled Sands'	Minor Adverse Permanent Regional Not Significant
Photoviewpoint 1:	Moderate Adverse Permanent Local Potentially significant
Photoviewpoint 2:	Moderate Adverse Permanent Local Potentially significant
Photoviewpoint 3:	Minor /Negligible Adverse Temporary Local Not Significant
Photoviewpoint 4:	Moderate/Minor Adverse Temporary Local Potentially Significant
Photoviewpoint 5:	Moderate Permanent Local Potentially significant

Receptor	Predicted Significance of Effect
Photoviewpoint 6:	Moderate Permanent Local Potentially significant
Photoviewpoint 7:	Moderate/Minor Permanent Local Not significant
Photoviewpoint 8:	Moderate Adverse Permanent Local Significant
Photoviewpoint 9:	Moderate/Minor Adverse Permanent Local Not significant
Photoviewpoint 10:	Moderate Adverse Permanent Local Potentially significant
Photoviewpoint 11:	Major/Moderate Adverse Permanent Local Significant
Photoviewpoint 12:	Moderate/Minor Adverse Permanent Local Not significant
Photoviewpoint 13:	Moderate/Minor Adverse Permanent Local Not significant

Receptor	Predicted Significance of Effect
Photoviewpoint 14:	Moderate/Minor Adverse Permanent Local Not significant
Photoviewpoint 15:	Moderate/Minor Adverse Permanent Local Not significant
Photoviewpoint 16:	Moderate Adverse Permanent Local Significant
Photoviewpoint 17:	Moderate/Minor Adverse Permanent Local Not significant
Photoviewpoint 18:	Moderate/Minor Adverse Permanent Local Not significant

In Combination and Cumulative Effects

- 11.187 Cumulative effects can arise from the intervisibility of operational or proposed developments and/or from the combined effects of individual components of the Proposed Development occurring in different locations or over a period of time. The separate effect of such individual components or developments may not be significant, but together they may create a degree of adverse effect on the landscape resource or visual receptors within their combined visual envelopes. In this cumulative assessment, the focus is on the additional effects of the Proposed Development. Baseline schemes may have significant effects in their own right, but significant cumulative effects do not automatically arise following the addition of the Proposed Development; the significance is determined by the degree of change that the Proposed Development would introduce into the theoretical cumulative baseline.
- 11.188 Cumulative effects arise in two principal ways – in combination and sequentially. Combined effects occur when: 1) two or more schemes appear simultaneously in the same arc of view without the need for an observer to turn; and 2) in succession, where it is necessary for the

observer to turn the head to see the various schemes. Sequential effects occur where the observer has to move from one location to another to be able to see the different developments, and typically arise when the observer is travelling through a landscape.

- 11.189 There are three relevant schemes, identified with the potential to result in cumulative landscape and visual effects alongside the Proposed Development (i.e. application references: 191068, 190914 and 211033).
- 11.190 Based upon the distribution of landscape and visual receptors for the Proposed Development, and the likely extent of landscape and visual effects presented within this Chapter, it is only in combination with these schemes that any cumulative effects are likely to occur.

Summary of Cumulative Effects

- 11.191 There would only be limited cumulative construction and operational effects, primarily in relation to public footpaths, these are considered **negligible**.

Limitations and Assumptions

- 11.192 Baseline conditions have been established using existing assessments, available documentation and field assessment; it is important to note that this information may change before or during the construction and operation of the Proposed Development.
- 11.193 Within reasonable limits, the assessment is undertaken in consideration of the 'worst case' scenario for the development, i.e. those potential outcomes, situations or locations that would result in the most profound effect on landscape and visual receptors. It therefore identifies the greatest degree of change likely to accrue and may be subject to mitigating factors or alternative conditions that might reduce those effects. For example, visual effects are considered in both summer and winter contexts, although the level of effect is expressed for winter landscape conditions when trees are bare of leaf cover and the visibility of development is at its greatest. Where this is the case, the assessment identifies alternative conditions or further mitigation that might result in impacts being less pronounced.
- 11.194 The assessment of potentially significant effects applies a pre-determined methodology to arrive at its conclusions (**Appendix 11.1** and **11.2, Annex EDP 2**). This procedure brings a degree of objective, procedural rigour into what otherwise might be judged to be 'personal opinion'. Certainly, professional judgement still plays its part, but the purpose of adopting a methodology is to make the process as clear and logical as possible.

Conclusions

Effects on the Landscape Resource

- 11.195 The Proposed Development will have direct effects on existing landscape resources including trees and hedgerows. Given the change in land use from agriculture/grazing to residential, the Proposed Development will have unavoidable significant effects on the landscape character of the site, but will not significantly alter the character of the wider surrounding landscape, due to the discrete geographical area over which effects will be experienced.

- 11.196 More important than the presence of what amounts to unavoidable significant landscape character effects is the retention of existing hedgerows, trees and woodland copses along the and throughout the site, and the provision of new public open space and planting (particularly along the southern site extent), which will help considerably in integrating the Proposed Development into the urban-rural context.
- 11.197 The relatively well-contained nature of the residual effects are driven, largely through the strategic planting incorporated at points around the perimeter and throughout the site, to ensure that effects are predominantly limited to within localised areas comprising the Application Site and its immediate context. Whilst there would be significant adverse effects on the Application Site and its immediate context, the effects reduce quickly with distance so that the overall effects on landscape character types are not significant. Over time, these effects will further reduce such that the development would become an accepted part of the southern edge of Wokingham.

