

Land at Cossington Road, Sileby

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA) has been carried out by Golby + Luck Landscape Architects following instruction by BDW Trading Limited to assess, in landscape and visual terms, land at Cossington Road, Sileby, Leicestershire (the site); see **GL1400 01** and **02**.
- 1.2 The following assessment has been carried out in accordance the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment - Third Edition (2013), published by the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (GLVIA). An assessment methodology is set out in **Appendix 1**.
- 1.3 This assessment is supported by a series of drawings that identify:
- Site location and context;
 - Local setting of landform;
 - Landscape planning context;
 - Landscape character; and
 - Landscape capacity and sensitivity.
- 1.4 This assessment also includes a series of representative views that have been taken from publicly accessible locations including the public highway, public rights of way, and public access land. Site work has been ongoing since spring 2020 with the most recent views taken during January 2021 with limited leaf cover.
- 1.5 In the production of this appraisal reference has been made to the following documents and information:
- Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government - National Planning Policy Framework - 2019 (the NPPF);
 - Charnwood Borough Council – Draft Charnwood Local Plan 2019-36 – 2019 (the Draft Local Plan)
 - Charnwood Borough Council - Charnwood Local Plan 2011 – 2028 Core Strategy - 2015 (the Core Strategy);
 - Charnwood Borough Council – Borough of Charnwood Local Plan (2004) Saved Policies 2007 – (the Local Plan);



- Natural England - National Character Area Profile 69 Trent Valley Washlands (the NCA);
- Charnwood Borough Council – The Borough of Charnwood Landscape Character Assessment - 2012 (the Borough Assessment);
- Charnwood Borough Council - Charnwood Borough Landscape Sensitivity Assessment of SHLAA Sites - 2019 (the SHLAA Assessment);
- Charnwood Borough Council – Green Wedges, Urban Fringe Green Infrastructure Enhancement Zones and Areas of Local Separation Methodology and Assessment Findings Report – 2016 (AoLS Assessment)
- Charnwood Borough Council – Green Wedges, Urban Fringe Green Infrastructure Enhancement Zones and Areas of Local Separation Methodology and Assessment Annex A – Assessment Pro Formas – 2016 (AoLS Annex A)
- Historic England National Heritage List;
- DEFRA Magic environmental data base; and
- Ordnance Survey Mapping - Promap.



2 SITE CONTEXT AND DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The site is located to the east of Cossington Road contiguous with the southern edge of Sileby, Leicestershire; see **GL1400 01** and **02**. The site extends to approximately 10.17 hectares comprising a single field maintained as arable farmland extending between the settlement edge to the north, Cossington Road to the west, the Midland Mainline Railway to the east (MMRR) and a combination of Brook Farm, Derry's Nurseries site and a local watercourse to the south.
- 2.2 The site and wider settlements of Sileby to the north and Cossington to the south are located on the lower eastern slopes of the Soar Valley approximately 7km to the south-east of Loughborough and 5km from the northern fringes of Leicester City.
- 2.3 In terms of settlement, Sileby is one of a number of settlements set on the edge of the floodplain to the River Soar. To the north is Barrow upon Soar, and to the south Cossington and Syston. Quorn, Mountsorrel and Rothley are located on the lower valley slopes to the west.
- 2.4 The historic settlement has a relative compact pattern, centred around High Street, King Street and Swan Street, with extensions to the north associated with Barrow Road and to the south along the MMRR towards the former Albion Works (now an industrial site extending between Albion Road/Kendal Road and the MMRR). By the 1900's there is evidence of ribbon development extending along Cossington Road, Ratcliffe Road, Barrow Road and Seagrave Road. There is also evidence of large working pits associated with the former brickworks and a number of allotment gardens that extended between Cossington Road and the MMRR to the northern boundary of the site. By the 1930's ribbon development along Cossington Road was prolific with the planned modern expansion of the settlement taking effect throughout the 1960's. By the early 1970's much of the modern settlement that we see today had been developed with the most recent expansion occurring to the north and east of the settlement between Seagrave Road and Ratcliffe Road.
- 2.5 To the south of Sileby is the smaller village of Cossington that is linear in form following Main Street. The historic settlement is characterised by wayside properties fronting Main Street. To the west of Main Street depth is created by the treed grounds of All Saints Church and the landscaped grounds of the older properties. The village remained relatively unchanged until the 1960's when modern development expanded the linear pattern of the settlement to the north along Main Street, and larger infill development to the east set



between Main Street and Back Lane. This has resulted in the creation of two distinct halves to the settlement where the historic pattern of loose wayside development set within treed gardens to the west gives way to higher density modern development to the east.

- 2.6 In terms of infrastructure, Sileby sits within the Soar Valley with the MMRR passing to the east of the site connecting Leicester to the south with Loughborough to the north. To the west of the River Soar the A6 provides the principal highway connection between Leicester and Loughborough, and to the east, the A46 runs along the High Leicestershire plateau connecting Leicester with Nottingham. Sileby is connected to the surrounding settlement by a number of local roads and lanes that radiate from the historic core of the settlement and railway station.
- 2.7 In terms of land use and vegetation cover, the majority of the land beyond the settlement, including the site, is maintained as farmland. There is a distinction between the land to the west of the settlement that comprises predominantly pastoral land, and the land to the east that is predominantly arable land. The land to the west comprises smaller scale pastoral fields with less well managed, taller hedgerows and increased tree cover. To the east field sizes increase with low clipped boundary hedgerows and more limited tree cover. The site itself comprises a single field under arable production. There is a clipped native hedgerow at the boundary with Cossington Road with no notable tree cover. To the north there are remnants of the former native hedgerow that guided the boundary to the last phase of housing development that turns its back on the wider setting of farmland. To the east there is sporadic vegetation cover associated with the boundary to the railway. In contrast to the south, there is a well-established vegetated boundary associated with the local watercourse and sections of Leylandii hedgerow associated with the northern boundary of the adjoining nursery site.
- 2.8 In terms of landform, the site and southern extent of the settlement are located on the gentle lower slopes of the valley that site at approximately 40m to 50m above ordnance datum (AOD); see **GL1400 03**. The valley falls to the banks of the River Soar at just below 45m AOD, rising to the east towards the High Leicestershire plateau comprising a series of rolling ridges to that extent between 90m and 100m AOD above the valley. To the west the valley rises into the rolling landform associated with the Charnwood Forest defined by a mosaic of deciduous woodland, plantation, open farmland, and at its highest point heathland with granite outcrops. The landform of the site is relatively low-lying, falling north-east to south-west at a gentle gradient from just above 55m AOD to approximately 47m AOD at Brook Farm.



- 2.9 In terms of access and recreation, the site is maintained as private farmland and does not provide any access or public recreation function. In the local vicinity of the site there is a network of public rights of way that provide access from the settlements to the surrounding countryside; see **GL1400 02**. Notable rights of way relevant to the site include I47 to the south-west crossing between Cossington Road and the grounds of All Saints Church, and footpath I56 that follows the eastern edge of Cossington. The Leicester Road recreation route follows Humble Lane and Blackberry Lane to the west of Cossington and Sileby connecting with Ratcliffe Road and the public bridleway that provides access through the ground of Ratcliffe College. To the west of Sileby there is a concentrated network of rights of way and access paths associated with the Cossington Meadows Nature Reserve that connect with the bankside footpath further to the west following the River Soar.
- 2.10 In terms of parks and open space, there does not appear to be a any meaningful provision in the local context of the site, or adjoining settlement, with the closest formal play facility at Melody Drive approximately 650m to the north.
- 2.11 In terms of designation, the site is located with a designated Area of Local Separation (AoLS); see **GL1400 04**. Beyond the AoLS the site is not covered by any landscape designation that would suggest an increased value or sensitivity to change, or statutory/non-statutory designation that would prevent it development for residential purposes. The southern part of the site is located within the flood zone of the adjoining watercourse presenting an immediate constraint to development.
- 2.12 In terms of heritage assets, the site is remote from the Conservation Areas within Sileby and Cossington and is not considered to fall within the setting of their associated Listed Buildings. No. 275 Cossington Road (Brook Farm) is a Locally Listed Building located at the southern boundary of the site. This building and its setting is considered in further detail in this assessment.
- 2.13 In terms of wildlife and nature conservation assets, the site is maintained as arable farmland that is considered to be of limited ecological value. The only features of note are the existing sections of native boundary hedgerow and the water course at the southern boundary of the site will associated vegetation cover. To the west of Sileby, Cossington Meadows and the River Soar are designated Local Nature Reserves (LNR).



3 LANDSCAPE PLANNING CONTEXT

The site is located within the jurisdiction of Charnwood Borough Council (the Local Authority) with the relevant landscape policies set out in the Charnwood Borough Council Local Plan 2011-2028 Core Strategy.

National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (NPPF)

- 3.1 The Department for Communities and Local Government issued the most recent update to the National Planning Policy Framework in February 2019. The Framework sets out the national planning policy for achieving sustainable development that includes the economic, social and environmental objectives. This assessment is primarily concerned with the policies relating to the environmental objective that seeks:

“to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.”

- 3.2 Paragraph 10 of the NPPF sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development stating:

*“So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a **presumption in favour of sustainable development** (paragraph 11).”*

- 3.3 Paragraph 11 of the NPPF sets out the application of decision making:

Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

*For **plan-making** this means that:*

- a) plans should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area, and be sufficiently flexible to adapt to rapid change;*
- b) strategic policies should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses, as well as any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas, unless:*



- i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the plan area; or*
- ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.*

For **decision-taking** this means:

- c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or*
- d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:
 - i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or*
 - ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole."**

3.4 Footnote 6 of the NPPF sets out a list of identified areas or assets of particular importance that includes habitat sites as listed under paragraph 176 of the NPPF, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Green Belt, Local Green Space, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), National Parks (NP), Heritage Coast (HC), irreplaceable habitats, designated heritage assets including assets listed under footnote 63 of the NPPF, and areas at risk of flooding and coastal change.

3.5 The site is not covered by any of these identified assets of particular importance, except for a section of the southern part of the site that forms part of an identified flood zone.

3.6 Section 12 of the NPPF sets out policy in relation to achieving well-designed places. Paragraph 127 states that planning decisions should ensure that developments:

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*



- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);*
- d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;*
- e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and*
- f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience."*

3.7 Section 15 of the NPPF is concerned with conserving and enhancing the natural environment. Paragraph 170 of the NPPF states that planning decision should contribute the and enhance the natural environment by:

- a) "protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);*
- b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;*
- c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;*
- d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;*
- e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by,*



unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and

f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate."

3.8 The site does not contain any designated biodiversity or geological assets. Ecological and arboricultural surveys have identified that the site has limited features of value beyond its boundary vegetation and the local watercourse running alongside the southern boundary.

3.9 Paragraph 171 of the NPPF states:

"Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries."

3.10 The site is not covered by any landscape or environmental designation that would suggest an increased value or sensitivity to change. The site does form part of an AoLS that is considered in this assessment.

3.11 Paragraph 172 of the NPPF identifies the landscapes with the highest status of protection stating:

"Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads."

3.12 The site is not located within or near any such designations.



3.13 Section 16 of the NPPF is concerned with the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. Paragraph 184 states:

“Heritage assets range from sites and buildings of local historic value to those of the highest significance, such as World Heritage Sites which are internationally recognised to be of Outstanding Universal Value⁶¹. These assets are an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.”

3.14 The brick barns and house at Brook Farm that site beyond the site are identified as Locally Listed Buildings comprising a complex of redbrick outbuildings with slate roof, and a single dwelling of rebrick with slate roof and central chimney stack. The property fronts Cossington Road separated from the site by the intervening barns and a modern rolltop shed. The buildings do not form part of the application site and will continue their existing function.

Draft Charnwood Local Plan 2019-36 (2019)

3.15 The policies in the Draft Local Plan are emerging but this assessment uses the parts of the most recent planning evidence base produced in support of the plan that includes the SHLAA Assessment. The site is not included in this assessment but the consideration of local sites at Sileby and Cossington provide a key insight to local landscape sensitivity.

Charnwood Local Plan 2011-2028 Core Strategy (2015)

3.16 Within the Core Strategy Policy CS 11 provides the most up to date guidance relating to Area of Local Separation (AoLS). The policy states:

“We will support and protect the character of our landscape and countryside by:

- *requiring new developments to protect landscape character and to reinforce sense of place and local distinctiveness by taking account of relevant local Landscape Character Assessments;*
- *requiring new development to take into account and mitigate its impact on tranquillity;*
- *requiring new development to maintain the separate identities of our towns and villages;*
- *supporting rural economic development, or residential development which has a strong relationship with the operational requirements of*



agriculture, horticulture, forestry and other land based industries and contributes to a low carbon economy, in accordance with Policy CS10;

- *supporting the provision of community services and facilities that meet proven local needs as identified by a Neighbourhood Plan or other community-led plan; and*
- *supporting rural communities by allowing housing development for local needs in accordance with Policy CS3.*

We will protect the predominantly open and undeveloped character of Areas of Local Separation unless new development clearly maintains the separation between the built-up areas of these settlements."

- 3.17 The following assessment takes account of the most recent character assessments prepared by the Local Authority relative to the site. It also considers an assessment of the AoLS.

Borough of Charnwood Local Plan 1991-2006

- 3.18 A number of policies have been saved from the old Local Plan. Saved Policies CT/1 and CT/2 deal with strategic countryside issues. Saved policy CT/4 deals more specifically with Areas of Local Separation.

- 3.19 Policy CT/1 states:

"Land lying outside the defined Limits to Development is variously identified on the Proposals Map as Countryside, Green Wedge and Areas of Local Separation

Development within these areas of generally open land will be strictly controlled. Planning permission will be granted for the re-use and adaptation of rural buildings for uses suitable in scale and nature, and small-scale new built development, where there would not be a significant adverse environmental impact and the proposal would:

- i. be essential for the efficient long-term operation of agriculture, horticulture or*
- ii. forestry; or*
- iii. facilitate the diversification of the rural economy; or*
- iv. improve facilities for recreation, or leisure uses; or*



- v. *implement strategically important schemes for mineral related uses, transport*
- vi. *infrastructure, and for public services or utilities.*

In all cases it should be demonstrated that the proposed development could not reasonably be located within or adjacent to an existing settlement."

