



Thames Valley Park Data Centre

Landscape & Visual Appraisal

Arup | On Behalf of FH Trustees
Revision 01 | September 2026

ARUP

Document Verification

Project title Thames Valley Park Data Centre
Document title Landscape and Visual Appraisal

Job number 313902-00
Document ref
File reference P01

Revision	Date	Filename
Final	25 09 26	Description
		Prepared by
		Checked by
		Approved by
		Name
		Signature
		Signature
		Description
		Prepared by
		Checked by
		Approved by
		Name
		Signature
		Signature
		Filename
		Description
		Prepared by
		Checked by
		Approved by
		Name
		Signature
		Signature

Issue Document Verification with Document ☒

Contents

1.	Introduction	1
1.1	Application Site	1
1.2	Proposed Development	2
1.3	Assumptions and limitations	3
2.	Legislation, policy context and guidance	5
2.1	Legislation	5
3.	Assessment methodology and scope	6
3.1	Introduction	6
3.2	Assessment standards and guidance	7
3.3	Scope of the assessment	7
4.	Study area	9
4.1	Topography and hydrology	10
4.2	Landcover and vegetation patterns	10
4.3	Land use and settlement	10
4.4	Movement and connectivity	10
4.5	Infrastructure	11
4.6	Landscape designations	11
4.7	Tranquillity	12
5.	Landscape baseline and effects	12
5.1	Introduction	12
5.2	Published landscape character assessments	12
5.3	Local Landscape Character Areas	14
5.4	Landscape elements and features	14
5.5	Summary of landscape baseline	14
5.6	Landscape effects of construction	15
5.7	Landscape effects at year one of existence and operation	16
5.8	Residual landscape effects at year 15 of existence and operation	17
6.	Visual baseline and effects	18
6.1	Introduction	18
6.2	Zones of Theoretical Visibility	18
6.3	Visual receptors and representative viewpoints	18
6.4	Summary of visual baseline	20
6.5	Visual effects of construction	22
6.6	Visual effects at year one of existence and operation	26
6.7	Summary of residual visual effects at year 15 of existence and operation	29
7.	Design, mitigation and enhancement measures	31
7.1	Embedded mitigation	31
8.	Glossary of terms	32
9.	References	34

Tables

Table 1: Landscape and visual matters raised in the Pre-application meetings	7
Table 2: Landscape receptors	14
Table 3: Summary of landscape effects of construction	15
Table 4: Summary of landscape effects at year one of existence and operation	17
Table 5: Summary of landscape effects at year 15 of existence and operation	17
Table 6: Representative viewpoints and visual receptors	20
Table 7: Summary of visual effects of construction	24
Table 8: Summary of visual effects at year one of existence and operation	28
Table 9: Summary of visual effects at year 15 of existence and operation	30
Table 10: Establishing landscape value criteria	A-5
Table 11: Susceptibility of landscape receptors to change	A-6
Table 12: Sensitivity of landscape receptors criteria	A-7
Table 13: Magnitude of landscape impacts criteria	A-7
Table 14: Value attached to views criteria	A-10
Table 15: Susceptibility of visual receptors to change	A-10
Table 16: Sensitivity of visual receptors criteria	A-11
Table 17: Magnitude of visual impacts criteria	A-12
Table 18: Determining the level of landscape and visual effects	A-12
Table 19: Descriptions of landscape and visual effects	A-13
Table 20: Factors in determining landscape value in LLCA 1	C-1
Table 21: Factors in determining landscape value in LLCA 2	C-1
Table 22: Factors in determining landscape value in LLCA 1	C-1
Table 23: Factors in determining landscape value in LLCA 3	C-2
Table 24: Factors in determining landscape value in LLCA 1	C-1
Table 25: Factors in determining landscape value in LLCA 4	C-2
Table 26: Factors in determining landscape value in LLCA 5	C-1
Table 27: Factors in determining landscape value in LLCA 1	C-1
Table 28: Factors in determining landscape value in LLCA 6	C-2
Table 29: Factors in determining landscape value in LLCA 1	C-1
Table 30: Factors in determining landscape value for landscape features at the Application Site	C-2
Table 31: Summary of Landscape effects	C-1
Table 32: Summary of visual effects.	D-1

Figures

See Appendix E

Drawings

No table of figures entries found.

Pictures

Picture 1: Parameter Building Heights Plans	3
---	---

Photographs

No table of figures entries found.

Attachments

No table of figures entries found.

Appendices

Appendix A	A-1
A.1 Introduction	A-1
A.2 Assessment methodology	A-1
A.1 Introduction	A-2
A.2 Assessment methodology	A-2
Appendix B	B-1
B.1 Introduction	B-1
B.2 European Landscape Convention	B-1
B.3 National legislation, planning policy and guidance	B-1
B.4 Regional planning policy and guidance	B-1
B.5 Local planning policy and guidance	B-1
Appendix C : Landscape baseline and effects	C-1
C.1 LLCA 1: Thames Valley Park business park	C-1
C.2 LLCA 2: Sonning and the Thames Valley Park Local Gap	C-1
C.3 LLCA 3: Woodley, Reading and Sonning residential	C-1
C.4 LLCA 4: Bulmershe Park and allotments	C-1
C.5 LLCA 5: Caversham Lake and the River Thames	C-1
C.6 LLCA 6: Major transport corridors	C-1
C.7 Landscape features: Mature trees and vegetation within the Application Site as part of the wider setting of the Thames Valley Park business park	C-1
C.8 Landscape effects schedule	C-1
Appendix D : Visual baseline and effects	D-1
D.1 Introduction	D-2
D.2 Viewpoint 1: Thames Valley Park communal landscaped picnic area	D-3
D.3 Viewpoint 2: Thames Path Nationally Promoted Route and PRoW EARL3	D-1
D.4 Viewpoint 3: Thames Path Nationally Promoted Route and NCN Route 4	D-1
D.5 Viewpoint 4: Inglewood House off Sonning Lane	D-1
D.6 Viewpoint 5: London Road bridge above the Great Western railway line heading towards Reading Station	D-1
D.7 Viewpoint 6: Bulmershe Park SULV	D-1
D.8 Viewpoint 7: PLCA3A Key view 2 (west of Milestone Wood) PRoW 205/11/10	D-1
D.9 Viewpoint 8: PLCA1 Key view 1 Thames Path	D-1
D.10 Viewpoint 9: PLCA3A 3 Key view 3 Foxhill Lane	D-1

D.11	Viewpoint 10: Junction of Hilltop Road and London Road, Earley Visual baseline description	D-1
D.12	Viewpoint 11: Junction of Shepherds Avenue and London Road	D-3
D.13	Visual effects schedule	D-1
Appendix E :		E-1
E.1	Figure 1: Application Site and Study Area	E-2
E.2	Figure 2: Relevant statutory designations and recreational routes	E-3
E.3	Figure 3: Relevant local and non-statutory designations	E-4
E.4	Figure 4: Published Landscape Character Assessment	E-5
E.5	Figure 5: Local Landscape Character Areas	E-6
E.6	Figure 6: Thames Valley Park Data Centre Zone of Theoretical Visibility – screened (DSM)	E-7
E.7	Figure 7: Representative viewpoints	E-8
E.8	Figure 8: Representative viewpoint photography and visualisations	E-9

1. Introduction

This report has been prepared by landscape architects at Ove Arup and Partners Limited (Arup) and has been commissioned by BCS Consultancy Ltd, on behalf of FH Trustees¹ (the Applicant). The authors have experience of the assessment of similar developments, with reference to current planning policy and best practice guidance. It presents the results of a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) of the proposed Thames Valley Park Data Centre (hereafter the Proposed Development) on the character of the landscape and on people's views and visual amenity. Further detail is provided in the following appendices:

- **Appendix A** sets out the methodology for the LVA.
- **Appendix B** provides extracts of the planning policies summarised in this report.
- **Appendix C** comprises tables setting out descriptions of the baseline, sensitivity, magnitude of impact and level of effect for each landscape receptor.
- **Appendix D** comprises tables setting out descriptions of the baseline, sensitivity, magnitude of impact and level of effect for each visual receptor group.
- **Appendix E** provides the Figures which support the LVA.

Much of the Study Area includes urban and urban fringe areas that could be defined as townscape areas. Paragraph 2.7 of the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Appraisal, 3rd Edition (GLVIA3) define townscape as: *"the landscape within the built-up area, including the buildings, the relationship between them, the different types of urban open spaces, including green spaces and the relationship between buildings and open spaces."* (Landscape Institute; IEMA, 2013). For the purposes of this report these effects for these areas will be appraised as landscape effects but with consideration to guidance contained within Townscape Character Assessment, Technical Information Note 05/17 (Landscape Institute, 2017).

There are clear differences between landscape effects and visual effects and the following distinctions have been made:

- **Landscape effects** relate to changes to the landscape as a resource, including physical changes to the fabric or individual elements of the landscape, its aesthetic or perceptual qualities, and landscape character.
- **Visual effects** relate to changes to existing views of identified visual receptors ('people'), from the loss or addition of landscape features within their view due to the Proposed Development.

Landscape effects and visual effects have therefore been assessed and reported separately.

1.1 Application Site

The Application Site, located at Thames Valley Park, Thames Valley Park Drive, Sonning, Reading RG6 1WG, is situated to the north of the railway line between Reading and Twyford. The Application Site lies between Sonning to the east and Lower Caversham to the west. The Application Site extends to approximately 5.4 hectares and currently contains three office buildings formerly occupied by Microsoft as part of their long-established presence at Thames Valley Park along with ground level car parking areas and mature boundary vegetation. Microsoft have already vacated two of the three buildings and will vacate entirely at the expiry of their lease in December 2027.

The immediate context comprises commercial offices to the north, east and west, and the Great Western railway line to the south, with the River Thames and Caversham Lakes, including the marina and Redgrave Pinsent Rowing Lake, situated further north. Topographically, the Application Site is generally gently sloping, with levels rising from approximately 38m AOD in the lower northern/north-western parts of the site to approximately 51m AOD in the southern/south-eastern parts.

¹ FH Trustees and FH Trustees 2 as trustees of the Mapeley Beta HL Unit Trust

1.2 Proposed Development

1.2.1 Built development

Outline planning permission is sought (all matters reserved except access) for the redevelopment of the site to provide a data centre campus of up to 72MW capacity. The Proposed Development would comprise four three-storey data halls, an administration building, fuel cell compounds, electrical infrastructure, generators and associated operational facilities arranged within a cohesive campus layout. The data centre buildings would be up to 30.5m in height, with the ancillary administration building up to 22.5m in height and fuel cells up to 16.5m in height. Associated infrastructure would include plant, drainage features, backup generation equipment, car parking, security infrastructure, internal access roads and landscaping.

The administration building would be positioned along the northern frontage of the site, maintaining the established building line of Thames Valley Park, whilst the data halls, fuel cells and supporting infrastructure would be located within the central and southern parts of the site. The layout has been refined through an iterative design process to respond to existing site constraints, including the retention of established vegetation and avoidance of direct impacts on protected trees where practicable. The tallest built elements would be concentrated within the centre of the site, where they would benefit from the greatest degree of containment from retained vegetation and surrounding development.

The Proposed Development would also include external lighting associated with access roads, parking areas, building entrances, perimeter routes and operational requirements. Further details of the landscape works, arboricultural proposals and lighting strategy are provided in the following sections.

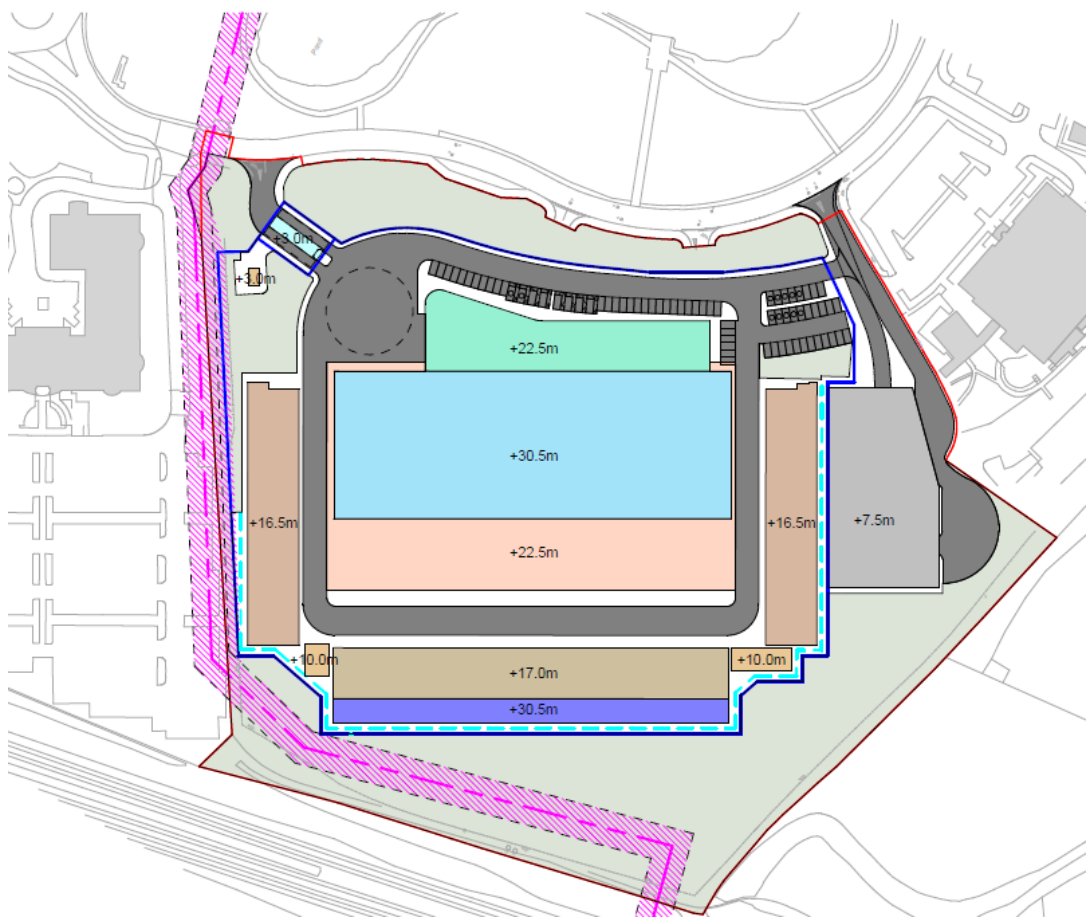
1.2.2 Arboricultural works

The Proposed Development would require the removal of a proportion of the existing vegetation within the Application Site. Arboricultural surveys indicate that 75 of the 131 individual trees currently present on site would be removed, together with 10 tree groups and 18 hedgerows, whilst 56 individual trees, eight tree groups and five hedgerows would be retained, with additional groups and hedgerows partially retained. The arboricultural assessment concludes that the majority of vegetation proposed for removal is of low or poor quality and associated with the original landscape planting of the business park. The proposals have sought to retain the more visually important and established perimeter trees, together with legally protected trees, and incorporate replacement planting and landscape enhancements as part of the wider landscape strategy.

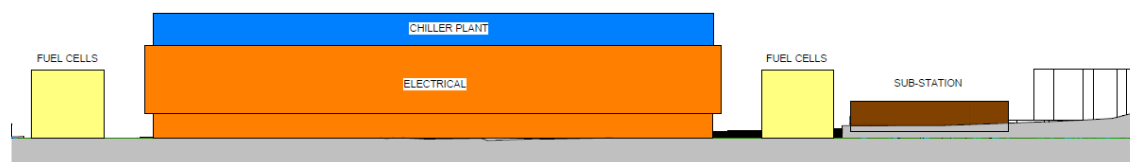
1.2.3 Landscape strategy

The landscape strategy is based on a perimeter-led approach which retains and enhances existing boundary vegetation, reinforces north–south ecological connectivity and creates a continuous planted “Green Ring” around the data centre. The layout concentrates the building mass and security line close to the development footprint, allowing existing woodland, trees and hedgerows around the site margins to be retained where practicable and supplemented with new native woodland and ornamental planting. Redundant hardstanding would be removed where practicable to allow new planting and open mosaic habitat to establish. The retaining wall strategy has been developed to reduce disruption to woodland and Root Protection Areas, with the highest section located along the southern edge where it would be screened by the building mass, before tapering along the eastern and western boundaries. Overall, the strategy seeks to integrate the Proposed Development within the landscaped business park setting, strengthen habitat connectivity and contribute to Biodiversity Net Gain.

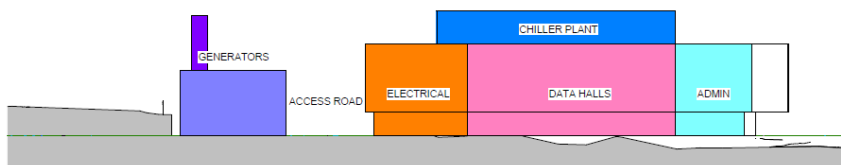
Picture 1: Parameter Building Heights Plans



Picture 2: Parameter Typical Sections



1 Parameter Typical Section - 01
1 : 500



2 Parameter Typical Section - 02
1 : 500

1.3 Assumptions and limitations

This section sets out the assumptions which have been made and the limitations which inform the scope of the LVA.

- The assessment of potential effects on visual receptors is made based on a worst-case approach of a clear bright day in winter as per best practice and to be consistent with the approach for other receptors in this assessment;
- Viewpoint photography has been captured in April 2026. Whilst most deciduous tree species remain visually unchanged from their winter dormancy, there is evidence of some tree and hedgerow species breaking into leaf along with spring blossom for other species. GLVIA3 guidance suggests that consideration be given to seasonal variation in effects where appropriate but acknowledges that the timing of the assessment may mean that this is not practical. Additional photography was undertaken in August 2026, as requested by the local authority and recorded in the consultation table. This comprised summer photography from Viewpoints 1, 2, 10 and 11, when trees and other vegetation were in leaf. The seasonal context of these photographs has been taken into account in the assessment. The original winter baseline photographs have been retained alongside the Type 4 visualisations and Type 2 visualisations. In this LVA potentially important differences between seasonal views have been indicated in the assessment and taken into consideration in reaching conclusions;
- The construction assessment is based on the construction information that is currently available. As with all construction assessments, the exact details of construction activities would not be fully known until the Principal Contractor is appointed to complete the works who would determine their exact construction methods and programme during the detailed design stage;
- The assessment of temporary construction effects considers the likely worst case, for example when taller plant and equipment such as tower cranes would be visible and in use. While it assumes that construction activity would be present across the whole of the Proposed Development site during the construction period, the visibility depends on a variety of compounds and plant equipment, and the effects are reflected through the different receptor groups.
- Operational effects are appraised in the first winter following the completion of all construction activities (Year 1);
- The identification and evaluation of likely effects at year 15 of operation assumes that all planting incorporated into the Proposed Development would have been appropriately managed over the period and would have successfully established and be in full leaf. Native trees and plants would have grown on average by approximately 0.3m per year to a height of between 3.5m and 6m depending on species and specification;
- The assessment of trees and woodland within the Study Area has been undertaken based upon their importance as landscape elements and features as part of the landscape character. The presence of ancient and long-established woodland has been considered using available data from the Natural England Ancient Woodland Inventory available from the Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) Map application (Natural England, 2026);
- The extent of vegetation and tree removal required to facilitate the Proposed Development has been informed by the Arboricultural Impact Assessment and has been taken into account in this LVA. Any subsequent changes to the extent of vegetation removal should be reviewed by a qualified arboriculturist and, where relevant, by a qualified landscape architect.
- It is assumed that the design and material selection of building façades and roofing would be developed using a muted natural pallet selected to assimilate the built infrastructure into the landscape where possible;
- It is assumed that construction vehicles would access the Proposed Development from the existing entrance to the Thames Valley Park;
- A full assessment of visual effects at night has not been undertaken as part of this LVA. However, potential night-time landscape and visual effects associated with the proposed external lighting have been considered where relevant within the assessment, with reference to the submitted Exterior Lighting Strategy; and

- Cumulative effects have been excluded from the assessment. It is not anticipated that there are any other developments within the Study Area of the same type that has planning consent or is subject to a valid planning application that has not yet been determined.

2. Legislation, policy context and guidance

This section summarises the key of national, regional, county, local and neighbourhood planning policies relevant to landscape and visual amenity and explains, where relevant, how they have informed the assessment and design of the Proposed Development.

Detailed extracts are set out in Appendix B of this report.

2.1 Legislation

2.1.1 European Landscape Convention

Paragraph 2.1 of GLVIA3 states that:

“The UK has signed and ratified the European Landscape Convention (ELC) since 2002, when the last edition of this guidance was published. The recognition that government has thus given to landscape matters raises the profile of this important area and emphasises the role that landscape can play as an integrating framework for many areas of policy. The ELC is designed to achieve improved approaches to the planning, management and protection of landscapes throughout Europe and to put people at the heart of this process.”

The ELC defines landscape as:

“...an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors.”

2.1.2 National planning policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (MHCLG, 2026) sets out how the government sees the planning system in England working in practice in accordance with primary and secondary legislation. The NPPF provisions are supported by further detail set out in national Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG). The following national legislation and policy has informed the LVA:

- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (MHCLG, 2026);
- National Infrastructure and Construction Pipeline 2023 (Infrastructure and Projects Authority, 2024);
- Transforming Infrastructure Performance: Roadmap to 2030 (Infrastructure and Projects Authority, 2021);
- UK Infrastructure: A 10 Year Strategy (HM Treasury and National Infrastructure & Service Transformation Authority, 2025);
- National Design Guide (MHCLG, 2021);
- National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) - Natural Environment (MHCLG, 2025);
- National Planning Practice Guidance – Design process and tools (MHCLG, 2019);
- National Planning Practice Guidance – Tree Preservation Orders and trees in conservation area (MHCLG, 2014);
- National Planning Practice Guidance – Historic Environment (MHCLG, 2014); and
- Data centres: planning policy, sustainability, and resilience - Research Briefing 03 Nov 2025 (House of Commons Library, 2025).

2.1.3 Local planning policy

The Application Site is located within the jurisdiction of Wokingham Borough Council with parts of the Study Area also located within the jurisdiction of Reading Borough Council and South Oxfordshire District Council. Key local policy relevant to the Proposed Development that has informed the LVA are listed below:

2.1.3.1 Wokingham Borough Council

- Wokingham Borough Local Development Framework – Adopted Core Strategy Development Plan (Wokingham Borough Council, 2010);
- Wokingham Borough Local Development Framework – Adopted Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (Wokingham Borough Council, 2014);
- Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update 2023-2040 (Wokingham Borough Council, 2026);
- Wokingham Borough Council Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)
 - Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (Wokingham Borough Council, 2010);
 - Interactive Borough Design Guide (Wokingham Borough Council, 2012); and
- Sonning Neighbourhood Plan (Sonning Parish Council, 2025).

2.1.3.2 Reading Borough Council

- Reading Borough Local Plan (Reading Borough Council, 2019);
- Reading Borough Council SPD
 - Assessment of significant views with heritage interest SPD (Reading Borough Council, 2018); and
 - Tall buildings strategy (Reading Borough Council, 2008).

2.1.3.3 South Oxfordshire District Council

- South Oxfordshire District Local Plan (South Oxfordshire District Council, 2020);
- South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse district council Joint Local Plan 2041 (South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse District Council, 2026);
- Oxfordshire Historic Landscape Characterisation Project (Oxfordshire County Council, 2017); and
- Eye and Dunsden Neighbourhood Plan (draft) (Eye and Dunsden Parish Council, 2025).

3. Assessment methodology and scope

3.1 Introduction

The detailed methodology, including the criteria referred to in making judgements on the sensitivity of landscape and visual receptors, the magnitude of impact and the importance of the resulting effects is set out in Appendix A.

The methodology for the LVA involved the following stages:

1. A review of published landscape character assessments, studies, relevant supporting evidence base documents, aerial photography, mapping and fieldwork to define the baseline and to determine the extent of the Study Area within which there is potential for landscape and visual effects;
2. Define the landscape and visual receptors and describe the landscape and visual baseline;

3. Review the design to embed mitigation measures into the Proposed Development to avoid or minimise adverse landscape and visual effects and maximise opportunities for landscape integration and enhancement;
4. Determine the sensitivity (nature of the receptor) of landscape and visual receptors, by considering the value attached to the landscape or views and susceptibility to change of the receptor;
5. Assess the magnitude of impact (nature of effect) of the Proposed Development in relation to size, scale, duration and reversibility.
6. Assess the importance of resulting effects by considering the relationship between the sensitivity of the receptor and the magnitude of impact.

The assessment of the likely landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development has been undertaken for the following scenarios:

- The peak of construction activity, in winter;
- Year 1 of operation, assuming the Proposed Development is built out and in winter; and
- Year 15 of the operation, assuming the proposed planting has established, and the season is summer.

3.2 Assessment standards and guidance

The following standards and guidance have been used to inform the scope and content of the LVA, and to assist the identification and mitigation of likely effects.

- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Appraisal, 3rd Edition (Landscape Institute; IEMA, 2013);
- LITGN-2024-01. Notes and Clarifications on aspects of the 3rd Edition Guidelines on Landscape and Visual Appraisal (GLVIA3) (Landscape Institute, 2024);
- An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment, (Natural England, 2014);
- Assessing landscape value outside national designations, Technical Guidance Note 02/21, (Landscape Institute, 2021);
- Visual Representation of Development Proposals, Technical Guidance Note 06/19 (Landscape Institute, 2019) (Landscape Institute, 2019);
- Townscape Character Assessment, Technical Information Note 05/17 (Landscape Institute, 2017); and
- Infrastructure, Technical Guidance Note 04/20 (Landscape Institute, 2020).

3.3 Scope of the assessment

The assessment scope was established by comparing available design details for the Proposed Development with data, information and records relating to landscape character and the visual environment.

Pre-application communication with Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) during a pre-application meeting dated 25th March 2026 identified topic-specific matters that were subsequently brought into the overall scope of the LVA. There was a further pre-application meeting on the 17th June 2026 to discuss the representative viewpoints. Table 1 sets out these matters and provides a summary of how the Applicant has responded to the points raised, and where this information is reported.