Effects on Designated Landscapes

- 11.198 As illustrated within the assessment, there is no effect on any designated landscape.

Effects on Visual Amenity

- 11.199 Based on the assessed viewpoints, the overall visibility of the development is relatively well-contained in many directions, due to the strategic planting incorporated surrounding, and through the site, in addition to the contribution that woodland and urban form make to general intervisibility within the study area. The urban area of Wokingham to the north limits the distribution of effects dramatically to a narrow zone at the urban edge.
- 11.200 The visual effects predicted to arise as a result of the introduction of the Proposed Development follow a similar pattern to effects upon landscape character, in that significant effects are likely to occur only within and in very close proximity to the Proposed Development; the magnitude of change to views decreases rapidly with distance from the Application Site, partly due to screening, and partly due to the masterplan layout, which is designed to respect close range and more distant views. Therefore, the receptors most likely to experience a potential significant effect at Year 15 following completion would be the roads and PRow within and in close proximity to the site.

Effects on Settlement and Residential Visual Amenity

- 11.201 The Proposed Development will be visible from the edges of the existing settlement, but there is likely to be limited, or no, visibility from within the wider urban area of the settlement and from other nearby settlements and isolated residences to the south, east or west. Furthermore, the parameter plans indicate that building heights have been designed to be sensitive to the most proximate, and sensitive, visual receptors.

Arboricultural Matters

- 11.202 Based solely on the masterplan, the Proposed Development and access would result in the removal or partial removal of 22 surveyed items. All other items will be unaffected by the development.

11.203 The relatively small percentage loss of trees will be substantially compensated for through the provision of a considerable amount of new planting of younger trees with potential for greater longevity within the landscape. The new trees will improve the species and age diversity of the tree stock, whilst also enhancing the setting of the new development within the landscape.

Summary

11.204 This assessment concludes that, from a landscape and visual perspective, the Application Site is suitable for the Proposed Development, at the scale and form indicated on the parameter plans and 'wider' illustrative masterplan. The Proposed Development with 'embedded' mitigation measures will have a limited effect on views from the surrounding areas, as it would be well-integrated, through a combination of tree belts and other screening features, and where visible, perceived in the context of the existing suburban areas of Wokingham. Over the longer term, it would represent a well-designed and sensitive extension to the wider settlement.

11.205 The landscape and visual receptors that have been identified in this Chapter, the potential effects of the Proposed Development on these receptors, mitigation and resulting residual impacts are summarised in **Tables 11.8 to 11.11** above.