3.20 Residential development is not listed as one of the land uses under this policy. However, there is conflict between Policy CT/1 and Policy CS11 of the Core Strategy that does not preclude residential development within the countryside.

3.21 Policy CT/2 of the Local Plan states:

"In areas defined as Countryside, development(s) acceptable in principle will be permitted where it would not harm the character and appearance of the countryside and provided it could safeguard its historic, nature conservation, amenity, and other local interest."

3.22 This policy requires development to be acceptable in principle and is therefore directly linked to the test set out under Policy CT/1. Given the age of the Local Plan, the redefined test as set out under Policy CS11 of the Core Strategy and the most up to date policy set out in the NPPF, these policies are considered to be out of date.

3.23 Policy CT/4 of the Local Plan covers development in AoLS. The policy lists each AoLS that includes the land between Sileby and Cossington. This policy is again linked to the acceptability test set out in Policy CT/1 and requires development to retained the predominantly undeveloped character of the AoLS, and to not reduce the gap between settlements. This test had clearly been superseded by Policy CS11 of the Core Strategy that requires development to maintain separation between settlement.



4 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL BASELINE

4.1 The following section of this appraisal considers the baseline landscape setting of the site covering issues relating to character and appearance. When considering character, published landscape character documents have been referenced alongside a more detailed consideration of the site and its local setting.

4.2 When considering the appearance of the site a number of representative views have been identified through field work that provide an accurate representation of its visual setting. Views have been taken from publicly accessible locations, and for each the likely receptors have been identified.

Landscape Character

4.3 At a National level Natural England has divided England into 159 character areas. The site and its local setting are located within National Character Area 69: Trent Valley Washlands (NCA 69). The key characteristics of NCA 69 are:

- *“Distinctly narrow, linear and low-lying landscape largely comprised of the flat flood plains and gravel terraces of the rivers and defined at its edges by higher ground.*
- *Geology dominated by superficial alluvium and gravel river terrace deposits underpins the contrast in arable and pastoral agricultural use, arable crops predominating on the free-draining soils of the river terraces, with grassland more commonly located along the alluvial river flood plains where soils are subject to frequent flooding or are naturally wet.*
- *Flood plain pastoral areas where riverside pastures are subdivided by thick, full hedgerows with some trees contrast with arable areas with larger fields divided by low, small hedgerows with few trees.*
- *Limited tree cover, but local concentrations give the impression of a welltimbered landscape in many places. Riparian trees, especially willows, provide an important component.*
- *A landscape strongly defined by its rivers and their flood plains with the extensive canal network adding significantly to the watery character and providing major recreational assets for the area.*



- *Diverse range of wetland habitats supporting notable species such as spined loach and bullhead fish, otter, water vole, white-clawed crayfish, shoveler, bittern, lapwing, snipe and redshank.*
- *Rich history of human settlement and activity reflected in the archaeology and historic buildings with a particular focus on river crossing points and the gravel terraces, as well as being significant for early Christianity in the Midlands, and later for its canal and brewing heritage.*
- *Settlement pattern heavily influenced by flood risk, confining villages to the gravel river terraces and to rising ground at the edges of the flood plains. Traditional buildings are characteristically of red brick and clay plain tile with earlier timber frame and grander dwellings and churches typically built from sandstone. Red brick and Welsh slate of 19th- and early 20th-century urban expansion prominent in larger settlements along with modern housing and development.*
- *A landscape heavily used as transport and communication corridors along the rivers and canals, for major roads and railways, and for power lines.*
- *A landscape marked by extensive sand and gravel extraction, power stations and prominent urban-edge industrial and commercial development."*

4.4 This NCA is large in comparison to the site but the broad characteristics are generally present and identifiable with the local valley setting of the River Soar.

4.5 In the Borough Assessment the site is identified within the Soar Valley LCA; see **GL1400 05**. The key characteristics of this LCA are identified as:

- *"Flat wide river floodplain which experiences regular flooding*
- *Navigable River Soar and Grand Union Canal*
- *Major engineering features are the raised landscaped embankments of A6 and mainline railway and electricity pylons*
- *Visible built development on well-defined rising valley slopes*
- *Restored gravel worked landscapes for recreation, farmland and wildlife benefit*
- *Settlements are Hathern, Loughborough, Quorn, Birstall, Barrow upon Soar, Sileby, Cossington and much of Mountsorrel and Rothley, Syston and Thurmaston."*



4.6 The general description of this LCA states:

“The landscape of the Soar Valley is essentially a flat floodplain with rising valley sides. The landscape is essentially rural in the floodplain where grassland was naturally enriched from silt carried by flood waters. Once active sand and gravel workings are now largely restored as agricultural grazing and wildlife wetlands or recreational water bodies. The width between the built development on opposite banks narrows in locations: between Loughborough and Cotes, and between Quorn and Barrow upon Soar.

The valley has been a major transport corridor for a long time, with canalised navigation, railway and road network and electricity pylons. On higher ground, localised industries enabled the expansion of the larger villages. Twentieth century settlement growth and recreational activities along the river and canal has had a substantial visual impact on the area. There is increasing pressure for greater recreational provision with caravan sites and marinas associated with the Canal and riverside.

It is the most urbanised area of Charnwood Borough, with Loughborough in the north, substantial settlements to both east and west sides of the river corridor, and the influence of Leicester City to the south.”

4.7 Again, the key characteristics of the LCA and general description are considered to be representative of the wider valley setting of the River Soar and local setting of the site.

4.8 This assessment finds this landscape to be of moderate strength of character and moderate condition, promoting a landscape strategy of conservation and enhancement.

4.9 In the guidelines for this LCA the assessment states two recommendation relative to new development:

- *“Maintain the current balance between the urban and rural character of the Soar Valley*
- *Direct development away from prominent locations on the valley slopes. Any new built form on the valley slopes should be assimilated into its surroundings by careful scale, layout, siting, and design, and the use of materials and associated landscaping.”*



- 4.10 More recently the SHLAA Assessment of 2019 has considered a number of land parcels local to the site; **GL1400 06**. Whilst this does not include the site it does provide an insight into the level of sensitivity attributed to areas of the local landscape that share similar features and character. The land to the south of the site (PSH260) has been given an overall landscape sensitivity assessment to 2-3 storey residential development of medium. Further to the south PSH393 directly adjoins the settlement conservation area comprising land that forms part of the historic open treed backdrop to the wayside properties that align Main Street. Even though the development of this land would conflict with the established character of the village, bringing modern housing to the west of Main Street, the site has been assessed as medium to low landscape sensitivity.
- 4.11 To the east of the site land parcels PSH64, PSH150, PSH318, and PSH346 all occupy open arable farmland not dissimilar to the site higher on the valley slopes. These sites have been assessed as medium to low landscape sensitivity.
- 4.12 In addition to the published assessments that form part of the Local Authorities evidence base it is important to provide an independent assessment of value and sensitivity as part of the baseline assessment. The factors set out under Box 5.1 of the GLVIA provide a basis for determining landscape value. These include:
- Landscape quality;
 - Scenic quality;
 - Rarity;
 - Representativeness;
 - Conservation interests;
 - Recreational value;
 - Perceptual aspects; and
 - Associations
- 4.13 In terms of quality, the site comprises a single arable field contained by the modern settlement, highways, railway, the tree setting of a local watercourse and an old farm complex. The landscape is relatively well maintained, and its features are of reasonable quality and condition. The existing land use is representative of the local landscape character, but the site is not central to the special interest of this landscape, and is not an important part or feature of the Soar Valley LCA.
- 4.14 In terms of scenic quality, the site has detracting elements that include the modern settlement with garden boundaries that back onto the countryside with little if any



- screening elements to provide integration. The railway line is relatively well hidden by the landform but there are gantries in view and passing trains are visible on embankment at the south-east boundary.
- 4.15 In terms of rarity, the feature features of the site are not considered to be rare and there are no designations that would suggest otherwise. The existing arable use is well represented in the local landscape.
- 4.16 In terms of representativeness, as noted the features of the site are considered to be representative of this landscape but are not considered to be particularly important examples.
- 4.17 In terms of conservation interest, the sections of native hedgerows at the boundaries of the site, and the section of local watercourse with tree cover are considered to be the key nature conservation assets of the site. In terms of heritage assets, the complex of brick barns and house at Brook Farm are Locally Listed Buildings that are of some value to the local setting and clearly linked to the wider setting of farmland.
- 4.18 In terms of recreational value, the site is maintained as private farmland with no formalised public access. The site does not provide any access or recreation function.
- 4.19 In terms of perceptual aspects, the site adjoins the modern settlement edge to the north and is bound to the west by ribbon development extending alongside Cossington Road. This is combination with the railway to the east limits any value that may be attributed to perceptual aspects.
- 4.20 In terms of associations, there are no known cultural associations between the site the local landscape and settlement setting and there is no evidence of the site providing a function for community events or celebrations.
- 4.21 The site is located within a designated AoLS. This designation serves primarily as a planning function and should be limited to the minimum land considered essential and necessary to maintaining separation between settlements. The planning function of the AoLS should be considered separately to the assessment of landscape and visual effects attributed to the development proposal but the spatial function of this landscape will be of local value to both settlements and it is therefore important to considered how the site relates and performs relative to the wider AoLS and its role as a point of arrival/departure between these settlements.



4.22 The AoLS Assessment includes site specific pro-formas that include a more detailed commentary of each AoLS. The site is located within AoLS D that extends to 14.3 hectares of land. The pro-forma makes the following observations:

- Distinct landscapes either side of Cossington Road;
- Land to west comprises a more contained pastoral setting with connections to the historic setting of Cossington giving a greater sense of age and permanence;
- Land to east comprises an open arable landscape with neutralising character and detracting elements in the form of the modern settlement edge and railway;
- View to wider setting of farmland noted as important;
- Watercourse noted as potential alternative boundary to the AoLS;
- Relatively constrained inter-visibility between the settlements and north to south across the AoLS;
- Topography to north-east makes this section of the AoLS particularly sensitive to change.

4.23 What is key to understand is the capacity of the AoLS to accommodate change. The AoLS is compartmentalised and fragmented which results in limited inter-visibility between the settlements. The land to the west of Cossington Road affords structure and pattern that is of greater visual interest and scenic quality, it also affords a more direct relationship with Cossington and provides an open setting as you enter and leave the village. In contrast the land to the east of Cossington Road at Sileby is relatively featureless, of limited diversity with detracting elements. Development in this location would not result in the coalescence of the settlements if managed properly. It also has the potential to secure a better designed and high-quality edge to the settlement, alongside structural landscape mitigation that would lessen the impact of the settlement edge in overall terms. A carefully considered, high quality, well designed, sustainable development brought forward with a new strategic scale open space and structural landscaping has the potential to:

- Enhance the quality and appearance of the settlement edge;
- Improved the sense of arrival/gateway to the settlement;



- Improve the structure and pattern of the landscape to the east of Cossington Road, and
- Enhance the public use and recreation of the AoLS in this location and secure permanence to it through adoption.

4.24 Whilst this may reduce the quantity of open land between the settlements it does not mean that it will reduce the sense separation between them, or impact on their separate characters and identity.

Table 1 – Summary of landscape value

Landscape Character Area/Type	Landscape Value
Trent Valley Washlands NCA	Medium Value in the context of the Soar Valley
Soar Valley LCA	Medium value
Local setting of the site including the immediate setting of the site, the land associated with the wider AoLS, land to the immediate south of the local watercourse, and to the east of the MMRR.	Medium value
The site	Medium value

Visual Setting

4.25 The following section of this assessment considers the appearance of the site and wider setting referencing a number of representative views. A summary of each view is set out with an assessment of value that is determined with reference to:

- Planning designations specific to each view;
- Views that are important to the special qualities of a designated landscape, or recorded in published documentation;
- Views recorded as being important to cultural heritage assets;
- Views recorded in guidebooks or on maps, and/or where special provision has been made in the landscape for the appreciation of a view; and
- Judgements made on site as to the specific quality of a view



4.26 The potential visual envelope of the site can be summarised as:

- Open and filtered private residential views and highway views from Chalfont Drive, Molyneux Drive and Charles Street to the north of the site;
- Open private residential views and highway views from Cossington Road at the western boundary of the site;
- Filtered views from sections of public footpaths I47 and I51 to the south-west of the site;
- Heavily filtered and glimpsed views from Derry's Nurseries site, the northern section of Main Street and sections of public footpath I62;
- Filtered views from section of Humble Lane and Blackberry Lane that includes the Leicestershire Round recreation route;
- Distant heavily filtered views from public footpath I50 and associated sections of Cossington Meadows LWS; and
- Distant and elevated filtered views from sections of Ratchliffe Road to the north-east of the site.
- xx

4.27 The following table summarises each representative view making an assessment of value; see **GL1400 07** to **12**. View locations are identified on the site location plan; see **GL1400 01** and **02**.



