

Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment

Land at Patshull Road, Albrighton

On behalf of Boningale Homes Limited

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Document Management.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. Pegasus Group have been commissioned by Boningale Homes Limited to prepare a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) in support of an outline planning application on a 47.29 ha site (the 'Site'), for the construction of up to 800 dwellings (the 'Proposed Development') (**Site Location Plan at Figure 1 and Indicative Framework Plan at Appendix 5**).
- 1.2. An initial desk-top study was carried out to review a range of published information relating to the Site and its context, landscape designations, published landscape character assessments and the accompanying guidance. A site visit was carried out in early March 2024 to review the findings of the desktop study and to determine the extent of the visual influence of the Site.
- 1.3. The main objectives of the LVIA are:
 - To describe the landscape character of the Site and its surroundings, evaluate its sensitivity to change and, considering the magnitude of change, assess the effect that the proposal would have on the landscape character.
 - To identify potential visual receptors (i.e. people who would be able to see the development), evaluate their sensitivity to change and, considering the magnitude of change, assess the effect that the proposal would have on visual amenity. A residential visual amenity study is excluded from this LVIA, noting that appropriate privacy distances between existing properties and new built development would be maintained.
 - To identify landscape elements associated with the site, evaluate their sensitivity to change and, considering the magnitude of change, assess the effect the proposals would have on landscape elements.
- 1.4. As illustrated on the **Environmental Designations Plan (Figure 2)** the Site lies outside of any statutory or local/non-statutory landscape designations but is located within the Green Belt.
- 1.5. This LVIA should be read in conjunction with the supporting Green Belt Assessment, Planning Statement, Design and Access Statement (DAS) and Environmental Enhancement Strategy (EES). The **Illustrative Landscape Masterplan** is included at **Appendix 6**.

Assessment Approach and Methodology

- 1.6. This LVIA assesses the operational stage of the Proposed Development only, as the construction stage is short and temporary in duration. The effects are therefore assessed at Year 1, immediately post-completion, and at Year 15 to consider the proposed mitigation and enhancement measures.
- 1.7. A preliminary 2km radii study area has been initially identified to review the baseline condition and planning policies that may be relevant to the Proposed Development. This study area captures the nearby settlements and publicly accessible locations that may offer views of or towards the site.
- 1.8. The LVIA has been undertaken with regard to the following best practice:
 - Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (3rd edition) (hereafter referred to as GLVIA3) – Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013);

- GLVIA3 Statement of Clarification 1/13, 2/13, 1/14, and 2/14 – Landscape Institute (2013 and 2014);
- An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment – Natural England (2014);
- An Approach to Landscape Sensitivity Assessment – to inform spatial planning and land management – Natural England (2019);
- Visual Representation of Development Proposals, Technical Guidance Note 06/19 – Landscape Institute (2019); and
- Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations, Technical Guidance Note 02/21 – Landscape Institute (2021).

1.9. The detailed methodology for this LVIA is provided at **Appendix 1**.

1.10. The GLVIA3 states in paragraph 1.1 that:

“...Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) is a tool used to identify and assess the significance of and the effects of change resulting from development on both the landscape as an environmental resource in its own right and on people’s views and visual amenity.”¹

1.11. GLVIA3 also states in paragraph 1.17 that when identifying landscape and visual effects there:

“...is a need for an approach that is in proportion to the scale of the project that is being assessed and the nature of the likely effects. Judgement needs to be exercised at all stages in terms of the scale of investigation that is appropriate and proportional.”²

1.12. GLVIA3 also recognises in paragraph 2.23 that:

“...professional judgement is a very important part of LVIA. While there is some scope for quantitative measurement of some relatively objective matters much of the assessment must rely on qualitative judgements”³

Limitations to the Assessment

1.13. In undertaking the landscape and visual assessment in relation to the Proposed Development, there are limitations and constraints affecting the outputs from this work. These include:

- The baseline assessment has been based on information readily available at the time of undertaking the assessment;
- Every effort has been made to ensure that the photographs and their locations represent a variety of receptors and views from a range of distances and directions;
- Winter views (illustrating deciduous trees devoid of leaf cover) have been obtained for the baseline views and the assessment assumes winter conditions unless otherwise stated;

¹ Paragraph 1.1, Page 4, GLVIA3rd Edition

² Paragraph 1.17, Page 9, GLVIA, 3rd Edition

³ Paragraph 2.23, Page 21, GLVIA, 3rd Edition

- The assessed development is based on planning application drawings that accompany the planning application and The **Illustrative Masterplan** as shown at **Appendix 2**, and is assessed on the assumption that the proposals are delivered in line with these drawings and associated timescales; and
- The assessed development at year 1 is based on the drawings and elevations that accompany the application. The development at year 15 is assessed on the assumption that the proposals are delivered in line with these drawings and estimated conservative growth of existing and proposed mitigation planting.