Table 1: Landscape and visual matters raised in the Pre-application meetings

Matters raised	How this is addressed in the LVA
Pre application meeting 25th March 2026	
Stuart Ryder (on behalf of WBC)	

Matters raised	How this is addressed in the LVA
Stuart broadly agreed with the 1km Study Area and the approach to viewpoint selection within but queried the 1km study limit to the north, where the land is more open.	Three viewpoints have been selected beyond the 1km Study Area elevated land to the north. The viewpoints proposed are from specific key view listed in the Eye and Dunsden Landscape Character Assessment and Proposal for a Local Valued Landscape report. An increase in study area has since been requested to 1.5km.
Stuart Ryder (on behalf of WBC) The modelled height (24m) used for the Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) was questioned based upon the latest design updates provided by the architects.	The initial ZTV was prepared using the red line boundary at 24m as a worst case whilst design options were being formulated. As the building design has evolved, the ZTV has been re-analysed and refined to enable greater accuracy for the LVA.
Stuart Ryder (on behalf of WBC) Stuart questioned the appearance of the fuel cells. These are currently proposed to be located adjacent to the main building in both options proposed.	The fuel cells have been considered based upon available information regarding the design and material selection of building façades and roofing considered as part of outline design
Stuart Ryder (on behalf of WBC) Stuart questioned the security fencing highlighting the need to consider the fence type, height and associated impact on the vegetation.	The effect upon proposed boundary vegetation from the impact of fencing type, height as described in the landscape strategy and outline landscape masterplan have informed the LVA.
Stuart Ryder (on behalf of WBC) Stuart confirmed he had no objection to the viewpoints chosen but requested worst-case winter photography be undertaken.	Viewpoint photography has been captured in April 2026. Whilst most deciduous tree species remain visually unchanged from their winter dormancy, there is evidence of some tree and hedgerow species breaking into leaf along with spring blossom for other species. GLVIA3 guidance suggests that consideration be given to seasonal variation in effects where appropriate but acknowledges that the timing of the assessment may mean that this is not practical (Landscape Institute; IEMA, 2013). In this LVA potentially important differences between seasonal views have been indicated in the assessment and taken into consideration in reaching conclusions
Stuart Ryder (on behalf of WBC) Stuart raised a potential desired right of way from Sonning to the Business Park and its subsequent review as a potential receptor type and viewpoint.	As this route is not currently a made Public Right of Way (PRoW) it is not appropriate to access the route without the current landowner's permission.
Pre application meeting 17 th June 2026	
Stuart Ryder (on behalf of WBC) A single additional viewpoint – VP11 is requested from the junction of London Road and Shepherd's Avenue. The reason for this request is that even though VP10 is close by it is on the other side of the A4 dual carriageway and VP11 would better represent what the visual effects on the small residential cul-de-sac Shepherd's Avenue would be. This viewpoint would need to be taken in winter to allow an understanding of the visual screening the bare branches of the railway trees and those to the south of the Site provide.	Viewpoint 11 has been added as an additional viewpoint and has been included within the LVA. However winter photography cannot be provided due to the timeframes for the planning application submission. A description of how the view would change in the winter is provided.

Matters raised	How this is addressed in the LVA
Stuart Ryder (on behalf of WBC) Four visualisations are envisaged using the existing viewpoint photography locations. - VP1 – View from Thames Valley Park communal picnic area as a Type 4² AVR (Accurate Visual Representation) to illustrate the visual effect on this piece of popular POS; - VP2 – View from Thames Corridor as a Type 4 AVR to illustrate the visual effect on this key piece of POS that has the National Promoted Thames Path passing through it. It is the upper part of the proposals that I anticipate to be visible but if wireline modelling indicate that they are not then the full Type 4 production does not have to be completed. - VP10 – View from junction of Hilltop Road and London Road as a Type 2 AVR to show potential mass and scale of building set behind the tree screen on the railway to help understand potential winter views from this key arterial route. - VP11 – View from junction of Shepherd’s Avenue and London Road as a Type 2 AVR to show potential mass and scale of building set behind the tree screen on the railway to help understand potential winter effects on this small residential cul-de-sac.	The four visualisations requested have been included in the LVA. VP1 and VP2 are Type 4 AVR and VP10 and VP11 are Type 2 AVR, See Figure 8 (Sheet 11 to 14).
Stuart Ryder (on behalf of WBC) Further to our meeting of 17 June, the Council's Public Rights of Way & Capital Projects Officer has confirmed that the Council is not aware of any significant informal pedestrian access, desire lines, or expansion of the PRoW improvement plan through the fields located between Sonning Meadows and the application site.	No additional PRoWs will be included in the assessment
Stuart Ryder (on behalf of WBC) To increase the size of the study area above 1km, to 1.5km-2km	The size of the study area has been increased to 1.5km

4. Study area

The Study Area for the LVA includes all land within the Application Site and the area within which the Proposed Development may give rise to important landscape and visual effects, as illustrated on **Appendix E, Figure 1**.

Detailed desk study and fieldwork has determined that intervening landform, buildings and vegetation limit the extent of views to approximately 1.5km from the Application Site. Beyond this distance important landscape and visual effects are not likely to occur. This exercise identified that:

² Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 06/19: *Visual Representation of Development Proposals* which is currently under review but is still the preferred guidance for visualisation work.

- Landform including the Great Western railway limit views for receptors to the south of the Application Site;
- The urban character and density of residential dwellings to the south of the Application Site largely screen views for most residential receptors. Exceptions to this include residential dwellings next to open spaces such as Bulmershe Park and the Reading Road allotments which are represented in the LVA.
- The landform to the north of the Application Site is generally flat with open views from the Thames Valley Park Nature Reserve. The waterbodies including the River Thames and Caversham Lakes are however heavily screened by woodland vegetation.
- Elevated landform provides longer distance views to the north of the Application Site for a limited number of receptors. Representative viewpoints have therefore been considered as part of LVA but due to the distance, the urban backdrop of Woodley and Reading, and the size and scale of the Proposed Development are not likely to be important.

The consideration of lighting effects has focused on receptors within the local study area, where there is potential for visibility of illuminated elements or changes to the existing night-time character.

The following sections set out details of the existing landscape and visual context across this Study Area.

4.1 Topography and hydrology

The Application Site is generally gently sloping, with levels rising from approximately 38m AOD in the lower northern/north-western parts of the site to approximately 51m AOD in the southern/south-eastern parts, giving an overall level change of approximately 13m across the surveyed site. The existing built form responds to this change in levels through a series of gently sloping access roads and tiered parking areas. Within the wider Study Area, land to the north of the Application Site is generally low-lying and associated with the River Thames corridor and Caversham Lakes, before rising northwards towards Caversham and Binfield Heath. The urban areas of Woodley and Reading to the south of the Application Site are comparatively lower lying and influenced by the intervening railway corridor.

There are no notable waterbodies within the Application Site, however there are several artificial ponds and lakes within the Thames Valley Park. The area to the north of the Study Area is defined by Caversham lakes and the River Thames.

4.2 Landcover and vegetation patterns

There are large areas of mature planting within the Application Site including established trees, shrubs and some ornamental planting closer to the buildings. These connect to the wider established planting within the Thames Valley Park business park and Nature Reserve, but also to the east at Little and Big Cogs around Sonning Hill. Large woodland belts are a notable landscape feature alongside the River Thames and to large areas around Caversham lakes.

4.3 Land use and settlement

Three large commercial buildings with large areas of hard standing for vehicle access and parking occupy most of the Application Site. Situated at the urban edge, the Thames Valley Park business park along with the Great Western railway line act as demarcation to the urban areas of Woodley and Reading to the south. The large waterbodies to the north of the Application Site along with more rural landscapes to the east mark a brief shift in land use. Settlements such as Play Hatch, Dunsden Green, Sonning, Sonning Eye and Binfield Heath are low density and retain a more rural character, however urban land use remains prevalent with the large settlement of Caversham to the north of the waterbodies.

4.4 Movement and connectivity

Highway and rail infrastructure are prominent within the Study Area. The Application Site lies directly adjacent to the Great Western railway corridor that passes from Twyford to Reading. The Application Site is well connected to the large arterial roads linking the centres of Wokingham and Reading to the M4 motorway.

There are no PRow within or crossing the Application Site. The Thames Path Nationally Promoted Route passes to the north of Application Site alongside the River Thames. National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 4 also passes close to the west of the Application Site before heading south of the railway line. There are only a limited number of PRow elsewhere in the Study Area and these are predominantly to the north and east.

4.5 Infrastructure

The network of major highways and the rail corridors and branch lines near Reading contribute largely to the infrastructure provision in the Study Area. A sewage treatment works at Sonning and a quarry at Play Hatch are also present with other minor infrastructure elements such as telegraph poles being largely associated with the urban environment.

4.6 Landscape designations

There are no statutory landscape designations within the Application Site or the Study Area.

Other designations, including statutory ecological and cultural designations, are limited to listed buildings. London Road Bridge, approximately 600m to the east of the Application Site, is the nearest. The conservation area at Sonning, lies approximately 850m to the northeast of the Application Site.

There are no non-statutory landscape designations within the Application Site. There are several local landscape designations defined within existing and emerging policy that are within the Study Area.

4.6.1 Valued Landscapes Assessment

The Valued Landscapes Assessment (Wokingham Borough Council, 2024) identifies the landscapes considered the highest quality and most value in the Borough. Policy NE6 (Landscape Character, Value and Green Routes) of the emerging plan proposes to designate 11 areas as ‘valued landscapes’. The River Thames Valued Landscape is located within the Study Area to the north of the Application Site. See **Appendix E, Figure 2**.

4.6.2 Sites of Urban Landscape Value

The sites of Urban Landscape Value (Wokingham Borough Council, 2024) assessment identifies the key characteristics for the Sites of Urban Landscape Value (SULVs) that are identified in policy TB22: Sites of Urban Landscape Value of the MDD local plan. This includes Bulmershe Park, Woodley SULV, which is located within the Study Area to the south of Application Site. See **Appendix E, Figure 2**.

4.6.3 Major Landscape features

Reading Borough Council Local Plan (Reading Borough Council, 2019) policy EN13: Major landscape features and Areas of Outstanding Natural beauty notes that whilst *‘Reading is primarily an urban area, ... it benefits from a number of natural features that have remained largely undeveloped’*. The Thames Valley is defined as a Major Landscape Feature and is located approximately 1km to the northwest of the Application Site, within 1.5km Study Area. See **Appendix E, Figure 2**.

4.6.4 District-valued landscapes

The Local Landscape Designation Review of South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse (South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse District Council, 2024) report prepared as part of the evidence base for the emerging South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Joint Local Plan 2041 defines district-valued landscapes as *‘landscapes identified to be valued at a district scale, which are given additional protection through the local landscape designation process’*. The Henley-on-Thames to Sonning Eye Thames Floodplain is identified as a local landscape designation and is located approximately 1.1km to the northeast of the Application Site. See **Appendix E, Figure 2**.

4.6.5 Eye and Dunsden Locally Valued Landscape

As part of the Eye and Dunsden Neighbourhood Plan (Eye and Dunsden Parish Council, 2025), there is a draft proposal that all areas within the parish should be considered locally valued landscape, stating that the area *‘seeks to ensure the retention of the distinct rural intrinsic beauty and character of each of the 4 Parish Landscape Character Areas (PLCA) within the parish and Neighbourhood Plan Area’*.

Whilst the draft report lists several PLCAs as part of the setting of the Chiltern National Landscape, this does not include PLCA2 which is within the Study Area. However, the report states *‘Each of the PLCA is connected with each other visually, containing landscape features of quality within a strong agricultural landscape. The four PLCA’s therefore are well above an ‘ordinary’ countryside and form an interlinked landscape of high value, intrinsic beauty and distinctive character, contributing to the setting of the Chilterns AONB and that of a rural section of the River Thames.’* See **Appendix E, Figure 2.**

4.6.6 Sonning – Earley Local Gap

As part of the draft Sonning Neighbourhood Plan, a Local Gap Study (Sonning Parish Council, 2025) has been undertaken to determine whether inclusion of a Local Gap between Sonning and Earley should be included as part of the Neighbourhood Plan. This report states that “the identification of Local Gaps is a widely used, conventional, planning policy designation including policy within a neighbourhood plan”. Whilst a Local Gap does not constitute consideration as a landscape designation, the report does consider some of the landscape and visual considerations that support the value of this area. See **Appendix E, Figure 2.**

4.7 Tranquillity

Tranquillity is limited within the Application Site due to its proximity to the railway line, and the major highways and urban areas to the south and northwest. However, the Thames Valley Park Nature Reserve, the complexity of the openness of the waterbodies to the north and surrounding woodland belts, and the rural areas to the northeast do provide some localised tranquillity within the surrounding urban context.

5. Landscape baseline and effects

5.1 Introduction

This section summarises the information gathered and assessed to describe the landscape baseline, including published landscape character assessments at various scales. It defines which landscape receptors form the basis of the assessment landscape effects and summarises the effects on these receptors. Detailed descriptions of these landscape receptors and effects are reported in Appendix C.

5.2 Published landscape character assessments

Relevant national, regional, district and local scale published landscape character assessments have been reviewed as part of the LVA to identify the key features and characteristics of the Study Area. This information has been used to inform the iterative design.

Landscape character assessment is defined within the glossary of GLVIA3 as the “*process of identifying and describing variation in the character of the landscape, and using this information to assist in managing change in the landscape. It seeks to identify and explain the unique combination of elements and features that make landscapes distinctive.*”. Natural England’s ‘An approach to Landscape Character Assessment’ (Natural England, 2014) notes the use and purpose of key characteristics, stating:

“Key characteristics are those combinations of elements which help give an area its distinctive sense of place. If these characteristics change, or are lost, there will be important consequences for the current character of the landscape. Key characteristics are particularly important in the development of planning and management policies. They are important for monitoring change and can provide a useful reference point against which landscape change can be assessed. They can be used as indicators to inform thinking about whether and how the landscape is changing and whether, or not, particular policies – for example - are effective and having the desired effect on landscape character.”

5.2.1 National Character Areas

National Character Areas (NCA) are broad scale and provide context to more detailed studies of local landscape character. The Proposed Development and Study Area lies within National Character Area Profile 115 Thames Valley defined by Natural England (Natural England, 2013).

As proposed by Stuart Ryder (WBC) during a pre-application meeting dated 25th March 2026, the NCA is not at an appropriate scale for assessment and has therefore been scoped out as agreed.

5.2.2 Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment

The Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment (Wokingham Borough Council, 2019) defines the Landscape Character Types (LCT) and Landscape Character Areas (LCA) of Wokingham Borough. The Application Site is located within the A1 Thames River Valley LCA. Areas to the south of the Application Site within the Study Area are located in D2 Sonning Wooded Chalk Slopes LCA and J4 Woodley-Earley Settled and Farmed Clay LCA. It is also noted that settlement boundaries comprise a large part of the Study Area within this jurisdiction. Whilst smaller than the NCA, these LCA are broad in the context of the Application Site and Study Area and not at an appropriate scale for assessment. Key characteristics of the LCA are included to provide context but effects on these receptors have not been assessed within the LVA. See Appendix E Figure 4.

5.2.3 South Oxfordshire District Council Landscape Character Assessment for the Local Plan 2033

Large parts of the Study Area to the north and west of the Application Site are located within LCA that form part of South Oxfordshire District Council. The South Oxfordshire District Council Landscape Character Assessment for the Local Plan 2033 (South Oxfordshire District Council, 2017) defines eleven LCA across South Oxfordshire. Part of the Study Area lies within LCA 11 Thames Valley and Fringes. Whilst smaller than the NCA, this LCA is broad in the context of the Application Site and Study Area and not at an appropriate scale for assessment. Key characteristics of the LCA are included to provide context but effects on these receptors have not been assessed within the LVA. See Appendix E Figure 4.

5.2.4 Landscape Character Assessment for South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse

As part of the evidence base for the emerging joint local plan 2041 for South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse District Council, a new landscape character assessment was prepared. The Landscape Character Assessment for South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse (South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse District Council, 2024) defines 14 LCT, each with a number of LCA within. A large part of the Study Area to the north and west of the Application Site lies within LCA 14G: Caversham to Henley Thames River Valley. Whilst this supports the emerging local plan and therefore is not currently adopted, it has been considered when appraising the landscape character of the Study Area. However, the study remains broad in the context of the Application Site and Study Area and not at an appropriate scale for assessment. Key characteristics of the LCA are included to provide context but effects on these receptors would not be assessed within the LVA. See Appendix E Figure 4.

5.2.5 Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study

The Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (Oxfordshire County Council; Natural England; The Earth Trust, 2004) is '*an investigation of landscape character and biodiversity across the county*'. The study defines a series of 24 separate LCT. A large part of the Study Area to the north and west of the Application Site lies within the Alluvial Lowlands LCT. This LCT is included to provide context but effects on this LCT receptor have not been assessed within the LVA as it is a broad scale and the geographical area is covered by other published assessments. See Appendix E Figure 4.

5.2.6 Eye and Dunsden Parish Landscape Character Assessment and Proposal for a Local Valued Landscape draft

As part of the preparation of the Eye and Dunsden Neighbourhood Plan (Eye and Dunsden Parish Council, 2025), a Landscape Character Assessment was prepared to support the evidence base. The Eye and Dunsden Parish Landscape Character Assessment and Proposal for a Local Valued Landscape (Eye and Dunsden Parish Council, 2022) sets out Parish Landscape Character Areas (PLCAs). These PLCAs overlap with the findings of the wider South Oxfordshire published LCA. A large part of the Study Area to the north and west of the Application Site lies within PLCA2: River Thames, Meadows and Lakes. Whilst this supports the emerging neighbourhood plan and therefore is not currently adopted, it has been considered when appraising the landscape character of the Study Area and due to the scale of this assessment has been used to inform the LLCA defined by the applicant, although the PLCA itself has not been appraised as a landscape receptor. See Appendix E Figure 4.

5.3 Local Landscape Character Areas

A total of six Local Landscape Character Areas (LLCA) have been identified to provide a finer level of detail to inform the assessment of landscape effects. These LLCA, the location and extents of which are illustrated on Appendix E Figure 4, have been defined through desk study and fieldwork surveys to detail existing landscape character at a more relevant and proportionate scale to the Proposed Development. Baseline descriptions of each LLCA are provided in Appendix C.

5.4 Landscape elements and features

GLVIA3 states that “*Individual components of the landscape, including particular landscape features, and notable aesthetic or perceptual qualities can be judged on their importance in their own right*” noting that “*For example, an ancient hedgerow may have high value in its own right but also be important because it is part of a hedgerow pattern that contributes significantly to landscape character*”.

The following individual components of the landscape have been considered as part of the baseline situation for the Application Site and the Study Area.

5.4.1 Mature trees and vegetation within the Application Site

Since its development in the 1990's, the Thames Valley Park has sought “*to capitalise on the outstanding natural setting by the river Thames*” (The Earley Buildings, 2026). Much of the internal and boundary landscaping for the Application Site has been designed to integrate with the wider landscape and is now well established and mature. The approach to maintenance has meant that whilst some landscape features are contained and municipal in their effect, much of the boundary vegetation and specimen trees are now well established and less contained. These components have value in their own right, contributing to a range of ecosystem services along with perceptual and aesthetic characteristics.

5.4.2 Night-time lighting context

Existing night-time lighting within and around the site is limited, associated principally with the surrounding road network, existing street lighting and the lit frontages of neighbouring buildings within the wider business park. To the north, the woodland forms a dark, unlit edge which screens views towards the railway corridor and the residential area and main road beyond. Existing lighting associated with these features is therefore largely filtered from view from within the site and its immediate surroundings, although it contributes to the wider night-time context.

The submitted Exterior Lighting Strategy records a predominantly low-lit baseline, with localised influence from existing street lighting and developed areas. The overall night-time character of the site is one of low background lighting, where lit elements read as discrete points against a largely dark backdrop.

5.5 Summary of landscape baseline

None of the areas defined within the published LCA will be appraised as part of the LVA as is not considered likely that the Proposed Development would have an important effect on the landscape character at this scale given the size and location. Elements of these have been incorporated into the LLCA which will form the basis of the assessment along with the landscape elements and features discussed above.

Table 2 below sets out the landscape receptors that will form the basis of the assessment of landscape effects.

Table 2: Landscape receptors

Landscape receptor	Value attached to landscape
LLCA 1: Thames Valley Park business park	Low
LLCA 2: Sonning and the Thames Valley Park Local Gap	Medium
LLCA 3: Woodley, Reading and Sonning residential	Very Low
LLCA 4: Bulmershe Park and allotments	High

Landscape receptor	Value attached to landscape
LLCA 5: Caversham Lakes and the River Thames	High
LLCA 6: Major transport corridors	Very Low
Mature trees and vegetation within the Application Site as part of the wider setting of the Thames Valley Park business park	Medium

5.6 Landscape effects of construction

5.6.1 Potential landscape impacts of construction

Impacts on landscape during construction of the Proposed Development are likely to include the following:

- Movement of plant and heavy goods vehicles, both within the Proposed Development and in the surrounding area;
- Temporary stockpiling of storage of construction materials at the Proposed Development;
- Temporary storage of waste materials for recycling at the Proposed Development;
- Establishment of site compounds resulting in temporary structures to serve the workforce;
- Site clearance operations to remove existing vegetation, including hedgerows, trees and boundary woodland, which could increase the openness of the landscape;
- Soil stripping and disturbance of natural landform through excavation and the creation of temporary earthwork bunds, which could locally alter topography of the landscape;
- The presence and operation of tower cranes to construct taller structures within the Proposed Development;
- Building construction including the new buildings and associated infrastructure at the Proposed Development; and
- External lighting to illuminate site operations after dark at the Proposed Development.

5.6.2 Summary of landscape effects of construction

The following section provides a summary of the important landscape effects that would result from the construction of the Proposed Development. A detailed assessment of all landscape effects, including those that are not considered important, is reported in Appendix C.

Due to the enclosed nature of the Application Site set within the mature vegetation of the Thames Valley Park business park there would be limited change to the character or perceptual characteristics of the LLCA within the study area. In proximity to the site of the Proposed Development there would be changes from an operational building on the business park to a construction site. The effects would be limited in size and scale, and perceived over a localised geographical extent. The construction would also be short term. Beyond the immediate site, perceptual effects would be limited to the perception of development when tall cranes would be in use but these would be short term and within the context of the urban backdrop.

There would be no important effects to the LLCA or landscape features considered in the study area during construction.

Table 3: Summary of landscape effects of construction

Landscape receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude of impact	Importance of effect
LLCA 1: Thames Valley Park business park	Low	Low	Minor adverse (not important)

Landscape receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude of impact	Importance of effect
LLCA 2: Sonning and the Thames Valley Park Local Gap	Medium	Very Low	Negligible adverse (not important)
LLCA 3: Woodley, Reading and Sonning residential	Very Low	Very Low	Negligible adverse (not important)
LLCA 4: Bulmershe Park and allotments	Low	Very Low	Negligible adverse (not important)
LLCA 5: Caversham Lake and the River Thames	Medium	Very Low	Minor adverse (not important)
LLCA 6: Major transport corridors	Very Low	Very Low	Negligible adverse (not important)
Mature trees and vegetation within the Application Site as part of the wider setting of the Thames Valley Park business park	High	Very Low	Minor adverse (not important)

5.7 Landscape effects at year one of existence and operation

5.7.1 Potential landscape impacts of existence and operation

Impacts on landscape during year one of existence and operation of the Proposed Development are likely to include the following:

- Existence and operation of permanent, large-scale structures including the data centre building, chiller units, substation, and generators at the Proposed Development;
- Easements that prevent existing vegetation being replaced or mitigation planting;
- Loss of existing vegetation, which may cause severance and fragmentation of existing landscape elements, for example woodland and hedgerows to the east of the Proposed Development;
- External safety lighting to illuminate site operations after dark at the Proposed Development; and
- Movement of additional vehicles within and around the operational areas; and
- External lighting to access roads, perimeter routes, car parking and building perimeter and the use of four metre high pole-mounted and building-mounted luminaires.

5.7.2 Summary of landscape effects at year one of existence and operation

The following section provides a summary of the important landscape effects that would result from the Proposed Development in year one of existence and operation. A detailed assessment of all landscape effects, including those that are not considered important, is reported in Appendix C.

The perceptual and aesthetic characteristics of the Proposed Development would largely be experienced as return to the baseline condition. The increased massing of a single building (compared to three current buildings) and the commensurate loss of green spacing between them would slightly increase the perception of larger scale development, but this would be negligible adverse for most LLCA with some experiencing no change.

There would be no important effects to the LLCA or landscape features considered in the study area during year one of existence and operation.

Table 4: Summary of landscape effects at year one of existence and operation

Landscape receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude of impact	Importance of effect
LLCA 1: Thames Valley Park business park	Low	Low	Negligible adverse (not important)
LLCA 2: Sonning and the Thames Valley Park Local Gap	Medium	Very Low	Negligible adverse (not important)
LLCA 3: Woodley, Reading and Sonning residential	Very Low	Very Low	Negligible adverse (not important)
LLCA 4: Bulmershe Park and allotments	Low	No Change	No Change
LLCA 5: Caversham Lake and the River Thames	Medium	Very Low	Negligible adverse (not important)
LLCA 6: Major transport corridors	Very Low	No Change	No Change
Mature trees and vegetation within the Application Site as part of the wider setting of the Thames Valley Park business park	High	Very Low	Minor adverse (not important)

5.8 Residual landscape effects at year 15 of existence and operation

The following section provides a summary of the important residual landscape effects that would result from the Proposed Development following fifteen years of existence and operation. A detailed assessment of all landscape effects, including those that are not considered important, is reported in Appendix C.

The perceptual and aesthetic characteristics of the Proposed Development would largely be experienced as return to the baseline condition. The increased massing of a single building (compared to three current buildings) and the commensurate loss of green spacing between them would slightly increase the perception of larger scale development, but this would be negligible adverse for most LLCA with some experiencing no change.

There would be no important effects to the LLCA or landscape features considered in the study area at year 15 of existence and operation.

Table 5: Summary of landscape effects at year 15 of existence and operation

Landscape receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude of impact	Importance of effect
LLCA 1: Thames Valley Park business park	Low	Low	Negligible adverse (not important)
LLCA 2: Sonning and the Thames Valley Park Local Gap	Medium	Very Low	Negligible adverse (not important)
LLCA 3: Woodley, Reading and Sonning residential	Very Low	Very Low	Negligible adverse (not important)
LLCA 4: Bulmershe Park and allotments	Low	No Change	No Change
LLCA 5: Caversham Lake and the River Thames	Medium	Very Low	Negligible adverse (not important)
LLCA 6: Major transport corridors	Very Low	No Change	No Change
Mature trees and vegetation within the Application Site as part of the wider setting of the Thames Valley Park business park	High	Very Low	Minor adverse (not important)

6. Visual baseline and effects

6.1 Introduction

This section summarises the visual baseline and likely impacts identified within the Study Area through a review of Zones of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) and fieldwork surveys. Detailed descriptions of the baseline and likely effects are provided in Appendix D.

6.2 Zones of Theoretical Visibility

The ZTV presented in **Appendix E, Figure 6** has been used to help identify sensitive visual receptor groups and locate representative viewpoints. The ZTV represents the worst-case building option scenario.

Fieldwork surveys have shown that other vegetation not modelled into the ZTV, for example along field boundaries and in private gardens, further reduces the extent of visibility indicated on the ZTV.

The ZTV with screening presented in **Appendix E, Figure 6** demonstrates that large areas of study area are unlikely to experience views of the Proposed Development. Within the urban context to the south of railway line it is unlikely that the proposed development would be visible to this extent. Pockets of visibility are limited to the area around Bulmershe Park and the Reading Road Allotments. To the north of the railway there is potential visibility from the open spaces alongside the River Thames, and also from the large water bodies. There is some visibility to the east around the proposed Sonning Local Gap area although access to this area is quite limited. Further to the north beyond the proposed Study Area there are potential views from fields around Littlestead Green. Whilst it could be considered that making a more ovate shaped Study Area would encapsulate this potential visibility, this has not been undertaken in this instance. Viewpoints have been considered from these areas outside the 1.5km Study Area to consider effects, but because the size and scale of the Proposed Development within its context have also been considered along with the ZTV, it is not considered that this would lead to a proportionate Study Area that will help understand where important effects might be experienced.