Table 2 – Summary of representative and assessment of sensitivity

View	Distance	Description	Value	Receptors and Susceptibility	Visual Sensitivity
1	10m	This view is taken from Cossington Road close to the north-west boundary of the site. From this location there is a view across the roadside hedgerow and the site towards the MMRR at the eastern boundary of the site with a view beyond towards the wooded ridge at Ratcliffe Road. The mature treed setting at the southern boundary substantially restricts views beyond the site. Brook Farm is visible at the south-west corner of the site. This is an open view from the local highway that provides an appreciation of the arable farmland setting at the southern edge of Sileby.	Medium	Receptors groups include private residents fronting this section of the highway and users of Cossington Road that are considered to be of high and medium susceptibility.	Medium
2	10m	This view is taken from Cossington Road at the junction with public footpath I47. From this location there is an open view across the arable setting of the site towards the modern settlement edge at Sileby to the north. There is a view across the MMRR at the eastern boundary of the site towards the wooded ridge at Ratcliffe Road. This is an open view from the local highway that provides an appreciation of the arable farmland setting at the southern edge of Sileby.	Medium	Receptors groups include private residents fronting this section of the highway, users of the public footpath, and users of Cossington Road that are considered to be of high and medium susceptibility.	Medium
3	0m	This view is taken from within the site which is not a publicly accessible location, but it does provide an illustration of the view afforded by the properties backing onto the northern boundary of the site. From this location there is an open view across the arable setting of the site. There are filtered views of the properties at Cossington from this location. However, any open appreciation of the land beyond the site is restricted by the mature vegetation associated with the local watercourse and Derry's Nurseries site. This is an open view from the settlement that provides an appreciation of the arable farmland setting at the southern edge of Sileby.	Medium	Receptor groups include private residential views from the properties backing onto the northern boundary of the site that are considered to be of high susceptibility to change.	Medium
4	140m	This view is taken from Main Street at the northern edge of Cossington close to the junction with public footpath I56. From this location the view is restricted to the immediate setting of the highway and treed setting of Derry's Nurseries site. Any wider appreciation of the landscape is substantially restricted by the existing tree and vegetation cover.	Medium to Low	Receptor groups include users of Main Street, private residential views from the properties at the northern edge of Cossington and visitors to the nursery site that are considered to be of high,	Medium to Low



				medium and medium to low susceptibility to change.	
5	305	This view is taken from public footpath I56 looking north towards the site. From this location there is an open appreciation of the immediate farmland setting leading up to the treed and heavily vegetated setting of the local watercourse and Derry's Nurseries. View of the site are heavily filtered by the intervening tree cover and set in the backdrop of glimpsed views towards the southern settlement edge of Sileby. This view provides an open appreciation of the arable farmland setting to the east of Cossington from a well-used public footpath.	Medium	Receptor groups include users of the public footpath that are considered to be of high susceptibility to change.	Medium
6	175m	This view is taken from public footpath I47 looking north-east towards the site. In the foreground there is an open appreciation of the pastoral setting to the west of Cossington Road. Views into the site are restricted to glimpsed through intervening vegetation cover and built-form, and seen in the back drop of the modern settlement edge at the northern boundary of the site. This is a relatively contained view from a well-used public footpath providing an open appreciation of the pastoral setting that extends between Sileby and Cossington.	Medium	Receptor groups include users of the public footpath that are considered to be of high susceptibility to change.	Medium
7	335	This view is taken from public footpath I51 looking north-east towards the site. This view is similar to View 6 and provides a similar appreciation of the site and open pastoral setting extending between Sileby and Cossington.	Medium	Receptor groups include users of the public footpath that are considered to be of high susceptibility to change.	Medium
8	840m	This is an open view looking across the low-lying flood meadows of the River Saar. The view is taken from public footpath I50 within the designated Cossington Meadows Local Nature Reserve that is a highly popular local visitor attraction with surfaced routes provided unrestricted access.	High	Receptor groups include users of the public footpath and visitors to the Local Nature Reserve that are considered to be of high susceptibility to change.	High
9	485m	This view is taken from Humble Lane at the bridge crossing the MMRR looking north toward the site. From this location there is an open appreciation of the wider setting of arable farmland extending up to the eastern edge of Cossington and the treed setting of the local watercourse at the southern boundary of the site and Derry's Nurseries. Views into the site are heavily filtered and seen in the backdrop of glimpses towards the residential setting at the southern edge of Sileby. The railway is openly visible.	Medium	Receptors groups include users of Humble Lane that includes a section of the Leicestershire Round that are considered to be of medium susceptibility to change.	Medium



<p>10</p>	<p>470m</p>	<p>This view is taken from Blackberry Lane (Leicestershire Round recreation route) opposite Humble Farm looking west towards the site. From this location there is an open appreciation of the arable farmland setting to the east of Sileby and Cossington that gently rises towards the ridges and plateau at Ratcliffe Road. Views towards the site are heavily filtered by intervening vegetation and seen in the backdrop of glimpses towards the residential setting at the southern edge of Sileby. In the distance the backdrop of the upland areas associated with the Charnwood Forest are visible.</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Receptor groups include users of Blackberry Lane and the Leicestershire Round that are considered to be of high susceptibility to change.</p>	<p>Medium</p>
<p>11 & 12</p>	<p>1.2km 940m</p>	<p>View 11 is taken from Ratcliffe Road and View 12 from Humble Lane. Both views are taken from elevated sections of the highway traversing the ridge that provide a wide panoramic appreciation of the Soar Valley and rising upland setting of the Charnwood Forest to the west. From both locations there are filtered views of the site set in the lower valley and viewed in the wider context of Sileby to the north that stretches across the valley slope rising towards Ratcliffe Road. These are open panoramic that provide an wide appreciation of the valley setting.</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>Receptor groups include users of Humble Lane and Ratcliffe Road that are considered to be of medium susceptibility to change (Ratcliffe Road reducing to medium to low susceptibility due to the busy nature of the highway)</p>	<p>Medium</p>



5 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

- 5.1 This application is being made in outline for the proposed development of up to 170 dwellings with highway access taken from Cossington Road.
- 5.2 The baseline assessment has identified the site as being located within the Soar Valley LCA that is assessed as a landscape of moderate strength of character and moderate condition. In addition, the site is located within the local context of sites that have been assessed as being of medium and medium to low sensitivity to two storey residential development. These areas share similar, if not the same landscape characteristics of the site.
- 5.3 The visual baseline assessment has confirmed that the site affords a framework of settlement to the north and west that restricts its visual setting to the adjoining housing and highways associated with the boundaries of the site. To the south the visual setting of the site is substantially contained by the treed setting of the local watercourse and Derry's Nurseries site, allowing only heavily filtered views that are characterised by the backdrop of modern settlement. To the south-west the visual setting of the site is restricted to the localised setting of pasture to the west of Cossington Road/Main Street. To the east there are filtered views of the site from the wider valley slopes where it is viewed in the immediate context of the modern settlement, the industrial backdrop of the Soar Valley to the west, and the wider reaches of Sileby that extends across the valley slopes.
- 5.4 The baseline assessment has identified the following landscape constraints associated with the site:
- The treed setting at the southern boundary of the site associated with the watercourse and floodplain;
 - The sections of native hedgerows associated with the boundaries of the site, notably the hedgerow boundary to Cossington Road;
 - The Locally Listed Brook Farm and barn at the south-west boundary of the site;
 - The landform with the site that rises towards the north-east corner of the site;
 - The amenity of the residential properties fronting Cossington Road, and to a lesser degree the amenity of the properties backing onto the northern boundary of the site; and



- The visual setting of the local rights of way network.

5.5 The separation of Sileby and Cossington is also of key consideration, and whilst this is recognised as a key constraint it is considered as a planning function rather than purely a landscape issue. Nonetheless, the issue of separation has been of primary consideration in the analysis of the site and identification of an appropriate development framework.

5.6 The emerging development has responded directly to the identified landscape constraints by respecting the floodplain, offsetting development from the existing structure of tree cover and hedgerows and providing space to accommodate structural landscaping at the eastern and western boundaries to soften and filter both the development and existing settlement in wider views from the countryside; see **GL1400 13**. The development also seeks to maintain an open setting to Brook Farm and its associated barns that will continued to be appreciated and enjoyed as a collection of individual buildings framed by open space to the north and the open setting of pastoral farmland to the west.

5.7 In terms of separation, the development has responded to the following site analysis:

- To set the leading edge of development back from the Cossington Road frontage and extend only to the existing agricultural access. This broadly aligns with the extent of semi-detached properties on the other side of the road and maintains an open setting to the wider highway frontage extending south towards Brook Farm. This in turn ensures that development does not extend any further to the south along Cossington Road than is currently exists;
- To maintain an open setting to views from public footpath 147 as it joins Cossington Road (see View 2, **GL1400 07**). With this view in mind the southern edge of the proposed development has been aligned with the mature tree at the MMRR boundary, roughly at the centre point of the eastern site boundary. As this view illustrates, the landform of the site and settlement somewhat restrict any view of the wider landscape to the north of this tree, however, to the south there is a slightly more open view across the site towards the wider valley that should be retained;
- The western edge of the development fronts Cossington Road with the opportunity to secure key architectural/landmark building that help to define the gateway to the settlement, in combination with a high-quality landscaped frontage to compliment the housing;



- The southern edge of the development secures a loose structure of low-density housing fronting low-key lanes with room for high levels of native tree planting that will secure an active and improved edge to the settlement than currently exists; and
- The design of the open space seeks to secure a more structured and visually appealing landscape that will be set out and maintained as accessible meadows to reflect the landscape to the east of Cossington Road. This will improve its quality, amenity value and overall identity as an active edge to the settlement, reinforcing local character and settlement identity. Features such as local play areas, trim-trails and footpaths will be sympathetically incorporated into what will become an area of public open space, providing a robust and enduring boundary to Sileby.

5.8 In terms of how this is likely to impact on the AoLS and the separate characters of Sileby and Cossington, it is important to note that these changes are only likely to result in a direct impact to the immediate settlement edge of Sileby and corresponding section of Cossington Road. The fragmented and compartmentalised nature of the wider AoLS means that these changes will be barely noticeable from Cossington. From leaving Cossington along Main Street the view into the treed setting of Derry's Nurseries and wider views across the open pasture to the west of the highway will remain unchanged. The perception of leaving the village passing open and undeveloped land will be maintained. Turning onto Cossington Road the ribbon development at the southern edge of Sileby will reveal itself as it does now, and it is only until passing Brook Farm that the development will reveal itself as a relatively modest extension of the settlement, with an improved outlook and landscaping to reinforce the settlements character and identity.

5.9 In terms of wider setting, the proposed extension will result in little, if any change, to views from the south and east. From the west the development will be visible but read in the immediate context of the existing settlement edge. This in turn is unlikely to impact on the separate characters of Sileby and Cossington.

5.10 The AoLS Annex A proforma notes the prominent nature of the landform associated with the site relative to the existing settlement edge. It should be noted that the AoLS Assessment considers the AoLS in isolation, it is not a landscape assessment and does not take account of the wider landscape setting in any detail. The visual baseline assessment in this report has been useful in demonstrating that whilst the landform of the site may be high, or prominent, relative to the AoLS, it is actual low-lying and relatively well contained when considered as part of the wider valley. This is apparent when compared to the wider



southern edge of the settlement that climbs the valley slopes between the MMR and Ratcliffe Road. The visual baseline assessment also demonstrates that the site and its landform are not prominent when viewed from Cossington, or the wider areas of pasture to the north of Cossington. The only location that the site can be considered prominent is in views from Cossington Road at its immediate boundary where it is already very much defined by the open setting of modern housing on higher ground to the north. Whilst the development proposal will extend the settlement it will ultimately soften what is currently a stark and abrupt transition, and over time better assimilate the settlement in this location. It can be argued that whilst the development will result in the loss of land within the AoLS it will improve the character and identity of Sileby without impacting on the separate character of Cossington.

5.11 In addition, the development will secure enhancements that will see the transformation of the existing arable land use to species rich meadows with open water features and increased native tree cover. This in combination with the proposed access and recreation facilities has the potential to secure enhancements in local biodiversity and public amenity value.

5.12 The proposal will secure:

- 4.29 hectares of development land with the potential to secure up to 170 new houses at an average density of 35 dwellings per hectare;
- 5.88 hectares of public open space and structural landscaping that will be laid out as accessible species rich meadows;
- The open space will include approximately 0.32 hectares of open attenuation that will be managed and maintained as seasonally flooding wet meadows and include areas of permanent water;
- A network of surfaced footpaths that will provide inclusive access to local green space; and
- Play and recreation facilities that will provide a fitness and leisure resource for the community.

5.13 The proposed green space will be the subject of a long-term ecological and landscape management plan and will be put forward for adoption by the Local Authority or approved management company.



6 ASSESSMENT OF LIKELY LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS

Landscape Effects

- 6.1 The following table considers the susceptibility of the receiving landscape to the proposed changes taking into consideration its individual elements and overall appearance and condition. Judgements of susceptibility are then combined with value as identified in the baseline assessment to identify an overall sensitivity.
- 6.2 A judgement is then made as to the likely magnitude of effect. This includes the consideration of the features and elements of the site to be affected; the size or scale of those effects; the geographic extent of the effects; and the duration and reversibility of the effect.
- 6.3 The sensitivity of the receiving landscape is then considered against the likely magnitude of effect to make an overall judgement of significance. The effects highlighted in blue are those considered to be of particular relevance to the planning decision making process.