1.14. The focus of this report is on landscape and visual effects arising from the proposals; however, whilst effects on cultural heritage and ecology are beyond the scope of this LVIA, heritage assets and nature conservation designations in the study area are shown on **Environmental Designations Plan (Figure 2)**.

Nature of Effect

1.15. The degree of landscape or visual effect is identified by means of a descriptive scale as per the GLVIA 3rd Edition guidance. However, it is also necessary to consider the nature of the landscape and visual effects. GLVIA 3 assists on this point noting paragraph 5.37 concerning landscape effects which states that:

“One of the more challenging issues is deciding whether the landscape effects should be categorised as positive or negative. It is also possible for effects to be neutral in their consequences for the landscape. An informed professional judgement should be made about this, and the criteria used in reaching the judgement should be clearly stated. They might include, but should not be restricted to:

- ***The degree to which the proposal fits with existing character.***
- ***The contribution to the landscape that the development may make its own right, usually by virtue of good design, even if it is in contrast to existing character.***
- ***The importance of perceptions of landscape is emphasised by the European Landscape Convention, and others may of course hold different opinions on whether the effects are positive or negative, but this is not a reason to avoid making this judgement, which will ultimately be weighed against the opinions of others in the decision making process.”***

1.16. A precautionary approach is applied to this LVIA that assumes all landscape and visual effects are considered to be negative or adverse unless otherwise stated.

2. Site Location and Description

- 2.1. The Site is located on the southern edge of the settlement of Albrighton, Shropshire; and is formed of two distinct parcels of land as illustrated in **Figure 1: Site Location Plan**. The western Site parcel is broadly triangular and bounded by Cross Road to the northwest, Patshull Road to the east and the A464 Holyhead Road to the south. The eastern Site parcel is located between Patshull Road and New House Lane, excluding the land between the residential property of Oaklea and Lea Hall.
- 2.2. The northern tip of the western parcel abuts the current development boundary for Albrighton, as defined in the Policies Map for the Local Plan 2016–38. The northern boundary of the eastern parcel is set back from the existing development boundary of Albrighton to accommodate the land which is designated as ‘Safeguarded Land’ (P36 / ALB014) as illustrated in **Figure 2: Environmental Designations Plan**.
- 2.3. There are several residential properties opposite the northwest boundary of the Site outside the settlement boundary along Cross Road, several large industrial-type sheds at the Enterprise Business Park, and a single residential dwelling located midway down Cross Road. Scattered residential properties are also located across the road from the southern and eastern boundary of the western Site parcel. The Albrighton Feeds shop and associated service yard adjacent to the A464 is located to the southwest of the Site. Lea Farm and Lea House and their associated curtilage are excluded from the Site.
- 2.4. The full details of the tree and hedgerow planting within and adjacent to the Site is covered in a separate Arboricultural Report. In summary, the planting across the western parcel of the Site is largely confined to the perimeter boundaries, where it is present as hedgerows of varying heights with occasional hedgerow trees. Exceptions to this pattern includes planting along the southern site boundary where groups of mature trees, including within the gardens of dwellings adjacent to the Site boundary. Trees internally within the western parcel are present in the form of individual field trees and a small woodland copse. A single line of hedgerow is present within the western parcel running on a broad north–south axis from Lea Farm. Within the eastern Site parcel vegetation is present in the form of internal field boundaries comprised of hedgerow and reinforced with hedgerow trees, as well as the forming the perimeter boundary. Mature trees are present around several small field ponds.
- 2.5. The entire site is currently maintained as private farmland and there is currently no formal authorised access to the site such as designated Public Rights of Way (PRoW) apart from the southeastern corner of the Site, east of Newhouse Lane where the proposed vehicular access crosses a public footpath (that would be maintained). Beyond the Site, several PRoW provide access across the wider landscape with bridleways and footpaths being the most prevalent type.
- 2.6. Land use beyond settlement boundaries is predominantly agricultural and formed of a mix of larger–scale geometric arable fields and smaller–scale more organically shaped fields used for pastoral farming. Field boundaries are defined by a mix of hedgerow vegetation, which includes hedgerows with scattered and intermittent tree cover and riparian vegetation.
- 2.7. As illustrated on **Figure 4: Topography Plan**, there is little variation in landform across the site, with the height of the land sitting between approximately 90–100m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD). Within 1km of the site, the topography is similar in profile to the site, with little variation and gently undulating. Beyond 1km to the east of the site, the change in topography is more dramatic, with the land rising to a wide plateau of approximately 140–160m AOD near the settlement of Kingswood Common. Beyond 1km to the west of the site the land gradually falls to approximately 80m AOD; a series of valleys associated with minor watercourses are also present in this area which have incised the otherwise gently sloping landscape.