6.3 Visual receptors and representative viewpoints

Visual receptors likely to experience views of the construction or existence and operation of the Proposed Development were identified through interrogation of the ZTVs and fieldwork, and subsequently categorised into the following types:

- Residents of local communities;
- People engaged in outdoor recreation whose attention or interest is likely to be focussed on the landscape and on particular views;
- Visitors to tourist hotspots, heritage assets or other attractions, particularly at specific viewpoints or viewing places, where views of the landscape are important to the experience;
- People engaged in outdoor sport or recreation which does not involve or depend upon appreciation of views of the landscape; and
- People at their place of work.

Where a collection of visual receptors in the same category are located in proximity and are likely to experience similar views, they have been grouped.

No views are experienced from the major network corridors including the railway line and the A4 and A3290. People travelling along major road, rail or other transport routes which are not recognised as scenic routes are of low susceptibility, and the baseline context of these views would be very low. Therefore these receptor types and groups have been scoped out of the assessment.

Representative viewpoints have been used to inform the assessment of visual effects. These viewpoints, which have been agreed with Wokingham Borough Council, have been selected to represent a range of close,

middle and long-distance views from various receptor groups including residents, recreational users and people travelling through the area.

Appendix D sets out in detail the baseline and assessment of effects relating to the visual receptors associated with each viewpoint. The location of these viewpoints is shown in **Appendix E, Figure 7**.

Winter annotated photographs (Landscape Institute Type 1) of the existing baseline view are included for each representative viewpoint. Refer to Section 1.3 Assumptions and limitations regarding the fieldwork conditions whilst undertaking viewpoint photography fieldwork and associated considerations during assessment.

6.4 Summary of visual baseline

This section provides a summary of the extent and character of views and visual amenity across the Study Area, determined through desk study and fieldwork.

Short distance views of the Application Site are very limited due to the localised context of other tall buildings and the mature vegetation within the wider Thames Valley Park business park and also the adjacent open space alongside the River Thames. There will be short distance views for people using the communal recreational space in front of the building, but other views for people travelling through the Thames Valley Park Business Park and alongside the River Thames will be of a highly localised extent and often restricted to glimpses through intervening vegetation. The railway line corridor heavily screens views to the south.

Elsewhere there are longer distanced views for people using recreational routes, notably alongside the River Thames but these are highly screened by intervening vegetation and constrained by the flat landform. There are some views to the north from more elevated terrain for people using the PRow network around Littlestead Green and Dunsden Green. These provide views down onto the Application Site but are set within wider views of the urban extent of Wokingham and Reading.

Table 6: Representative viewpoints and visual receptors

Representative viewpoint	Associated visual receptor groups	Value attached to the view
1: Thames Valley Park business park communal landscaped picnic area	- Visitors to the Thames Valley Park Nature Reserve - People working at the Thames Valley Park business park	Low
2: Thames Path Nationally Promoted Route and PRow EARL3	- People travelling through the landscape using the Thames path Nationally Promoted Route and other PRow whose attention or interest is likely to be focussed on the landscape and on particular views - River users including those beside (such as anglers) and those on (such as pleasure boats and water sports) the water - Visitors to the Thames Valley Park Nature Reserve - People using the Redgrave Pinsent Rowing Lake	High
3: Thames Path Nationally Promoted Route and NCN Route 4	- People travelling through the landscape using the Thames path Nationally Promoted Route and other PRow whose attention or interest is likely to be focussed on the landscape and on particular views - People travelling through the landscape using National Cycle Route 4 - River users including those beside (such as anglers) and those on (such as pleasure boats and water sports) the water - People using the Redgrave Pinsent Rowing Lake	High
4: Inglewood House off Sonning Lane	- Residents to the east of the Application Site at the western extent of Sonning - People using the sports complex and playing fields at Sonning	Medium

Representative viewpoint	Associated visual receptor groups	Value attached to the view
5: London Road bridge above the Great Western railway line heading towards Reading Station	- Residents to the east of the Application Site at the western extent of Sonning - Residents to the south of the railway line and southeast of the Application Site at the northwestern extent of Woodley - Residents to the south of the railway line and south of the Application Site at the northern extent of Earley	Very Low
6: Bulmershe Park SULV	- Residents to the south of the railway line and southeast of the Application Site at the northwestern extent of Woodley - Visitors to Bulmershe Park, Earley including the Highwood Local Nature Reserve (LNR) - People using the Reading Road allotments and Bulmershe Park sports complex	Medium
7: PLCA3A Key view 2 (west of Milestone Wood) PRoW 205/11/10	Visitors to key view locations as defined in the Draft Eye and Dunsden Landscape Character Assessment and Proposal for a Local Valued Landscape	High
8: PLCA1 Key view 1 Thames Path	Visitors to key view locations as defined in the Draft Eye and Dunsden Landscape Character Assessment and Proposal for a Local Valued Landscape	High
9: PLCA3A 3 Key view 3 Foxhill Lane	Visitors to key view locations as defined in the Draft Eye and Dunsden Landscape Character Assessment and Proposal for a Local Valued Landscape	High
10: Junction of Hilltop Road and London Road, Earley	Residents to the south of the railway line and south of the Application Site at the northern extent of Earley	Very Low
11: Junction of Shepherds Avenue and London Road	Residents to the south of the railway line and south of the Application Site at the northern extent of Earley	Very Low

6.5 Visual effects of construction

6.5.1 Potential visual impacts of construction

Impacts on visual receptors during construction of the Proposed Development are likely to include the following:

- Demolitions and site clearance of the existing three buildings including the removal and temporary storage of waste and recyclable materials;
- Site clearance operations to remove existing vegetation, including hedgerows, trees and woodland strips, which could increase the openness of views or remove screening to reveal new incongruous elements;
- The removal and stockpiling of topsoil and subsoil, and disturbance of landform through excavation and the creation of temporary earthwork bunds, which could appear as incongruous elements in views, and increase the openness of landscape views or remove screening elements to reveal new incongruous elements;
- Views of detracting elements including taller plant and equipment such as tower cranes to construct taller structures such as the data centre building, chiller units, and substation, and other plant in the landscape breaking the skyline;
- Views of temporary areas and buildings for plant maintenance, site offices and compounds which could appear as incongruous elements in the view;
- Views of temporary stockpiling of construction materials, and waste materials for recycling on site which could appear as incongruous elements in the view;
- Movement of site personnel, plant and heavy goods vehicles, and delivery and removal vehicles within the Proposed Development and in the surrounding area, which could appear as incongruous elements in the view;
- External lighting views to illuminate site operations after dark for safety and security purposes which could alter night-time views.

6.5.2 Summary of visual effects of construction

The following section provides a summary of the important visual effects that would result from the construction of the Proposed Development. A detailed assessment of all visual effects, including those that are not considered important, is reported in Appendix D.

Construction activity would be most apparent from short-range viewpoints, although the nature and extent of effects would vary depending on the degree of intervening screening. From Viewpoint 1, within Thames Valley Park, there would be close-range views of site clearance, demolition, construction activity, materials storage, site facilities, plant and equipment, vehicle movements and tall cranes. These works would form a prominent change in the view, albeit within a highly localised geographical extent.

Viewpoint 11 is also a close-range view, located close to the southern boundary of the Application Site. However, from this location, views towards the site would be strongly influenced by the intervening railway corridor, associated landform and vegetation. Ground-level construction activity would generally be screened, with visibility likely to be limited to tall cranes or taller plant visible above intervening tree cover, particularly in winter when vegetation is not in leaf. Although the viewpoint is close to the Application Site, the intervening screening would reduce the prominence and extent of construction activity in the view.

From other medium- and longer-distance viewpoints, construction activity would generally be less apparent due to increased distance and the filtering or screening effect of intervening woodland, trees, boundary vegetation, built form and landform. Where visible, construction activity would mainly comprise tall cranes or taller plant seen above vegetation or built form, forming a small-scale or barely perceptible addition within the wider view.

Overall, the greatest visual effects during construction would occur where short-range views have an open or partially open relationship with the Application Site. Effects would be reduced where intervening vegetation, built form, landform or the railway corridor screen or filter views, and would generally reduce with increasing distance. With the exception of the important effects identified for receptors represented by Viewpoint 1, construction visual effects would be Minor adverse or Negligible adverse and not important.

Overall, construction effects would be temporary and reversible. Night-time effects from construction lighting are expected to be limited, as representative receptors at the assessed viewpoints are unlikely to be present during night-time periods.

Table 7: Summary of visual effects of construction

Visual receptor group number	Visual receptor group name	Sensitivity	Magnitude of impact	Importance of effect
1	Residents to the east of the Application Site at the western extent of Sonning	High	Very Low	Minor Adverse (not important)
2	Residents to the south of the railway line and southeast of the Application Site at the northwestern extent of Woodley	High	Low	Minor Adverse (not important)
3	Residents to the south of the railway line and south of the Application Site at the northern extent of Earley	Low	Low	Minor Adverse (not important)
4	People travelling through the landscape using the Thames path Nationally Promoted Route and other PRow whose attention or interest is likely to be focussed on the landscape and on particular views	High	Very Low	Minor Adverse (not important)
5	People travelling through the landscape using National Cycle Route 4	High	Very Low	Minor Adverse (not important)
6	River users including those beside (such as anglers) and those on (such as pleasure boats and water sports) the water	High	Very Low	Minor Adverse (not important)
7	Visitors to Bulmershe Park, Earley including the Highwood Local Nature Reserve (LNR)	High	Very Low	Minor Adverse (not important)
8	Visitors to key view locations as defined in the Draft Eye and Dunsden Landscape Character Assessment and Proposal for a Local Valued Landscape	High	Very Low	Minor Adverse (not important)
9	Visitors to the Thames Valley Park Nature Reserve	High	High	Moderate Adverse (Important)
10	People using the Redgrave Pinsent Rowing Lake	Low	Very Low	Negligible Adverse (not important)
11	People using the Reading Road allotments and Bulmershe Park sports complex People using the Reading Road allotments and Bulmershe Park sports complex	Medium / Low	Very Low	Minor Adverse (not important)
12	People using the sports complex and playing fields at Sonning	Low	Very Low	Negligible Adverse (not important)

Visual receptor group number	Visual receptor group name	Sensitivity	Magnitude of impact	Importance of effect
13	People working at the Thames Valley Park business park	Medium	High	Moderate Adverse (Important)

6.6 Visual effects at year one of existence and operation

6.6.1 Potential visual impacts at year one of existence and operation

Impacts on visual receptors during year one of existence and operation of the Proposed Development are likely to include the following:

- Existence and operation of permanent, large-scale structures including the data centre building, chiller units, and substation which could appear as incongruous elements in the view;
- The increased massing from the coalescence of the three existing building with associated spacing into a single building;
- Loss of vegetation, which may cause severance and fragmentation of existing landscape elements, for example woodland and hedgerows which could increase the openness of landscape views or remove screening elements to reveal new incongruous elements;
- The introduction of reinstated or new vegetation as either part of the operational design of the Proposed Development or as part of the design and embedded mitigation which could alter views compared to the baseline context as it establishes; and
- The visible movement of additional vehicles within and around the Proposed Development.

6.6.2 Summary of visual effects at year one of existence and operation

The following section provides a summary of the important visual effects that would result from the Proposed Development at Year 1 of existence and operation.

At Year 1 of existence and operation, visual effects would vary according to the proximity of receptors, the extent of intervening vegetation, built form and landform, and the degree to which the Proposed Development would be visible above or through existing screening. The greatest effects would occur where receptors experience relatively close-range or open views towards the Application Site, or where the increased height and massing of the Proposed Development would be visible above the existing tree line.

From Viewpoint 1, within Thames Valley Park, the Proposed Development would be visible at close range and would result in a noticeable change to the composition of the view. Although built form is already present in the baseline, the increased massing of a single, larger building, together with the loss of existing vegetated spaces between the current buildings, would be apparent. At this stage, new planting would not yet be sufficiently established to provide the level of integration expected in the longer term. Effects on visitors to the Thames Valley Park Nature Reserve and people working at Thames Valley Park business park would therefore be Moderate adverse and important.

Important visual effects would also occur for people using the Thames Path Nationally Promoted Route, river users and visitors to the Thames Valley Park Nature Reserve represented by Viewpoint 2. In these views, the upper parts of the Proposed Development would be visible above intervening buildings and vegetation, particularly in winter, and would be seen as a large massing above the tree line. However, the effects would be experienced over a short section of route and the Proposed Development would be viewed obliquely, away from the principal river views. Effects for people using the Redgrave Pinsent Rowing Lake would be less important due to the lower susceptibility of this receptor group.

From Viewpoint 11, which is a close-range view to the south of the Application Site, the Proposed Development may be intermittently visible through winter trees. However, the intervening railway corridor, associated landform and vegetation would limit the extent of visibility, and nearby residential receptors are generally orientated towards London Road rather than towards the Application Site. The increased height and proximity of the Proposed Development, together with potential lighting, may result in some discernible changes to views, but these would be localised and seen in the context of existing commercial development, the railway corridor, street lighting and traffic along London Road. Effects would be Minor adverse and not important.

From other representative viewpoints, including those to the west, east, south and northeast of the Application Site, the Proposed Development would generally be screened or heavily filtered by intervening

woodland, trees, built form and landform. In some longer-distance elevated views, such as Viewpoints 7 and 9, the Proposed Development may be visible as part of the wider urban and commercial context, but it would form a small or barely perceptible change within a broad panorama and would not break the skyline. From several viewpoints, including Viewpoints 3, 4, 5, 6, 8 and 10, the Proposed Development would either not be discernible or would occupy such a small part of the view that there would be no change.

Overall, the most important Year 1 visual effects would be experienced from short-range views in Thames Valley Park and from the Thames Path/river corridor where the Proposed Development would be more clearly visible. Elsewhere, effects would be reduced by intervening vegetation, built form, landform and the railway corridor, or by the Proposed Development forming a small element within wider urban-influenced views. With the exception of the important effects identified for receptors represented by Viewpoints 1 and 2, Year 1 visual effects would be Minor adverse, Negligible adverse or No Change, and not important.

Table 8: Summary of visual effects at year one of existence and operation

Visual receptor group number	Visual receptor group name	Sensitivity	Magnitude of impact	Importance of effect
1	Residents to the east of the Application Site at the western extent of Sonning	High	No change	No change (not important)
2	Residents to the south of the railway line and southeast of the Application Site at the northwestern extent of Woodley	High	Low	Minor adverse (not important)
3	Residents to the south of the railway line and south of the Application Site at the northern extent of Earley	Low	No change	No change (not important)
4	People travelling through the landscape using the Thames path Nationally Promoted Route and other PRow whose attention or interest is likely to be focussed on the landscape and on particular views	High	Medium	Moderate adverse (Important)
5	People travelling through the landscape using National Cycle Route 4	High	No change	No change (not important)
6	River users including those beside (such as anglers) and those on (such as pleasure boats and water sports) the water	High	Medium	Moderate adverse (Important)
7	Visitors to Bulmershe Park, Earley including the Highwood Local Nature Reserve (LNR)	High	No change	No change (not important)
8	Visitors to key view locations as defined in the Draft Eye and Dunsden Landscape Character Assessment and Proposal for a Local Valued Landscape	High	Low	Minor adverse (not important)
9	Visitors to the Thames Valley Park Nature Reserve	High	Medium	Moderate adverse (Important)
10	People using the Redgrave Pinsent Rowing Lake	Low	Medium	Negligible adverse (not important)
11	People using the Reading Road allotments and Bulmershe Park sports complex	Medium / Low	No change	No change (not important)
12	People using the sports complex and playing fields at Sonning	Low	No change	No change (not important)
13	People working at the Thames Valley Park business park	Medium	Medium	Moderate adverse (Important)

6.7 Summary of residual visual effects at year 15 of existence and operation

The following section provides a summary of the important residual visual effects that would result from the Proposed Development following fifteen years of existence and operation. A detailed assessment of all visual effects, including those that are not considered important, is reported in Appendix D.

At year 15 of existence and operation, the majority of residual visual effects would reduce as the embedded mitigation and landscape enhancement measures described in Section 7 establish. These measures include the retention and reinforcement of existing boundary vegetation, supplementary native woodland and ornamental planting, and the perimeter-led “Green Ring” landscape strategy. Together, these measures would help to filter and soften views of the Proposed Development, particularly the lower parts of the built form, and integrate it further within the established landscape framework of Thames Valley Park.

Important residual visual effects would remain for visual receptor groups represented by Viewpoint 2, comprising people travelling through the landscape using the Thames Path Nationally Promoted Route and other PRow, river users, and visitors to Thames Valley Park Nature Reserve. From this location, the upper parts of the Proposed Development would remain visible above intervening vegetation and built form, forming a noticeable addition to the wooded skyline and wider river corridor view. While the embedded mitigation would assist in filtering lower-level views and strengthening the surrounding landscape structure, the scale and height of the Proposed Development mean that the upper parts of the building would continue to be visible from this part of the Thames corridor.

The important residual effects would be experienced over a localised section of route and would be viewed obliquely, away from the principal direction of views along the River Thames. However, given the high sensitivity of these receptors and the high value attached to the view, residual effects for visual receptor groups 4, 6 and 9 would remain Moderate adverse and important at year 15, as summarised in Table 9.

No other visual receptor groups are assessed as experiencing important residual visual effects at year 15. For other receptors, including those represented by Viewpoints 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11, residual effects would be reduced by distance, intervening woodland, built form, landform, the retained frontage trees, existing railway-side vegetation and the establishment of proposed planting. These effects are summarised in Table 9 as Minor adverse, Negligible adverse or No Change, and are not important.

Table 9: Summary of visual effects at year 15 of existence and operation

Visual receptor group number	Visual receptor group name	Sensitivity	Magnitude of impact	Importance of effect
1	Residents to the east of the Application Site at the western extent of Sonning	High	No Change	No Change (not important)
2	Residents to the south of the railway line and southeast of the Application Site at the northwestern extent of Woodley	High	No Change	No Change (not important)
3	Residents to the south of the railway line and south of the Application Site at the northern extent of Earley	Low	Very Low	Negligible adverse (not important)
4	People travelling through the landscape using the Thames path Nationally Promoted Route and other PRow whose attention or interest is likely to be focussed on the landscape and on particular views	High	Medium	Moderate adverse (Important)
5	People travelling through the landscape using National Cycle Route 4	High	No Change	No Change (not important)
6	River users including those beside (such as anglers) and those on (such as pleasure boats and water sports) the water	High	Medium	Moderate adverse (Important)
7	Visitors to Bulmershe Park, Earley including the Highwood Local Nature Reserve (LNR)	High	No Change	No Change (not important)
8	Visitors to key view locations as defined in the Draft Eye and Dunsden Landscape Character Assessment and Proposal for a Local Valued Landscape	High	Low	Minor adverse (not important)
9	Visitors to the Thames Valley Park Nature Reserve	High	Medium	Moderate adverse (Important)
10	People using the Redgrave Pinsent Rowing Lake	Low	Medium	Negligible adverse (not important)
11	People using the Reading Road allotments and Bulmershe Park sports complex	Medium / Low	No Change	No Change (not important)
12	People using the sports complex and playing fields at Sonning	Low	No Change	No Change (not important)
13	People working at the Thames Valley Park business park	Medium	Low	Minor adverse (not important)

7. Design, mitigation and enhancement measures

7.1 Embedded mitigation

The Proposed Development has been designed, as far as possible, to avoid adverse effects on the landscape and views through option identification, assessment, selection and refinement.

Modifications made to the design of the Proposed Development to avoid landscape and visual effects include:

- the refinement of the layout to concentrate built development within the existing developed plot and retain the established commercial character of Thames Valley Park;
- positioning the administration building along the northern frontage to respond to the existing building line, with the larger data halls and operational infrastructure set further within the site;
- refinement of the building position to reduce effects on existing trees and Root Protection Areas, including avoidance of direct impacts on protected trees where practicable;
- development of the building massing and façade approach to respond to the established scale, rhythm and articulation of the surrounding business park; and
- refinement of the retaining wall and security fencing strategy to reduce disturbance to boundary vegetation and maintain landscape connectivity around the site.

Measures which have been integrated (embedded) into the Proposed Development to minimise effects on landscape character, views and visual amenity include the following:

- retention of existing mature trees, hedgerows and woodland around the site boundaries where practicable, including the existing line of frontage trees, which will be supplemented with additional planting to reinforce the established landscape edge and filter views from Thames Valley Park.
- reinforcement of boundary planting to provide a continuous planted framework around the Proposed Development;
- new native woodland and ornamental planting to strengthen the landscape structure and help integrate the Proposed Development within the wider business park setting;
- removal of redundant hardstanding where practicable to allow new planting and habitat creation;
- use of a perimeter-led “Green Ring” landscape strategy to maintain ecological and visual connectivity around the site;
- a retaining wall strategy that reduces disturbance to woodland and Root Protection Areas, with the highest sections located where they would be screened by built form;
- positioning of security fencing to reduce effects on retained vegetation while meeting operational requirements; and
- architectural and plant-screening measures, including façade articulation and louvred or mesh plant enclosures, to reduce the apparent scale and utilitarian appearance of the built form.

7.1.1 Landscape design approach

A Landscape Strategy has been developed as part of the iterative design process to retain and reinforce the established green character of Thames Valley Park, while maximising ecological connectivity around the Application Site. The strategy includes a “Green Ring” approach, which concentrates development within the centre of the plot and uses retained and proposed woodland planting to create a continuous landscape framework around the Proposed Development.

Existing woodland, hedgerows and mature trees would be retained wherever practicable, with additional native woodland planting proposed along the eastern and western boundaries. Along the northern frontage, existing mature trees would be retained and supplemented with new planting to reinforce the established avenue character and help soften views of the Proposed Development.

The position of the security fencing has been informed by the landscape strategy, with the fence line located to maximise habitat permeability around the site as far as practicable. Areas of redundant hardstanding would be replaced with new planting and habitat creation, supporting the wider landscape and biodiversity objectives for the site.

The retaining wall strategy has also been developed to minimise effects on existing woodland and root protection areas, helping to safeguard the most valuable retained landscape features. Within the secure perimeter, ornamental planting and tree groups would be incorporated around the administration building to enhance the arrival experience and contribute to the overall setting of the Proposed Development.

7.1.1.1 Aims and objectives

The overall objective of the landscape design is to integrate the Proposed Development into its landscape setting and eliminate or minimise adverse landscape and visual effects as far as practicable. The design has been developed in collaboration with the wider design team and other specialists to achieve a solution that achieves this objective whilst maximising opportunities to deliver net gains in biodiversity.

The landscape design aims to achieve the following:

- **Maximising Ecological Connectivity:** The design intentionally uses the site perimeter to maximise ecological connectivity.
- **Strengthening Existing Green Infrastructure:** Proposals create links between the existing woodland by reinforcing existing planting and introducing new planting corridors, increasing ecological connectivity and creating a continuous green backdrop with the surrounding landscape.
- **Permeability:** The position of the proposed security fencing is kept as close to the buildings as possible, maximising ecological and habitat permeability across the site.
- **One Continuous Habitat:** By concentrating the building massing and screening close to the development footprint, and reinforcing and extending planting along the eastern and western boundaries, the proposals create continuous north–south habitat corridors, forming a permeable green ring around the data centre

8. Glossary of terms

The following terminology has been used consistently throughout the assessment:

- **Landscape Character Types (LCT):** distinct types of landscape that are relatively homogeneous in character, which may occur in different parts of the Study Area. Where they occur they share broadly similar combinations of geology, topography, drainage patterns, vegetation and historical land use and settlement pattern, and perceptual and aesthetic attributes.
- **Landscape Character Areas (LCA):** unique areas of relatively homogenous landscape character which are the discrete geographical areas of a particular landscape type.
- **Townscape Character Areas (TCA):** unique areas of relatively homogenous townscape character which are the discrete geographical areas of a particular townscape type. Typical townscape elements include landform, street patterns and built development, vegetation and open space. More subjective criteria are also considered such as sense of scale, unity and enclosure.
- **Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV):** a computer-generated map showing areas of landscape within which the Proposed Development would either be screened or would be theoretically visible.

- **Visual Receptors:** discrete groups of people who would have views of the Proposed Development. Visual receptor groups have been identified through desk study and fieldwork.
- **Representative Viewpoints:** viewpoints selected to represent the experience of different visual receptor groups, where larger numbers of viewpoints cannot all be included individually and where the levels of significance of effect are unlikely to differ.