Table 3 – Assessment of likely landscape effects

Character Area/Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude of effect	Short-term effect (Year 1)	Long-term effect (Year 15)
The Trent Valley Washlands LCA	This is a landscape of moderate character comprising a low-lying valley setting with a mixture of pastoral floodplains, arable valley side, settlement and major infrastructure. The condition of the NCA is also varied and weak in areas. This landscape is considered to be of medium to low susceptibility to change, and in overall terms medium landscape sensitivity.	<p>Short-term: Relatively to the NCA the site is extremely small, and the proposed change will represent the extension of an existing settlement at the loss of arable farmland. Settlement located on the terraces of the floodplain is a characteristic of this landscape and whilst the proposal will result in the loss of farmland, also a key characteristic, it will not introduce a new or discordant element into this NCA. In the context of the NCA the magnitude of effect is likely to be negligible.</p> <p>Long-term: The long-term effect is also likely to be negligible.</p>	Minimal adverse	Minimal adverse
Soar Valley LCA	Similar to the wider NCA, the Soar Valley LCA comprises a landscape of varied character and condition with a medium susceptibility to the proposed change, and in overall terms medium landscape sensitivity.	<p>Short-term: Again, settlement is common to the terraces that flank the floodplain, typically set at the transition between the pastoral valley floor and arable slopes. The change is small in scale relative to the wider LCA and will not introduce a new or visually discordant element. The proposal will result in an alteration to existing landscape elements through the extension of the settlement and loss of arable farmland. This in turn is likely to result in a low magnitude of change at a local level.</p> <p>Long-term: The scheme includes new structural landscaping measures that have the ability to secure a softer settlement edge and improved transition with the wider countryside. Unlike at the NCA level these measures will be perceptible at the local level and likely to reduce the magnitude of effect to negligible.</p>	Minor adverse	Minimal adverse



<p>Local setting of the site including the site, the land associated with the wider AoLS, land to the immediate south of the local watercourse, and to the east of the MMRR.</p>	<p>The land associated with the site, Derry's Nurseries to the south, the pastoral setting to the west and wider arable setting to the south and east is varied possessing a moderate strength of character and condition with a relatively constant relationship with the settlement. This local setting is considered to be of medium susceptibility to change and in overall terms medium landscape sensitivity.</p>	<p>Short-term: The development will result in the transformation of the site from an open arable setting to housing development and landscaped open space. This change will be direct and be of high magnitude. To the west any change to the pastoral setting will be indirect and set in the immediate context and backdrop of the existing modern settlement. Any perceived alteration of existing landscape components and arrangements will be quite limited, likely to result in a low magnitude of effect. From the south the intervening setting of mature tree and vegetation will restrict any open appreciation of the change. Any change will be indirect with a negligible magnitude of effect. In terms of the wider setting of farmland to the east, again any change will be indirect and set in the immediate context of the modern setting. Again, the proposal will result in the alteration of existing components in a relatively small and partially contained setting likely to result in a low magnitude of change. In overall terms, the likely magnitude of change to the local landscape setting will be medium (accepting that the immediate change to the site will be high).</p> <p>Long-term: Just under 60% of the site has been committed to new landscaping measures and green space. Over time the new landscaping will have matured to reinforce the treed setting to the watercourse and soften the settlement edge. The magnitude of effect to the immediate setting of the extended settlement will remain high. However, the creation of new pastures with a more defined structure will add to and extend the pastoral setting that exist to</p>	<p>Moderate adverse</p>	<p>Moderate to Minor adverse</p>
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		the west. This in turn has the potential to reduce the over magnitude of effect to medium/ow.		
The site	The site possesses a moderate to weak character that is influenced by the immediate setting of settlement to the north and west, and the MMRR to the east. The condition of the site is varied but can be considered as moderate, in line with the wider local setting of the LCA. The site is considered to be of medium susceptibility to the change, and in overall terms medium landscape value	<p>Short-term: The development will result in the overall transformation of the site from a single arable field to housing development with open space laid out as pastures with access and recreation facilities and an attenuation pond. This effect will be direct and likely to result in a high magnitude of change.</p> <p>Long-term: Just under 60% of the site is committed to new green space and landscaping that will be laid out to present as pastoral meadows similar in character and appearance to the landscape to the west of Cossington Road. New native hedgerows and tree planting will frame the space and soften the setting of the new housing/redefined settlement edge. New landscaping at the boundary of the MMRR will soften the appearance to the new housing, and views of the existing settlement from the south and south-east. This is likely to reduce the magnitude of effect to high/medium.</p>	Major to Moderate adverse	Moderate adverse

All arising effects are considered to be of significance, however, those effects highlighted in blue are those considered to be of particular significance to the planning decision making process.



Visual Effects

- 6.4 The following tables considers the magnitude of effect the development is likely to have on each of the identified representative views that includes the consideration of the features and elements of the site to be affected; the size or scale of those effects; the geographic extent of the effects; and the duration and reversibility of the effect.
- 6.5 The sensitivity of the visual receptor is then considered against the likely magnitude of effect to make an overall judgement of significance.



Table 4 – Assessment of likely visual effects

View	Magnitude of effect	Short-term effect (Year 1)	Long-term effect (Year 15)
1	<p>Short-term: The development will be openly visible from this section of the highway seen as an extension to the existing settlement to the north. This will result in a material alteration to the view transforming the currently open setting of the site to residential development. The new housing retained the hedgerow boundary with development set back within the site and new landscaping to provide some softening to the new built-form. However, the change will materially alter the existing character and composition of this view resulting is a high magnitude of change.</p> <p>Long-term: In the long-term the new landscaping measures will have mature to secure and attractive landscape setting to the development, softening, and filtering views of the new houses within the site. This will help to assimilate the development within the highway setting but the magnitude of change is likely to remain medium to high.</p>	Major to Moderate adverse	Major to Moderate adverse
2	<p>Short-term: From this location the development will be openly visible within the site, seen as an extension of the existing settlement edge that already defines the backdrop of the site. This will result in a foreshortening of the view towards the settlement and the loss of part of the open setting associated with the site. The proposed highway access and associated works will be visible resulting in changes to what is currently a relatively low-key agricultural access. The immediate setting of the site will remain open and laid out as a series of pastures with associated attenuation pond, access paths and new tree planting. These changes are likely to result in a medium to high magnitude of change.</p> <p>Long-term: In the long-term the new planting measures associated with the new pastoral setting will have matured to secure a softer landscape setting similar to the pastures to the west of Cossington Road. The new tree planting will have matured to soften and filter views of the new housing and secure a softer edge to the settlement than currently exists. The loss of open setting will remain, but the new landscaping will secure effective mitigation even when viewed at relatively close proximity potentially reducing the magnitude of change to medium.</p>	Major to Moderate adverse	Moderate adverse
3	<p>Short-term: From this location this location and similar views from the existing settlement edge the development will be openly visible resulting is the material transformation of the existing visual setting. This level of effect will be restricted to the properties at this boundary and is an effect that is common to any housing development seeking the extension of the existing urban area. The magnitude of change is likely to be high.</p> <p>Long-term: In the long-term new tree planting thin garden areas at the northern boundary of the site will have matured to provide some softening of the views between the existing and proposed housing but this is unlikely to reduce the magnitude of change that will remain high.</p>	Major to Moderate adverse	Major to Moderate adverse
4	<p>Short-term: From this location the heavily vegetated setting of Derry's Nurseries and the local watercourse is likely to obscure views of the development to all but glimpses of the new roofscape. These are most likely to occur where there are views of the</p>	Minor to Minimal adverse	Minimal adverse



	<p>existing settlement that already defines the backdrop of the site. This is likely to result in a low to negligible magnitude of change.</p> <p>Long-term: In the long-term the extensive landscaping measures associated with the new open space will have matured to reinforce the landscape setting of the watercourse. This in turn will further screen views of both the existing settlement and new housing limiting the magnitude of change to negligible.</p>		
5	<p>Short-term: From this location there are likely to be filtered views of the new development roofscape seen in the immediate context of the existing settlement that extends beyond the site. The foreground setting of this view will remain unchanged as will the vegetated setting of Derry's Nurseries and the watercourse with any alteration to the character and composition of this view being limited to a relatively small alteration to existing landscape elements beyond the tree cover. This is likely to result in a low magnitude of change.</p> <p>Long-term: In the long-term the extensive landscaping measures associated with the new open space will have matured to reinforce the landscape setting of the watercourse. This in turn will further screen views of both the existing settlement and new housing limiting the magnitude of change to negligible.</p>	Minor adverse	Minimal adverse
6	<p>Short-term: From this location there will be views of the new housing seen in the immediate context of the existing settlement. Due to the fragmented and compartmentalised nature of this view there is a limited perception of the open setting of the site limiting the overall magnitude of change. The immediate setting of pasture that defines this view will remain unaltered, with the change being limited to the alteration of existing elements within restricted sections of this view. The development roofscape may be slightly more prominent across the horizon of this view but it will remain set within the wider context of the existing houses and rolltop barn. The magnitude of change is likely to be medium to low.</p> <p>Long-term: In the long-term the new landscaping measures at the Cossington Road frontage will have matured to secure a softer setting of tree cover across the visual horizon of this view filtering both the new housing and to a degree the existing settlement. This in turn is likely to reduce the magnitude of change to low.</p>	Moderate to Minor adverse	Minor adverse
7	<p>Short-term: This view is not dissimilar to View 6 and again there are likely to be views of the new housing, albeit restricted to small glimpses and filtered views that are already defined by the backdrop of the existing settlement. The immediate open setting of pasture that defines much of this view will remained unchanged with any alteration being limited to a relatively small change to the existing setting of the settlement edge. This is likely to result in a low magnitude of change.</p> <p>Long-term: In the long-term the new landscaping measures at the Cossington Road frontage will have matured to secure a softer setting of tree cover across the visual horizon of this view filtering both the new housing and to a degree the existing settlement. This in turn is likely to reduce the magnitude of change to low/negligible.</p>	Minor adverse	Minor to Minimal adverse
8	<p>Short-term: From this location any change to the visual setting of the site will be barely perceptible, and most likely not possible. This in turn is likely to result in a negligible magnitude of change at worst, and/or no change.</p>	Minor to Minimal adverse	Minimal adverse to No change



	Long-term: Again, the magnitude of change is likely to be negligible at worst, and/or no change .		
9	<p>Short-term: From this location the development will be visible extending into the open setting of the site, albeit any view is filtered by the intervening tree cover associated with the watercourse and Derry's Nurseries site. The new development roofscape will add to the presence of settlement and in winter months (as depicted) the development will be silhouetted beyond the tree cover. However, this view is characterised by the immediate open setting of farmland and the railway line that will remain unchanged with any alteration to character and composition being restricted to the filtered setting of the site that is viewed almost entirely in the context of the settlement. This is likely to result in a medium to low magnitude of change.</p> <p>Long-term: In the long-term the extensive planting measures associated with the new open space will have matured to further filter and soften views of the development and reinforce the landscape setting associated with the watercourse. This is likely to limit the magnitude of change to low.</p>	Moderate to Minor adverse	Minor adverse
10	<p>Short-term: The character and composition of this view is not dissimilar to View 9 and the site is seen in a similar context (although the railway is less prominent). Again, the development will be seen within the site in the immediate context of the settlement affording varying levels of screening from the intervening vegetation cover. In the short-term this is likely to result in a medium to low magnitude of change.</p> <p>Long-term: In the long-term the extensive planting measures associated with the new open space will have matured to further filter and soften views of the development and reinforce the landscape setting associated with the watercourse. In addition, new planting at the eastern boundary of the site will soften views across the slightly more open setting of the railway. This is likely to limit the magnitude of change to low.</p>	Moderate to Minor adverse	Minor adverse
11	<p>Short-term: There are likely to be views of the development roofscape set low in the valley and seen within the wider context of the settlement and industrial development beyond. This is a wide and open panoramic view where the new housing will be seen as a relatively small change involving the alteration of exist visual components common to the locality of the site. This is likely to result in a low to negligible magnitude of change.</p> <p>Long-term: In the long-term the extensive planting measures associated with the new open space will have matured to further filter and soften views of the development and lower setting of the valley that is likely to reduce the magnitude of change to negligible.</p>	Minor to Minimal adverse	Minimal adverse
12	<p>Short-term: There are likely to be views of the development roofscape set low in the valley and seen within the wider context of the settlement and industrial development beyond. The development is likely to more visible when compared with View 11 but there is also an increased visibility of the wider settlement that extends to the north across the valley side. This is again, a wide and open panoramic view where the new housing will be seen as a relatively small change involving the alteration of exist visual components common to the locality of the site. This is likely to result in a low magnitude of change.</p>	Minor adverse	Minor to Minimal adverse



	<p>Long-term: In the long-term the extensive planting measures associated with the new open space will have matured to further filter and soften views of the development and lower setting of the valley that is likely to reduce the magnitude of change to low/negligible.</p>		
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All arising effects are considered to be of significance, however, those effects highlighted in blue are those considered to be of particular significance to the planning decision making process.



7 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 In summary this landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA) has set out a clear and transparent assessment of the baseline resource applicable to the site, and an assessment of the likely landscape and visual effects of the development proposals.
- 7.2 The site is located within the Soar Valley accommodating a single arable field adjoining the southern settlement edge of Sileby. The site affords a framework of settlement, a railway line with embankments, highways, and the treed setting of a local watercourse and horticultural nursery site.
- 7.3 The site is not covered by any landscape designation that would suggest an increased value or sensitivity to change and is not covered by any statutory or non-statutory designation that would prohibit its development for residential purposes. The site is located within a designated Area of Local Separation (AoLS) covered by Policy CS11 of the adopted Core Strategy that seeks to protect the undeveloped character of the AoLS unless new development clearly maintains the separation between built-up areas.
- 7.4 The landscape baseline assessment has identified the site as being located within the Soar Valley that is considered to be of medium value and in overall terms medium landscape sensitivity. This finding is consistent with the Local Authorities landscape assessment and more recent assessment of SHLAA sites, although it is accepted that the latter does not specially cover the application site.
- 7.5 In terms of visual setting, this assessment has considered a number of representative views taken from the local highway and public rights of way that broadly correlate with the visual envelope of the site. These views demonstrate that the visual setting of the site is contained to the north and west by settlement, to the south-west by the immediate setting of pasture, to the south by the local setting of woodland and tree cover, and to the east by the local setting of the valley.
- 7.6 In terms of the AoLS, this assessment has identified the fragmented and compartmentalised nature of the landscape that extends between Sileby and Cossington. This landscape can be separated into three character zones that include the open arable setting of the site, the contained pastoral setting of the land to the west of Cossington Road, and the heavily treed/wooded setting of the local watercourse and Derry's Nurseries. The visual baseline has confirmed that views from Cossington towards the site are heavily screened by intervening vegetation cover, and views between the two settlements are restricted to the land to the west of Cossington Road and a small section



of the south-east settlement edge of Sileby where views exist across the site towards Cossington. The Local Authorities assessment of the AoLS concludes that it has a moderate function and identifies the watercourse as an alternative boundary. The character and quality of the pastoral setting to the west of Cossington Road is noted as a positive element of the AoLS. In contrast the arable setting of the site to the east of Cossington Road is noted for its neutral character and detracting setting of the open settlement boundary and railway.

7.7 The open and elevated nature of the site is identified in the Local Authorities assessment of the AoLS as being sensitive to change. However, the wider visual assessment set out in this report confirms the sites setting within the valley as low-lying and partially contained.