- 2.8. The site is physically and visually separate from the Albrighton Conservation Area. The Boningale Conservation Area is located to the south of the Site as illustrated in **Figure 2: Environmental Designations Plan**. The closest Listed Buildings are located at Lea Hall (Grade II), other Grade II Listed Buildings and one Grade II* Listed Building are also located within the Boningale Conservation Area. The assessment of the impact of the Proposed Development upon these designations is covered in the separate Cultural Heritage report by Pegasus Group. The site is not covered by any wildlife or nature conservation designations.

3. Description Of Proposals

- 3.1. The Illustrative Landscape Masterplan is contained at **Appendix 6**, and a separate **Environmental Enhancement Strategy (EES)** has been prepared by Pegasus Group. At a macro level, the proposed green infrastructure would ensure that the Proposed Development is accessible, would be an attractive place to live, would manage surface water attenuation in a sustainable way and would facilitate improved opportunities for local wildlife. The key new landscape features proposed are:
- A community orchard set within a wildflower meadow near the centre of the site within the principal area of public open space;
 - A native woodland belt along the southern boundary of the site adjacent to Holyhead Road and the new access road and along New House Lane, including land to the east of New House Lane within the client ownership; and
 - Sustainable drainage systems to manage surface water run-off, increase biodiversity and provide amenity with wildflower meadows.
- 3.2. In addition to the Green Infrastructure elements (see **Appendix 6**), the following proposals could be integrated within the public open space on the site:
- Potential educational opportunities (e.g. Forest School) including the varied habitats (existing and proposed) within the central public open space adjacent to the southern boundary of the secondary school site or within the school site;
 - Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP) – indicated within the central POS adjacent to an existing woodland copse that has the potential to follow naturalistic play principles; and
 - Informal play and fitness provision along a trim trail that also includes nearby public art opportunities.
- 3.3. The Proposed Development could deliver a cohesive and high-quality green infrastructure network that would:
- Encourage and promote healthy and active lifestyles through the provision of high-quality, safe, and accessible open spaces for informal recreation and play;
 - Support local landscape character to provide an attractive sense of place and enhance visual amenity;
 - Create and facilitate safe and cohesive communities;
 - Protect and enhance existing green infrastructure assets namely the trees and hedgerows within and around the perimeter of the site so that they can be appreciated and valued by everyone for future generations;
 - Protect and create habitats to enable biodiversity habitats and species to thrive;
 - Enhance connectivity to promote and facilitate sustainable travel movements; and
 - Provide a resilient and adaptive environment in the face of climate change, principally through tree planting.

3.4. The green infrastructure could deliver a broad range of benefits considered enhancement which could include:

- Climate change adaptation and mitigation – principally tree planting for natural air-cooling and CO2 absorption;
- Improving the quality of place by using the natural environment to create high-quality living and recreational environments for people to live and work;
- Improving physical and mental health and social well-being by creating good quality green spaces and opportunities for relaxation and health, physical activity as well as providing the overall built infrastructure necessary to ensure people run, walk, cycle and play;
- Investment in the proposed green infrastructure which could provide multi-functional open spaces and parks bringing benefit to people, wildlife, and the environment;
- Creating an attractive environment framing new and existing residential areas;
- Sustaining economic growth and investment through high-quality environments of comparative location advantages to attract and retain business locally; and
- Protecting and enhancing landscape character and biodiversity by using land improvements and management to deliver biodiversity gain and overall landscape enhancement.