9. References

- Eye and Dunsden Parish Council, 2022. *Landscape Character Assessment and Proposal for a Local Valued Landscape*. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.southandvale.gov.uk/app/uploads/sites/2/2025/11/II.-Landscape-Character-Assessment-v12-26Apr22-compressed-1.pdf>
- Eye and Dunsden Parish Council, 2025. *Eye and Dunsden Neighbourhood Plan Submission draft*. [Online]
Available at:
<https://www.southandvale.gov.uk/app/uploads/sites/2/2025/11/EyeDunsdenNeighbourhoodPlan-November-2025-compressed.pdf>
- HM Treasury and National Infrastructure & Service Transformation Authority, 2025. *UK Infrastructure: A 10 Year Strategy*. [Online]
Available at:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6853c5db99b009dcdb73649/UK_Infrastructure_A_10_Year_Strategy_Web_Accessible.pdf
- House of Commons Library, 2025. *Data centres: planning policy, sustainability, and resilience - Research Briefing 03 Nov 2025*. [Online]
Available at: <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-10315/>
- Infrastructure and Projects Authority, 2021. *Transforming Infrastructure Performance: Roadmap to 2030*. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/transforming-infrastructure-performance-roadmap-to-2030/transforming-infrastructure-performance-roadmap-to-2030>
- Infrastructure and Projects Authority, 2024. *Analysis of the National Infrastructure and Construction Pipeline 2023*. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-infrastructure-and-construction-pipeline-2023>
- Landscape Institute; IEMA, 2013. *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA)*. 3rd ed. Abingdon, Oxon.: Routledge.
- Landscape Institute, 2017. *Technical Information Note 05/17 Townscape Character Assessment*. [Online]
Available at: <https://landscapewpstorage01.blob.core.windows.net/www-landscapeinstitute-org/2018/04/tin-05-2017-townscape.pdf>
- Landscape Institute, 2019. *Technical Guidance Note (TGN) 06/2019: Visual Representation of Development Proposals*. [Online]
Available at: https://landscapewpstorage01.blob.core.windows.net/www-landscapeinstitute-org/2019/09/LI_TGN-06-19_Visual_Representation.pdf
- Landscape Institute, 2020. *Infrastructure, Technical Guidance Note 04/20*. [Online]
Available at: <https://landscapewpstorage01.blob.core.windows.net/www-landscapeinstitute-org/2018/01/LI-Infrastructure-TGN-FINAL-200924.pdf>
- Landscape Institute, 2021. *Technical Guidance Note 02/21: Assessing Landscape Value outside National Designations*. [Online]
Available at: <https://landscapewpstorage01.blob.core.windows.net/www-landscapeinstitute-org/2021/05/tgn-02-21-assessing-landscape-value-outside-national-designations.pdf>
- Landscape Institute, 2024. *LI TGN 01/24 Notes and Clarifications on aspects of the 3rd Edition Guidelines on Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3)*. [Online]
Available at: https://www.landscapeinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/LITGN-2024-01-GLVIA3-NC_Aug-2024.pdf
- MHCLG, 2014. *Planning Practice Guidance, Historic Environment*. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/conserving-and-enhancing-the-historic-environment>

MHCLG, 2014. *Planning Practice Guidance, Tree Preservation Orders and trees in conservation areas*. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/tree-preservation-orders-and-trees-in-conservation-areas>

MHCLG, 2019. *Planning Practice Guidance, Design: Process and Tools*. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/design>

MHCLG, 2021. *National Design Guide*. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-design-guide>

MHCLG, 2023. *Planning Practice Guidance, Green Belt*. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/green-belt>

MHCLG, 2026. *National Planning Policy Framework*. [Online]
Available at: [National Planning Policy Framework.pdf](#)

MHCLG, 2025. *Planning Practice Guidance, Natural Environment*. [Online]
Available at: [Available at: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/natural-environment](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/natural-environment)

Natural England, 2013. *National Character Area 115 Thames Valley*. [Online]
Available at: <https://nationalcharacterareas.co.uk/thames-valley/>

Natural England, 2014. *An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment*. [Online]
Available at:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/691184/landscape-character-assessment.pdf

Natural England, 2026. *Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) Map application*. [Online]
Available at: <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/home.htm>

Oxfordshire County Council; Natural England; The Earth Trust, 2004. *Oxfordshire Wildlife & Landscape Study*. [Online]
Available at: <https://owls.oxfordshire.gov.uk/wps/wcm/connect/occ/OWLS/Home/>

Oxfordshire County Council, 2017. *Oxfordshire Historic Landscape Characterisation Project*. [Online]
Available at:
https://data.southoxon.gov.uk/ccm/support/Main.jsp?MODULE=FolderView&ID=2828305432&CODE=32EDC8FC20E8822242208B6E527535DE&NAME=Local%20Plan%202035%20Documents%20and%20Evidence%20Base&REF=SLP_EXAMLIB&REFERER_URL_IN=&SOVA_IN=SOUTH#exactline

Reading Borough Council, 2008. *South Park Conservation Area Appraisal*. [Online]
Available at: https://images.reading.gov.uk/2019/12/South_Park_full.pdf

Reading Borough Council, 2008. *Tall buildings Strategy*. [Online]
Available at: <https://images.reading.gov.uk/2019/12/Reading-Tall-Buildings-Strategy-0308.pdf>

Reading Borough Council, 2018. *Assessment of significant views with heritage interest*. [Online]
Available at: <https://images.reading.gov.uk/2021/11/Assessment-of-Significant-Views-with-Heritage-Interest-January-2018.pdf>

Reading Borough Council, 2019. *Reading Borough Local Plan*. [Online]
Available at: https://images.reading.gov.uk/2019/12/Local_Plan_Adopted_November_2019.pdf

Sonning Parish Council, 2025. *Draft Sonning Neighbourhood Plan – Regulation 15*. [Online]
Available at: <https://sonning.info/snp/>

Sonning Parish Council, 2025. *Sonning Neighbourhood Plan Local Gap Study*. [Online]
Available at: https://sonning.info/snp/Docs/Sonning_Local_Gap_Study_with_figures_and_appendices-RevB.pdf

South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse District Council, 2024. *Landscape Character Assessment For South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse*. [Online]

Available at: <https://www.southandvale.gov.uk/app/uploads/2024/12/NHL04-Landscape-Character-Assessment.pdf>

South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse District Council, 2024. *Local Landscape Designation Review of South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse*. [Online]

Available at: <https://www.southandvale.gov.uk/app/uploads/2024/12/NHL16-Local-Landscape-Designation-Review.pdf>

South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse District Council, 2026. *South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse district council Joint Local Plan 2041*. [Online]

Available at: <https://www.southandvale.gov.uk/app/uploads/2024/12/CSD01-Joint-Local-Plan-2041-Publication-Version.pdf>

South Oxfordshire District Council, 2017. *Landscape Character Assessment for the Local Plan 2033*. [Online]

Available at:

https://data.southoxon.gov.uk/ccm/support/dynamic_serve.jsp?ID=2828305567&CODE=2A5978D0EF99E781A0E2C40F6F98F217

South Oxfordshire District Council, 2020. *South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035*. [Online]

Available at: <https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/south-oxfordshire-district-council/planning-and-development/local-plan-and-planning-policies/local-plan-2035/adopted-local-plan-2035/>

The Earley Buildings, 2026. *The Earley Buildings at Thames Valley Park*. [Online]

Available at: <https://theearleybuildings.co.uk/thames-valley-park/>

Wokingham Borough Council, 2010. *Adopted Core Strategy Development Plan*. [Online]

Available at: <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/sites/wokingham/files/2023-06/Final%20adopted%20Core%20Strategy%20inc.%20cover.pdf>

Wokingham Borough Council, 2010. *Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document*. [Online]

Available at: <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/sites/wokingham/files/2023-06/CD13.10%20Sustainable%20Design%20Construction%20SPD.pdf>

Wokingham Borough Council, 2012. *Interactive Borough Design Guide*. [Online]

Available at: <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/sites/wokingham/files/2023-06/CD13.03%20Borough%20Design%20Guide%20Interactive%20SPD%20%281%29.pdf>

Wokingham Borough Council, 2014. *Adopted Managing Development Delivery Local Plan*. [Online]

Available at: <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/sites/wokingham/files/2023-06/Adopted%20MDD.pdf>

Wokingham Borough Council, 2017. *Sonning Conservation Area Appraisal*. [Online]

Available at: <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/sites/wokingham/files/2023-06/Sonning%20Conservation%20Area%20%20Appraisal%202017%20%28Adopted%2019%20April%202017%29.pdf>

Wokingham Borough Council, 2019. *Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment*. [Online]

Available at: <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/planning-policy/evidence-studies>

Wokingham Borough Council, 2024. *Sites of Urban Landscape Value Assessment*. [Online]

Available at: <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/sites/wokingham/files/2024-09/Sites%20of%20Urban%20Landscape%20Value%20Assessment.pdf>

Wokingham Borough Council, 2024. *Valued Landscapes Assessment*. [Online]

Available at: <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/sites/wokingham/files/2024-09/Valued%20Landscape%20Assessment%20September%202024%20%28reduced%29.pdf>

Wokingham Borough Council, 2026. *Wokingham Borough Council Tree Preservation Orders Map*. [Online]

Available at: https://wokingham.sharepoint.com/:f:/s/TPODocuments/Ei-TJG7o7d5Ig_vNwd6ygl0BYe6sSjsk9kyKO1wnZ1KgxA

Wokingham Borough Council, 2026. *Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update 2023-2040*. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/planning-policy/emerging-local-plan-update>

Appendix A

A.1 Introduction

A.2 Assessment methodology

A.1 Introduction

This appendix sets out the methodology applied in the Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) for the Thames Valley Park Data Centre, hereafter the Proposed Development.

A.2 Assessment methodology

A.2.1 Establishment of the Study Area and baseline

A.2.1.1 Study area

An search area extends 1.5km from the Application Site of the Proposed Development. Zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV) were used to appraise the potential visibility of the Proposed Development. Other information sources referenced during the refinement of the Study Area included online digital mapping, three-dimensional topographical data and aerial photography.

Fieldwork was subsequently undertaken to verify the findings of the desk study. Extensive review of the Study Area was then undertaken in order to identify landscape and visual receptors that have potential to be affected by the Proposed Development. This analysis determined the Study Area, defined as the extent in which the Proposed Development may result in important landscape or visual effects.

The Study Area for the LVA is shown in See Appendix E Figure 1. It includes all land within the Proposed Development site and the area within which the Proposed Development may give rise to important landscape and visual effects.

A.2.1.2 Desk study

Reference has been made to the prevailing policy framework including local plans and evidence base documents to identify any designated landscapes or features of characteristics of value and their relationship to the Proposed Development. Further detail is provided in **Appendix A**.

Other information sources referenced as part of the baseline review included 1:25,000 and 1:10,000 scale Ordnance Survey mapping, three-dimensional topographical data, and site photographs and aerial photography.

The following sources of information were reviewed to inform the landscape and visual baseline and opportunities and constraints which have informed the embedded mitigation and enhancement measures.

- Ordnance Survey base mapping;
- aerial photography;
- Environment Agency LiDAR / topographical data;
- digital surface model (DSM) data used to inform the screened ZTV;
- Application Site boundary and Proposed Development layout;
- relevant statutory landscape, ecological and heritage designations;
- local and non-statutory landscape designations;
- published landscape character assessment boundaries;
- public rights of way, promoted routes and National Cycle Network routes; and
- local planning policy designations and constraints.

Designations relevant to landscape and visual amenity have been mapped in **Appendix E Figure 1** Relevant statutory designations and recreational routes and in **Appendix E Figure 2**: Relevant local and non-statutory designations

The data used for these figures is included below:

1. Application Site and study area
 - Administrative boundaries, Ordnance Survey.
2. Relevant statutory designations and recreational routes
 - Listed buildings and conservation areas, Historic England.
 - Local Nature Reserve and National Trail, Natural England.
 - National Cycle Network, Walk Wheel Cycle Trust, formerly Sustrans.
 - Public Right of Way, Wokingham Council.
3. Relevant local and non-statutory designations
 - Boundary Line administrative boundaries, Ordnance Survey.
 - Sites of Urban Landscape Value, Wokingham Borough Council.
 - The Henley-on-Thames to Sonning Eye Thames Floodplain and Eye and Dunsden Parish Landscape Character Areas, South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils.
 - Sonning–Earley Local Gap, Sonning Parish Council.
 - The River Thames Valued Landscape, Wokingham Borough Council.
 - The Thames Valley Major Landscape Features, Reading Borough Council.
4. Published Landscape Character Assessment
 - Wokingham local character areas, Wokingham Borough Council.
 - Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study, Oxfordshire County Council.
 - LCA 14G: Caversham to Henley Thames River Valley and Eye and Dunsden Parish Landscape Character Areas, South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils.
 - LCA 11: Thames Valley and Fringes, South Oxfordshire District Council.
 - Boundary Line administrative boundaries, Ordnance Survey.
5. Local Landscape Character Areas
 - Local Landscape Character Areas, Arup.
6. Thames Valley Park Data Centre Zone of Theoretical Visibility – screened
 - Derived from Environment Agency data, Arup.
7. Representative viewpoints and photomontage locations
 - Not applicable, Arup.

A.2.1.3 Fieldwork surveys

Fieldwork surveys were undertaken on the 14th April 2026 by qualified and experienced landscape architects to record the characteristics, features and views of the Application Site and the Study Area. The purpose of this fieldwork was to review the boundaries and key characteristics defined in the published landscape character assessments and to identify, record and map characteristics of the landscape not covered by published landscape character assessments.

Additional photography was undertaken in August 2026 to aid the preparation of visualisations requested by the local authority. Due to the project programme, it was not possible to capture winter photography for these additional visualisation viewpoints. However, the baseline photography obtained during the April fieldwork surveys has been retained and continues to inform the assessment of winter baseline conditions.

All fieldwork was recorded using a combination of predetermined criteria to maximise consistency. Attributes recorded as part of the fieldwork surveys included features associated with the natural, built environment and historic landscape which contribute to an understanding of the value attached to the

landscape and views. Perceptual qualities of the landscape, such as tranquillity and time depth were also recorded.

Fieldwork surveys were also used to identify visual receptors and representative viewpoints and to clarify the extent of views, taking account of the effect of intervening features such as buildings and vegetation. As fieldwork was carried out in late spring, assumptions have been made regarding the likely extent of views in winter to inform worst-case assumptions.

This information has informed the LVA and the design of the proposed mitigation and enhancement measures.

A.2.2 Assessment of landscape effects

A.2.2.1 Landscape baseline

GLVIA3 defines landscape receptors as “*aspects of the landscape resource that have the potential to be affected by a proposal*” (Landscape Institute; IEMA, 2013). Landscape receptors have been identified via a review of published landscape character assessments, maps and aerial photography, relevant planning policy and fieldwork surveys.

Landscape character is defined by GLVIA3 as “*a distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse.*”

Published landscape character assessments at the national, regional and local level have been reviewed to identify Landscape Character Types (LCT) and Landscape Character Areas (LCA). These are mapped in Appendix E Figure 4. The geographical extent of LCAs in published assessments at the national level are generally large and extend beyond the Study Area. As explained in paragraph 5.14 of GLVIA3, “*broad-scale assessments at national or regional level can be helpful in setting the landscape context, but are unlikely to be helpful on their own as the basis for LVA*”. These have therefore been included to provide context but effects on these have not been assessed.

The review of published landscape character assessments identified gaps in existing information relating to urban areas on the edge of the Study Area. Therefore, Local Landscape Character Areas (LLCA) have also been identified by the Applicant via desk study and fieldwork surveys to provide full coverage of the Study Area. These are mapped in Appendix E Figure 5.

A.2.2.2 Sensitivity of landscape receptors

Paragraph 5.39 of GLVIA3 states that “*landscape receptors need to be assessed firstly in terms of their sensitivity, combining judgements of their susceptibility to the type of change or development proposed and the value attached to the landscape*”.

Judging landscape sensitivity is thus a two-part process of:

- Value attached to the landscape – relates to the existing landscape and has been determined at the baseline stage in line with paragraph 5.19 of GLVIA3, which states that “*as part of the baseline description the value of the potentially affected landscape should be established*”; and
- Susceptibility to change – which is considered in relation to the proposed development.

A.2.2.2.1 Value attached to the landscape

Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note (TGN) 02/21: Assessing landscape value outside national designations (Landscape Institute, 2021) defines landscape value as “*the relative value or importance attached to different landscapes by society on account of their landscape qualities*”.

For assessing landscape value outside national designations, Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 02/21 is now the primary source of guidance. The approach to assessing the value attached to the landscape has followed a three-stage process:

- **Stage 1** identify if the landscape is covered by any landscape designations;

- **Stage 2** consider each of the factors listed in Table 1 below which have been developed with reference to Table 1 of TGN 02/21 and are pertinent and most important to understanding its value; and
- **Stage 3** make an assessment the value attached to the landscape and assign value based on a five-point scale, clearly articulating the reasons for these judgements.

An overall conclusion will be drawn on the value attached to the landscape for each landscape receptor considering the overall weight of evidence.

Table 10: Establishing landscape value criteria

Stage 1 – Landscape designations	Stage 2 - Define landscape value factors with reference to TGN 02/21	Criteria	Description
Landscape with statutory status or national policy protection: National Park, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, or World Heritage Sites	Natural heritage - Landscape with clear evidence of ecological, geological, geomorphological or physiographic interest which contribute positively to the landscape.	Very High	A designated landscape with statutory status (National Park or AONB).
	Cultural heritage - Landscape with clear evidence of archaeological, historical or cultural interest which contribute positively to the landscape.	High	A locally designated landscape supported by a detailed evidence base or with other strong indicators of value, which may include other relevant designations such as ancient woodland or conservation areas, with identified quality in the development plan or evidence base.
	Landscape condition - Landscape which is in a good physical state both with regard to individual elements and overall landscape structure.		
	Associations - Landscape which is connected with notable people, events and the arts.	Medium	Unlikely to be a designated for landscape quality but may exhibit some indicators of value which are identified in the development plan or evidence base and are important at the community level.
Local landscape designation, such as Special Landscape Area or Area of Great Landscape Value, supported by policy and a detailed evidence base.	Distinctiveness - Landscape that has a strong sense of identity.	Low	Not designated for landscape quality and likely to exhibit few indicators of value which are identified in the development plan or evidence base.
	Recreational - Landscape offering recreational opportunities where experience of landscape is important.		
	Perceptual (Scenic) - Landscape that appeals to the senses, primarily the visual sense.		
No relevant designations.	Perceptual (wildness and tranquillity) - Landscape with a strong perceptual value notably wildness, tranquillity and/or dark skies	Very low	A landscape dominated by industry or infrastructure or which is damaged or degraded landscape, not designated for landscape quality and not likely to exhibit indicators of value which are identified in the development plan or evidence base.
	Functional - Landscape which performs a clearly identifiable and valuable function, particularly in the healthy functioning of the landscape.		

A.2.2.2.2 Valued landscape

According to paragraph A4.2.11 of TGN 02/21, a ‘valued landscape’ is an area identified as having sufficient landscape qualities to elevate it above other more everyday landscapes. It is noted that a valued landscape is no longer a term used in the NPPF which identifies only Protected Landscapes.

Paragraph A4.2.5 of TGN 02/21 states that, “*where a landscape has a statutory status, such as a National Park or AONB, it is self-evident that it is a valued landscape*”. Therefore, where such landscapes are present within the Study Area, and accord with the NPPF definition of Protected Landscapes, these have been attributed very high value and are recognised as valued landscapes.

A different approach has been taken to determine whether landscapes outside of nationally designated landscapes can be considered valued landscape. Paragraph A4.2.6 of TGN 02/21 states that the interpretation of ‘identified quality in the development plan’ is not clear and that there are two fundamentally different interpretations that have been adopted by inspectors, which are considered below in more detail:

1. It means non-statutory, locally designated landscapes;
2. It means any landscape where there is evidence to justify the identification of a ‘valued landscape’. Local designation alone may not be sufficient evidence.

For a landscape without statutory status to be considered valued landscape it must be supported by strong evidence. The assessment has therefore considered each of the criteria set out in Table 10, references in Local Plan policy and evidence base, including whether there are existing local landscape designations in forming an overall judgement. Landscapes with high value may also be considered valued landscape.

A.2.2.2.3 Susceptibility of landscape receptors to change

GLVIA3 paragraph 5.40 defines the susceptibility to change of landscape receptors as:

“the ability of the landscape receptor (whether it be overall character or condition of a particular landscape type or area, or an individual element and/or features, or a particular aesthetic and perceptual aspect) to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies” (paragraph 5.40).

The features and characteristics which are more or less susceptible to the type of changes proposed have been set out for each LCA. The narrative provides a clear explanation based upon analysis of the landscape receptor and the extent to which it is able to accommodate the type of change arising from the specific proposal. The susceptibility to change has then been categorised with reference to the criteria in Table 11 below.

Table 11: Susceptibility of landscape receptors to change

Criteria	Description
Very high	The type of change arising from the specific proposal are very likely to lead to undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies.
High	The type of change arising from the specific proposal are likely to lead to undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies.
Medium	The type of change arising from the specific proposal may lead to undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies.
Low	The type of change arising from the specific proposal are unlikely to lead to undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies.
Very low	The type of change arising from the specific proposal are very unlikely to lead to undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies.

A.2.2.2.4 Combining judgements to define the sensitivity of landscape receptors

The sensitivity of each LCA has been defined by combining professional judgements on the value attached to the landscape and its susceptibility to change and is supported by a clear narrative. Reference has been made to the criteria set out in Table 12 below.

Table 12: Sensitivity of landscape receptors criteria

Criteria	Description
Very high	Landscapes with statutory status or national policy protection with very limited ability to accommodate the type of change without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies.
High	Landscapes which may be locally designated or otherwise supported by a detailed evidence base or landscape with other strong indicators of value with limited ability to accommodate the type of change without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies.
Medium	Landscapes which are unlikely to be a designated for landscape quality but may exhibit some indicators of value and which may have some ability to accommodate the type of change without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies.
Low	Not designated for landscape quality and likely to exhibit few indicators of value and likely to accommodate the type of change with no or limited undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies.
Very low	Landscapes of very low value able to accommodate the type of change without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies.

A.2.2.3 Magnitude of landscape impacts

Paragraph 3.28 of GLVIA3 notes that the magnitude is informed by combining considerations relating to the “scale, extent and duration” of impacts. This includes the geographical extent of influence, the spatial extent of the impact, the level of integration of new features with existing elements, its duration and degree to which the impact is reversible.

In summarising the magnitude of landscape impacts, reference has been made to the following:

- Size and scale – the degree to which key characteristics or features identified in the baseline would change.
- Geographical extent – the area over the change would occur.
- Duration and reversibility – the time over which the change would occur and if these changes are reversible, set out on the following scale: short (weeks); medium (months); and long (years)).

The criteria set out in **Table 13** have been referred to in determining the magnitude of landscape impacts.

Table 13: Magnitude of landscape impacts criteria

Magnitude of landscape impacts	Criteria
Very high	Substantial changes to key characteristics across most of the area or to unique and distinctive features at a local level. May be longer term impacts, permanent or reversible.
High	Changes to the character of the landscape across large parts of the area or to distinctive features at a local level. May be longer term impacts, permanent or reversible
Medium	Changes to the character of the landscape across parts of the area or to some existing features at a local level. May be medium term impacts, permanent or reversible.
Low	Slight change to landscape character or landscape features across a small area. May be short to medium term impacts, permanent or reversible.

Magnitude of landscape impacts	Criteria
Very low	Barely perceptible change to the landscape receptor or may impact a limited area or no key characteristics. May be short term impacts, permanent or reversible.

There may be cases where there will be no impacts on a receptor, for example where the design has been changed to avoid such impacts. In such cases this is recorded as no change.

A.2.3 Assessment of visual effects

A.2.3.1 Visual baseline

Visual receptors are defined in GLVIA3 as “*individuals and/or defined groups of people who have the potential to be affected by a proposal*”. This includes, for example, residents, users of public rights of way and motorists.

Computer-generated zones of theoretical visibility (ZTV) has been prepared and these are presented in Appendix E Figure 6. GLVIA3 defines as ZTV as “*a map, usually digitally produced, showing areas of land within which a development is theoretically visible.*”

ZTVs do not indicate how much of the Proposed Development will be visible. The purpose of the ZTV is to:

- Identify the theoretical extents of visibility of the Proposed Development i.e., areas from which it would not be visible and areas from which it could potentially appear in existing views;
- Assist in the identification of the Study Area;
- Identify visual receptors likely to be affected by the Proposed Development;
- Identify locations that are representative of the views experienced by visual receptors at different locations within the Study Area (representative viewpoints); and
- Inform the design, including the extent and type of proposed mitigation.

A ZTV have been modelled using the ‘Viewshed’ tool in ESRI ArcMap GIS Software.

A ZTV has been prepared that includes models of existing buildings and woodland. This was prepared using digital surface model (DSM) data. This ZTV provides some understanding of potential screening or filtering of views of the Proposed Development, which has been further verified through fieldwork.

For the ZTV an assumed viewing height of 1.7m above ground level has been used to simulate the eye level of a person at the top of the range set out in paragraph 6.11 of GLVIA3 to represent the worst-case scenario.

A.2.3.1.1 Visual receptors and representative viewpoints

Visual receptors likely to experience views of the Proposed Development have been identified through interrogation of the ZTV, desktop analysis of maps and Google Earth, and fieldwork surveys. They have subsequently been categorised into the following types:

- Residents of local communities;
- People engaged in outdoor recreation whose attention or interest is likely to be focussed on the landscape and on particular views;
- Visitors to tourist hotspots, heritage assets or other attractions, particularly at specific viewpoints or viewing places, where views of the landscape are important to the experience;
- People engaged in outdoor sport or recreation which does not involve or depend upon appreciation of views of the landscape; and
- People at their place of work.

Where a collection of visual receptors in the same category are likely to experience similar views, they have been grouped. Representative viewpoints have been identified within the ZTV to assist in describing the baseline view and the effects likely to be experienced by visual receptor groups. These representative viewpoints were agreed with Stuart Ryder on behalf of Wokingham Borough Council on the 25th March 2026 and have been selected on the basis that they cover a range of viewing distances, elevations and orientations from locations with different viewing experiences of the Proposed Development. The selection of representative viewpoints has been informed by the following criteria:

- Accessibility to the public;
- Number and sensitivity of people whose can be affected;
- Viewing direction, distance, openness and elevation; and
- Nature of the viewing experience.

Photographs taken during fieldwork surveys on the 14th April 2026 are included in Appendix E Figure 7 to help demonstrate the nature of baseline views including the extent of existing screening. These photographs are presented as Type 1 annotated photographs. All photographs have been prepared in accordance with Landscape Institute TGN 06/19 (Landscape Institute, 2019).

A.2.3.2 Sensitivity of visual receptors

Paragraph 6.31 of GLVIA3 states that “*each visual receptor, meaning the particular person or group of people likely to be affected at a specific viewpoint, should be assessed in terms of both their susceptibility to change in views and visual amenity and also the value attached to particular views.*” The sensitivity of visual receptors results from a combination of parameters, such as:

- The activity/occupation/ pastime of the receptors at particular locations;
- The extent to which their attention or interest may be focused on the views; and
- The visual amenity they experience.

Consideration has been given to the:

- Location, focus and orientation;
- Features or characteristics of value within the view;
- Principal or secondary interests;
- Static or kinetic nature of views;
- Duration of the view.

A.2.3.2.1 Value attached to views

A three-stage process has been used to determine the value attached to views. This relates to the features and characteristics of the baseline landscape within the view and other indicators of value, for example reference in policy, guide books, literature or art.

- **Stage 1:** identify if the view or the landscape within the view is covered by any relevant policy or designations and note features and characteristics of value with reference to the landscape baseline;
- **Stage 2:** identify if the view is identified on maps, is likely to be from a popular visitor location or has historical or cultural importance or associations; and
- **Stage 3:** Determine the value attached to the view with reference to the criteria provided in **Error! Reference source not found.** from a range of very high to very low, using the evidence from stages 1 and 2.

Table 14: Value attached to views criteria

Stage 3: Criteria	Description
Very high	Views within or across a nationally or internationally designated landscapes and/or specific views designated in national or regional policy. Views are likely to have few or no detracting features and which may also have strong cultural associations supported by evidence, which could include links to historical events or people, representation in art or literature, for example.
High	Views within or across regionally or locally designated landscapes, other or landscapes with strong indicators of value, or views identified in the development plan or evidence base. Views are likely to have few or no detracting features and may also have some cultural associations supported by strong evidence.
Medium	Views across landscapes which are unlikely to be designated but may exhibit some indicators of value which are identified in the development plan or evidence base and are important at the community level. Views may have some detracting features and cultural associations supported by evidence.
Low	Views across landscapes which are not designated for landscape quality and likely to exhibit few indicators of value which are identified in the development plan or evidence base. Views are likely to have some detracting features and lack cultural associations supported by evidence.
Very low	View across landscapes which are neither designated, nor identified in the development plan or evidence base, and without cultural associations. The landscape in the view is in poor condition or notably detracts from the experience of the view.

A.2.3.2.2 Susceptibility of visual receptors to change

The sensitivity of visual receptors is also dependent upon their susceptibility to changes in views and the visual amenity they experience at particular locations.

Paragraph 6.32 of GLVIA3 explains that “*the susceptibility of different visual receptors to changes in views and visual amenity is mainly a function of:*

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

GLVIA3 notes that visual receptors “*most susceptible to change*”, include residents and visitors engaged in outdoor recreation “*whose attention or interest is likely to be focused on the landscape and on particular views*” (para 6.33).

Table 15 sets out the criteria referred to in determining the susceptibility of visual receptors to the Proposed Development.

Table 15: Susceptibility of visual receptors to change

Classification	Description
Very high	Visitors to nationally or internationally designated landscapes, particularly at specific viewpoints or viewing places, where views of the landscape are fundamental to the experience. People engaged in specific activities for enjoyment of dark skies.
High	Residents at home. Visitors to tourist hotspots, heritage assets or other attractions outside of nationally or internationally designated landscapes, particularly at specific viewpoints or viewing places, where views of the landscape are important to the experience.