7.8 The findings of the baseline assessment have been used to inform a strategy for development that responds to the identified landscape and visual constraints and seeks to minimise any effect on the AoLS to maintain the separate character and identities of the settlements. A detailed description of the development proposal is set out in this report but in summary the proposal secures:

- 4.29 hectares of development land with the potential to secure up to 170 new houses at an average density of 35 dwellings per hectare;
- 5.88 hectares of public open space and structural landscaping that will be laid out as accessible species rich meadows;
- The open space will include approximately 0.32 hectares of open attenuation that will be managed and maintained as seasonally flooding wet meadows and include areas of permanent water;
- A network of surfaced footpaths that will provide inclusive access to local green space; and
- Play and recreation facilities that will provide a fitness and leisure resource for the community.

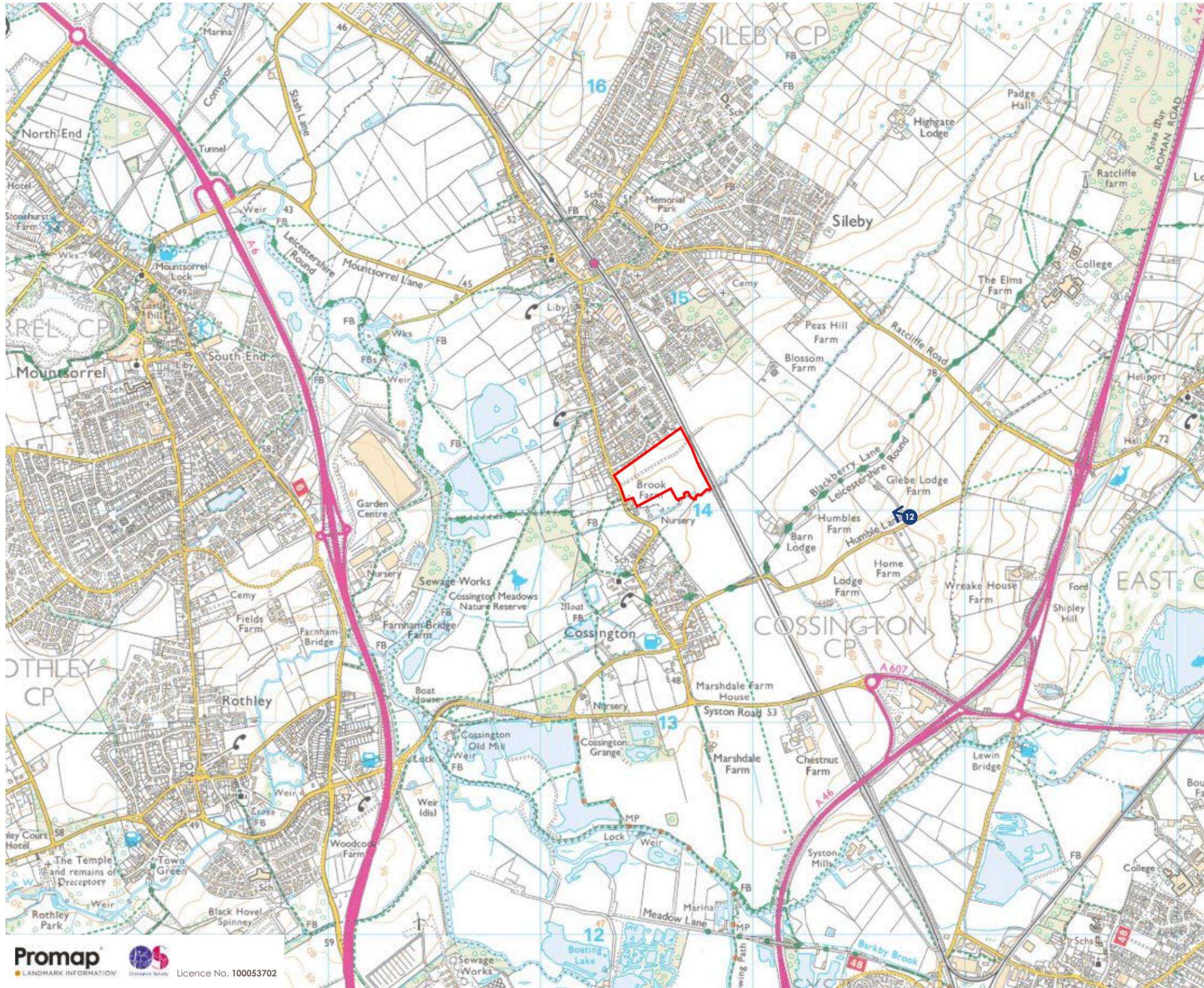
7.9 The development comprises a relatively modest extension to the settlement with approximately 57% of the site area committed to the creation of accessible green space. The new areas of open space have been designed to reflect the character of the pastoral setting to the west of Cossington Road, with new native hedgerows, tree planting and meadow grassland that will retain the open setting between the settlements and secure an enhanced edge to Sileby with the potential to reinforce its separate character and



- identity. The open space also provides a leisure and recreation asset that is accessible to the site and local communities at the southern edge of Sileby and Cossington.
- 7.10 The assessment of landscape effects has confirmed that any adverse effects arising from the proposal considered particularly relevant to the planning decision making process are limited to the immediate setting of the site and restricted to the short-term. Wider effects to local character are assessed as combination of moderate and minor adverse reducing over time as the proposed planting mitigation measures take effect.
- 7.11 The assessment of visual effects had confirmed that any adverse effects arising from the proposal considered particularly relevant to the planning decision making process are restricted to the highways and properties at the immediate boundaries of the site. This level of effect is not uncommon to residential development that involves the extension of the existing settlement and is therefore entirely predictable. Beyond the immediate boundaries of the site the visibility and likely effect arising from the proposal reduce to a combination of moderate, minor, minimal and negligible adverse effects. Most notable is the relatively limited visual effect of the proposal on the wider AoLS and the equally limited effect of the proposal on the separate character and identities of Sileby and Cossington. Again, the level of effect reduces over time as the planting mitigation measures take effect.
- 7.12 In summary, the landscape and visual effects arising from this application are not considered to be unexpected or uncommon to the scale and nature of the proposal, and it is considered that the proposal successfully retains the separate character and identities of Sileby and Cossington in accordance with Policy CS 11 of the Core Strategy.



Figures



Key

-  Site boundary
-  Public footpath
-  Other route with public access
-  Recreational route
-  Public bridleway
-  Nature reserve
-  Photographic view locations

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LANDMARK INFORMATION
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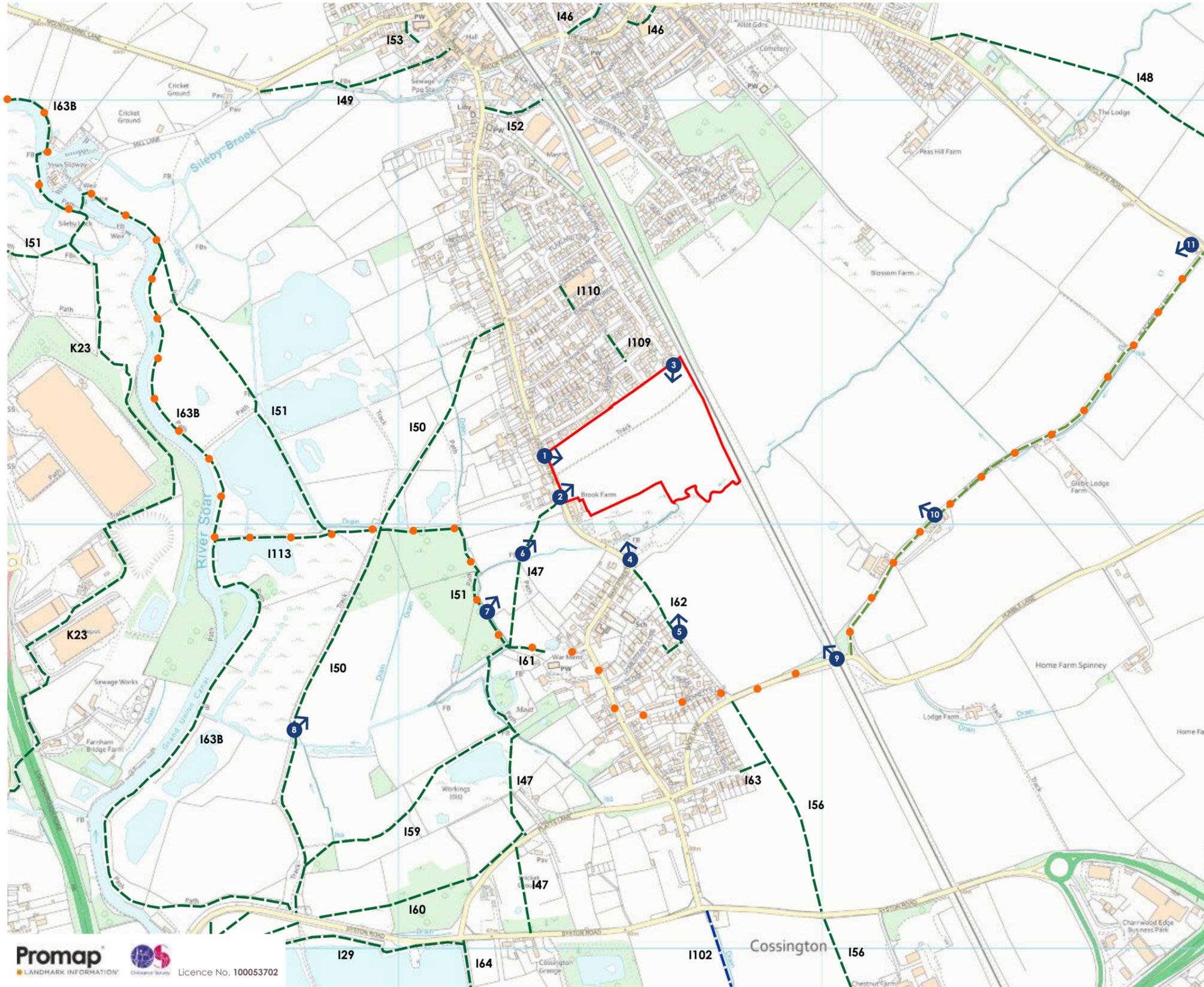
Number/Figure GL1400 01	Project Land at Cossington Road Sileby
Scale 1:20000@A3	Drawing title Site Context
Date 15/01/2021	Client BDW Trading Limited
Checked JG	

north

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Key

-  Site boundary
-  Public footpath
-  Other route with public access
-  Recreational route
-  Public bridleway
-  Photographic view locations

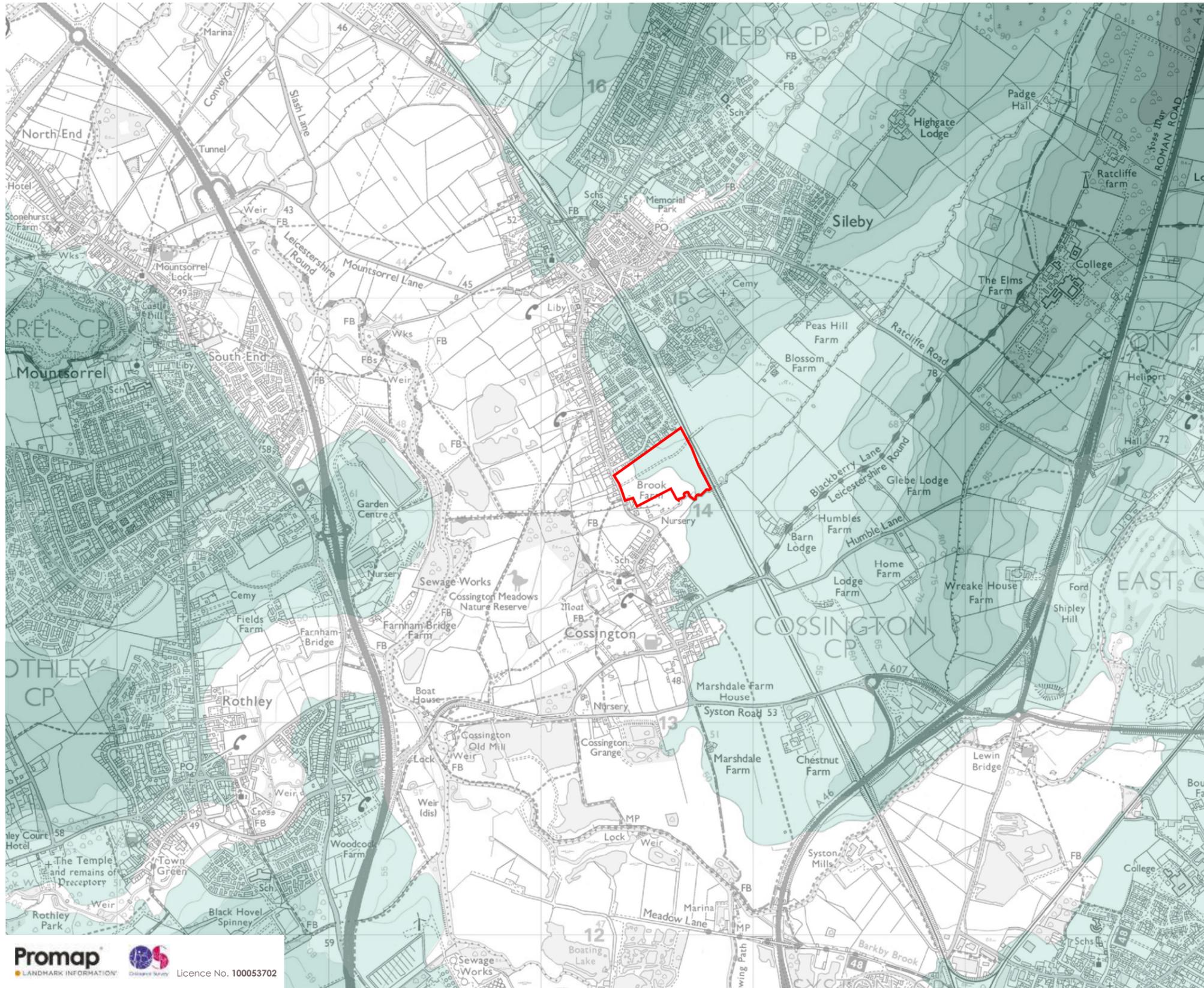
Number/Figure GL1400 02	Project Land at Cossington Road Sileby
Scale 1:10000@A3	Drawing title Site Location
Date 15/01/2021	Client BDW Trading Limited
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Key