CHAPTER 11 FIGURES

Figure 11.1 - Site Location and Boundaries

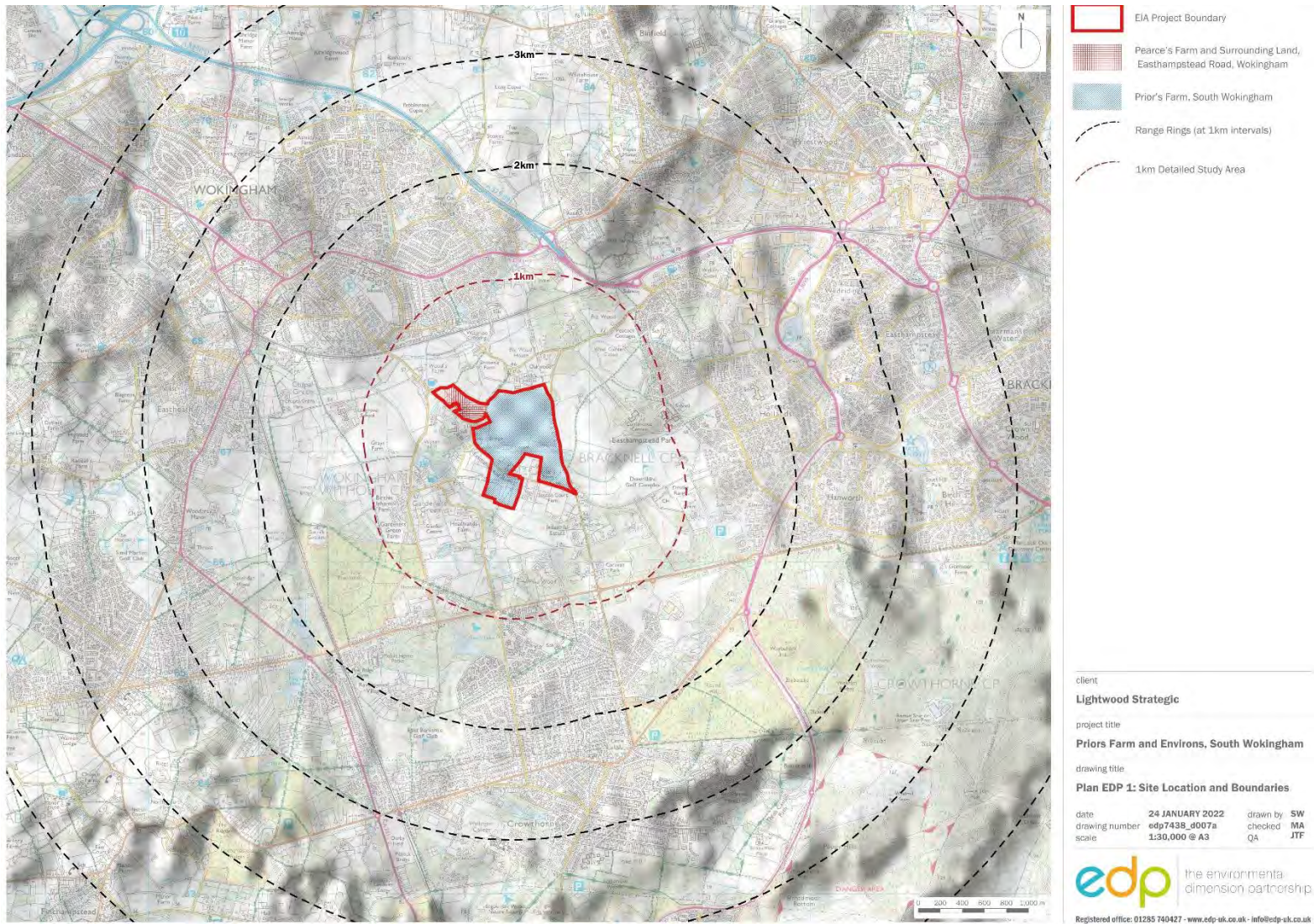


Figure 11.2 - Soil Map

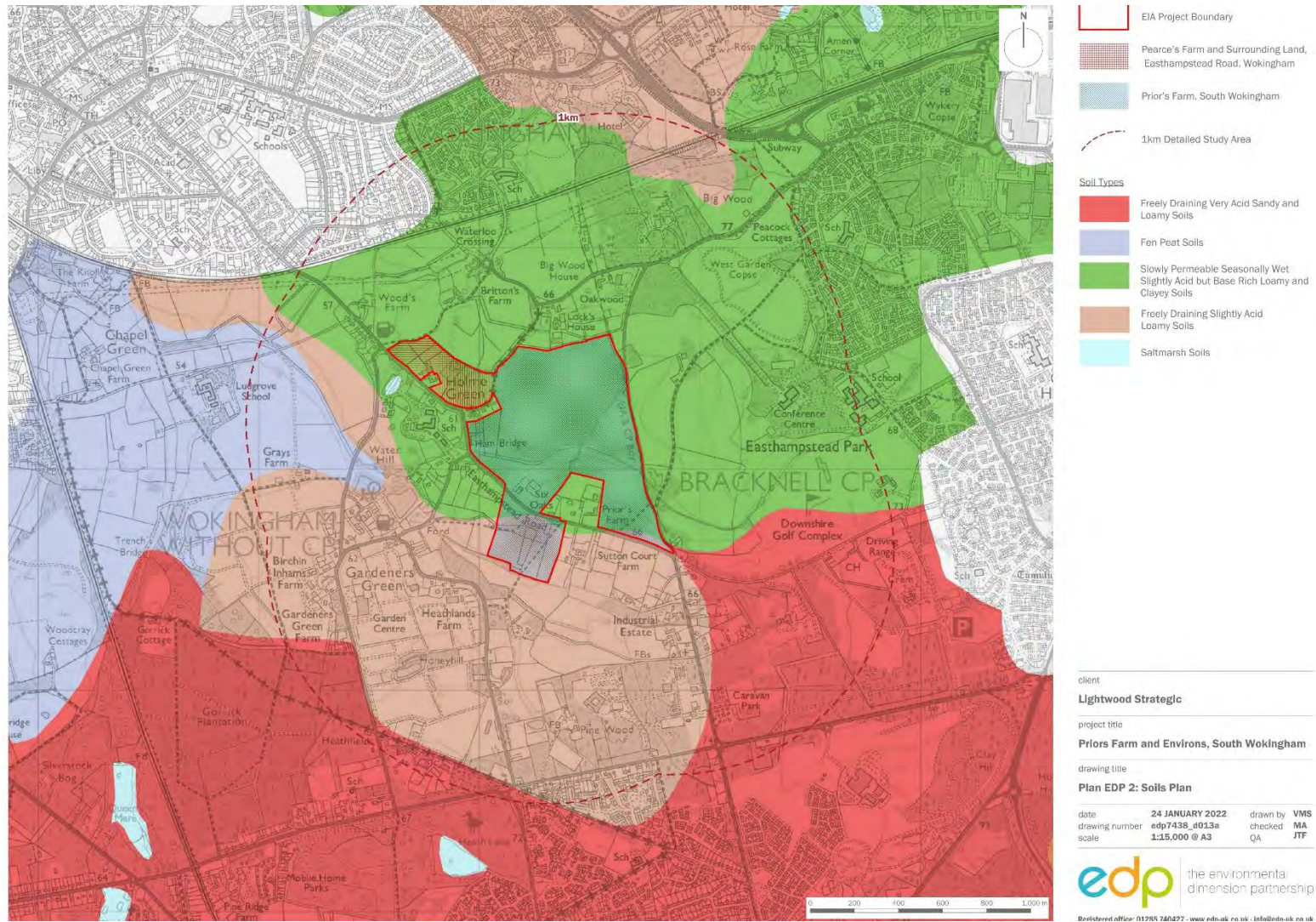


Figure 11.3 - Geology Map

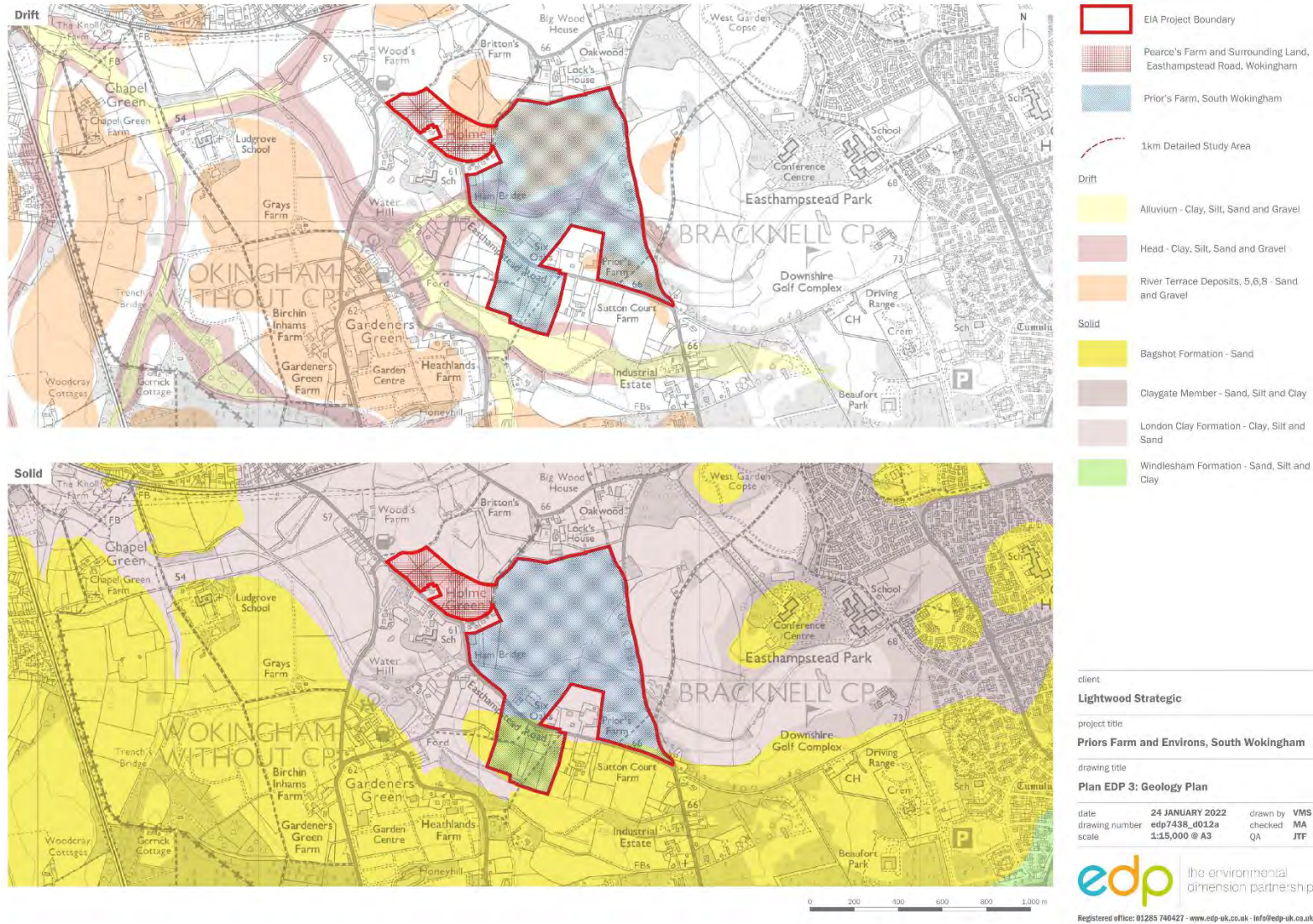


Figure 11.4 - Topography Plan