Classification	Description
	People engaged in outdoor recreation whose attention or interest is likely to be focussed on the landscape and on particular views, for example those using promoted walking and cycling routes. People travelling along promoted scenic routes.
Medium	People engaged in outdoor recreation or travelling along public rights of way or local roads, which are not promoted routes but where an appreciation of the surrounding landscape are relevant to the experience. People working outdoors.
Low	People engaged in outdoor sport or recreation which does not involve or depend upon appreciation of views of the landscape People travelling on major road, rail or other transport routes which are not recognised as scenic routes.
Very low	People working indoors.

A.2.3.2.3 Summarising the sensitivity of visual receptors

The sensitivity of visual receptors is based on professional judgement informed by the criteria in **Table 16**, considering the value attached to views and susceptibility of visual receptors to the changes proposed.

Table 16: Sensitivity of visual receptors criteria

Criteria	Description
Very high	Activity where views are fundamental to the experience and are related to landscapes with national or international designation and with few or no detracting features and which may also have strong cultural associations supported by evidence.
High	Activity resulting in a particular interest or appreciation of the view and/or views within or across regionally or locally designated landscapes, other or landscapes with strong indicators of value, or views identified in the development plan or evidence base with few or no detracting features and may also have some cultural associations supported by strong evidence.
Medium	Activity resulting in a general interest or appreciation of the and/or a view, likely to exhibit some indicators of value which are identified in the development plan or evidence base and are important at the community level.
Low	Activity where interest or appreciation of the view is secondary to the activity or the period of exposure to the view is limited, and/or views across landscapes which are not designated for landscape quality and likely to exhibit few indicators of value and likely to have some detracting features and lack cultural associations supported by evidence.
Very low	Activity where interest or appreciation of the view is inconsequential to their activity, and/or across landscapes which are neither designated, nor recognised in policy, and without cultural associations or is in poor condition or notably detracts from the experience of the view.

A.2.3.3 Magnitude of visual impacts

The magnitude of visual impacts relates to the extent to which the baseline view would change as a result of the Proposed Development. This assessment has been made with reference to the photographs from the representative viewpoints shown in Appendix E Figure 8.

Paragraph 3.28 of GLVIA3 notes that magnitude is informed by combining considerations relating to the “scale, extent and duration” of impacts. This includes the geographical extent of influence, the spatial extent of the impact, the level of integration of new features with existing elements, its duration and degree to which the impact is reversible.

Reference has been made to the following in summarising the magnitude of visual impacts:

- Size and scale – loss of existing features or addition of new features.
- Geographical extent – where the proposed changes would be visible and to what extent.

- Duration and reversibility – the time over which the change would occur and if these changes are reversible, set out on the following scale: short (weeks); medium (months); and long (years)).

The criteria set out in Table 17 have been referred to in determining the magnitude of visual impacts.

Table 17: Magnitude of visual impacts criteria

Criteria	Description
Very high	The proposed development will result in extensive changes to the character and composition and will become the dominant feature of the landscape within the view. There may be longer term impacts, permanent or reversible.
High	The proposed development will change the character and composition of large parts of the landscape within the view. There may be longer term impacts, permanent or reversible.
Medium	The proposed development will change the character and composition of discrete parts of the landscape within the view. There may be medium term impacts, permanent or reversible.
Low	The proposed development will cause small changes to the character and composition of the landscape within the view. There may be short to medium term impacts, permanent or reversible.
Very low	The development will cause barely perceptible changes in the character and composition of the landscape within view. May be short term impacts, permanent or reversible.

There may be cases where there will be no impacts on a receptor, for example where the design has been changed to avoid such impacts. In such cases this is recorded as no change.

A.2.4 Level of landscape and visual effects

The approach to determining the level of landscape effects and visual effects will be the same.

Judgements on the sensitivity of each receptor and the magnitude of impact have been combined to establish the level of effect. Effects considered most important in the decision-making process are those assessed as being major or moderate. All other effects have been categorised as not important.

Table 18 has been used to guide judgements on the relationship between the sensitivity of a visual receptor, the magnitude of impact. Where conclusions differ from this guide, a reasoned explanation is provided in the assessment text.

Table 18: Determining the level of landscape and visual effects

		Magnitude of impact				
		Very high	High	Medium	Low	Very low
Sensitivity	Very high	Major	Major	Major or Moderate	Moderate	Moderate or Minor
	High	Major	Major or Moderate	Moderate	Moderate or Minor	Minor
	Medium	Major or Moderate	Moderate	Moderate or Minor	Minor	Minor or Negligible
	Low	Moderate	Moderate or Minor	Minor	Minor or Negligible	Negligible
	Very low	Moderate or Minor	Minor	Minor or Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

The assessment has relied on detailed analysis and the professional judgement of competent experts, and consultation with stakeholders. **Error! Reference source not found.** defines what the levels of effect terms mean.

Table 19: Descriptions of landscape and visual effects

Level of effect	Landscape effects	Visual effects
Major beneficial	Effects that result in a considerable improvement of the existing landscape resource. Valued characteristic features would be restored or reintroduced as part of the development.	Effects that result in a substantial improvement in the existing view.
Moderate beneficial	Effects that result in a partial improvement of the existing landscape resource. Valued characteristic features would be largely restored or reintroduced.	Effects that result in a noticeable improvement in the existing view.
Minor beneficial	Effects that result in a slight improvement of the existing landscape resource. Characteristic features would be partially restored.	Effects that result in a limited improvement in the existing view.
Negligible beneficial	Effects that result in a very slight improvement to the existing landscape resource, not uncharacteristic within the receiving landscape.	Effects that result in a barely perceptible improvement in the existing view.
Neutral	Effects which are a balance between adverse and beneficial effects and are neutral in their consequences for the landscape.	Effects that are a balance between adverse and beneficial effects and are neutral in their consequences for the view of visual receptors.
Negligible adverse	Effects that result in a very slight deterioration to the existing landscape resource, not uncharacteristic within the receiving landscape.	Effects that result in a barely perceptible deterioration in the existing view.
Minor adverse	Effects that result in a slight deterioration of the existing landscape resource. Characteristic features would be partially lost.	Effects that result in a limited deterioration in the existing view.
Moderate adverse	Effects that result in a partial deterioration of the existing landscape resource. Valued characteristic features would be largely lost.	Effects that result in a noticeable deterioration in the existing view.
Major adverse	Effects that result in a considerable deterioration of the existing landscape resource. Valued characteristic features would be wholly lost.	Effects that result in a substantial deterioration in the existing view.

Whether effects are adverse, beneficial or neutral has determined by considering the way in which the changes are likely to affect the baseline.

Adverse effects are likely to occur where the Proposed Development introduces new elements or changes which are discordant or intrusive resulting in a deterioration to existing character or valued features of the landscape or of views and visual amenity.

Beneficial effects are likely to occur where the proposed development enhances the character of the landscape or existing views.

Paragraphs 5.37 and 6.29 of GLVIA3 state that it is possible for effects to be neutral in their consequences for landscape and for visual receptors. Where a judgement of neutral effects has been reached, reference has been made to the contribution of the proposed development to the baseline and acknowledging the positive and negative aspects which have been considered.

Where the assessment has concluded that there will be no impacts on a receptor, this is reported as no effect. This may, for example, be a consequence of changes to the design which has avoided impacts on receptors.

Residual effects are those which remain even with embedded or primary mitigation at construction and year 15 of existence and operation and which cannot be further mitigated by design or other measures in this time period.

Appendix B

B.1 Introduction

B.2 European Landscape Convention

B.3 National legislation, planning policy and guidance

B.4 Regional planning policy and guidance

B.5 Local planning policy and guidance

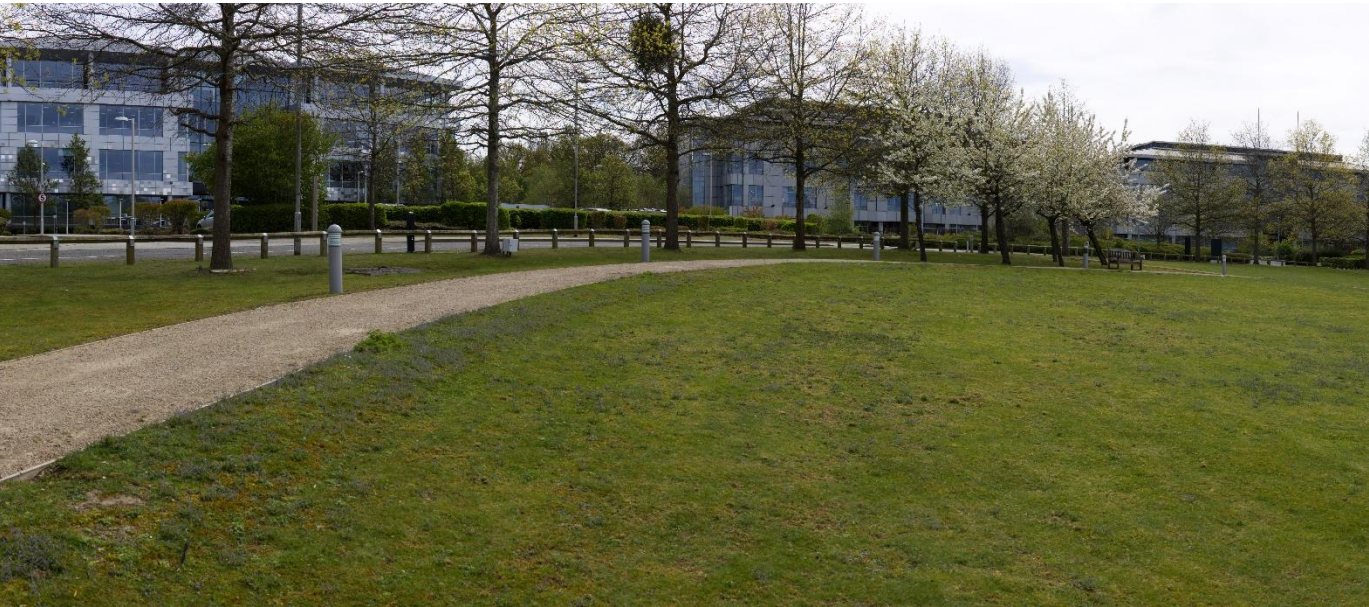
Appendix C: Landscape baseline and effects

C.1 LLCA 1: Thames Valley Park business park

9.1 Landscape baseline description

This LLCA comprises the business and commercial elements of the ‘Thames Valley Park’ business park. It includes vegetation within the building curtilage and immediate boundaries between adjacent plots. It does not include the nature reserve elements of Thames Valley Park.

Part of the LLCA is located within the within the A1Thames River Valley LCA with part in the D2 Sonning Wooded Chalk Slopes LCA as defined in the Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment (Wokingham Borough Council, 2019).



9.1.1 Key characteristics

LLCA 1 is defined by the following key characteristics:

- Edge of settlement physically and functionally separated from surrounding urban areas;
- Monolithic, low-rise buildings that are large in physical scale but within a low density spatial arrangement that makes them physically dominant at close range yet oddly diluted across the landscape;
- Expansive ground-level parking with extensive structural, well maintained landscaping that softens massing and breaks up car parking;
- Predictable planting palettes with well-established plants that both contribute positively to a neutral green backdrop, and through maturity bring other ecosystem services.

9.2 Landscape sensitivity

9.2.1 Landscape value

There are no statutory or non-statutory landscape designations within this LLCA.

The value attached to the landscape of LLCA 1: Thames Valley Park business park has been considered in **Error! Reference source not found.** below against the factors defined in **Error! Reference source not found.** of the methodology in **Error! Reference source not found.** of this report.

Table 20: Factors in determining landscape value in LLCA 1

Factor	Value
Natural heritage	Whilst landscape elements are predictable and functional, they are well maintained and this has enabled good establishment which now brings increased ecosystem services and benefits.
Cultural heritage	Limited architectural value to the relatively modern buildings at site. The buildings do create a cultural expression of the wider townscape in a limited way with some modern time depth as a recruitment hub.
Landscape condition	Large floorplates allocated to buildings and ground level parking has degraded the landscape condition, however mature vegetation brings positive benefits.
Associations	No associations identified with direct connection to the landscape of the LLCA
Distinctiveness	Generally, there are no natural landscape elements which in themselves are considered to be rare or identified as being characteristic of the LLCA.
Recreational	Very limited recreational access to the functional areas within the Thames Valley Park.
Perceptual (Scenic)	Whilst planting has established and maintained, it offers limited value at close range but does contribute to the green backdrop of the LLCA within its peri-urban context. The buildings are of a similar visual style that contribute to the peri-urban townscape. The physical scale and massing is distinctive. The buildings do contribute to the skyline but only at a local scale as most are set within the surrounding mature vegetation.
Perceptual (wildness and tranquillity)	Negligible due to the commercial nature of the LLCA and its surrounding context of highways and rail infrastructure.
Functional	Predictable, functional planting does soften massing and break up car park at the local level. Maturation and management has brought additional screening value and wider ecosystem services.

A landscape designed as much for function as for aesthetic value but through maturation has led to a well-integrated commercial business park that has integrated into the peri-urban location. The LLCA contains landscape elements of value albeit based around buildings and infrastructure.

Overall, the value attached to LLCA 1: Thames Valley Park business park is **Low**.

9.2.2 Susceptibility to change

The following features and characteristics of the site are particularly susceptible to the change proposed:

- vegetation within the building curtilage and immediate boundaries between adjacent plots;
- the horizontal spatial arrangement of built form.

Areas of the LCA that are less susceptible to development include:

- the vertical composition of built form within the localised landscape

Overall, the susceptibility to change for LLCA 1: Thames Valley Park business park is **Low**.

9.2.3 Sensitivity

The value attached to the landscape of LLCA 1: Thames Valley Park business park is considered **Low** which combined with a **Low** susceptibility leads to an overall **Low** sensitivity for this landscape receptor meaning it is likely to accommodate the type of change no or limited undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation.

9.3 Magnitude of impact and level of effect

9.3.1 Construction (winter)

Construction activities associated with the Proposed Development would lead to the loss of landscape elements and changes to the physical fabric of this LLCA. Impacts would include site clearance of buildings and hard landscaped parking areas, vegetation removal including, trees, hedgerows and ornamental planting, and some limited earthworks. Construction activity would also impact upon the perceptual qualities of the LLCA. Construction machinery and

typical construction features such as fencing, the establishment of site compounds resulting in temporary structures to serve the workforce, and material stockpiles will be introduced. The movement of vehicles both on site and using the wider Thames Valley Park, and workers on site will increase the perception of development and its immediate setting. This would be particularly noted from the central communal picnic area of the Thames Valley Park business park.

The size and scale of change would be all encompassing at the site level but smaller in the wider context. The geographical context would be largely limited to the site and its immediate setting with a limited effect upon the wider LLCA. The duration of construction would be short term, and would be permanent in nature given the historic context of the site. The magnitude of impact is considered to be **Low**.

Overall, the Low sensitivity assessed against the Low magnitude of impact would result in **Minor adverse** effects, which is not important.

9.3.2 Existence and operation year 1 (winter)

At operation, the increased massing from the single building compared to the three individual buildings with open space between in the baseline condition. This would be notable and magnified by the evolving but immature planting. External lighting would be controlled and designed to minimise spill, resulting in only a limited localised change to night-time character. Perceptual qualities would return to baseline conditions. The magnitude of impact is considered to be **Low**.

Overall, the Low sensitivity assessed against the Low magnitude of impact would result in **Negligible adverse** effects, which is not important.

9.3.3 Existence and operation year 15 (summer)

Whilst the successful establishment of planting at the Proposed Development would be integrating the Proposed Development into the wider setting of the LLCA, trees would still not have reached maturity so would not have fully returned to the baseline condition. The magnitude of impact is considered to be **Low**.

Overall, the Low sensitivity assessed against the Low magnitude of impact would result in **Negligible adverse** effects, which is **not important**.

C.2 LLCA 2: Sonning and the Thames Valley Park Local Gap

9.4 Landscape baseline description

This LLCA is located to the northeast and east of the Application Site and is characterised by large areas of open space used as pasture, grassland paddocks, and playing fields for a variety of sporting teams within the local area. There is a small area of woodland directly adjacent to LLCA 1 that forms physical transition between the two LLCA and serves as a backdrop for the openness of this LLCA. The area is considered as part of the Sonning Neighbourhood Plan Local Gap Study (Sonning Parish Council, 2025) as the ‘Sonning-Earley Neighbourhood gap’.

Part of the LLCA is located within the within the A1Thames River Valley LCA with part in the D2 Sonning Wooded Chalk Slopes LCA, and J4 Woodley-Earley Settled and Farmed Clay LCA as defined in the Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment (Wokingham Borough Council, 2019).



9.4.1 Key characteristics

C.2 LLCA 2: Sonning and the Thames Valley Park Local Gap is defined by the following key characteristics:

- Woodland blocks (Big Cogs and Little Cogs) connect up to the bankside vegetation along the River Thames and form a legible transition from LLCA 1;
- Steeply sloping landform adjacent to the river which flattens out into larger scale open fields;
- A mixture of pasture, grassland paddocks and private sporting playing fields with limited settlement or built form; and
- Access into the area is limited to private users although glimpsed views into the LLCA are available from the Thames Path Nationally promoted route.

9.5 Landscape sensitivity

9.5.1 Landscape value

There are no statutory or non-statutory landscape designations within this LLCA. It is proposed that the Sonning – Earley Local Gap would be introduced to the Sonning Neighbourhood Plan in some part due to landscape and visual qualities.

The value attached to the landscape of LLCA 1: Thames Valley Park business park has been considered in **Error! Reference source not found.** below against the factors defined in **Error! Reference source not found.** of the methodology in **Error! Reference source not found.** of this report.

Table 21: Factors in determining landscape value in LLCA 2

Factor	Value
Natural heritage	The two woodland blocks (Big Cogs and Little Cogs) contribute as landscape elements and characteristic features within the LLCA. They also contribute to the spatial definition of the LLCA in the context of the Thames Valley Park business park.
Cultural heritage	Remnant parkland at the now Reading Blue Coat School provides time-depth and contributes to the sense of place. This continues to contribute to the cultural expression of the wider townscape of the area.
Landscape condition	The landscape is considered in moderate condition (Wokingham Borough Council, 2019). Some areas having an unmanaged quality alongside areas used for sporting clubs being highly maintained.
Associations	There are numerous alumni from the Reading Blue Coat School, of which Alok Sharma who as President of COP26 has strong links to the environment and therein landscape, although not directly at the local scale. Richard Josey a prominent and internationally renowned mezzotint engraver also received his education here. No associations identified with direct connection to the landscape of the LLCA
Distinctiveness	The remnant parkland retains a strong sense of place. The spatial arrangement of landscape and the landscape elements within (referred to as the Sonning – Earley Local Gap) contribute to the distinctiveness of the rural settlements set apart from the wider urban area.
Recreational	Access is limited with recreation largely the permission of private sporting clubs and the Reading Blue Coat School.
Perceptual (Scenic)	The scenic quality is limited due in part to access, but where available this is exemplified by the surrounding urban context.
Perceptual (wildness and tranquillity)	The tranquillity is very limited, but is contextualised by the surrounding urban context.
Functional	The LLCA offers recreational opportunity to private users amongst other ecosystem service, and the landscape elements provide functional screening to the wider urban context.

The functional value of the LLCA along with the open character adjacent to the urban context contribute largely to the value at the local level, only reduced by the limited access to private areas.

Overall, the value attached to LLCA 2: Sonning and the Thames Valley Park Local Gap is **Medium**.

9.5.2 Susceptibility to change

The following features and characteristics of the site are particularly susceptible to the change proposed:

- Any loss of woodland elements that contribute to a reduction of the visual separation of the LLCA with the Thames Valley Park business park. This includes an increase in building height above the height of the existing tree cover in these woodland blocks.

Overall, the susceptibility to change for LLCA 2: Sonning and the Thames Valley Park Local Gap is **Medium**.

9.5.3 Sensitivity

The value attached to the landscape of LLCA 2: Sonning and the Thames Valley Park Local Gap is considered **Medium** which combined with a **Medium** susceptibility leads to an overall **Medium** sensitivity for this landscape receptor meaning it may have some ability to accommodate the type of change without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation.

9.6 Magnitude of impact and level of effect

9.6.1 Construction (winter)

There would be no loss or change to landscape elements or the physical landscape within this LLCA as the Proposed Development would not be located within it. Impacts from construction activities would be limited to the introduction of taller plant and equipment such as tower cranes with operational safety lighting during lower light and at night. As an active construction site, there would be a reduction in perceived tranquillity but this is likely to be barely perceptible.

Construction activity would lead to barely perceptible changes across a small area of the LLCA, notably at the boundary to the Application Site, and the effects would diminish the further away from the Proposed Development the area is. These impacts would be temporary over the short duration of the construction period and reversible.

The magnitude of impact is considered to be **Very Low**.

Overall, the **Medium** sensitivity assessed against the **Very Low** magnitude of impact would result in **negligible adverse** effects, which is **not important**.

9.6.2 Existence and operation year 1 (winter)

There would be no loss or change to landscape elements or the physical landscape within this LLCA as the Proposed Development would not be located within it. Impacts at operation would be limited to the perception of development from the increased building height and mass in conjunction with the loss of some mature vegetation to the eastern boundary of the Application Site. Whilst mitigation planting would soften the perception of development, it would be limited due to immaturity at this stage.

These impacts would be permanent leading to barely perceptible changes across a small area of the LLCA, notably at the boundary to the Application Site, and the effects would diminish the further away from the Proposed Development the area is.

The magnitude of impact is considered to be **Very Low**.

Overall, the **Medium** sensitivity assessed against the **Very Low** magnitude of impact would result in **negligible adverse** effects, which is **not important**.

9.6.3 Existence and operation year 15 (summer)

The successful establishment of mitigation planting would further soften the perception of development but as the trees would still not have reached maturity this would not have fully returned to the baseline condition.

The magnitude of impact is considered to be **Very Low**.

Overall, the **Medium** sensitivity assessed against the **Very Low** magnitude of impact would result in **negligible adverse** effects, which is **not important**.

C.3 LLCA 3: Woodley, Reading and Sonning residential

9.7 Landscape baseline description

Most of this LLCA is located to the south of the Application Site and is spatially separated by the Great Western railway train corridor (part of LLCA 6). There is also a smaller additional area to the east of the Application Site to either side of Bath Road. There is a small commercial area with large retail buildings to the southwest. The area is characterised by medium to high density urban settlement with landscape elements limited to municipal grass areas, street trees and private gardens.

The LLCA is located within the J4 Woodley-Earley Settled and Farmed Clay LCA as defined in the Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment (Wokingham Borough Council, 2019).



9.7.1 Key characteristics

LLCA 3: Woodley, Reading and Sonning residential is defined by the following key characteristics:

- Densely settled character associated with Reading, Woodley and Earley and extension of Sonning;
- A well-developed major transport network, including the A329 (M), A4 Bath Road and railway line;
- Post war and modern estates including some with large gardens; and
- Vegetation generally comprised of municipal grass areas, street trees and private gardens.

9.8 Landscape sensitivity

9.8.1 Landscape value

There are no statutory or non-statutory landscape designations within this LLCA.

The value attached to the landscape of LLCA 3: Woodley, Reading and Sonning residential has been considered in **Error! Reference source not found.** below against the factors defined in **Error! Reference source not found.** of the methodology in **Error! Reference source not found.** of this report.

Table 22: Factors in determining landscape value in LLCA 1

Factor	Value
Natural heritage	Whilst landscape elements are predictable and functional, they are well maintained and this has enabled good establishment which now brings increased ecosystem services and benefits.
Cultural heritage	Limited architectural value to the relatively modern buildings at site. The buildings do create a cultural expression of the wider townscape in a limited way with some modern time depth as a recruitment hub.
Landscape condition	Large floorplates allocated to buildings and ground level parking has degraded the landscape condition, however mature vegetation brings positive benefits.
Associations	No associations identified with direct connection to the landscape of the LLCA
Distinctiveness	Generally, there are no natural landscape elements which in themselves are considered to be rare or identified as being characteristic of the LLCA.
Recreational	Very limited recreational access to the functional areas within the Thames Valley Park.
Perceptual (Scenic)	Whilst planting has established and maintained, it offers limited value at close range but does contribute to the green backdrop of the LLCA within its peri-urban context. The buildings are of a similar visual style that contribute to the peri-urban townscape. The physical scale and massing is distinctive. The buildings do contribute to the skyline but only at a local scale as most are set within the surrounding mature vegetation.
Perceptual (wildness and tranquillity)	Negligible due to the commercial nature of the LLCA and its surrounding context of highways and rail infrastructure.
Functional	Predictable, functional planting does soften massing and break up car park at the local level. Maturation and management has brought additional screening value and wider ecosystem services.

A landscape designed as much for function as for aesthetic value but through maturation has led to a well-integrated commercial business park that has integrated into the peri-urban location. The LLCA contains landscape elements of value albeit based around buildings and infrastructure.

Overall, the value attached to LLCA 1: Thames Valley Park business park is **Low**.

9.8.2 Susceptibility to change

The following features and characteristics of the site are particularly susceptible to the change proposed:

- vegetation within the building curtilage and immediate boundaries between adjacent plots;
- the horizontal spatial arrangement of built form.

Areas of the LCA that are less susceptible to development include:

- the vertical composition of built form within the localised landscape

Overall, the susceptibility to change for LLCA 1: Thames Valley Park business park is **Low**.

9.8.3 Sensitivity

The value attached to the landscape of LLCA 1: Thames Valley Park business park is considered **Low** which combined with a **Low** susceptibility leads to an overall **Low** sensitivity for this landscape receptor meaning it is likely to accommodate the type of change no or limited undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation.

9.9 Magnitude of impact and level of effect

Table 23: Factors in determining landscape value in LLCA 3

Factor	Value
Natural heritage	A predominantly urban area where municipal grass areas, street trees and private gardens are the key positive contributors to the landscape.
Cultural heritage	Heritage designations include listed buildings around Bulmershe Manor. There are no conservation areas within the LLCA.
Landscape condition	Landscape condition is influenced by the prevalence of urban form and infrastructure.
Associations	There are notable literary and artistic associations to the areas of Woodley, Reading and Sonning for whom the local landscape has influenced their work. This includes Kenneth Grahame, Jane Austin, Jerome K. Jerome, and Ernest Haslehurst, all of international acclaim who were born, educated or influenced recognition of the local landscape.
Distinctiveness	The landscape elements are largely indistinct in the urban environment.
Recreational	There are limited recreational routes through the area although the street layout is accessible.
Perceptual (Scenic)	There is limited scenic landscape value to this LLCA
Perceptual (wildness and tranquillity)	There is very limited tranquillity to this LLCA due to the busy road network.
Streetscape	The urban areas of Woodley, Earley and Reading within the study area are well contained. Residential dwellings are set within medium density estates with a hierarchy of access including main arterial roads, interconnecting street, and cul-de-sacs.
Skyline / profile	The majority of buildings within the LLCA are single or two storey representing the residential context. Taller buildings are limited to commercial edges which have some local influence.
Townscape	Scale and massing and urban grain are typical of the urban context of the major towns for which they comprise. Due to the age of the built form, there is spatial consideration of the major roads within the area with residential buildings generally set back from these and surrounded by generous green verges.
Townscape land use	The majority of the area is residential although sporadic small scale commercial buildings tend to be located alongside the main roads.
Functional	Municipal grass areas, street trees and private gardens offer some ecosystem services to the urban environment.