-  Site boundary
-  40m to 50m AOD
-  50m to 60m AOD
-  60m to 70m AOD
-  70m to 80m AOD
-  80m to 90m AOD
-  90m to 100m AOD
-  100m to 110m AOD

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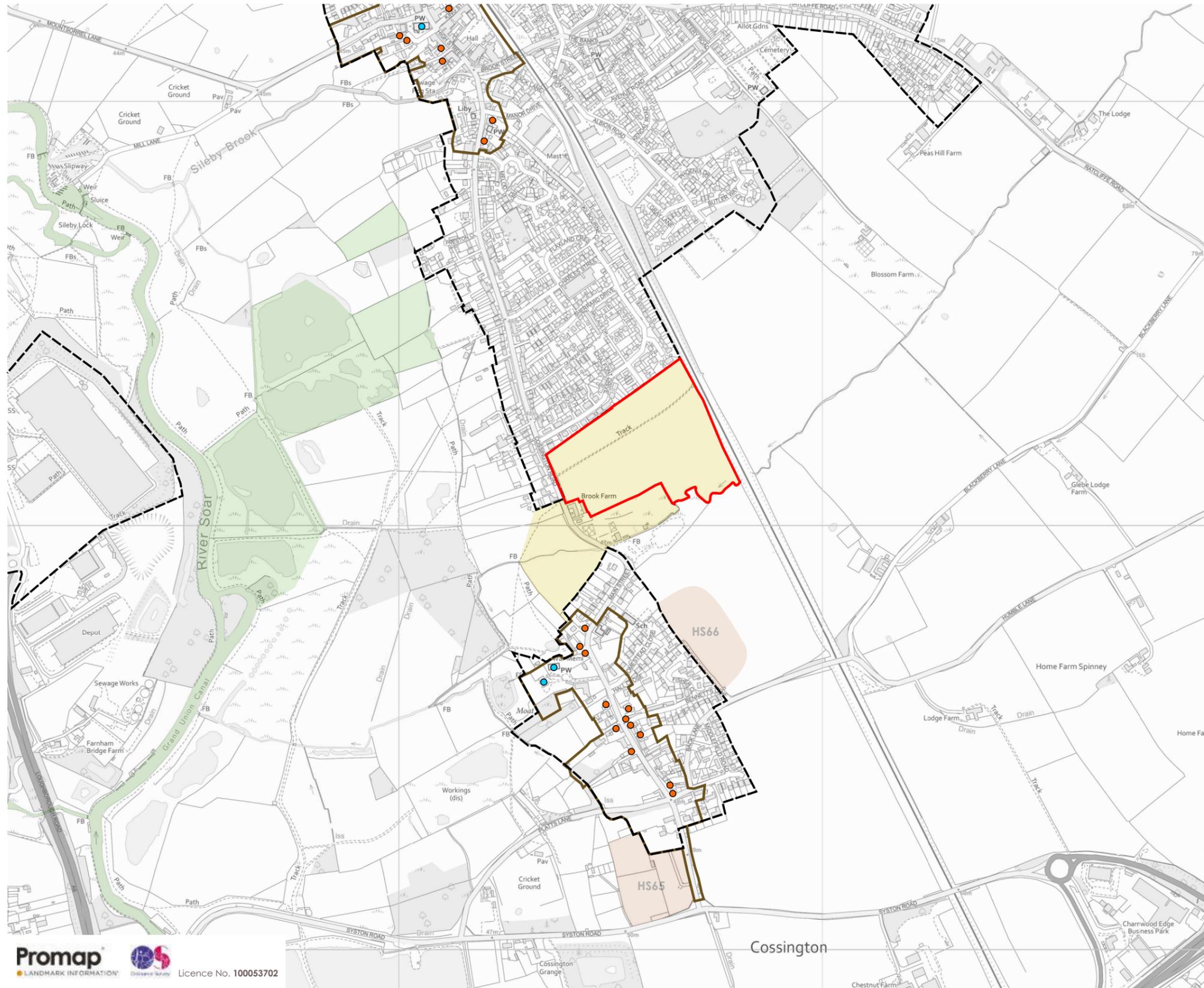
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Scale 1:20000@A3	Drawing title Topography
Date 15/01/2021	Client BDW Trading Limited
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Key

-  Site boundary
-  Limits to Development
-  Area of Local Separation
-  Local Wildlife Site
-  Conservation Area
-  Grade II* Listed Building
-  Grade II Listed Building
-  Proposed Housing Allocation

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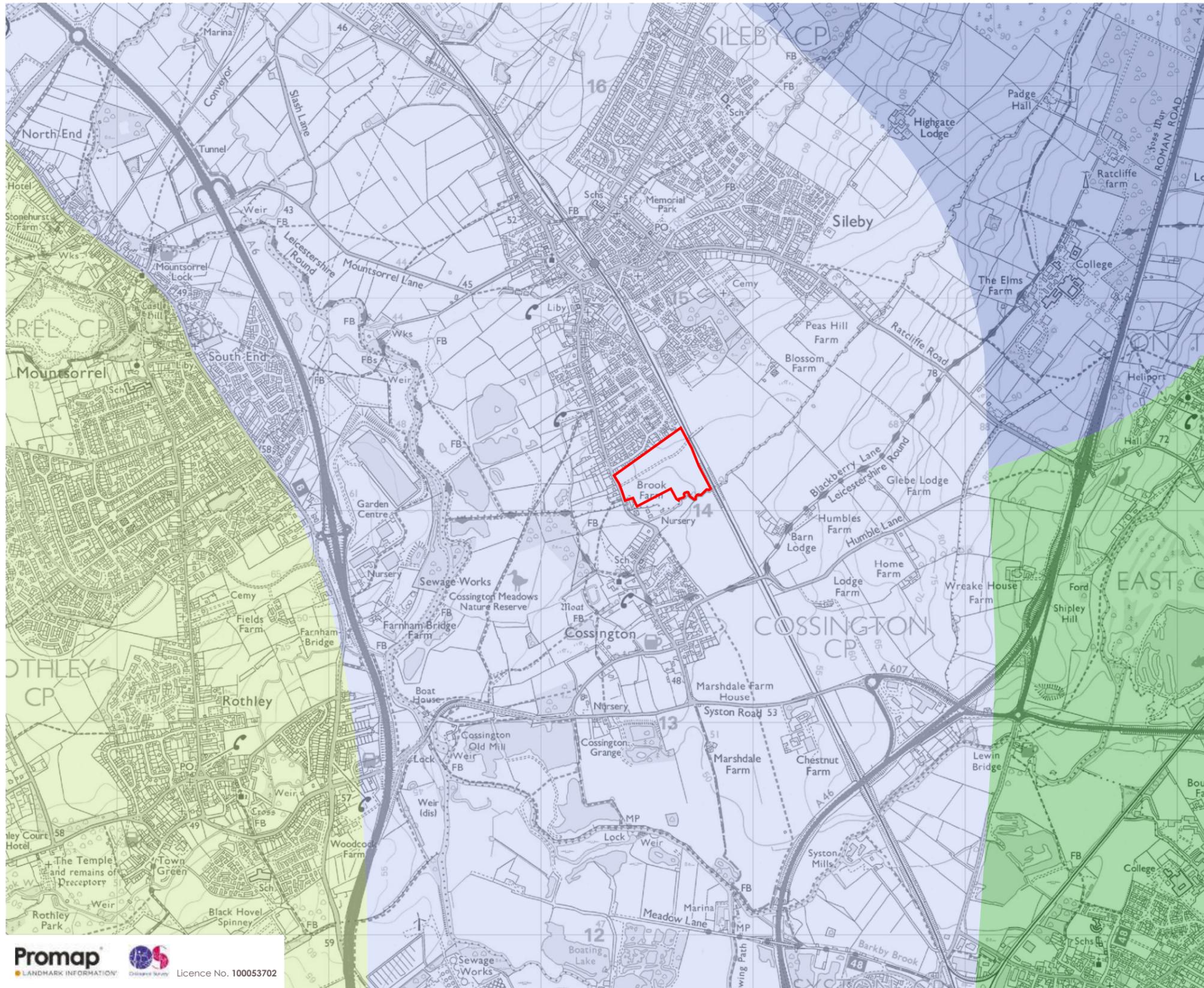
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Number/Figure
GL1400 04
Scale
1:10000@A3
Date
15/01/2021
Checked
JG

Project
Land at Cossington Road
Sileby
Drawing title
Designations
Client
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Key

-  Site boundary
-  Soar Valley LCA
-  Wreake Valley LCA
-  High Leicestershire LCA
-  Charnwood Forest LCA

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Number/Figure GL1400 05	Project Land at Cossington Road Sibleby
Scale 1:20000@A3	Drawing title Landscape Character
Date 15/01/2021	Client BDW Trading Limited
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View 1 - From Cossington Road at the north-west boundary of the site looking south-east



View 2 - From Cossington Road at the south-west boundary of the site looking north-east

Number/Figure	Project
GL1400 07	Land at Cossington Road Sileby
Scale	Drawing title
NTS@A3	Photographic Views 1 & 2
Date	Client
15/01/2021	BDW Trading Limited
Checked	
JG	

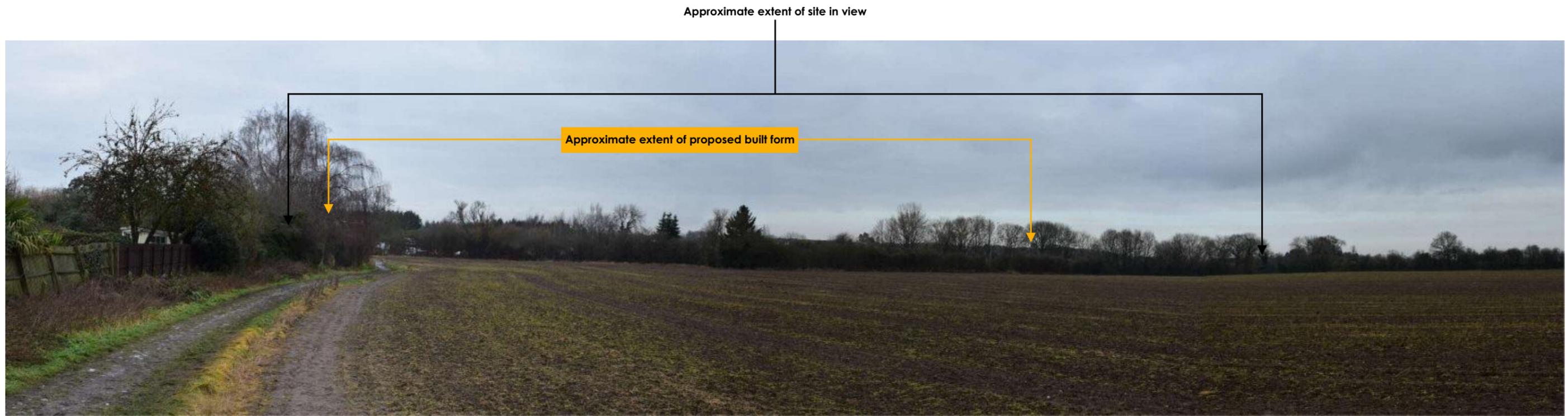


View 3 - From the north-east boundary of the site looking south-west

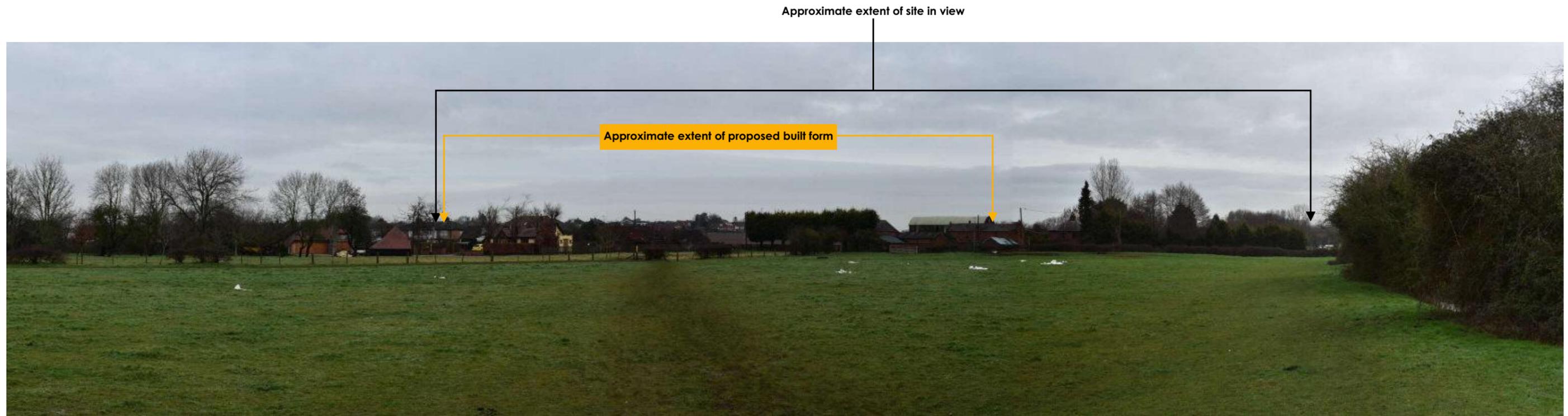


View 4 - From Main Street at the junction with public footpath I56 approximately 140m from the site looking north