3.5. The iterative design of the scheme has been landscape and heritage led and has also considered the opportunities to deliver strategic tree and woodland planting that would minimise the visibility of the built elements of the scheme from the wider countryside, comprising:

- Proposed woodland belt to the southern site boundary along Holyhead Road to define a new Green Belt boundary and restrict the currently limited views towards the site from the Boningale Conservation Area to the south;
- Proposed woodland belt to the eastern site boundary on alternate sides of Newhouse Lane and along the new access road to define a new Green Belt boundary and restrict longer range views of new built development from open countryside to the east of the Site;
- Reinforce existing planting with a new woodland belt along the site boundary to the east of Lea Hall to reflect the setting of the listed building; and
- Additional planting outside the redline boundary within highway land at the new junctions on the A464 Holyhead Road and Cross Road. This planting will minimise the impact of vehicle movements associated with the new development upon the residential visual amenity of existing nearby dwellings.

4. Effect On Landscape Elements

- 4.1. The following section assesses the effects on the landscape elements that currently characterise the Site. It considers the introduction of the new elements that make up the proposals and how these will physically affect the existing features present within the Site.

Land Cover

- 4.2. The Site is predominantly cultivated for arable crops. The crops would be removed and replaced by the Proposed Development, which would include areas of public open space including planting, residential buildings and the associated roads and pedestrian paths. The existing land cover of the Site as farmland is typical of the locality and is assessed to be of medium susceptibility and value, which results in a medium sensitivity.
- 4.3. Whilst the construction phase would include clearing the existing land cover once the landscape proposals have been implemented, the operation phases of the development would have some beneficial effects upon the land cover. The proposed grassland mixes for the areas of public open space would be species diverse which would not only be beneficial to biodiversity but would have amenity value. In addition, the redevelopment of the Site presents the opportunity for a cohesive and attractive hard landscape strategy which complements the proposed built form. It is assessed that whilst there would be some beneficial changes to landcover, larger areas of the Site would comprise new buildings and areas of hard surfacing, and there would be an overall adverse effect upon land cover, relative to the baseline.
- 4.4. The magnitude of change is assessed as high, which when combined with the medium sensitivity results in a major adverse effect upon land cover.

Topography

- 4.5. There is a relatively modest topographical variation within the Site currently, and only limited earthworks would be necessary to accommodate much of the proposed built development parcels. The susceptibility of the topography to changes as a result of the Proposed Development is low, which combined with a low value, would result in an overall low sensitivity.
- 4.6. The changes to the topographic profile would be localised and related to the construction of the road network, paths, areas of car parking, the foundations of dwellings and the creation of attenuation features.
- 4.7. However, once the Proposed Development is constructed the existing topography of the Site could still be experienced to some degree within the areas of public open space. The overall magnitude of change to the ground profile of the Site would be low. With a low sensitivity and a low magnitude of change, the overall effect on the topography would be minor adverse.

Trees and Hedgerows

- 4.8. The Arboricultural Survey sets out a detailed assessment of the condition of trees and hedgerows within and adjoining the site.
- 4.9. The perimeter of the western parcel is bound by mature native hedgerows, largely continuous in character and typically 2–2.5m high, located along Cross Road to the West and the A464 to the South. The hedgerow planting along Patshull Road to the east is more fragmented in places. Occasional hedgerow trees are most notable along Patshull Road, and several isolated trees are located near the center of the Site. Internal field boundaries are low clipped

hedgerows. The eastern Site parcel is bound by mature native hedgerows, similar to the western parcel and these hedgerows are typically continuous in character and approximately 2m high as found along the A464 to the southern boundary and Newhouse Lane to the east. Field boundary hedgerows along the western edge of the western parcel follow property boundaries to dwellings off Patshull Road and are typically taller with frequent trees. A similar character of taller hedgerows with trees is present along field boundaries that define the northern boundary of the Site. The small number of internal field boundaries comprise low clipped hedgerows and there is a small copse of trees around a field pond near the centre of the eastern Site parcel and a smaller triangular shaped copse adjacent to Newhouse Lane.