This LLCA is predominantly urban in character with few landscape elements or indicators of townscape value of note.

Overall, the value attached to LLCA 3: Woodley, Reading and Sonning residential is **Very Low**.

9.9.1 Susceptibility to change

The following features and characteristics of the site are particularly susceptible to the change proposed:

- Residential properties adjacent to open spaces such as LLCA 4 where the perception of increased development might be greater.

Areas of the LCA that are less susceptible to development include:

- The commercial area with large retail buildings to the southwest; and
- Residential properties bound by other properties contained within the estates (rather than at the edge).

Overall, the susceptibility to change for LLCA 3: Woodley, Reading and Sonning residential is **Very Low**.

9.9.2 Sensitivity

The value attached to the landscape of LLCA 3: Woodley, Reading and Sonning residential is considered **Very Low** which combined with a **Very Low** susceptibility leads to an overall **Very Low** sensitivity for this landscape receptor

meaning it would be able to accommodate the type of change without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies.

9.10 Magnitude of impact and level of effect

9.10.1 Construction (winter)

There would be no loss or change to landscape elements or the physical landscape within this LLCA as the Proposed Development would not be located within it. Impacts from construction activities would be limited to the introduction of taller plant and equipment such as tower cranes with operational safety lighting that would also lead to effects on tranquillity during lower light and at night. As an active construction site, there would be a reduction in perceived tranquillity but this is likely to be barely perceptible given the proximity of major highway and rail infrastructure.

Construction activity would lead to barely perceptible changes across a small area of the LLCA, notably closest to the boundary to the Application Site, and the effects would diminish the further away from the Proposed Development the area is. The majority of the LLCA would experience no change. These impacts would be temporary over the short duration of the construction period and reversible.

The magnitude of impact is considered to be **Very Low**.

Overall, the **Very Low** sensitivity assessed against the **Very Low** magnitude of impact would result in **negligible adverse** effects, which is **not important**.

9.10.2 Existence and operation year 1 (winter)

There would be no loss or change to landscape elements or the physical landscape within this LLCA as the Proposed Development would not be located within it. Impacts at operation would be limited to the perception of development from the increased building height and mass in conjunction with the loss of some mature vegetation to the eastern boundary of the Application Site.

These impacts would be permanent leading to barely perceptible changes across a small area of the LLCA, notably closest the boundary to the Application Site, and the effects would diminish the further away from the Proposed Development the area is. The majority of the LLCA would experience no change.

The magnitude of impact is considered to be **Very Low**.

Overall, the **Very Low** sensitivity assessed against the **Very Low** magnitude of impact would result in **negligible adverse** effects, which is **not important**.

9.10.3 Existence and operation year 15 (summer)

As ‘existence and operation year 1 (winter)’.

The magnitude of impact is considered to be **Very Low**.

Overall, the **Very Low** sensitivity assessed against the **Very Low** magnitude of impact would result in **negligible adverse** effects, which is **not important**.

C.4 LLCA 4: Bulmershe Park and allotments

9.11 Landscape baseline description

This LLCA is located to the south of the Application Site and is spatially separated by the Great Western railway train corridor (part of LLCA 6). It is also surrounded by the urban context of LLCA 3 Woodley, Reading and Sonning residential. The LLCA is a green, open space of local value to the communities of Woodley, and Reading. It is a mixture of Bulmershe Park, designated a Site of Urban Landscape Value (SULV) as part of the local plan evidence base, that contains a small area of Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland, and the Reading Road allotments.

The LLCA is located within the J4 Woodley-Earley Settled and Farmed Clay LCA as defined in the Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment (Wokingham Borough Council, 2019).



9.11.1 Key characteristics

LLCA 4: Bulmershe Park and allotments is defined by the following key characteristics:

- A combination of playing fields, open space with associated tree cover, woodland and allotments between the settlements of Earley and Woodley;
- The area provides an open and undeveloped space of local value in a constrained urban environment;
- Strong landscape elements and features including a block of Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland, and a belt of screening trees and shrubs to the east side of Pitts Lane and Church Road; and
- Recreational and communal resource to the local communities.

9.12 Landscape sensitivity

9.12.1 Landscape value

There are no statutory landscape designations within this LLCA however Bulmershe Park is a SULV which is a non-statutory designation of local value. .

The value attached to the landscape of LLCA 3: Woodley, Reading and Sonning residential has been considered in **Error! Reference source not found.** below against the factors defined in **Error! Reference source not found.** of the methodology in **Error! Reference source not found.** of this report.

Table 24: Factors in determining landscape value in LLCA 1

Factor	Value
Natural heritage	Whilst landscape elements are predictable and functional, they are well maintained and this has enabled good establishment which now brings increased ecosystem services and benefits.
Cultural heritage	Limited architectural value to the relatively modern buildings at site. The buildings do create a cultural expression of the wider townscape in a limited way with some modern time depth as a recruitment hub.
Landscape condition	Large floorplates allocated to buildings and ground level parking has degraded the landscape condition, however mature vegetation brings positive benefits.
Associations	No associations identified with direct connection to the landscape of the LLCA
Distinctiveness	Generally, there are no natural landscape elements which in themselves are considered to be rare or identified as being characteristic of the LLCA.
Recreational	Very limited recreational access to the functional areas within the Thames Valley Park.
Perceptual (Scenic)	Whilst planting has established and maintained, it offers limited value at close range but does contribute to the green backdrop of the LLCA within its peri-urban context. The buildings are of a similar visual style that contribute to the peri-urban townscape. The physical scale and massing is distinctive. The buildings do contribute to the skyline but only at a local scale as most are set within the surrounding mature vegetation.
Perceptual (wildness and tranquillity)	Negligible due to the commercial nature of the LLCA and its surrounding context of highways and rail infrastructure.
Functional	Predictable, functional planting does soften massing and break up car park at the local level. Maturation and management has brought additional screening value and wider ecosystem services.

A landscape designed as much for function as for aesthetic value but through maturation has led to a well-integrated commercial business park that has integrated into the peri-urban location. The LLCA contains landscape elements of value albeit based around buildings and infrastructure.

Overall, the value attached to LLCA 1: Thames Valley Park business park is **Low**.

9.12.2 Susceptibility to change

The following features and characteristics of the site are particularly susceptible to the change proposed:

- vegetation within the building curtilage and immediate boundaries between adjacent plots;
- the horizontal spatial arrangement of built form.

Areas of the LCA that are less susceptible to development include:

- the vertical composition of built form within the localised landscape

Overall, the susceptibility to change for LLCA 1: Thames Valley Park business park is **Low**.

9.12.3 Sensitivity

The value attached to the landscape of LLCA 1: Thames Valley Park business park is considered **Low** which combined with a **Low** susceptibility leads to an overall **Low** sensitivity for this landscape receptor meaning it is likely to accommodate the type of change no or limited undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation.

9.13 Magnitude of impact and level of effect

Table 25: Factors in determining landscape value in LLCA 4

Factor	Value
Natural heritage	The landscape contains valued natural capital assets that contribute to ecosystem services within the surrounding urban context. This is an indicator of Townscape value which contributes positively to the character of the area
Cultural heritage	The nearby Bulmershe Manor is a grade II* listed building, with the park formerly being part of the farm and estate.
Landscape condition	Individual landscape elements appear in good visible condition and contribute to the overall landscape structure. Incongruous elements are limited within the LLCA but are present in the wider context and setting.
Associations	Historic associations to Bulmershe Manor are now limited but the allotments link back to the original farm use.
Distinctiveness	The LLCA has a strong sense of identity within the local communities, and there are some distinctive landscape elements present.
Recreational	The LLCA offers valuable recreational access within the urban context.
Perceptual (Scenic)	The area offers green open space within an otherwise urban context.
Perceptual (wildness and tranquillity)	The tranquillity is very limited, but is contextualised by the surrounding urban context.
Functional	The LLCA offers cultural ecosystem services to the local community

This LLCA is valued at the local level as an area of open, green space that also has a local landscape designation associated with it.

Overall, the value attached to LLCA 4: Bulmershe Park and allotments is **High**.

9.13.1 Susceptibility to change

Due to the urban context surrounding the LLCA the type of change arising from the specific proposal are unlikely to lead to undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies.

Overall, the susceptibility to change for LLCA 4: Bulmershe Park and allotments is **Very Low**.

9.13.2 Sensitivity

The value attached to the landscape of LLCA 4: Bulmershe Park and allotments is considered **High** which combined with a **Very Low** susceptibility leads to an overall **Low** sensitivity for this landscape receptor meaning it would be able to accommodate the type of change with limited undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies.

9.14 Magnitude of impact and level of effect

9.14.1 Construction (winter)

There would be no loss or change to landscape elements or the physical landscape within this LLCA as the Proposed Development would not be located within it. Impacts from construction activities would be limited to the introduction of taller plant and equipment such as tower cranes with operational safety lighting. These impacts would be temporary over the short duration of the construction period and reversible. Due to the size and scale of the Proposed Development, and subsequent proximity to this LLCA it is likely that construction effects would be barely perceptible.

The magnitude of impact is considered to be **Very Low**.

Overall, the **Low** sensitivity assessed against the **Very Low** magnitude of impact would result in **negligible adverse** effects, which is **not important**.

9.14.2 Existence and operation year 1 (winter)

There would be no loss or change to landscape elements or the physical landscape within this LLCA as the Proposed Development would not be located within it. Due to the size and scale of the Proposed Development, and subsequent proximity to this LLCA it is likely that there would be **No Change** to the baseline condition.

The magnitude of impact is **No Change**.

Overall, the **Low** sensitivity assessed against **No Change** to the magnitude of impact would result in **No change**, which is **not important**.

9.14.3 Existence and operation year 15 (summer)

As ‘existence and operation year 1 (winter)’.

The magnitude of impact is **No Change**.

Overall, the **Low** sensitivity assessed against **No Change** to the magnitude of impact would result in **No change**, which is **not important**.

C.5 LLCA 5: Caversham Lake and the River Thames

9.15 Landscape baseline description

This LLCA is located to the north of the Application Site and is dominated by the hydrological features including Caversham lakes and the adjacent meandering section of the River Thames. Along with water, woodland is also an important feature within this flat area with large belts of riparian woodland and blocks to the lake edges, peninsulas and islands.

The LLCA is located within LCA across multiple published assessments including:

- LCA 11 Thames Valley and Fringes – The South Oxfordshire District Council Landscape Character Assessment for the Local Plan 2033 (South Oxfordshire District Council, 2017);
- LCA 14G: Caversham to Henley Thames River Valley – Landscape Character Assessment for South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse (South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse District Council, 2024);
- Alluvial Lowlands LCT – The Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (Oxfordshire County Council; Natural England; The Earth Trust, 2004); and
- Parish Landscape Character Area (PLCA) 2: River Thames, Meadows and Lakes – The Eye and Dunsden Parish Landscape Character Assessment and Proposal for a Local Valued Landscape (Eye and Dunsden Parish Council, 2022).



9.15.1 Key characteristics

LLCA 5: Caversham Lake and the River Thames is defined by the following key characteristics:

- The low-lying River Thames floodplain and large, flooded gravel pits from ongoing and historic gravel abstraction;
- A flat valley floor with a generally open character with woodland blocks creating intimate areas of semi-enclosure;
- A lack of intrusive urbanising elements; and
- An open character with views available along the river corridor, sometimes framed by bankside vegetation.

9.16 Landscape sensitivity

9.16.1 Landscape value

There are no statutory landscape designations within this LLCA however there are a number of local designations including:

- River Thames Valued Landscape – Wokingham Borough Council Valued Landscape Assessment (Wokingham Borough Council, 2024);
- The Thames Valley Major Landscape Feature – Reading Borough Council Local Plan 2019 (Reading Borough Council, 2019);
- Candidate Local Landscape Designation: Henley-on-Thames to Sonning Eye Thames Floodplain – Local Landscape Designation Review of South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse (South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse District Council, 2024); and
- PLCA 2 River Thames, Meadows and Lakes – The Eye and Dunsden Parish Landscape Character Assessment and Proposal for a Local Valued Landscape (Eye and Dunsden Parish Council, 2022)

The value attached to the landscape of LLCA 5: Caversham Lake and the River Thames has been considered in **Error! Reference source not found.** below against the factors defined in **Error! Reference source not found.** of the methodology in **Error! Reference source not found.** of this report.

Table 26: Factors in determining landscape value in LLCA 5

Factor	Value
Natural heritage	Wetland habitats, including riparian woodland and floodplain grazing marsh, along the river course and recolonisation of semi-natural vegetation around the former gravel pits.
Cultural heritage	Elements of cultural heritage are limited within the LLCA
Landscape condition	Whilst much of the landscape has been degraded as part of extraction works, semi-natural vegetation has started to recolonise the flooded gravel pits.
Associations	The associations with the River Thames in this area are rich and varied. They include writers (Jerome K Jerome, Jane Austen, and Kenneth Grahame) and artists (Sir John Everett Millais, William Holman Hunt) of international acclaim. Part of the lakes used for elite level rowing training are named after Olympic rowers Sir Steve Redgrave and Sir Matthew Pinsent.
Distinctiveness	The River Thames with its riparian tree lined banks create a strong sense of place. Caversham lakes also have strong character albeit slightly detached due to lack of access.
Recreational	The Thames River Path offers recreational access to the river. Opportunities beside and on the River Thames also include boating, and fishing. There is limited access in and around Caversham lakes with few PRoW and opportunities for rowing and boating often limited to private access.
Perceptual (Scenic)	The open, flat character set against the rising slopes of the Chiltern hills afford scenic riverine vistas with few detracting elements.
Perceptual (wildness and tranquillity)	Whilst views into the landscape evoke tranquillity, the LLCA is a busy, functional landscape surrounded by urban influences.
Functional	The primary function as a floodplain is enhanced by the recreational services, and the natural remediation of the former quarry areas.

The River Thames strongly contributes to the value of this LLCA through its associations, perceptual qualities and distinctiveness. Caversham Lakes have more contemporary associations but also contribute functionally and through natural restoration.

Overall, the value attached to LLCA 5: Caversham Lake and the River Thames is **High**.

9.16.2 Susceptibility to change

The following features and characteristics of the site are particularly susceptible to the change proposed:

- The openness and scenic quality of the riverine views

Areas of the LCA that are less susceptible to development include:

- The ongoing gravel extraction works.

Overall, the susceptibility to change for LLCA 5: Caversham Lake and the River Thames is **Low**.

9.16.3 Sensitivity

The value attached to the landscape of LLCA 5: Caversham Lake and the River Thames is considered **High** which combined with a **Low** susceptibility leads to an overall **Medium** sensitivity for this landscape receptor meaning it may have some ability to accommodate the type of change without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation despite its local designations, detailed evidence base and strong indicators of value.

9.17 Magnitude of impact and level of effect

9.17.1 Construction (winter)

There would be no loss or change to landscape elements or the physical landscape within this LLCA as the Proposed Development would not be located within it. Impacts from construction activities would be limited to the introduction of taller plant and equipment such as tower cranes with operational safety lighting during lower light and at night. As an active construction site, there would be a reduction in perceived tranquillity but this is likely to be barely perceptible due to proximity.

Construction activity would lead to barely perceptible changes across a small area of the LLCA, notably closest to the boundary to the Application Site along the River Thames, and the effects would diminish the further away from the Proposed Development the area is. These impacts would be temporary over the short duration of the construction period and reversible.

The magnitude of impact is considered to be **Very Low**.

Overall, the **Medium** sensitivity assessed against the **Very Low** magnitude of impact would result in **minor adverse** effects, which is **not important**.

9.17.2 Existence and operation year 1 (winter)

There would be no loss or change to landscape elements or the physical landscape within this LLCA as the Proposed Development would not be located within it. Impacts at operation would be limited to the perception of development from the increased building height and mass in conjunction with the loss of some mature vegetation to the eastern boundary of the Application Site. Whilst mitigation planting would soften the perception of development, it would be limited due to immaturity at this stage.

These impacts would be permanent leading to barely perceptible changes across a small area of the LLCA, notably at the boundary to the Application Site, and the effects would diminish the further away from the Proposed Development the area is.

The magnitude of impact is considered to be **Very Low**.

Overall, the **Medium** sensitivity assessed against the **Very Low** magnitude of impact would result in **negligible adverse** effects, which is **not important**.

9.17.3 Existence and operation year 15 (summer)

The successful establishment of mitigation planting would further soften the perception of development but as the trees would still not have reached maturity this would not have fully returned to the baseline condition.

The magnitude of impact is considered to be **Very Low**.

Overall, the **Medium** sensitivity assessed against the **Very Low** magnitude of impact would result in **negligible adverse** effects, which is **not important**.

C.6 LLCA 6: Major transport corridors

9.18 Landscape baseline description

This LLCA is directly adjacent to the southern boundary of the Application Site. It is a narrow defining strip that passes through the Study Area and forms a spatial distinction between the Application Site and the LLCA to the south. The LLCA comprises the great western railway corridor flanked by woodland belts, and major highways (A3290) within the Study Area.

A small part of the LLCA is located within the within the A1Thames River Valley LCA with most being located in the J4 Woodley-Earley Settled and Farmed Clay LCA as defined in the Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment (Wokingham Borough Council, 2019).



9.18.1 Key characteristics

LLCA 6: Major transport corridors is defined by the following key characteristics:

- An enclosed railway corridor largely within a cutting of differing depths;
- Mature screening woodland belts define the LLCA and limit intervisibility within and across it;
- Dual carriageway with large roundabouts as part of the arterial connections between Wokingham and Reading; and
- Limited tranquillity and access, albeit with some areas of wildlife refuge.

9.19 Landscape sensitivity

9.19.1 Landscape value

There are no statutory or non-statutory landscape designations within this LLCA.

The value attached to the landscape of LLCA 1: Thames Valley Park business park has been considered in **Error! Reference source not found.** below against the factors defined in **Error! Reference source not found.** of the methodology in **Error! Reference source not found.** of this report.

Table 27: Factors in determining landscape value in LLCA 1

Factor	Value
Natural heritage	Whilst landscape elements are predictable and functional, they are well maintained and this has enabled good establishment which now brings increased ecosystem services and benefits.
Cultural heritage	Limited architectural value to the relatively modern buildings at site. The buildings do create a cultural expression of the wider townscape in a limited way with some modern time depth as a recruitment hub.
Landscape condition	Large floorplates allocated to buildings and ground level parking has degraded the landscape condition, however mature vegetation brings positive benefits.
Associations	No associations identified with direct connection to the landscape of the LLCA
Distinctiveness	Generally, there are no natural landscape elements which in themselves are considered to be rare or identified as being characteristic of the LLCA.
Recreational	Very limited recreational access to the functional areas within the Thames Valley Park.
Perceptual (Scenic)	Whilst planting has established and maintained, it offers limited value at close range but does contribute to the green backdrop of the LLCA within its peri-urban context. The buildings are of a similar visual style that contribute to the peri-urban townscape. The physical scale and massing is distinctive. The buildings do contribute to the skyline but only at a local scale as most are set within the surrounding mature vegetation.
Perceptual (wildness and tranquillity)	Negligible due to the commercial nature of the LLCA and its surrounding context of highways and rail infrastructure.
Functional	Predictable, functional planting does soften massing and break up car park at the local level. Maturation and management has brought additional screening value and wider ecosystem services.

A landscape designed as much for function as for aesthetic value but through maturation has led to a well-integrated commercial business park that has integrated into the peri-urban location. The LLCA contains landscape elements of value albeit based around buildings and infrastructure.

Overall, the value attached to LLCA 1: Thames Valley Park business park is **Low**.

9.19.2 Susceptibility to change

The following features and characteristics of the site are particularly susceptible to the change proposed:

- vegetation within the building curtilage and immediate boundaries between adjacent plots;
- the horizontal spatial arrangement of built form.

Areas of the LCA that are less susceptible to development include:

- the vertical composition of built form within the localised landscape

Overall, the susceptibility to change for LLCA 1: Thames Valley Park business park is **Low**.

9.19.3 Sensitivity

The value attached to the landscape of LLCA 1: Thames Valley Park business park is considered **Low** which combined with a **Low** susceptibility leads to an overall **Low** sensitivity for this landscape receptor meaning it is likely to accommodate the type of change no or limited undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation.

9.20 Magnitude of impact and level of effect

Table 28: Factors in determining landscape value in LLCA 6

Factor	Value
Natural heritage	Limited access and disturbance to the railway corridor creates an area of wildlife refuge
Cultural heritage	There are two Grade II Listed bridges cross the railway corridor
Landscape condition	Infrastructure limits the available landscape, most notable around the highways. Woodland screening is largely undisturbed along the railway corridor.
Associations	No associations identified with direct connection to the landscape of the LLCA
Distinctiveness	Generally, there are no natural landscape elements which in themselves are considered to be rare or identified as being characteristic of the LLCA.
Recreational	No recreational access to this LLCA
Perceptual (Scenic)	Very little scenic quality to the LLCA which is further compounded by the urban context
Perceptual (wildness and tranquillity)	No tranquillity or wildness due to the urban context
Functional	The woodland belts provide screening to the neighbouring areas and offer areas of natural refuge and connectivity.

A sharp transitional landscape that largely screens views and forms a physical spatial barrier within the Study Area. The LLCA contains limited landscape elements of value flanking the railway cuttings.

Overall, the value attached to LLCA 6: Major transport corridors is **Very Low**.

9.20.1 Susceptibility to change

Due to the urban context surrounding the LLCA the type of change arising from the specific proposal are unlikely to lead to undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies.

Overall, the susceptibility to change for LLCA 6: Major transport corridors is **Very Low**.

9.20.2 Sensitivity

The value attached to the landscape of LLCA 6: Major transport corridors is considered **Very Low** which combined with a **Very Low** susceptibility leads to an overall **Very Low** sensitivity for this landscape receptor meaning it would be able to accommodate the type of change without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation

9.21 Magnitude of impact and level of effect

9.21.1 Construction (winter)

There would be no loss or change to landscape elements or the physical landscape within this LLCA as the Proposed Development would not be located within it. Impacts from construction activities would be limited to the introduction of taller plant and equipment such as tower cranes with operational safety lighting. These impacts would be temporary over the short duration of the construction period and reversible. Due to the size and scale of the Proposed Development, and subsequent proximity to this LLCA it is likely that construction effects would be barely perceptible.

The magnitude of impact is considered to be **Very Low**.

Overall, the **Very Low** sensitivity assessed against the **Very Low** magnitude of impact would result in **negligible adverse** effects, which is **not important**.

9.21.2 Existence and operation year 1 (winter)

There would be no loss or change to landscape elements or the physical landscape within this LLCA as the Proposed Development would not be located within it. Due to the size and scale of the Proposed Development, and subsequent proximity to this LLCA it is likely that there would be **No Change** to the baseline condition.

Overall, the **Very Low** sensitivity assessed against **No Change** to the magnitude of impact would result in **No change**, which is **not important**.

9.21.3 Existence and operation year 15 (summer)

As ‘existence and operation year 1 (winter)’.

Overall, the **Very Low** sensitivity assessed against **No Change** to the magnitude of impact would result in **No change**, which is **not important**.

C.7 Landscape features: Mature trees and vegetation within the Application Site as part of the wider setting of the Thames Valley Park business park

9.22 Landscape feature description

The designed landscape within and around the Application Site is well maintained and there are landscape features of value. This includes trees and specimen shrubs of differing degrees of maturity. Whilst many of these have an ornamental aesthetic, some at the periphery of the Application Site are more natural in their placement and management, and contribute to the wider green networks around the Thames Valley Park.



9.22.1 Key characteristics

Application Site landscape features are defined by the following key characteristics:

- Specimen trees (e.g. *Betula spp*; *Prunus spp*) of ornamental value within open areas of the Application Site;
- Specimen small ornamental trees (possibly *Acer japonicum* or *Acer palmatum*), shrubs (possibly *Lonicera spp*; *Laurus spp*; *Berberis spp*);
- Potted shrubs surrounding seating areas (various grasses, herbaceous perennials, and bulbs); and
- 4 No. Tree Preservation Order trees (*Quercus robur* TPO ref TPO-0304-1986) directly adjacent to the Application Site (Wokingham Borough Council, 2026).

9.23 Landscape sensitivity

9.23.1 Landscape value

There are no statutory or non-statutory landscape designations with these landscape features. There are 4 No. Tree Preservation Order trees (*Quercus robur* TPO ref TPO-0304-1986) directly adjacent to the Application Site (Wokingham Borough Council, 2026).

The value attached to the Application Site landscape features has been considered in **Error! Reference source not found.** below against the factors defined in **Error! Reference source not found.** of the methodology in **Error! Reference source not found.** of this report.

Table 29: Factors in determining landscape value in LLCA 1

Factor	Value
Natural heritage	Whilst landscape elements are predictable and functional, they are well maintained and this has enabled good establishment which now brings increased ecosystem services and benefits.
Cultural heritage	Limited architectural value to the relatively modern buildings at site. The buildings do create a cultural expression of the wider townscape in a limited way with some modern time depth as a recruitment hub.
Landscape condition	Large floorplates allocated to buildings and ground level parking has degraded the landscape condition, however mature vegetation brings positive benefits.
Associations	No associations identified with direct connection to the landscape of the LLCA
Distinctiveness	Generally, there are no natural landscape elements which in themselves are considered to be rare or identified as being characteristic of the LLCA.
Recreational	Very limited recreational access to the functional areas within the Thames Valley Park.
Perceptual (Scenic)	Whilst planting has established and maintained, it offers limited value at close range but does contribute to the green backdrop of the LLCA within its peri-urban context. The buildings are of a similar visual style that contribute to the peri-urban townscape. The physical scale and massing is distinctive. The buildings do contribute to the skyline but only at a local scale as most are set within the surrounding mature vegetation.
Perceptual (wildness and tranquillity)	Negligible due to the commercial nature of the LLCA and its surrounding context of highways and rail infrastructure.
Functional	Predictable, functional planting does soften massing and break up car park at the local level. Maturation and management has brought additional screening value and wider ecosystem services.

A landscape designed as much for function as for aesthetic value but through maturation has led to a well-integrated commercial business park that has integrated into the peri-urban location. The LLCA contains landscape elements of value albeit based around buildings and infrastructure.

Overall, the value attached to LLCA 1: Thames Valley Park business park is **Low**.

9.23.2 Susceptibility to change

The following features and characteristics of the site are particularly susceptible to the change proposed:

- vegetation within the building curtilage and immediate boundaries between adjacent plots;

- the horizontal spatial arrangement of built form.

Areas of the LCA that are less susceptible to development include:

- the vertical composition of built form within the localised landscape

Overall, the susceptibility to change for LLCA 1: Thames Valley Park business park is **Low**.

9.23.3 Sensitivity

The value attached to the landscape of LLCA 1: Thames Valley Park business park is considered **Low** which combined with a **Low** susceptibility leads to an overall **Low** sensitivity for this landscape receptor meaning it is likely to accommodate the type of change no or limited undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation.