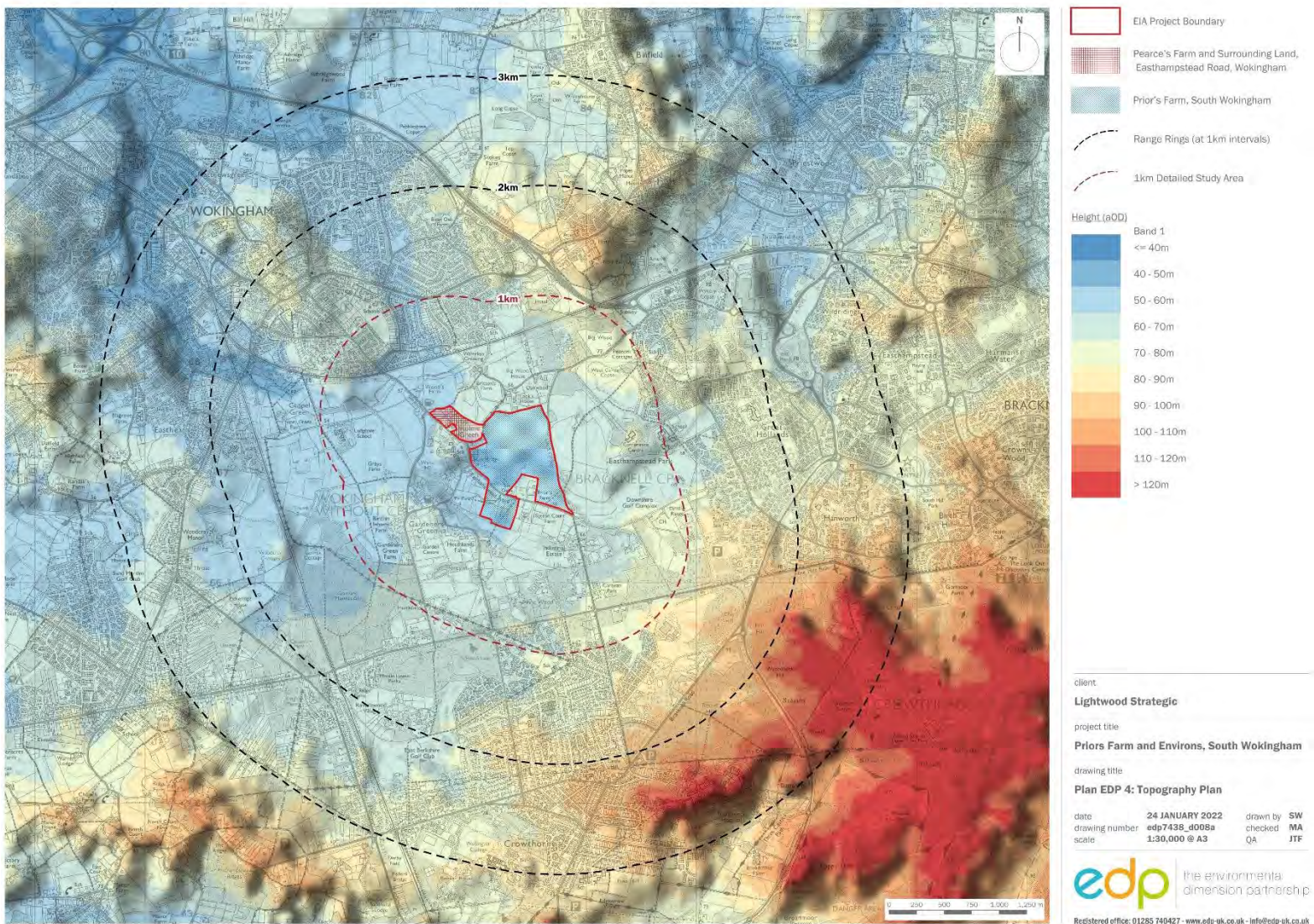


Figure 11.5 - Environmental Planning Context

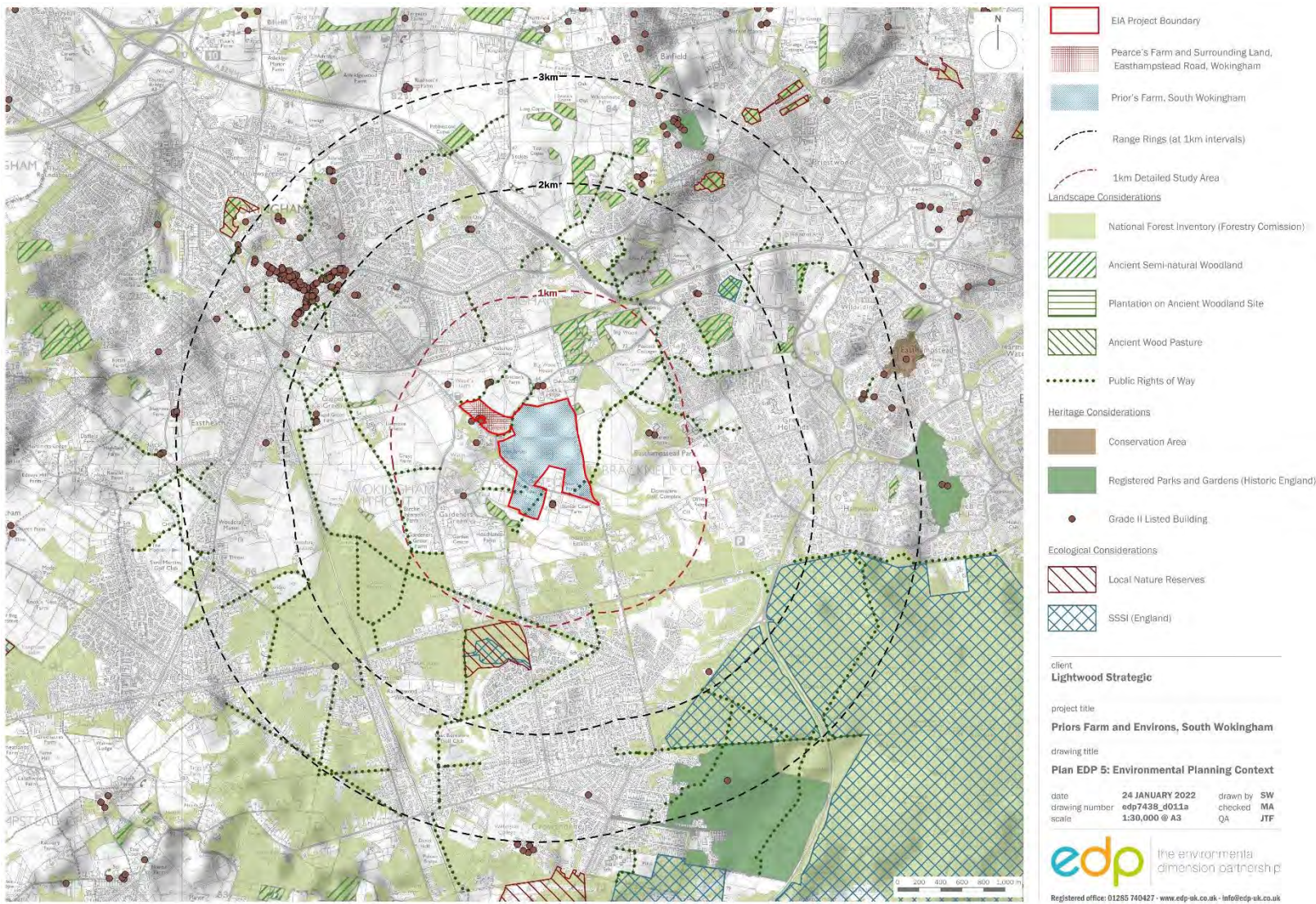


Figure 11.6 - Site Character and Local Context

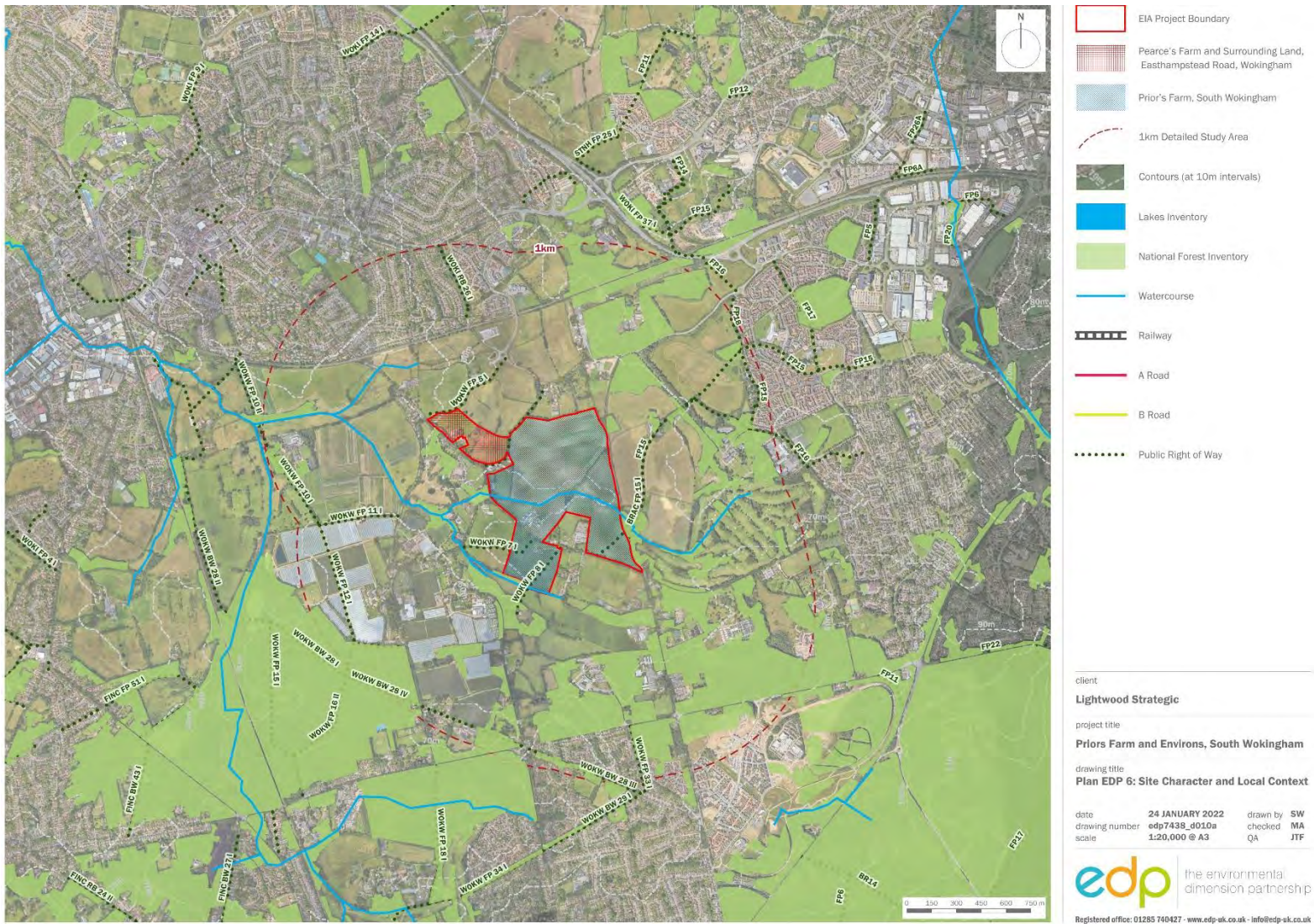


Figure 11.7 - Published Landscape Character Assessment