Number/Figure GL1400 08	Project Land at Cossington Road Sileby
Scale NTS@A3	Drawing title Photographic Views 3 & 4
Date 15/01/2021	Client BDW Trading Limited
Checked JG	

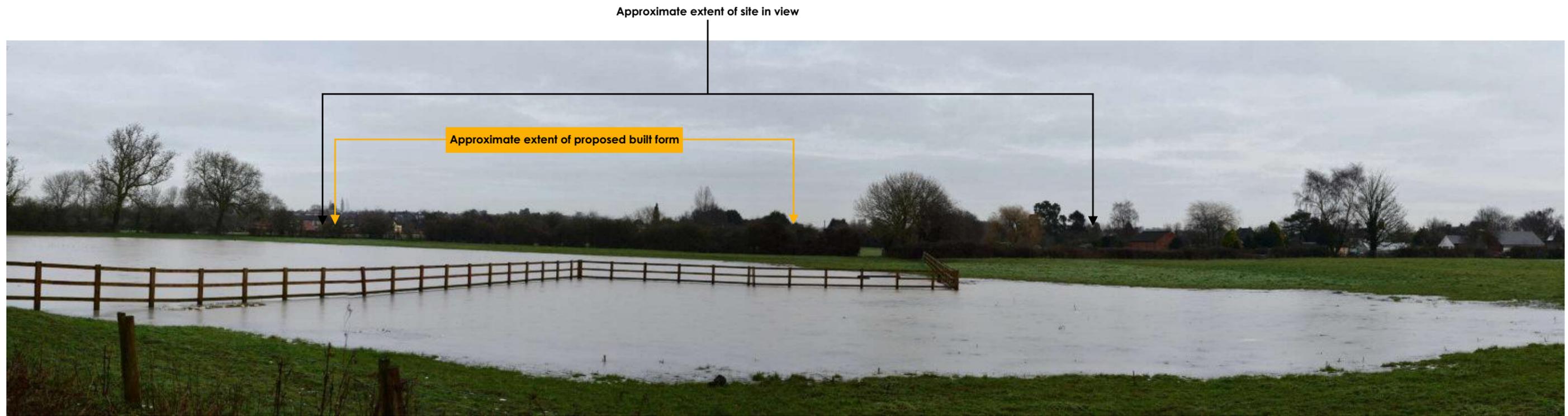


View 5 - From public footpath I56 approximately 305m from the site looking north



View 6 - From public footpath I47 approximately 175m from the site looking north-east

Number/Figure	Project
GL1400 09	Land at Cossington Road Sileby
Scale	Drawing title
NTS@A3	Photographic Views 5 & 6
Date	Client
15/01/2021	BDW Trading Limited
Checked	
JG	

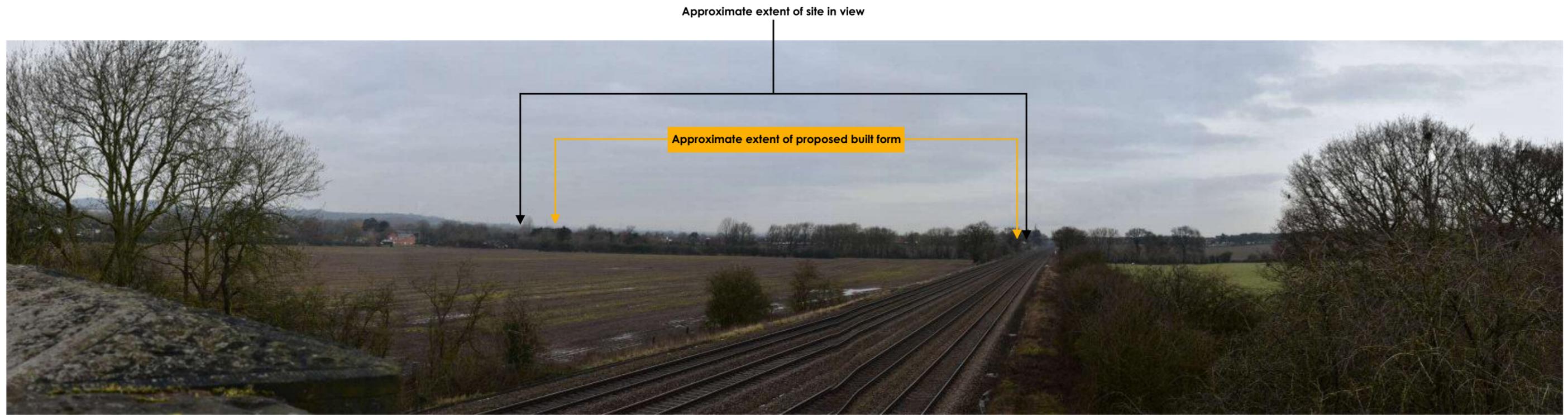


View 7 - From public footpath I51 approximately 335m from the site looking north-east



View 8 - From public footpath I50 approximately 840m from the site looking north-east

Number/Figure	Project
GL1400 10	Land at Cossington Road Sileby
Scale	Drawing title
NTS@A3	Photographic Views 7 & 8
Date	Client
15/01/2021	BDW Trading Limited
Checked	
JG	

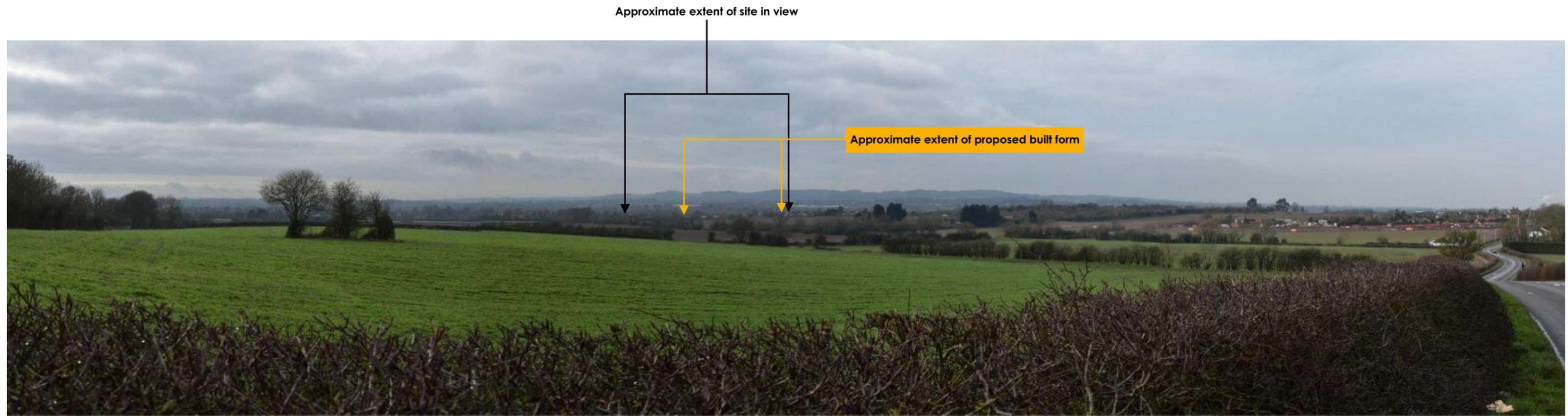


View 9 - From Humble Lane at the Midland Mainline Railway bridge crossing approximately 485m from the site looking north

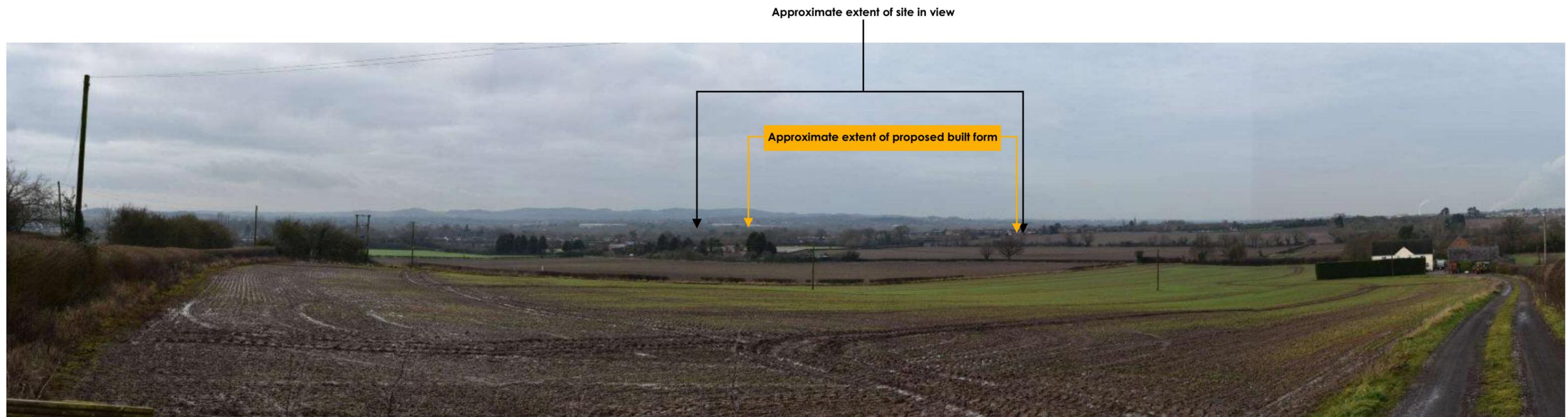


View 10 - From Blackberry Lane (the Leicestershire Round) approximately 470m from the site looking west

Number/Figure	Project
GL1400 11	Land at Cossington Road Sileby
Scale	Drawing title
NTS@A3	Photographic Views 9 & 10
Date	Client
15/01/2021	BDW Trading Limited
Checked	
JG	



View 11 - From Ratcliffe Road near the junction with Blackberry Lane approximately 1.2km from the site looking south-west



View 12 - From Humble Lane at the driveway to Glebe Lodge Farm approximately 940m from the site looking west

Number/Figure GL1400 12	Project Land at Cossington Road Sileby
Scale NTS@A3	Drawing title Photographic Views 11 & 12
Date 15/01/2021	Client BDW Trading Limited
Checked JG	



Illustrative Masterplan
Scale 1:1250



Contextual Masterplan
Scale 1:2500

Key

- | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Site boundary (approximately 10.17 hectares) | Proposed highway access | Proposed open space laid out as species rich meadow grassland |
| Existing settlement | Proposed features junctions | Proposed bound gravel cycleway/footpath access |
| Existing tree cover | Proposed lanes and private drives | Proposed mown pathway |
| Existing watercourse | Proposed on-plot tree planting measures | Proposed Locally Equipped Area for Play (LEAP) |
| Approximate extent of Flood Zones 2 and 3 | Proposed structural tree planting measures | Proposed Trim Trail fitness station (TT) |
| Existing public rights of way | Proposed native buffer planting | |
| Up to 170 proposed dwellings at an average density of approximately 35 dwellings per hectare | Proposed attenuation ponds laid out as wet meadow grassland | |

Appendix 1

Landscape and Visual Appraisal Methodology



LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

This assessment methodology is based on the guidance set out in the:

Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' (GLVIA) published by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013).

The following terms are used throughout the assessment and are defined in the GLVIA as:

Landscape: An area, as perceived by people, the character of which is the result of the action an interaction of natural and/or human factors.

Landscape Character: A distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different to another, rather than better or worse.

Landscape effects: Effects on the landscape as a resource in its own right.

Landscape Receptors: Defined aspects of the landscape resource that have the potential to be affected by a proposal.

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

Magnitude (of effect): A term that combines judgements about the size and scale of the effect, the extent of the area over which it occurs, whether it is reversible or irreversible and whether it is short or long term in duration.

Mitigation: Measures designed to avoid, reduce, remedy or compensate for landscape or visual effects (not taken from GLVIA).

Sensitivity: A term applied to specific receptors, combining judgements of the susceptibility of the receptor to the specific type of change or development proposal and the value related to that receptor.

Significance: A measure of the importance or gravity of the environmental effect, defined by significance criteria specific to the environmental topic. The use of the word significance in this LVIA is a measure of to the importance to be placed on an identified effect in the planning decision making process. This is distinct from the identification of "significant effects" used in the framework of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).



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

Visual effects: Effects on specific views and on the general visual amenity experienced by people.

Visual Receptors: Individuals and/or defined groups of people who have the potential to be affected by the proposal.

Landscape Baseline

The landscape baseline seeks to establish the value associated with the site, its local landscape setting, and its associated features. To understand value the assessment considered several factors when describing the site context and location that includes:

- Land use;
- Vegetation;
- Topography;
- Water features;
- Public access; and
- Local key characteristics

Landscape planning designation and published landscape character studies help to inform this assessment but their relevance will depend on the purpose and geographic extent of the designation, and detail of the study when considered against the nature and extent of the study.

As part of the landscape baseline an assessment of value is made. Box 5.1 in the GLVIA sets out a range of factors that can help in the identification of valued landscape and therefore inform a judgement as to their sensitivity. These include:

- **Landscape quality:** A measure of the physical state of the landscape. It may include the extent to which typical character is represented in individual areas, the intactness of the landscape and the condition of individual elements.
- **Scenic quality:** The term used to describe landscapes that appeal primarily to the senses (primarily but not wholly the visual sense).
- **Rarity:** The presence of rare elements or features in the landscape or the presence of a rare Landscape Character Type.



- **Representativeness:** Whether the landscape contains a particular character and/or features or elements which are considered particularly important examples.
- **Conservation interests:** The presence of features or wildlife, earth science or archaeological or historical and cultural interest can add to the value of the landscape as well as having value in their own right.
- **Recreation value:** Evidence that the landscape is valued for recreational activity where experience of the landscape is important.
- **Perceptual aspects:** A landscape may be valued for its perceptual qualities, notably wildness and/or tranquillity.
- **Associations:** Some landscape are associated with particular people, such as artists or writers, or events in history that contribute to perceptions of the natural beauty of the area.