- 4.10. The existing trees and tall hedgerows with trees are medium in value, as they contribute to the character of the area to some degree. Their susceptibility to changes arising from the development proposed would be high, reflecting the time this landscape element takes to mature. With a medium value and high susceptibility, the overall sensitivity of the tree and tall hedgerow resource is high. Existing clipped hedgerows are of medium value and susceptibility as their form and management is in keeping with existing field boundaries in the locality, although as lower clipped elements they take less time to mature than trees, which results in a medium sensitivity.
- 4.11. The Proposed Development would result in retention of the majority of the tree cover across the Site including trees within mature hedgerows, protected during the construction phase with measures to comply with BS: 5837 (see separate Arboricultural Survey). In order to accommodate the Proposed Development, it is likely that a single Grade B tree north of the proposed local centre (T1) would be lost. A grade B tree (T75) and section of Grade C hedgerow (H12) would be removed to accommodate the new access crossing Newhouse Lane. In order to accommodate the new roundabout junction onto Holyhead Road a section of Grade C hedgerow would be removed (H5) and part of the grade B and C groups of trees at either end of the hedgerow (G6 and G7). The high sensitivity trees lost in the context of the majority of tree cover retained, would represent a negligible magnitude of change and a negligible adverse effect. The removal of hedgerows of medium sensitivity to accommodate the Proposed Development would experience a low magnitude of change and a minor adverse effect.
- 4.12. Overall, the Proposed Development would bring about a notable increase in the quantity of trees and hedgerows within the Site (**Appendix 6: Landscape Strategy Plan**). The key areas of new planting are:
 - 10m wide belt of woodland planting along the southern and eastern edge of the Site;
 - New tree planting within a central public open space corridor that runs east to west through the Site;
 - Reinforcement of existing hedgerows along Patshull Lane and Cross Road achieved by infilling of gaps with new shrub planting and hedgerow tree planting; and
 - Proposed community green at northern end of the Site opposite the existing green space and pond with picnic table to the east of Patshull Road.
- 4.13. It is assessed that the magnitude of change upon the tree resource as a result of the new tree planting would be low. This would translate to moderate beneficial effects on the tree resource within the Site, with beneficial effects increasing over time as the trees mature further integrating the proposals into the local landscape setting.
- 4.14. Similarly, native, and ornamental hedgerows could be proposed across the Site to increase the diversity of hedgerows whilst also defining the curtilages of development parcels and

properties, reinforcing the Site's boundary vegetation, and providing habitat connectivity. On balance, the magnitude of change is likely to be low and this would translate to minor beneficial effects upon the hedgerow resource within the Site.

Water Features

- 4.15. The Site includes a number of small waterbodies and drainage ditches, which are assessed as being of high value, susceptibility, and sensitivity. The proposals have ensured that these existing features have been accommodated within the layout. The proposals would introduce sustainable drainage systems, including attenuation basins and swales within the open space areas of the Site, so there would be a net increase in these features, resulting in a low magnitude of change and overall moderate beneficial effects.

Public Rights of Way (PRoW)

- 4.16. There are no existing PRoW or public access within the Site apart from a section of public footpath at the southeastern end of the Site that connects Holyhead Road and Newhouse Lane. During the construction phase of the access road, it is predicted that there would be temporary closure or diversion of this route. The Proposed Development accommodates the route on its current alignment with a crossing of the new access road.
- 4.17. The proposals would increase the recreational opportunities across the Site with potential linkages to the existing public rights of way network beyond the Site. The notable increase in public access across the Site, including walking routes would be beneficial and available for the wider community. Effects upon the visual amenity of people using the existing PRoW in the wider landscape are assessed in Section 6 of this report.

5. Effects On Landscape Character

- 5.1. This section seeks to establish how the proposals would have a bearing on landscape character locally. The effects on landscape character consider how the introduction of new landscape elements physically alters the landform, landcover, landscape pattern, and perceptual attributes of the Site or how the visibility of the proposals changes the way in which landscape character is perceived. Landscape character is defined in GLVIA3 as the:

“Distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse.”

- 5.2. The landscape around the Site has been subject to several separate landscape character assessments, undertaken at a range of different scales, these are:

- National Character Area (NCA): 66 Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau; and
- The Shropshire Landscape Typology (2006), Landscape Character Type (LCT) 14: Sandstone Estatelands.

National Character Area

- 5.3. The Site is located within NCA 66 Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau which covers a large area from Telford in the north, across to Wolverhampton in the east and Stourport-on-Severn in the south (see **Appendix 2**).