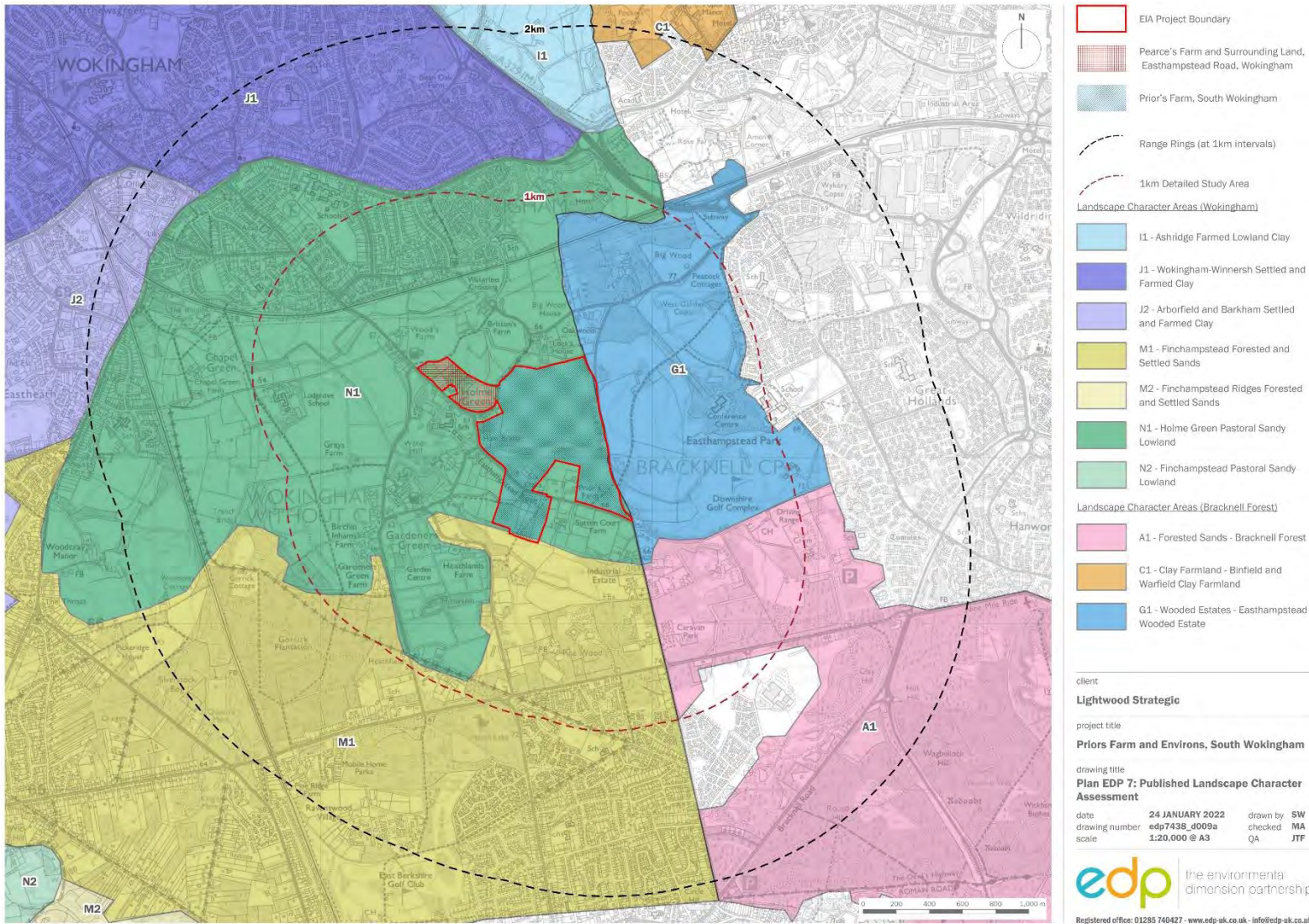


Figure 11.8 - Findings of Visual Appraisal

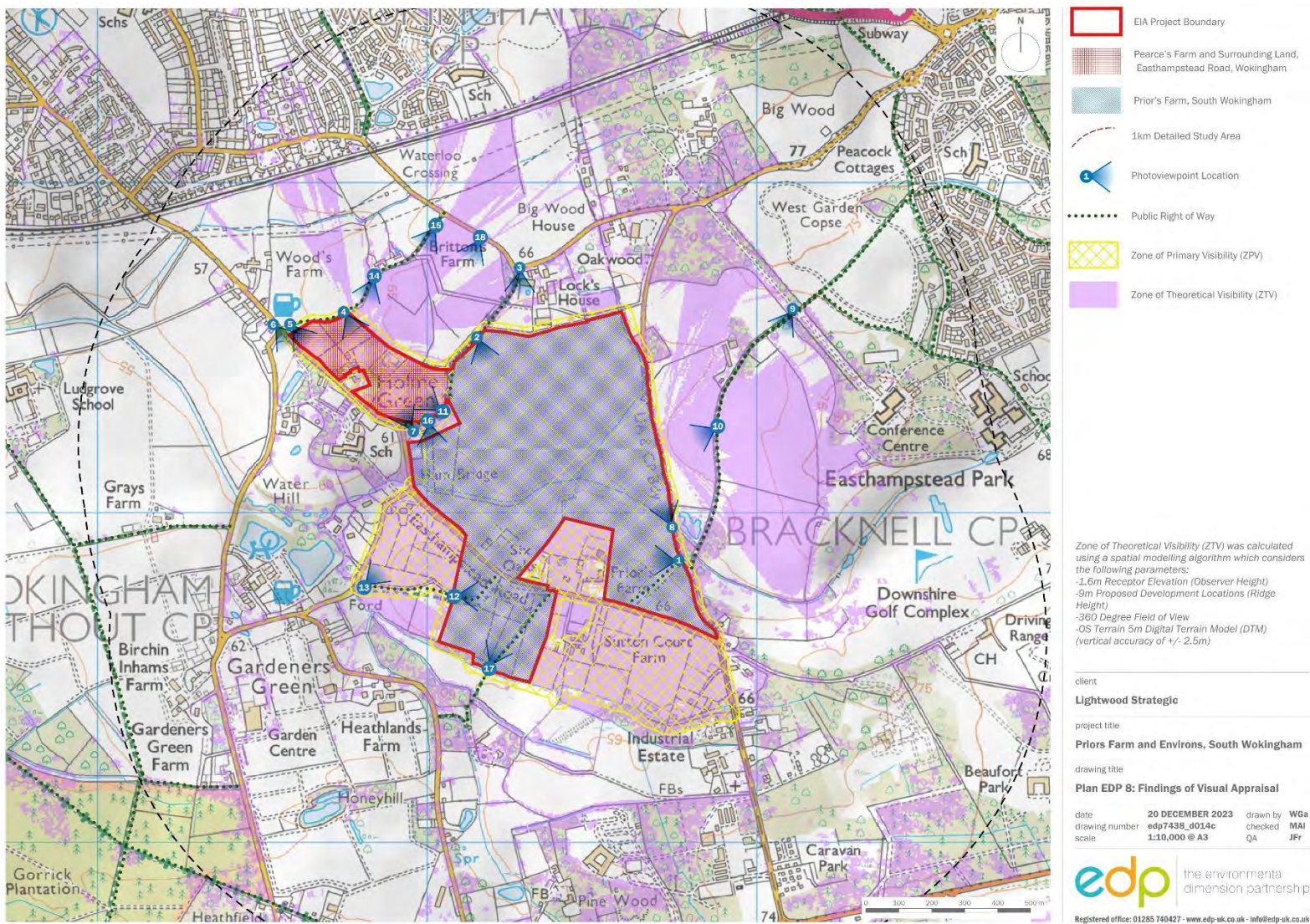


Figure 11.9 - Landscape Constraints and Opportunities

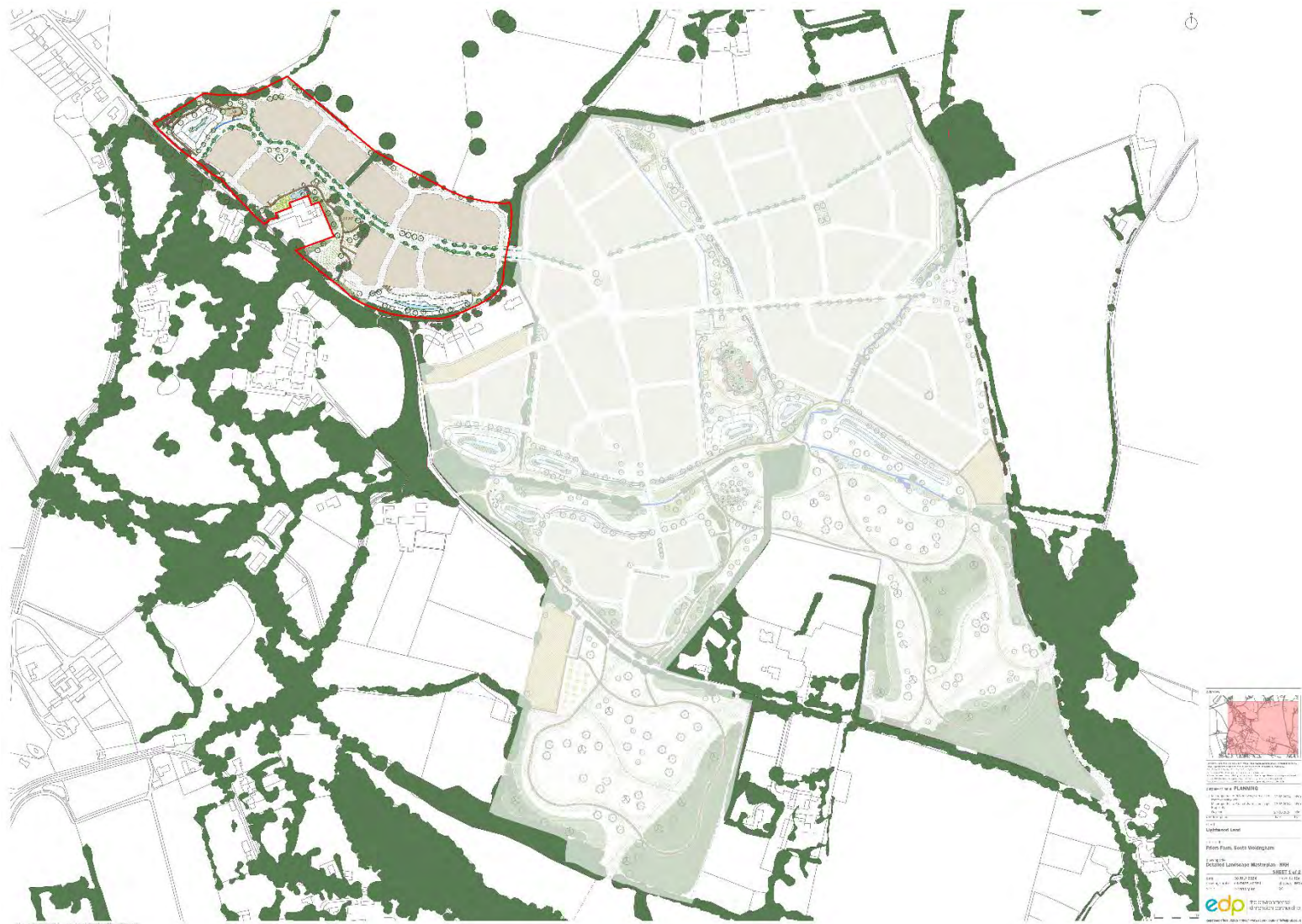


Figure 11.10.a - Landscape Masterplan (JSA)





Figure 11.10.b - Landscape Masterplan (NKH)





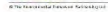
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edp the environmental dimension partnership
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www.edp-uk.co.uk
info@edp-uk.co.uk

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Visualisation Type: 1

Horizontal Field of View: 38.6°
Height of Camera: 1.6m
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Enlargement Factor: 100% @ A3

Direction of View: 240°
Distance: 180m
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Focal Length: 50mm

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drawn by: DM
checked: MW
QA: JF

client: Lightwood Strategic
project title: Priors Farm, South Wokingham
drawing title: Photoviewpoint EDP 9

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