9.24 Magnitude of impact and level of effect

Table 30: Factors in determining landscape value for landscape features at the Application Site

Factor	Value
Natural heritage	The landscape makes a contribution to the wider green infrastructure networks around the Application Site.
Cultural heritage	No evidence noted
Landscape condition	The landscape appears to be generally well maintained as a designed landscape within the Thames Valley Park business park
Associations	No associations noted
Distinctiveness	The landscape elements contribute to the character and identity of the Thames Valley Park
Recreational	No recreational value as part of the workplace environment.
Perceptual (Scenic)	Offers scenic value to people using the buildings at the Application Site and also the wider park given its central location near to the picnic area.
Perceptual (wildness and tranquillity)	Negligible due to the commercial nature of the setting and its surrounding context of highways and rail infrastructure.
Functional	The landscape elements provide regulating, supporting and cultural ecosystem services at the local site level.

A designed landscape that has a degree of maturity and maintenance that embeds the Application Site into both the wider context of the designed landscape of the Thames Valley Park, but also the green connectivity to the wider landscape of the area.

Overall, the value attached to Application Site landscape features is **Low**.

9.24.1 Susceptibility to change

The following features and characteristics of these landscape features at the Application Site are particularly susceptible to the change proposed:

- vegetation within the building curtilage and immediate boundaries between adjacent plots.

Overall, the susceptibility to change for Application Site landscape features is **High**.

9.24.2 Sensitivity

The value attached to the attached to Application Site landscape features is considered **Low** considered which combined with a **High** susceptibility leads to an overall **High** sensitivity for this landscape receptor meaning that the type of change is very unlikely to be accommodated without undue consequences to the baseline situation for these landscape elements.

9.25 Magnitude of impact and level of effect

9.25.1 Construction (winter)

Construction activities associated with the Proposed Development would lead to the loss of the majority of these landscape features and components. Elements along the boundary to the south and east of the Proposed Development are likely to remain intact along with elements outside the Application Site boundary. Whilst many of these features are unlikely to be considered for their contribution to ecological value, the effect of their removal would lead to an aesthetic change both within the Proposed Development, and the immediate vicinity. These also contribute the balancing of the building mass within the landscape by creating green spacing to the voids.

Whilst it might not be possible to transplant some of the larger specimen trees, this could be considered if the correct timing and maintenance regimes were in place. Some of the smaller ornamental trees and plants could be lifted and stored. Equally, these could be offered to local horticultural groups and charities within the area.

Loss of these landscape features will be most notable at the site level and will change the character of the Application Site during construction. The size and scale of loss will be limited beyond the site level and there would be limited geographic extent beyond this. Replacement as part of the reinstatement of the operational Proposed Development would also make it temporary and reversible.

The magnitude of impact is considered to be **Very Low**.

Overall, the **High** sensitivity assessed against the **Very Low** magnitude of impact would result in **Minor adverse** effects, which is **not important**.

9.25.2 Existence and operation year 1 (winter)

Whilst some ornamental planting would be undertaken it is unlikely that these landscape features would be fully reinstated to the baseline. The larger massing of the single building (compared with three smaller building currently) would also mean that the landscape masterplan should consider mitigating for the visual change. New planting is unlikely to be established at operational year 1 apart from larger specimen trees. The opportunity to incorporate planting of higher ecological value (alongside aesthetic value) could enhance the character by strengthening green corridors.

The magnitude of impact is considered to be **Very Low**.

Overall, the **High** sensitivity assessed against the **Very Low** magnitude of impact would result in **Minor adverse** effects, which is **not important**.

9.25.3 Existence and operation year 15 (summer)

Plant establishment would bring the Proposed Development closer to the existing baseline, however the magnitude of impact is considered to be **Very Low** due to the massing which would largely remain unchanged from operational year 1.

The magnitude of impact is considered to be **Very Low**.

Overall, the **High** sensitivity assessed against the **Very Low** magnitude of impact would result in **Minor adverse** effects, which is **not important**.

C.8 Landscape effects schedule

Table 31: Summary of Landscape effects

Landscape receptor	Landscape value	Susceptibility to change	Landscape sensitivity	Construction (year(s))		Year 1 of existence and operation (year)		Year 1 of existence and operation (year)	
				Magnitude of impact	Importance/significance of effect	Magnitude of impact	Importance/significance of effect	Magnitude of impact	Importance/significance of effect
LLCA 1: Thames Valley Park business park	Low	Low	Low	Low	Minor adverse (not important)	Low	Negligible adverse (not important)	Low	Negligible adverse (not important)
LLCA 2: Sonning and the Thames Valley Park Local Gap	Medium	Medium	Medium	Very Low	Negligible adverse (not important)	Very Low	Negligible adverse (not important)	Very Low	Negligible adverse (not important)
LLCA 3: Woodley, Reading and Sonning residential	Very Low	Very Low	Very Low	Very Low	Negligible adverse (not important)	Very Low	Negligible adverse (not important)	Very Low	Negligible adverse (not important)
LLCA 4: Bulmershe Park and allotments	High	Very Low	Low	Very Low	Negligible adverse (not important)	No Change	No Change	No Change	No Change
LLCA 5: Caversham Lake and the River Thames	High	Low	Medium	Very Low	Minor adverse (not important)	Very Low	Negligible adverse (not important)	Very Low	Negligible adverse (not important)
LLCA 6: Major transport corridors	Very Low	Very Low	Very Low	Very Low	Negligible adverse (not important)	No Change	No Change	No Change	No Change
Mature trees and vegetation within the Application Site as part of the wider setting of the Thames Valley Park business park	Low	High	High	Very Low	Minor adverse (not important)	Very Low	Minor adverse (not important)	Very Low	Minor adverse (not important)

Appendix D: Visual baseline and effects

D.1 Introduction

This Appendix presents a detailed description of the baseline view and the likely visual effects of the construction, existence and operation of the Proposed Development. It is structured by viewpoint, setting out the value attached to views, the sensitivity of visual receptors and the magnitude and level of effects at each location.

D.2 Viewpoint 1: Thames Valley Park communal landscaped picnic area

9.26 Visual baseline description

This viewpoint is located at the Thames Valley Park business park communal landscaped picnic area to the north of the Application Site, as shown in Figure 7.

The viewpoint is represented in a Type 4 Visualisation³ on Figure 8 Sheet 11

This viewpoint is representative of the following visual receptor groups:

- Group 9: Visitors to the Thames Valley Park Nature Reserve; and
- Group 13: People working at the Thames Valley Park business park.

This is a short distance, truncated view from the communal space in the centre of the Thames Valley Park business park. In the foreground there is an area of open green space with paths leading to picnic benches and a large waterbody and woodland area. Site furniture including low level lighting to paths, and wooden fencing is present in the view along with large specimen trees along the boundary of the communal open space. The site ring road occupies the middle ground with street furniture, signage and bus shelters. Beyond this are the individual Site plots associated with Thames Valley Park. Boundary planting and vegetation within the building curtilage partially filter views of ground level car parking and the lower levels of the buildings. Three Microsoft buildings (Thames Valley Park Site 200) are prominent in the view. The buildings are multiple storeys and obscure longer distance views. Large trees and woodland strips fill the spaces between the buildings.

9.27 Sensitivity of visual receptors

9.27.1 Value attached to views

A view with some natural elements albeit set within a designed landscape view dominated by large commercial buildings by virtue of its location.

The value attached to the view is **Low**.

9.27.2 Susceptibility to change

This visual receptor group relates to people working at the Thames Valley Park business park, particularly those taking restorative breaks in natural settings, and visitors to the Thames Valley Park local nature reserve. With reference to the criteria set out in **Error! Reference source not found.** of the methodology of this report, their susceptibility to change is assessed as **Medium**.

9.27.3 Sensitivity

The value attached to views is **Low** with susceptibility to change being **Medium** leading to the sensitivity of visual receptors associated with Viewpoint 1 being **Medium**.

³ Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 06/19: *Visual Representation of Development Proposals*,

9.28 Magnitude of impact and level of effect

9.28.1 Construction (winter)

Construction would be prominent in the view from this short-range viewpoint. Initially this would include activities associated with site clearance to the buildings, built form and vegetation. It would then involve construction activities for the Proposed Development. This would include the presence of materials storage, facilities, plant equipment and the movement of site personnel and vehicles at the ground level. The presence of tall cranes would also be visible breaking the skyline. Site activities would also include delivery and removal vehicles entering and leaving site, and external lighting during periods of low light during the winter months. Representative receptors for this viewpoint are unlikely to be present at night and therefore external lighting at night is unlikely to lead to effects upon the receptor types for this representative viewpoint.

Whilst the size and scale would be large in the view due to the proximity, they would be highly localised and of limited geographical extent. The duration is likely to be medium to long term and reversible.

The magnitude of impact would be **High** which combined with a **Medium** sensitivity would lead to **Moderate Adverse** effects which are **important**.

9.28.2 Existence and operation year 1 (winter)

The Type 4 visualisation indicates that the Proposed Development would be clearly visible from this close-range viewpoint. In the baseline view, the existing buildings generally sit below, or are partly contained by, the tree line associated with the communal landscaped open space and the existing frontage planting to the Application Site. The existing line of trees along the frontage of the Proposed Development would be retained and supplemented with additional planting. At year 1, the retained trees would continue to provide an established degree of containment and filtering, although new supplementary planting would not yet provide the level of additional integration expected in the longer term.

The Proposed Development would extend above parts of the intervening tree line and would form a more continuous built backdrop to the view, although the retained frontage trees would continue to filter and soften views of the lower parts of the building. This change would be most apparent as a result of the increased scale and massing of the single building, and the reduced visual separation currently provided by the existing arrangement of buildings and intervening vegetation. During winter, visibility would be greater due to the reduced filtering effect of deciduous vegetation, and the newly planted frontage trees would be less effective in screening the lower parts of the building. However, the Proposed Development would remain viewed within the established commercial context of Thames Valley Park, where large-scale office and commercial buildings already form part of the view.

The magnitude of impact would be **Medium** which, combined with a **Medium** sensitivity, would lead to **Moderate adverse** effects which are **important**.

9.28.3 Existence and operation year 15 (summer)

At operation year 15, the retained frontage trees and supplementary planting would provide a greater degree of vegetated containment to the lower parts of the Proposed Development. The supplementary planting would be expected to have established, working with the retained frontage trees to help integrate the development into the wider business park landscape.

In summer, visibility of this frontage planting would also be filtered by the existing trees around the communal landscaped open space in which the viewpoint is located. These foreground trees would continue to provide some containment and would limit views of the lower parts of the Proposed Development.

However, the Type 4 visualisation indicates that, even in summer, the upper parts of the building would remain visible above the intervening tree line. The Proposed Development would therefore continue to form a more prominent built element than the existing baseline buildings, although it would be seen within the established commercial character of Thames Valley Park. By year 15, the replacement frontage trees would be expected to have reached a height broadly comparable with the existing frontage vegetation, helping to better integrate the development into the wider business park landscape.

The magnitude of impact would reduce to **Low** as planting establishes and helps to integrate the Proposed Development into the wider business park landscape. This, combined with a **Medium** sensitivity, would lead to **Minor adverse** effects which are **not important**.

D.3 Viewpoint 2: Thames Path Nationally Promoted Route and PRoW EARL3

9.29 Visual baseline description

This viewpoint is located along the Thames Path Nationally Promoted Route and PRoW EARL3 to the northwest of the Application Site, as shown in Figure 7.

The viewpoint is represented in a Type 4⁴ Visualisation on Figure 8-11

This viewpoint is representative of the following visual receptor groups:

- Group 4: People travelling through the landscape using the Thames path Nationally Promoted Route and other PRoW whose attention or interest is likely to be focussed on the landscape and on particular views;
- Group 6: River users including those beside (such as anglers) and those on (such as pleasure boats and water sports) the water;
- Group 9: Visitors to the Thames Valley Park Nature Reserve; and
- Group 10: People using the Redgrave Pinsent Rowing Lake.

This is a flat, open view looking southeast from the Thames Path Nationally Promoted Route. An open and expansive area of grassland dominates the fore to middle ground. This is bound by small blocks and belts of woodland, including those surrounding the Thames Valley Park Nature Reserve. The buildings situated within the Thames Valley Park business park are largely screened however these are likely to be more apparent in winter. The tops of several buildings can be seen within the wooded backdrop but these do not break the skyline from this viewpoint. There are no other detracting elements present in the view.

9.30 Sensitivity of visual receptors

9.30.1 Value attached to views

The view has a natural composition with strong landscape elements of value including open grassland, woodland and views of the River Thames and its riparian vegetation. The view is within and looking across a locally designated landscape.

The value attached to the view is **High**.

9.30.2 Susceptibility to change

These visual receptor groups relate to people engaged in outdoor recreation whose attention or interest is likely to be focussed on the landscape, and others for the whom the outdoor sport or recreation undertaken makes the appreciation of views of the landscape less relevant. With reference to the criteria set out in **Error! Reference source not found.** of the methodology of this report, their susceptibility to change is assessed as **High** and **Low** respectively.

9.30.3 Sensitivity

The value attached to views is **High** with susceptibility to change ranging from **High** to **Low** leading to the sensitivity of visual receptors associated with Viewpoint 2 ranging from **High** for people travelling through the landscape using the Thames path Nationally Promoted Route, nature reserve, and river, and **Low** for all other receptors.

⁴ Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 06/19: *Visual Representation of Development Proposals*,

9.31 Magnitude of impact and level of effect

9.31.1 Construction (winter)

Construction activities would only be intermittently visible as a small-scale addition within a largely unchanged panorama. Ground level activities would be heavily screened by intervening building and vegetation. Visibility of construction would be limited to tall plant in the background above the tree line and only for the duration of the construction phase, which in this context would be medium to long term and reversible. Views would be more apparent during winter when vegetation is not in leaf, but the Proposed Development would cause barely perceptible changes in the composition of the landscape within the view. Glimpses of construction vehicle movement might add to the perception of development in the vicinity.

The magnitude of impact would be **Very Low** which combined with a **High** sensitivity for people travelling through the landscape using the Thames path Nationally Promoted Route, nature reserve, and river would lead to **Minor Adverse** effects which are **not important** and **Negligible Adverse** which are also **not important** for all other receptors.

9.31.2 Existence and operation year 1 (winter)

Views of the Proposed Development would be limited to the top of the building with much of the lower facades screened by intervening buildings and vegetation. However, when visible, the Proposed Development would be viewed as a large massing above the tree line and breaking the skyline. These would be more apparent during winter. Views for people travelling through the landscape using the Thames path Nationally Promoted Route, nature reserve, and river would be more apparent in the immediate vicinity of Proposed Development with visual impact for discreet parts of the landscape within the view for a short section of the route. The Proposed Development would be viewed obliquely and away from the river views afforded along the route.

The magnitude of impact would be **Medium** which combined with a **High** sensitivity for people travelling through the landscape using the Thames path Nationally Promoted Route, nature reserve, and river would lead to **Moderate Adverse** effects which are **important** and **Negligible Adverse** which is **not important** for all other receptors.

9.31.3 Existence and operation year 15 (summer)

At operation year 15 it would be expected that tree and vegetation planting around the Proposed Development would have established. However, these trees are unlikely to have reached maturity and therefore views will remain the same as Operation year 1 (winter).

The magnitude of impact would be **Medium** which combined with a **High** sensitivity for people travelling through the landscape using the Thames path Nationally Promoted Route, nature reserve, and river would lead to **Moderate Adverse** effects which are **important** and **Negligible Adverse** which is **not important** for all other receptors.

D.4 Viewpoint 3: Thames Path Nationally Promoted Route and NCN Route 4

9.32 Visual baseline description

This viewpoint is located along the Thames Path Nationally Promoted Route and NCN Route 4 to the west of the Application Site, as shown in Figure 7.

This viewpoint is representative of the following visual receptor groups:

- Group 4: People travelling through the landscape using the Thames path Nationally Promoted Route and other PRow whose attention or interest is likely to be focussed on the landscape and on particular views;
- Group 5: People travelling through the landscape using National Cycle Route 4;
- Group 6: River users including those beside (such as anglers) and those on (such as pleasure boats and water sports) the water; and
- Group 10: People using the Redgrave Pinsent Rowing Lake.

This is a flat, open view looking east from the Thames Path Nationally Promoted Route to the west of the Thames Valley Park business park. An open strip of grassland next to the River Thames stretches from the foreground to the background. Boundary vegetation and trees separate and partially filter views of the highway (Thames Valley Park Drive) beyond. The vegetation partially filter views of ground level car parking and the lower levels of the tall buildings situated within the Thames Valley Park business park and directly adjacent to the highway. These buildings would be more apparent in winter when vegetation is not in leaf. A woodland strip running perpendicular to the River Thames forms a wooded backdrop in the far distance. There are no other detracting elements present in the view.

9.33 Sensitivity of visual receptors

9.33.1 Value attached to views

The view has a natural composition with strong landscape elements of value including open grassland, woodland and views of the River Thames and its riparian vegetation. The view is within and looking across a locally designated landscape.

The value attached to the view is **High**.

9.33.2 Susceptibility to change

These visual receptor groups relate to people engaged in outdoor recreation whose attention or interest is likely to be focussed on the landscape, and others for the whom the outdoor sport or recreation undertaken makes the appreciation of views of the landscape less relevant. With reference to the criteria set out in **Error! Reference source not found.** of the methodology of this report, their susceptibility to change is assessed as **High** and **Low** respectively.

9.33.3 Sensitivity

The value attached to views is **High** with susceptibility to change ranging from **High** to **Low** leading to the sensitivity of visual receptors associated with Viewpoint 3 ranging from **High** for people travelling through the landscape using the Thames path Nationally Promoted Route and using the river and NCN, and **Low** for all other receptors.

9.34 Magnitude of impact and level of effect

9.34.1 Construction (winter)

There is the potential for periodic temporary views of construction activities for these receptors. Visibility of construction would be limited to the top of tall plant in the background above the tree line and other tall intervening buildings and only for the duration of the construction phase, which in this context would be medium to long term and reversible. Views would be more apparent during winter when vegetation is not in leaf, but they would remain heavily screened and the Proposed Development would cause barely perceptible changes in the composition of the landscape within the view. Glimpses of construction vehicle movement might add to the perception of development in the vicinity.

The magnitude of impact would be **Very Low** which combined with a **High** sensitivity for people travelling through the landscape using the Thames path Nationally Promoted Route and using the river and NCN would lead to **Minor Adverse** effects which are **not important** and **Negligible Adverse** which are also **not important** for all other receptors.

9.34.2 Existence and operation year 1 (winter)

Due to the proximity of the Proposed Development and intervening tall buildings and vegetation, the Proposed Development would not be discernible or would occupy such a small part of the view as to represent no change.

The magnitude of impact would be **No Change** which combined with a **High** sensitivity for people travelling through the landscape using the Thames path Nationally Promoted Route and using the river and NCN would lead to **No Change** in visual effects which are **not important**.

9.34.3 Existence and operation year 15 (summer)

As Operation Year 1 (winter)

The magnitude of impact would be **No Change** which combined with a **High** sensitivity for people travelling through the landscape using the Thames path Nationally Promoted Route and using the river and NCN would lead to **No Change** in visual effects which are **not important**.

D.5 Viewpoint 4: Inglewood House off Sonning Lane

9.35 Visual baseline description

This viewpoint is located at the entrance road Inglewood House off Sonning Lane to the northeast of the Application Site, as shown in Figure 7.

This viewpoint is representative of the following visual receptor groups:

- Group 1: Residents to the east of the Application Site at the western extent of Sonning; and
- Group 12: People using the sports complex and playing fields at Sonning.

The view encompasses the open space that is representative of the area proposed in the Sonning Local Gap study (Sonning Parish Council, 2025). Low wooden post and rail fencing bounds the verge to Inglewood House (road) in the immediate foreground. Beyond this large recreational sports fields stretch from the foreground to the horizon. Large trees and woodland belts screen the area from the road and contain views and limit intervisibility to the area. Sporting paraphernalia including goalposts and cricket pitch covers are present in the view. Several buildings are present along the horizon set within the wooded backdrop. Tall floodlighting masts are visible breaking the skyline but otherwise there are no detracting elements in the view.

9.36 Sensitivity of visual receptors

9.36.1 Value attached to views

A peri urban view of recreational playing fields containing few discernible detracting elements and with strong indicators of value at the community level. Views across this landscape are not currently locally designated but are being proposed in part within the draft Sonning Neighbourhood Plan.

The value attached to the view is **Medium**.

9.36.2 Susceptibility to change

This visual receptor group relates to residents of communities to at the western extent of Sonning, along with people engaged in sports and recreation at the various playing fields in this area. With reference to the criteria set out in **Error! Reference source not found.** of the methodology of this report, their susceptibility to change is assessed as **High** and **Low** respectively.

9.36.3 Sensitivity

The value attached to views is **Medium** with susceptibility to change ranging from **High** to **Low** leading to the sensitivity of visual receptors associated with Viewpoint 4 ranging from **High** for residents of communities to at the western extent of Sonning, and **Low** for all other receptors.

9.37 Magnitude of impact and level of effect

9.37.1 Construction (winter)

Visibility of construction would be limited to the top of tall cranes in the background of the view above the tree line and only for the duration of the construction phase, which in this context would be medium to long term and reversible. Views would be more apparent during winter when vegetation is not in leaf and safety lighting would be more noticeable. The tops of tall cranes would break the skyline. Ground level construction activities would not be visible. The Proposed Development would cause barely perceptible changes in the composition of the landscape within the view.

The magnitude of impact would be **Very Low** which combined with a **High** sensitivity for residents of communities to at the western extent of Sonning would lead to **Minor Adverse** effects which are **not important** and **Negligible Adverse** which are also **not important** for all other receptors.

9.37.2 Existence and operation year 1 (winter)

Due to the proximity of the Proposed Development and intervening vegetation, the Proposed Development would not be discernible or would occupy such a small part of the view as to represent no change.

The magnitude of impact would be **No Change** which combined with a **High** sensitivity for residents of communities to at the western extent of Sonning would lead to **No Change** in visual effects which are **not important**.

9.37.3 Existence and operation year 15 (summer)

As Operation Year 1 (winter)

The magnitude of impact would be **No Change** which combined with a **High** sensitivity for residents of communities to at the western extent of Sonning would lead to **No Change** in visual effects which are **not important**.

D.6 Viewpoint 5: London Road bridge above the Great Western railway line heading towards Reading Station

9.38 Visual baseline description

This viewpoint is located on the London Road bridge above the Great Western railway line heading towards Reading Station to the east of the Application Site, as shown in Figure 7. .

This viewpoint is representative of the following visual receptor groups:

- Group 1: Residents to the east of the Application Site at the western extent of Sonning; and
- Group 2: Residents to the south of the railway line and southeast of the Application Site at the northwestern extent of Woodley.

A truncated view looking west towards Reading from the A4 London Road bridge as it crosses the Great Western railway line. The tall bridge parapet in the immediate foreground largely screens views below 1.6m. The railway line corridor set within a deep but narrow cutting can be seen from the fore to middle ground of the view before turning out of view screened by the raised earthworks of the cutting. The sequential arrangement of overhead line electrification infrastructure is particularly notable as a detracting element due to the straight section of the railway line corridor albeit contained within the narrow cutting. The steep earthworks to either side of the railway line dominate the fore to middle ground view and truncate views beyond. The earthworks are heavily vegetated with scrubby vegetation and trees, including some standing deadwood. This heavily screens views beyond and serves to limit intervisibility across the railway line corridor. Areas of aggregate are also notable to the sides. A line of specimen trees can be seen along the northern side of the cutting along with boundary vegetation associated with residential dwellings along Bath Road. Vegetation to southern side of the cutting largely obscures views beyond although some of the industrial and retail park units are partially visible within the wooded backdrop. Views of the residential areas of Earley and Reading are present in the far distance.

9.39 Sensitivity of visual receptors

9.39.1 Value attached to views

A low quality view dominated by highways and rail infrastructure. Whilst the vegetation to the cutting provides beneficial screening, the value attached to the view is **Very Low**.

9.39.2 Susceptibility to change

This visual receptor group relates to residents of communities to the northwestern extent of Woodley, and the western extent of Sonning around Bath Road. With reference to the criteria set out in **Error! Reference source not found.** of the methodology of this report, their susceptibility to change is assessed as **High**.

9.39.3 Sensitivity

The value attached to views is **Very Low** with susceptibility to change being **High** leading to the sensitivity of visual receptors associated with Viewpoint 5 being **Low** due to the views across landscapes not being designated for landscape quality, exhibiting few indicators of value, and being dominated by detracting features informing the experience of the view.

9.40 Magnitude of impact and level of effect

9.40.1 Construction (winter)

Ground level construction activities would be heavily screened by the landform and vegetation along the railway line for the majority of residents of communities to the northwestern extent of Woodley. There might be some views of ground level construction activities for residents of communities to the western

extent of Sonning around Bath Road where dwellings back onto open fields at Sonning. These are likely to be screened by landform, boundary vegetation to the properties along with the woodland at Little and Big Cogs.

Visibility would generally be limited to tall cranes in the midground of the view above the tree line and only for the duration of the construction phase, which in this context would be medium to long term and reversible. Views would be more apparent during winter when vegetation is not in leaf and safety lighting would be more noticeable. The tops of tall cranes would break the skyline. The Proposed Development would cause small changes in the composition of the landscape within the view.

The magnitude of impact would be **Low** which combined with a **Low** sensitivity for residents of communities would lead to **Minor Adverse** effects which are **not important**.

9.40.2 Existence and operation year 1 (winter)

Due to the proximity of the Proposed Development and intervening landform and vegetation, the Proposed Development would not be discernible or would occupy such a small part of the view as to represent no change.

The magnitude of impact would be **No Change** which combined with a **Low** sensitivity for residents of communities would lead to **No Change** in visual effects which are **not important**.

9.40.3 Existence and operation year 15 (summer)

As Operation Year 1 (winter)

The magnitude of impact would be **No Change** which combined with a **Low** sensitivity for residents of communities would lead to **No Change** in visual effects which are **not important**.

D.7 Viewpoint 6: Bulmershe Park SULV

9.41 Visual baseline description

This viewpoint is located at Bulmershe Park SULV to the south of the Application Site, as shown in Figure 7.

This viewpoint is representative of the following visual receptor groups:

- Group 2: Residents to the south of the railway line and southeast of the Application Site at the northwestern extent of Woodley
- Group 7: Visitors to Bulmershe Park, Earley including the Highwood Local Nature Reserve (LNR)
- Group 11: People using the Reading Road allotments and Bulmershe Park sports complex.

The view encompasses the urban Bulmershe Park looking north from inside the park near to Woodlands Avenue. Large areas of municipal parkland stretches from the foreground to the horizon. There are several large individual trees in an otherwise open, green space. Green mesh security fencing segregates the open park areas from several of the adjacent sporting pitches. A thin woodland belt around the boundary of the park form a wooded horizon and largely screens views of residential dwellings along the B3350 Pitts Lane beyond. Tall buildings that break the skyline are limited to those around Woodley in the west. A line of overhead pylons are the only detracting element in the view.

9.42 Sensitivity of visual receptors

9.42.1 Value attached to views

A natural view within an urban context. The view is of local value with good recreational provision and access to the local community. The view has few detracting elements.

The value attached to the view is **Medium**.