At varying levels communities and individuals will have differing perceptions as to the value of a landscape. However, for the purposes of landscape assessment it is important to set out a reasoned hierarchy of criteria for assessing value. Value is essentially concerned with the importance or rarity of a landscape and its ability to be substituted or replicated. Value can be categorised as follows:

- **Very High Landscape Value** – landscapes of great importance or rarity that would have limited potential for substitution or replication. Such landscapes will include features and characteristics that combine to create areas of outstanding scenic quality with a value that extends beyond a local level. Such landscape may be identified by designation but not exclusively or may be undesignated but provide a critical setting to highly valued features such as heritage or rare geological features, major visitor attractions/destinations, or valuable and rare earth science/nature conservation assets.
- **High Landscape Value** – landscapes of local value that are of good condition and/or strong strength of character with some potential for substitution or replication. This will include landscapes with strong local cultural associations, and landscapes with high concentrations of designated features in close proximity (such as heritage assets) where the landscape between them makes a valuable but not critical contribution to their setting and interrelationship.
- **Medium Landscape Value** – landscapes of moderate value or rarity that have potential for substitution or replication. Such landscapes will have a cohesive character that is well represented. They may provide the wider setting to locally



valued features but will not be important to their special interest. These landscapes will also have detracting elements that are notable but not dominant.

- **Low Landscape Value** – landscapes of limited value or rarity that can be substituted or replicated. Such landscapes are likely to have a moderate to weak strength of character and will be made up of features that are both common and widespread and are of moderate to poor quality and condition. These landscapes will have dominant detracting elements and/or will have been eroded or modified.

Visual Baseline

In establishing the visual baseline, a series of representative views towards the site covering a range of visual receptors have been identified through field survey work and are identified on plans. The selected viewpoints can typically cover three types of views that are described in the GLVIA as:

- **Representative viewpoints** – selected to represent the experience of different types of visual receptor, where large numbers of viewpoints cannot be included individually and where the significant effects are unlikely to differ;
- **Specific viewpoints** – chosen because they are key and sometimes promoted viewpoints within the landscape, including for example specific local visitor attractions, viewpoints in areas of particularly noteworthy visual and/or recreational amenity such as landscape with statutory landscape designations, or viewpoints with particular cultural landscape associations. Specific views include those from recreational spaces, cemeteries, public footpaths, open access land, and promoted trails.
- **Illustrative viewpoints** – chosen specifically to demonstrate a particular effect or specific issues, which might, for example, be the restricted visibility at certain locations.

Not all of these types of viewpoints will be present or need to be considered in all of the assessment. The majority of viewpoints will be representative but not exclusively. All of the viewpoints considered are taken from publicly accessible locations. The likely effect of the development proposal on private locations, such as houses, is made through professional judgement based on views from publicly accessible locations nearby.

The representative views are described as part of the visual baseline assessment and consider the following criteria:

- Location of the viewpoint;



- Type of existing view;
- Distance between the observer and the site; and
- Extent and context of the site and/or likely view of development proposal observed.

With specific regard to the extent of the site/development observed the following descriptions are used:

- Open views – uninterrupted views into the site;
- Filtered views – views partially obstructed by vegetation, landform, built-form or combinations of each; and

As part of the baseline assessment judgements must be made about the value attached to a view. Value may be attached to views that relate to designated landscapes and heritage assets. Value may also be attached through appearance in guide books, on maps, and through the provision of facilities specific to the enjoyment of a view such as benches or interpretation boards. Value may also be attached to views associated with heritage assets, these are often identified in heritage assessments and conservation area appraisals. Value can be categorised as:

- **Very High Visual Value** – Promoted views identified on maps, or local walks/guides that are highly valued as a destination to appreciate a particular landscape or feature. This may include views towards or from notable natural features, structures, houses, heritage assets, designed views or exceptional landscapes. These views are considered to be of greater than local value and are likely to be marked by signs, seating, or features that promote the view. This may also include undesignated and promoted views that are of significant local cultural and community value.
- **High Visual Value** – Views from publicised vantage points, or to a landscape of notable importance, or highly popular visitor attractions where the view forms an important part of the experience or has important cultural associations. This may include particularly noteworthy views from identified trails, designated landscapes, and heritage assets. These views are considered to be of greater than local value and regularly visited. This may also include views that provide a valuable appreciation of a landscape, for instance open and elevated panoramic views that provide a wide appreciation of a landscape that defines a particular area, or conversely a focussed/channelled view of a specific feature or valued asset. Private views may include notable properties specifically designed to take advantage of a particular view;



- **Medium Visual Value** – Locally known or valued viewpoints. Views from promoted public rights of way or clear evidence of regular use and areas of informal open space. Views from regularly used rooms or living spaces. Panoramic views, vistas, or other noteworthy views from active recreation land, or highways. Such views will provide a wider appreciation of the landscape and its character with few detracting elements; and
- **Low Visual Value** – Views that are not published and/or where there is limited evidence of regular use, and/or views that do not provide a wider appreciation of the landscape and its character. Such views will often include modified landscapes and/or detracting elements. Views from secondary windows not forming the main living or working spaces in properties. Views of little noteworthiness from active recreation land, or highways.

Assessment of Landscape Effects

The initial stage of the assessment of landscape effect is to determine the susceptibility of the receptor to the proposed change, and an overall assessment of landscape sensitivity.

The following criteria are used to establish landscape susceptibility. Whilst these are typical examples it does not always follow that a site within a specific landscape designation will automatically fit with this categorization. Much will depend on the specific site conditions.

- **Very High Susceptibility** – A landscape possessing a strong and defined character of notable scenic quality, in good condition with a very low tolerance to the proposed change.
- **High Landscape Susceptibility** - A landscape possessing a defined character of good scenic quality, in good condition with a low tolerance to the proposed change.
- **Medium Landscape Susceptibility** – A landscape possessing a moderate strength character and scenic quality, in moderate condition with a moderate tolerance to the proposed change
- **Low Landscape Susceptibility** – A landscape possessing a weak and undefined character of limited scenic quality, in poor condition with a high tolerance to the proposed change.

Judgements of value and susceptibility are then combined as an assessment of overall sensitivity:



Table 1 – Matrix of Landscape Sensitivity

		SUSCEPTIBILITY			
		VERY HIGH	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
VALUE	VERY HIGH	Very High	Very High	High	Medium
	HIGH	Very High	High	Medium	Medium
	MEDIUM	High	Medium	Medium	Low
	LOW	Medium	Medium	Low	Low

The following stage of the assessment process considers the magnitude of change imposed by the proposed development on each landscape receptors. Issues that inform this judgement include:

- **Size or scale:** The amount of change resulting from the proposal to features, or key characteristics and attributes of the landscape type or area.
- **Geographic extent:** Determines the extent to which the landscape type or area will be affected by the proposed development.
- **Duration and reversibility of the landscape effect:** The timeframe, or duration of the effect by the proposed development, and whether the effect is permanent or temporary.

The likely magnitude of change of the development proposal can be guided by the following criteria:

- **High magnitude of change** – The proposal will result in a total change in the key characteristics of the landscape character, will introduce elements into the landscape that are totally uncharacteristic to the receiving landscape, and/or will result in the substantial loss, or alteration of key elements/features.
- **Medium magnitude of change** – The proposal will result in a change in the key characteristic of the landscape character, will introduce elements uncharacteristic to the attributes of the receiving landscape, and/or will result in loss, or alteration to key elements/features.
- **Low magnitude of change** – The proposal will result in a partial change to the key characteristics of the landscape character, will introduce elements that are not entirely uncharacteristic to the attributes of the receiving landscape, and/or will result in the minor loss, or alteration to key elements/features.



- **Negligible magnitude of change** – The proposal will result in a very limited changed to the key characteristics of the landscape character, will introduce elements consistent with the attributes of the receiving landscape, and/or will result in an limited loss, or alteration to key elements/features.

The combined judgements on the nature of the receptor (sensitivity) and the nature of the impact (magnitude) are combined to arrive at a clear and transparent judgement of significance. The significance of landscape effects are described in the assessment text and are guided by the matrix set out below:

Table 2 – Matrix of Landscape Significance

		SENSITIVITY			
		VERY HIGH	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE	HIGH	Major	Major	Major-Moderate	Moderate
	MEDIUM	Major-Moderate	Major-Moderate	Moderate	Minor
	LOW	Moderate	Moderate	Minor	Minimal
	NEGLIGIBLE	Minor	Minor	Minimal	Minimal

For the purpose of this assessment, effects that are of major and major-moderate significance (highlighted in blue) are those considered particularly relevant to the planning decision making process.

Assessment of Visual Effects

The initial stage of the assessment of visual effect is to determine the susceptibility of the receptor to the proposed change, and an overall assessment of landscape sensitivity.

GLVIA describes the susceptibility of different visual receptors to changes in views and visual amenity as a function of:

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

The GVLIA goes on to categorise those receptor groups that are likely to be most susceptible to change:



- residents at home;
- people, whether residents or visitors, who are engaged in outdoor recreation, including people using public rights of way, whose attention or interest is likely to be focussed on the landscape and on particular views;
- visitors to heritage assets, or to other attractions, where views of the surroundings are an important contributor to the experience;
- communities where views contribute to the landscape setting enjoyed by the residents in the area.

Whilst this covers a number of potential visual receptors it does not automatically make them all highly susceptible to change. Susceptibility can be categorised as follows:

- **Very High Susceptibility** – Views that provide a key understanding and appreciation of valued landscapes (most notably National Parks and AONB's), notable natural features, or historic structures/properties (such as engineering structures or country houses).
- **High Visual Susceptibility** - Primary views from residential properties; users of public rights of way, informal footpaths, cycleways and public open space where the appreciation of the wider landscape setting is critical to its function and enjoyment; visitors to local attractions and heritage/wildlife assets where views of the wider landscape are important to its setting.
- **Medium Visual Susceptibility** - Secondary/restricted views from residential properties; users of public rights of way, informal footpaths, cycleways, lanes and public open space where the appreciation of the wider landscape setting is moderately important to its function and enjoyment; and visitors to local attractions and heritage/wildlife assets where views of the wider landscape make a contribution to its setting but are not critical to its appreciation and enjoyment.
- **Low Visual Susceptibility** - People engaged in outdoor sport and recreation where the appreciation of views is not critical to their enjoyment; people at their workplace where the setting is not important to the quality of working life, and road or footpath users where views of the wider landscape make a limited contribution to its setting.

In terms of views from residential properties it is important to note that the planning system does not serve to protect private interests. The key issues in considering residential views is not whether an occupier would experience financial or other loss from development but whether such development would unacceptably affect the residential amenity of the



property and associated land holding. A number of Local Authorities have adopted residential amenity standards for new development that have been specifically implemented to control the relationship between existing and proposed development. Where such standards exist these will be relied upon and not replicated through further assessment.

Judgements of value and susceptibility are then combined as an assessment of overall sensitivity:

Table 3 – Matrix of Visual Sensitivity

		SUSCEPTIBILITY			
		VERY HIGH	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
VALUE	VERY HIGH	Very High	Very High	High	Medium
	HIGH	Very High	High	Medium	Medium
	MEDIUM	High	Medium	Medium	Low
	LOW	Medium	Medium	Low	Low

The following stage of the assessment process considers the magnitude of change imposed by the proposed development on each visual receptors. Issues that inform this judgement include:

- **Size or scale:** This includes the loss of important features to the character and composition of the views, the degree of consistency between the proposals and visual setting of the receiving landscape, and the extent of the view and proportion of that view the proposals in likely to influence or change.
- **Geographic extent:** The extent of the area in which the proposed change will be visible.
- **Duration and reversibility of the visual effect:** The timeframe, or duration of the effect by the proposed development, and whether the effect is permanent or temporary.

The likely magnitude of change of the development proposal can be guided by the following criteria:

- **High magnitude** - The proposal will cause a dominant or complete change or contrast to the view, resulting in the loss or addition of substantial features in the



view, at odds with the existing visual character, and substantially altering the appreciation of the view.

- **Medium magnitude** - The proposal will cause a clearly noticeable change or contrast to the view, which will have an effect on composition through the loss or addition of features, noticeably altering the appreciation of the view.
- **Low magnitude** - The proposal will cause a perceptible change or contrast in the view, but which will not materially affect the composition or the appreciation of the view.
- **Negligible magnitude** - The proposal will cause a barely perceptible change or contrast to the view that will not affect the composition or the appreciation of the view.
- **No change** – no part of the scheme or associated works will be discernible in the view.

The combined judgements on the nature of the receptor (sensitivity) and the nature of the impact (magnitude) are combined to arrive at a clear and transparent judgement of significance. The significance of visual effects are described in the assessment text and are guided by the matrix set out below:

Table 4 – Matrix of Visual Significance

		SENSITIVITY			
		VERY HIGH	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE	HIGH	Major	Major	Major-Moderate	Moderate
	MEDIUM	Major-Moderate	Major-Moderate	Moderate	Minor
	LOW	Moderate	Moderate	Minor	Minimal
	NEGLIGIBLE	Minor	Minor	Minimal	Minimal

For the purpose of this assessment, effects that are of major and major-moderate significance (highlighted in blue) are those considered particularly relevant to the planning decision making process.

Criteria of Other Factors Assessed

The assessment also considers the following aspects;



- **Directs and indirect effects** – direct effect effects are those directly attributable to the development. These include changes to features, character, and views. Indirect effects are those resulting indirectly from the development. These effects may result as a consequence of direct effects over distance from the site, or a sequence of change over time or distance;
- **Seasonal variation** – due to the role that vegetation can play in preventing or limiting views, or influencing the character of the landscape, the difference between winter and summer needs to be considered. Assessments completed during spring and summer months should include a prediction of winter effects with limited leaf cover to ensure the worst-case scenario has been considered.
- **Beneficial, neutral, or adverse effects** - adverse effects are those that would be damaging to the quality, integrity, or key characteristics of the landscape and/or visual resource. Beneficial effects are those that would result in an improvement in the quality, integrity, or key characteristics of the landscape and/or visual resource. Neutral effects are those effect that would maintain, on balance, the existing levels of quality, integrity, or key characteristics of the landscape and/or visual resource.

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