- 5.4. Key characteristics of the NCA, relevant to the Site and study area are listed as:

- ***“Extensive sandstone plateau in the core and east of the NCA underpins an undulating landscape with tree-lined ridges; this contrasts with the irregular topography and steep, wooded gorges of the Severn Valley in the west.***
- ***Permian and Triassic sandstones erode to free-draining, slightly acid mineral soils which historically supported extensive heathland and grassland. In contrast, marls and sandstones associated with Coal Measures erode to clayey (argillic) brown earth soils.***
- ***Interlocking blocks of mixed woodland and old orchards provide a well-wooded landscape and conifer plantations combine with parklands to give an estate character.***
- ***Large, open arable fields with a weak hedgerow pattern on the plateau contrast with mixed arable and pasture land with smaller, irregular shaped fields bounded by hedgerows with hedgerow oaks in the west.***
- ***Characteristic lowland heathland associated with acid grassland and woodland supports nationally important populations of flora and fauna, notably butterflies including the pearl-bordered fritillary.***
- ***Traditional buildings constructed of brick vary in colour. The local Kidderminster and Bromsgrove Sandstone features extensively. Its characteristic red colouration provides local distinctiveness to many towns and villages and estate boundary walls.***
- ***Important manmade features include the Roman road Watling Street, the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal, the M54 and the railway line that***

links the urban areas of Birmingham and the Black Country in the east with Shrewsbury in the neighbouring NCA in the west."

- 5.5. Landscape opportunities listed for the NCA which are considered relevant to the proposals include:

"Protect from further loss and degradation all semi-natural habitats, particularly the most important characteristic types, for example heathland, hedgerows and hedgerow trees, woodland, neutral and acid grassland by working in collaboration with farmers, planners, and developers."

Ensure that new developments and the maintenance of old buildings maintain the vernacular; manage small-scale extraction of local building stone for this purpose."

- 5.6. The overall key characteristics and description of the NCA reveal a relatively well settled landscape with varied landform as a result of the underlying geology. This document is inevitably a high-level character assessment, which provides a useful overview by which to understand the character of the local and wider landscape and its surroundings.
- 5.7. The NCA, on the whole, is considered to have a medium susceptibility, which when combined with a medium value, results in a medium sensitivity. The magnitude of change is assessed as negligible across the NCA beyond the Site. The proposal would be in keeping with the character of the existing settlement. Whilst the document describes the NCA as being relatively rural in places there are obviously variations across the area, with the Site considered to relate more closely to the settlement edge both functionally and visually, than the wider landscape across the NCA which includes areas of woodland and lowland heath and is heavily influenced by its underlying geology, reflected in the topographical variations across the NCA.
- 5.8. The boundary of NCA 61: Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain passes to the north of the Site, through the settlement of Albrighton. NCA 61 is described as comprising ***"most of the county of Cheshire, the northern half of Shropshire and a large part of north-west Staffordshire. This is an expanse of flat or gently undulating, lush, pastoral farmland..."***

The Shropshire Landscape Typology (2006)

- 5.9. The Shropshire Landscape Typology (September 2006) locates the Site within LCT 14: Sandstone Estatelands (**Figure 3: Landscape Character Plan**).
- 5.10. Extracts of the character area descriptions are included at **Appendix 3**, with the key characteristics for the LCT 14: Sandstone Estatelands listed as:
- ***"Arable landuse***
 - ***Regular field patterns***
 - ***Parkland with associated country houses***
 - ***Clustered settlement pattern***
 - ***Medium – large scale, open landscapes"***
- 5.11. A description for LCT 14 is set out as:

"Located on the eastern side of the county, and extending into Staffordshire and Worcestershire, these are gently rolling, open landscapes formed over Permo Triassic

sandstones. Historically, the light, sandy brown soils supported extensive areas of heathland but are utilised for intensive arable and, in some areas, mixed farming. As a consequence of successive phases of agricultural improvements, plant species associated with heathland and acid grassland are now largely confined to hedgerows and roadside verges. Parklands of various sizes, with their associated country houses, occur throughout these landscapes. They frequently contain veteran trees and provide significant focal points of tree cover more generally. Beyond these areas, the tree cover comprises thinly scattered field and hedgerow trees, together with occasional blocks of planted woodland, some of which may have ancient origins.