9.42.2 Susceptibility to change

This visual receptor group relates to residents of communities to the south of the railway line at Woodley and visitors to Bulmershe Park, and also people using the Reading Road allotments and Bulmershe Park sports complex. With reference to the criteria set out in **Error! Reference source not found.** of the methodology of this report, their susceptibility to change is assessed as **High, Medium** and **Low** respectively.

9.42.3 Sensitivity

The value attached to views is **Medium** with susceptibility to change ranging from **High, Medium** and **Low** leading to the sensitivity of visual receptors associated with Viewpoint 6 ranging from **High** for residents of communities and visitors to Bulmershe Park, **Medium** for people using the Reading Road allotments, and **Low** for all other receptors.

9.43 Magnitude of impact and level of effect

9.43.1 Construction (winter)

Visibility of construction would be limited to the top of tall cranes in the background of the view above the tree line and only for the duration of the construction phase, which in this context would be medium to long term and reversible. Views would be more apparent during winter when vegetation is not in leaf and safety lighting would be more noticeable. The tops of tall cranes would break the skyline. Ground level construction activities would not be visible. The Proposed Development would cause barely perceptible changes in the composition of the landscape within the view.

The magnitude of impact would be **Very Low** which combined with a **High** sensitivity for residents of communities and visitors to Bulmershe Park would lead to **Minor Adverse** effects which are **not important** and **Negligible Adverse** which are also **not important** for all other receptors.

9.43.2 Existence and operation year 1 (winter)

Due to the proximity of the Proposed Development and intervening vegetation, the Proposed Development would not be discernible or would occupy such a small part of the view as to represent no change.

The magnitude of impact would be **No Change** which combined with a **High** sensitivity for residents of communities and visitors to Bulmershe Park would lead to **No Change** in visual effects which are **not important** which is also the case for all other receptors.

9.43.1 Existence and operation year 15 (summer)

As Operation Year 1 (winter)

The magnitude of impact would be **No Change** which combined with a **High** sensitivity for residents of communities and visitors to Bulmershe Park would lead to **No Change** in visual effects which are **not important** which is also the case for all other receptors.

D.8 Viewpoint 7: PLCA3A Key view 2 (west of Milestone Wood) PRow 205/11/10

9.44 Visual baseline description

This viewpoint is located along PRow 205/11/10 at PLCA3A Key view 2 (west of Milestone Wood) to the north of the Application Site, as shown in Figure 7.

This viewpoint is representative of the following visual receptor groups:

- Group 8: Visitors to key view locations as defined in the Draft Eye and Dunsden Landscape Character Assessment and Proposal for a Local Valued Landscape

An expansive view looking south from an elevated perspective to the north of the Application Site. A large open field on a localised plateau falls down gently from the foreground to the middle ground where a woodland belt surrounding a quarry bounds the field in this direction. Around this point the terrain falls away steeply and along with the woodland strip combines to foreshorten middle to background views of the river valley floor. As the landform rises back in the far distance, views of the urban extent of Earley, Woodley and East Reading are visible with buildings along the valley side set within a vegetated backdrop. Larger buildings at the Thames Valley Park (including those on the Application Site) and Suttons business park are visible below the horizon. These buildings do not break the skyline. Further to the southwest, the urban context of Reading is visible. Several tall buildings including the Verto building and the Blade are prominent against the skyline along with several other tower blocks and church steeples. Detracting elements in the view include the chimney stack at the Royal Berkshire Hospital, and a wind turbine breaking the skyline. Temporary structures including several tall cranes are also visible in the far distance breaking the skyline.

9.45 Sensitivity of visual receptors

9.45.1 Value attached to views

An attractive rural view from a locally elevated viewpoint offering distant panoramic views from this locally designated landscape. There are few distinguishing or notable elements of value and the urban influence of Reading and Wokingham are detracting elements in the far-distance along the horizon. The view is a generally pleasing but indistinct composition.

The value attached to the view is **High**.

9.45.2 Susceptibility to change

This visual receptor group relates to recreational users of the PRow network, in particular to visit key view locations as defined in the Draft Eye and Dunsden Landscape Character Assessment and Proposal for a Local Valued Landscape. With reference to the criteria set out in **Error! Reference source not found.** of the methodology of this report, their susceptibility to change is assessed as **High**.

9.45.3 Sensitivity

The value attached to views is **High** with susceptibility to change being **High** leading to the sensitivity of visual receptors associated with Viewpoint 7 being **High**.

9.46 Magnitude of impact and level of effect

9.46.1 Construction (winter)

The demolition of the three existing buildings would be notable by their removal from the panorama although this would likely be perceived as a being amalgamated into the wooded backdrop from this distance. Construction activities would be limited to tall cranes in the background of the view. These would be visible above the tree line breaking the skyline and only for the duration of the construction phase, which in this context would be medium to long term and reversible. Views would be more apparent during winter

when vegetation is not in leaf and safety lighting would be more noticeable. Ground level construction activities would not be visible. Given the panorama and urban context, the Proposed Development would cause barely perceptible changes in the composition of the landscape within the view.

The magnitude of impact would be **Very Low** which combined with a **High** sensitivity for visitors to this key view within a proposed Local Value Landscape would lead to **Minor Adverse** effects which are **not important**.

9.46.2 Existence and operation year 1 (winter)

Reinstatement of built form at the Application Site will mean that the Proposed Development will cause only a small change to the composition of the landscape within the view. Whilst the size and scale of the building will be noticeable compared to other large buildings, it would be the dominance of the massing of a single building that would be most noticeable. Looking down from this elevated perspective, the additional height of the building will be barely perceptible, and will not break the skyline.

The magnitude of impact would be **Low** which combined with a **High** sensitivity for visitors to this key view within a proposed Local Value Landscape would lead to **Minor Adverse** effects which are **not important**.

9.46.3 Existence and operation year 15 (summer)

As Operation Year 1 (winter).

The magnitude of impact would be **Low** which combined with a **High** sensitivity for visitors to this key view within a proposed Local Value Landscape would lead to **Minor Adverse** effects which are **not important**.

D.9 Viewpoint 8: PLCA1 Key view 1 Thames Path

9.47 Visual baseline description

This viewpoint is located along the Thames Path at PLCA1 Key view 1 to the northeast of the Application Site, as shown in Figure 7.

This viewpoint is representative of the following visual receptor groups:

- Group 8: Visitors to key view locations as defined in the Draft Eye and Dunsden Landscape Character Assessment and Proposal for a Local Valued Landscape

A pastoral view from the Thames Path Nationally Promoted Route alongside the River Thames to the northwest of Charvil. A large flat pastoral field stretches from the foreground to the horizon. Belts and blocks of woodland combine to create a wooded backdrop to the view. Several large dwellings at Sonning are the only built form in the view from this section of the Thames Path. Apart from a line of wooden telegraph poles crossing the field there are no other detracting elements.

9.48 Sensitivity of visual receptors

9.48.1 Value attached to views

An attractive riparian view from the Thames Path Nationally Promoted Route where the river and rural elements are a pleasing composition with few detracting elements. The view is a generally pleasing but indistinct composition.

The value attached to the view is **High**.

9.48.2 Susceptibility to change

This visual receptor group relates to recreational users of the PRow network and, in particular to visit key view locations as defined in the Draft Eye and Dunsden Landscape Character Assessment and Proposal for a Local Valued Landscape. With reference to the criteria set out in **Error! Reference source not found.** of the methodology of this report, their susceptibility to change is assessed as **High**.

9.48.3 Sensitivity

The value attached to views is **High** with susceptibility to change being **High** leading to the sensitivity of visual receptors associated with Viewpoint 8 being **High**.

9.49 Magnitude of impact and level of effect

9.49.1 Construction (winter)

Visibility of construction would be limited to the top of tall cranes in the background of the view above the tree line and only for the duration of the construction phase, which in this context would be medium to long term and reversible. Views would be more apparent during winter when vegetation is not in leaf and safety lighting would be more noticeable. The tops of tall cranes would break the skyline. Ground level construction activities would not be visible. The Proposed Development would cause barely perceptible changes in the composition of the landscape within the view.

The magnitude of impact would be **Very Low** which combined with a **High** sensitivity for visitors to this key view within a proposed Local Value Landscape would lead to **Minor Adverse** effects which are **not important**.

9.49.2 Existence and operation year 1 (winter)

Due to the proximity of the Proposed Development and intervening vegetation, the Proposed Development would not be discernible or would occupy such a small part of the view as to represent no change.

The magnitude of impact would be **No Change** which combined with a **High** sensitivity for visitors to this key view within a proposed Local Value Landscape would lead to **No Change** in visual effects which are **not important**.

9.49.1 Existence and operation year 15 (summer)

As Operation Year 1 (winter)

The magnitude of impact would be **No Change** which combined with a **High** sensitivity for visitors to this key view within a proposed Local Value Landscape would lead to **No Change** in visual effects which are **not important**.

D.10 Viewpoint 9: PLCA3A 3 Key view 3 Foxhill Lane

9.50 Visual baseline description

This viewpoint is located along Foxhill Lane at PLCA3A 3 Key view 3 to the north of the Application Site, as shown in Figure 7.

This viewpoint is representative of the following visual receptor groups:

- Group 8: Visitors to key view locations as defined in the Draft Eye and Dunsden Landscape Character Assessment and Proposal for a Local Valued Landscape.

A view looking southeast from Foxhill Lane to the south of Littlestead Green at a field entrance along the regional cycle network route. Views along Foxhill Lane are heavily screened by landform and tall densely vegetated field boundaries and limited views through the gaps at field entrances. In the foreground the tall vegetation, including occasional hedgerow trees alongside Foxhill Lane recedes into the middle ground. The terrain is largely flat. Small open fields to either side of Foxhill Lane are bound by tall hedgerow and woodland belts which foreshorten views beyond. Dwellings at Dunsden Green are visible along the horizon to the east along with a line of overhead pylons which break the skyline. A dwelling along Foxhill Lane is prominent in the middle ground. Beyond this the terrain falls away steeply foreshortening middle ground views of the river valley floor. The tops of tall commercial buildings are visible along with the urban extent of Earley, Woodley and East Reading with buildings along the rising valley side set within a vegetated backdrop. Where views are possible, larger buildings including those at the Thames Valley Park (including those on the Application Site) and the Suttons business park are visible below the horizon. These buildings do not break the skyline. Glimpsed views of taller buildings around Reading are also possible with some breaking the skyline. Temporary structures including several tall cranes are also visible in the far distance breaking the skyline.

9.51 Sensitivity of visual receptors

9.51.1 Value attached to views

An attractive rural view from a flat but locally elevated viewpoint offering glimpsed distant panoramic views from this locally designated landscape. There are few distinguishing or notable elements of value and the urban influence of Reading and Wokingham are detracting elements in the far-distance along the horizon. The view is a generally pleasing but indistinct composition.

The value attached to the view is **High**.

9.51.2 Susceptibility to change

This visual receptor group relates to recreational users of the PRoW network and includes regional cycle network users, in particular to visit key view locations as defined in the Draft Eye and Dunsden Landscape Character Assessment and Proposal for a Local Valued Landscape. With reference to the criteria set out in **Error! Reference source not found.** of the methodology of this report, their susceptibility to change is assessed as **High**.

9.51.3 Sensitivity

The value attached to views is **High** with susceptibility to change being **High** leading to the sensitivity of visual receptors associated with Viewpoint 8 being **High**.

9.52 Magnitude of impact and level of effect

9.52.1 Construction (winter)

Views from this viewpoint represent the worst case scenario for receptors using this PRoW and regional cycle network. For the majority of the route there would be no view of the Application Site or of construction activities associated with the Proposed Development. Where glimpsed views are possible the

demolition of the three existing buildings would be notable by their removal from the panorama although this would likely be perceived as a being amalgamated into the wooded backdrop from this distance. Construction activities would be limited to tall cranes in the background of the view. These would be visible above the tree line breaking the skyline and only for the duration of the construction phase, which in this context would be medium to long term and reversible. Views would be more apparent during winter when vegetation is not in leaf and safety lighting would be more noticeable. Ground level construction activities would not be visible. Given the panorama and urban context, the Proposed Development would cause barely perceptible changes in the composition of the landscape within the view.

The magnitude of impact would be **Very Low** which combined with a **High** sensitivity for visitors to this key view within a proposed Local Value Landscape would lead to **Minor Adverse** effects which are **not important**.

9.52.2 Existence and operation year 1 (winter)

Views from this viewpoint represent the worst case scenario for receptors using this PRoW and regional cycle network and indicate the highly localised geographical extent. For the majority of the route there would be no view of the Proposed Development. Where glimpsed views are possible the reinstatement of built form at the Application Site will mean that the Proposed Development will cause only a small change to the composition of the landscape within the view. Whilst the size and scale of the building will be noticeable compared to other large buildings, it would be the dominance of the massing of a single building that would be most noticeable. Looking down from this elevated perspective, the additional height of the building will be barely perceptible, and will not break the skyline.

Given the transient nature of the views available the magnitude of impact would be **Very Low** which combined with a **High** sensitivity for visitors to this key view within a proposed Local Value Landscape would lead to **Minor Adverse** effects which are **not important**.

9.52.3 Existence and operation year 15 (summer)

As Operation Year 1 (winter).

The magnitude of impact would be **Very Low** which combined with a **High** sensitivity for visitors to this key view within a proposed Local Value Landscape would lead to **Minor Adverse** effects which are **not important**.

D.11 Viewpoint 10: Junction of Hilltop Road and London Road, Earley Visual baseline description

This viewpoint is located at the Junction of Hilltop Road and London Road, Earley to the south of the Application Site, as shown in Figure 7.

The viewpoint is represented in a Type 2⁵ Visualisation on Figure 8-10.

This viewpoint is representative of the following visual receptor groups:

- Group 3: Residents to the south of the railway line and south of the Application Site at the northern extent of Earley

A truncated view from the urban edge of Earley alongside the A4 London Road. The view is typical of residential dwellings set back from major highways where views are more open than the higher density streets within the residential estates. A wide green verge alongside the highway in the immediate foreground creates a more open view at the residential edge of Earley. Beyond this the dual carriageway dominates the fore to middle ground. Several dwellings at right angles to the A4 London Road are situated along Shepherds Avenue in the view. Behind these the densely wooded terrain rises slightly foreshortening longer distance views and screening the Great Western Railway corridor set within the cutting beyond.

9.53 Sensitivity of visual receptors

9.53.1 Value attached to views

A Very Low value view from a residential road located close to the existing railway corridor and a major highway. The landscape in the view has few indicators of value and the infrastructure and urban elements are detracting elements.

The value attached to the view is **Very Low**.

9.53.2 Susceptibility to change

This visual receptor group relates to residents of communities to the south of the railway line at the northern extent of Earley. With reference to the criteria set out in **Error! Reference source not found.** of the methodology of this report, their susceptibility to change is assessed as **High**.

9.53.3 Sensitivity

The value attached to views is **Very Low** with susceptibility to change being **High** leading to the sensitivity of visual receptors associated with Viewpoint 10 being **Low** due to the views across landscapes not being designated for landscape quality, exhibiting few indicators of value, and being dominated by detracting features informing the experience of the view.

9.54 Magnitude of impact and level of effect

9.54.1 Construction (winter)

Ground level construction activities would not be visible, screened by the landform and vegetation along the railway line for the majority of residents of communities to the south of the railway line and south of the Application Site at the northern extent of Earley. Visibility would generally be limited to tall cranes in the midground of the view above the tree line and only for the duration of the construction phase, which in this context would be medium to long term and reversible. Views would be more apparent during winter when vegetation is not in leaf and safety lighting would be more noticeable. The tops of tall cranes would break the

⁵ Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 06/19: *Visual Representation of Development Proposals*,

skyline. The Proposed Development would cause small changes in the composition of the landscape within the view.

The magnitude of impact would be **Low** which combined with a **Low** sensitivity for residents of communities and would lead to **Minor Adverse** effects which are **not important**.

9.54.2 Existence and operation year 1 (winter)

Due to the proximity of the Proposed Development and intervening landform and vegetation, the Proposed Development would not be discernible or would occupy such a small part of the view as to represent no change.

The magnitude of impact would be **No Change** which combined with a **Low** sensitivity for residents of communities would lead to **No Change** in visual effects which are **not important**.

9.54.1 Existence and operation year 15 (summer)

As Operation Year 1 (winter)

The magnitude of impact would be **No Change** which combined with a **Low** sensitivity for residents of communities would lead to **No Change** in visual effects which are **not important**.

D.12 Viewpoint 11: Junction of Shepherds Avenue and London Road

This viewpoint is located at the Junction of Hilltop Road and London Road, Earley to the south of the Application Site, as shown in Figure 7.

The viewpoint is represented in a Type 2 ⁶Visualisation on Figure 8-11

This viewpoint is representative of the following visual receptor groups:

- Group 3: Residents to the south of the railway line and south of the Application Site at the northern extent of Earley

This viewpoint is located at the junction of Shepherds Avenue and London Road, Earley, to the south of the Application Site. It is representative of residents on Shepherds Avenue, where properties are generally orientated towards the central street rather than towards the Application Site.

This is a truncated urban view from the northern end of Shepherds Avenue. Residential properties and associated front gardens define the foreground and middle ground, with London Road forming part of the wider urban streetscape context. To the north, the Great Western Railway corridor forms an intervening feature between the residential street and Thames Valley Park. The railway is set within a shallow cutting relative to the surrounding residential area and is lined by mature trees and dense vegetation, which enclose the northern end of the street and strongly filter views beyond.

During summer, the mature railway-side vegetation provides a high degree of screening. In winter, filtered and intermittent views may be possible through the vegetation, including glimpses of passing trains and limited views towards existing buildings within Thames Valley Park. However, visibility of the existing business park is restricted by the intervening railway corridor, dense vegetation and the difference in ground levels. Shepherds Avenue is located at approximately 57m AOD, while the Application Site is approximately 48m AOD, meaning the business park is set almost 10m lower than the residential street.

9.55 Sensitivity of visual receptors

9.55.1 Value attached to views

A Very Low value view from a residential road located close to the existing railway corridor and a major highway. The landscape in the view has few indicators of value and the infrastructure and urban elements are detracting elements.

The value attached to the view is **Very Low**.

9.55.2 Susceptibility to change

This visual receptor group relates to residents of communities to the south of the railway line at the northern extent of Earley. With reference to the criteria set out in **Error! Reference source not found.** of the methodology of this report, their susceptibility to change is assessed as **High**.

9.55.3 Sensitivity

The value attached to views is **Very Low** with susceptibility to change being **High** leading to the sensitivity of visual receptors associated with Viewpoint 10 being **Low** due to the views across landscapes not being

⁶ Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 06/19: *Visual Representation of Development Proposals*,

designated for landscape quality, exhibiting few indicators of value, and being dominated by detracting features informing the experience of the view.

9.56 Magnitude of impact and level of effect

9.56.1 Construction (winter)

Ground level construction activities would not be visible, screened by the landform and vegetation along the railway line for the majority of to residents of communities to the south of the railway line and south of the Application Site at the northern extent of Earley. Visibility would generally be limited to tall cranes in the midground of the view above the tree line and only for the duration of the construction phase, which in this context would be medium to long term and reversible. Views would be more apparent during winter when vegetation is not in leaf and safety lighting would be more noticeable. The tops of tall cranes would break the skyline. The Proposed Development would cause small changes in the composition of the landscape within the view.

The magnitude of impact would be **Low** which combined with a **Low** sensitivity for residents of communities and would lead to **Minor Adverse** effects which are **not important**.

9.56.2 Existence and operation year 1 (winter)

The wireline indicates that the Proposed Development would be set low within the view due to the lower elevation of the Application Site beyond the intervening railway corridor. From this location, the proposed building would be largely screened by the mature trees and dense vegetation lining the railway. In winter, when deciduous vegetation is not in leaf, there may be intermittent filtered views towards parts of the Proposed Development, although these would be limited and seen beyond the railway corridor.

Where visible, the Proposed Development would be perceived at a relatively low level in the view and, in some locations, may appear broadly comparable in height to built form within the surrounding residential streetscape. It would also be seen in the context of existing commercial development at Thames Valley Park, passing trains, the railway corridor, London Road traffic and street lighting. Given the orientation of residential properties on Shepherds Avenue towards the street rather than towards the Application Site, views would not form the primary outlook from most properties.

The Proposed Development would therefore result in a small and localised change to the composition of the view. The magnitude of impact would be **Low**, which combined with a **Low** sensitivity for residents would lead to **Minor adverse** visual effects which are **not important**.

9.56.3 Existence and operation year 15 (summer)

At operation year 15, established planting within the Proposed Development and the existing mature vegetation along the railway corridor would provide further filtering and containment of views. In summer, the dense railway-side vegetation would substantially screen the Proposed Development from this location. Any remaining visibility would be limited to heavily filtered glimpses and would be experienced in the context of the intervening railway corridor and existing urban infrastructure.

The magnitude of impact would reduce to **Very Low** or **No Change**, which combined with a **Low** sensitivity for residents would lead to **Negligible adverse** or **No Change** visual effects, which would be **not important**.

D.13 Visual effects schedule

Table 32: Summary of visual effects.

Viewpoint number	Visual receptor	Value attached to view	Susceptibility to change	Sensitivity of visual receptor	Construction (year(s))		Year 1 of existence and operation (Winter)		Year 15 of existence and operation (Summer)	
					Magnitude of impact	Importance/significance of effect	Magnitude of impact	Importance/significance of effect	Magnitude of impact	Importance/significance of effect
VP 1	Visitors to the Thames Valley Park Nature Reserve	Low	Medium	Medium	High	Moderate adverse (important)	Medium	Moderate adverse (important)	Low	Minor adverse (not important)
VP 1	People working at the Thames Valley Park business park	Low	Medium	Medium	High	Moderate adverse (important)	Medium	Moderate adverse (important)	Low	Minor adverse (not important)
VP 2	People travelling through the landscape using the Thames path Nationally Promoted Route and other PRoW whose attention or interest is likely to be focussed on the landscape and on particular views	High	High	High	Very Low	Minor adverse (not important)	Medium	Moderate adverse (important)	Medium	Moderate adverse (important)
VP 2	River users including those beside (such as anglers) and those on (such as pleasure boats and water sports) the water	High	High	High	Very Low	Minor adverse (not important)	Medium	Moderate adverse (important)	Medium	Moderate adverse (important)
VP 2	Visitors to the Thames Valley Park Nature Reserve;	High	High	High	Very Low	Minor adverse (not important)	Medium	Moderate adverse (important)	Medium	Moderate adverse (important)
VP 2	People using the Redgrave Pinsent Rowing Lake	High	Low	Low	Very Low	Negligible adverse (not important)	Medium	Negligible adverse (not important)	Medium	Negligible adverse (not important)
VP 3	People travelling through the landscape using the Thames path Nationally Promoted Route and other PRoW whose attention or interest is likely to be focussed on the landscape and on particular views	High	High	High	Very Low	Minor adverse (not important)	No Change	No Change (not important)	No Change	No Change (not important)
VP 3	People travelling through the landscape using National Cycle Route 4	High	High	High	Very Low	Minor adverse (not important)	No Change	No Change (not important)	No Change	No Change (not important)
VP 3	River users including those beside (such as anglers) and those on (such as pleasure boats and water sports) the water	High	High	High	Very Low	Minor adverse (not important)	No Change	No Change (not important)	No Change	No Change (not important)

Viewpoint number	Visual receptor	Value attached to view	Susceptibility to change	Sensitivity of visual receptor	Construction (year(s))		Year 1 of existence and operation (Winter)		Year 15 of existence and operation (Summer)	
					Magnitude of impact	Importance/significance of effect	Magnitude of impact	Importance/significance of effect	Magnitude of impact	Importance/significance of effect
VP 3	People using the Redgrave Pinsent Rowing Lake	High	Low	Low	Very Low	Negligible adverse (not important)	No Change	No Change (not important)	No Change	No Change (not important)
VP 4	Residents to the east of the Application Site at the western extent of Sonning	Medium	High	High	Very Low	Minor adverse (not important)	No Change	No Change (not important)	No Change	No Change (not important)
VP 4	People using the sports complex and playing fields at Sonning	Medium	Low	Low	Very Low	Negligible adverse (not important)	No Change	No Change (not important)	No Change	No Change (not important)
VP 5	Residents to the east of the Application Site at the western extent of Sonning	Very Low	High	Low	Low	Minor adverse (not important)	No Change	No Change (not important)	No Change	No Change (not important)
VP 5	Residents to the south of the railway line and southeast of the Application Site at the northwestern extent of Woodley	Very Low	High	Low	Low	Minor adverse (not important)	No Change	No Change (not important)	No Change	No Change (not important)
VP 6	Residents to the south of the railway line and southeast of the Application Site at the northwestern extent of Woodley	Medium	High	High	Very Low	Minor adverse (not important)	No Change	No Change (not important)	No Change	No Change (not important)
VP 6	Visitors to Bulmershe Park, Earley including the Highwood Local Nature Reserve (LNR)	Medium	High	High	Very Low	Minor adverse (not important)	No Change	No Change (not important)	No Change	No Change (not important)
VP 6	People using the Reading Road allotments and Bulmershe Park sports complex	Medium	Medium	Medium	Very Low	Negligible adverse (not important)	No Change	No Change (not important)	No Change	No Change (not important)
VP 7	Visitors to key view locations as defined in the Draft Eye and Dunsden Landscape Character Assessment and Proposal for a Local Valued Landscape	High	High	High	Very Low	Minor adverse (not important)	Low	Minor adverse (not important)	Low	Minor adverse (not important)
VP 8	Visitors to key view locations as defined in the Draft Eye and Dunsden Landscape Character Assessment and Proposal for a Local Valued Landscape	High	High	High	Very Low	Minor adverse (not important)	No Change	No Change (not important)	No Change	No Change (not important)

Viewpoint number	Visual receptor	Value attached to view	Susceptibility to change	Sensitivity of visual receptor	Construction (year(s))		Year 1 of existence and operation (Winter)		Year 15 of existence and operation (Summer)	
					Magnitude of impact	Importance/significance of effect	Magnitude of impact	Importance/significance of effect	Magnitude of impact	Importance/significance of effect
VP 9	Visitors to key view locations as defined in the Draft Eye and Dunsden Landscape Character Assessment and Proposal for a Local Valued Landscape	High	High	High	Very Low	Minor adverse (not important)	Very Low	Minor adverse (not important)	Very Low	Minor adverse (not important)
VP 10	Residents to the south of the railway line and south of the Application Site at the northern extent of Earley	Very Low	High	Low	Low	Minor adverse (not important)	No Change	No Change (not important)	No Change	No Change (not important)
VP 11	Residents to the south of the railway line and south of the Application Site at the northern extent of Earley	Very Low	High	Low	Low	Minor adverse (not important)	Low	Minor adverse (not important)	Very Low	Negligible (not important)

Appendix E:

Figures

E.1 Figure 1: Application Site and Study Area

E.2 Figure 2: Relevant statutory
designations and recreational routes

E.3 Figure 3: Relevant local and non-statutory designations

E.4 **Figure 4: Published Landscape
Character Assessment**

E.5 Figure 5: Local Landscape
Character Areas

E.6 Figure 6: Thames Valley Park Data
Centre Zone of Theoretical
Visibility – screened (DSM)

E.7 Figure 1: Representative viewpoints

E.8 Figure 2: Representative viewpoint
photography and visualisations