The settlement pattern principally consists of villages and hamlets, together with a scatter of large estate farms. During the Middle Ages arable agriculture was constrained by the light soils. Open fields existed around the villages, separated by expansive areas of heathland and 'waste' (common rough pasture) that provided ample rough grazing for sheep and other livestock. They would also have provided cover for game, and a number of the parklands within this type were originally established as deer parks. Enclosure of the open fields around the villages had largely been completed by the 17th century, and the extent of the heathlands progressively reduced by a gradual process of informal enclosure.

The 18th and 19th centuries saw the establishment of new parks, and the expansion of existing ones, most of which were transformed through formal landscaping schemes into the designed landscapes we see today. Between the mid 18th and later 19th centuries landowners also invested considerable sums into the agricultural improvement of their wider estates. Consequently, this period also saw the formal enclosure of most of the remaining areas of open heathland, the construction of new farms in the open countryside, and the laying out of straight new roads. In some places earlier, more irregular field systems were also reorganised. These changes often produced a pattern of regular fields defined by straight hedgerows. The growing popularity of fox hunting in the early 19th century led many landowners to establish plantations to provide cover for their quarry. During the later 20th century these landscapes have undergone a period of rapid change. Mechanisation and agricultural subsidies have favoured the intensive arable regime evident today, creating the current pattern of the enlarged fields and open vistas."

(underlined – our added emphasis)

5.12. The LCT 15: Timbered Plateau Farmlands is located within the eastern part of the study area (see **Figure 3**). Key characteristics for LCT 15 are listed as:

- *"Upstanding plateau with rolling relief, dissected by valleys*
- *Linear ancient woodlands in valleys and dingles*
- *Mixed farming landuse*
- *Ancient pattern of irregular hedged fields*
- *Medium scale landscape"*

5.13. The description for LCT 15 states:

"This landscape type occurs widely in the Shropshire Hills and is mainly associated with sedimentary Ordovician rocks and Devonian Old Red Sandstones, with one outlier on the Carboniferous limestone of the Oswestry Hills. The upstanding, rolling topography increases the visual prominence of the hedgerows and woods, and creates

a range of different vistas; from open views on plateau tops to framed views within the valleys. The woodlands essentially have an ancient semi-natural character, although much has been replanted. They vary in size, with wooded stream valleys being particularly characteristic of this landscape type. Additional tree cover is provided by scattered hedgerow trees. Farming tends to be mixed, with pasture – sometimes of unimproved character – dominant where the terrain is more difficult.

The settlement pattern consists primarily of dispersed farms, wayside cottages, and hamlets, although small villages are present in some areas creating a more clustered pattern. The Timbered Plateau Farmlands have a varied history of development. Small open fields existed around many of the hamlets and villages in the Middle Ages, which in most cases had been enclosed through piecemeal agreements by the beginning of the 17th century. A particularly good example of such a field system can be seen around Clee St Margaret, on the western slopes of the Brown Clees. Much of the land beyond the open fields was enclosed directly from woodland or ‘waste’ (common rough pasture) in the medieval period, creating an organic pattern of hedged fields, winding lanes, and scattered farmsteads. Examples include the area around Hope, southwest of Minsterley, and the area to the east of Alveley, on the eastern bank of the Severn. Expanses of rough pasture and woodland appear to have persisted into the early modern period at higher elevations and along some watersheds. In these areas, the creation of smallholdings between the 17th and 19th centuries means that wayside cottages are more frequent, whilst 18th and 19th-century enclosure of the remaining commons has created a more regular field pattern.”

(underlined – our added emphasis)

- 5.14. At the southern edge of the study area LCT Sandstone Estatelands, and Landscape character sub-types Estatelands and Parkland are identified in the Staffordshire Planning for Landscape Change (2001) report (see **Figure 3**). These areas do not overlap the SZTV (see **Figure 5**) within the study area where there is public access and consequently there is no potential for any indirect effects on landscape character. Consequently, the LCT Sandstone Estatelands and associated Landscape Character Sub-types are scoped out of further consideration.

Shropshire Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Study (2018)

- 5.15. The Shropshire Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Study (2018) assessed the landscape around the settlements identified for growth. The study looks at landscape character and visual amenity and identifies how sensitive each parcel is to change caused by housing and employment development. The study identifies four parcels around Albrighton, with the Site being in parcel O7ALB-C, or Albrighton C (see **Appendix 4**).
- 5.16. Under the section relating to location and character the text states that: ***“Parcel C is located on the south side of Albrighton and extends from RAF Cosford in the west towards Kingswood Common in the east. The landscape is characterised by arable and pastoral fields with a large network of roads, ranging from the A464 to local roads crisscrossing across the parcel, as well as PRow. The boundary to the west is RAF Cosford and further boundaries comprise of mainly local roads or field boundaries. This landscape is a typically rural with both open views and areas that are more enclosed.”***
- 5.17. Under the heading of Landscape Value, the text states that, ***“This is a rural landscape of moderate strength and condition, with relatively good historic value derived from the grade II and II* listed buildings, within Boningale and several Tree Preservation Orders, particularly in the north east corner of the parcel. There are two different Conservation***

Areas within this parcel, one extends from Albrighton itself, around Albrighton Hall and the other is the small village of Boningale to the south of the parcel. The Cross Britain Way, a long distance walk, runs through the north west of the parcel for a short section and into Albrighton, also connecting to Monarchs Way. David Austin Roses garden centre is a promoted visitor attraction with recreational amenities that adds to the recreational value of the parcel. There are no particularly strong features within the parcel, however the landscape makes an important contribution to the enjoyment of the area."

- 5.18. Under the heading of Landscape Susceptibility, the text states that *"This is an unvaried landscape of regular and irregular, small to medium scale arable and pastoral fields. To the west arable fields are large, reducing in size becoming and becoming more arable to the east, with robust hedgerows that define the rural character. The parkland setting of Albrighton Hall on the outskirts of the settlement and two Conservation Areas would be vulnerable to change as a result of any development. A small employment area comprised of large sheds is located to the centre of the parcel and would not be particularly susceptible to additional development. The landform is relatively flat to gently rolling contributing to a medium sense of place that strengthens towards the Conservation Areas. There is a low sense of tranquility due to the high number of roads that run through the parcel. Grade II listed properties within the Conservation Area of Boningale and other residential receptors throughout the parcel would be susceptible to noticeable changes to cultural pattern."*
- 5.19. The heading of Landscape Sensitivity, the text states that, *"The character of the parcel is stronger around Albrighton Hall and its Conservation Area and Boningale Conservation Area. However, as a large proportion of the parcel is of typical rural character and there is a large network of roads running throughout the parcel, overall the sensitivity of the landscape to change arising from new housing is medium..."*
- 5.20. Under the heading of Visual Value, the text states that, *"Views within this parcel have some association with the Shropshire Hills AONB, particularly from Green Lane, however the parcel itself does not take in the special qualities of the AONB. There are views towards RAF Cosford airfield to the west and views in and out of Albrighton Hall Conservation Area and Boningale Conservation Area. The landscape is intact with the main detracting elements being the road network, main line railway, structures within RAF Cosford and large sheds, either associated with employment or agricultural uses. A windmill which is now a property is a visual feature within the landscape."*
- 5.21. Under the heading of Visual Susceptibility, the text states that, *"Views within the parcel are open and contained with hedgerows and hedgerow trees screening or filtering some views in and out. Green Lane is on a high point affording are more open views east and west to the AONB across the parcel. Development on this area of high ground would be particularly noticeable in the view. There are open views on the western boundary through to Parcel B where aircraft hangers are visible. There is also intervisibility with Parcel A in the south west corner and between the parcel and Parcel D in the north east corner. The parcel itself does not form a skyline. Views north out of Boningale Conservation Area into the parcel are relatively well screened due to woodland within the village, roadside hedgerows and hedgerow trees. However, views south east from the Conservation Area are relatively open and longer reaching and would be particularly vulnerable to noticeable change in the view. There is a constant level of access due to the road network with the residential receptors and users of the PRoW within the parcel typically of high susceptibility to change in the surroundings."*
- 5.22. Under the heading of Visual Sensitivity, the text states that, *"Although there are views in and out of the two Conservation Areas and towards the AONB, this affects a small proportion of the parcel and views elsewhere are typical. Detractors, such as the roads*

and the views towards RAF Cosford reduce the sensitivity. Therefore, the views experienced are of a Medium sensitivity to change arising from new housing."

Assessment of the Landscape Character of the Site

- 5.23. The Site is currently comprised of arable crops with a single small field of grassland, with both landcovers common in the locality, beyond the settlement limits. The Site and the surrounding landscape are not covered by any statutory or non-statutory landscape designations. For that reason, the Site falls at the lower spectrum of the landscape value continuum, representing an area of pleasant but unremarkable settlement edge landscape.
- 5.24. The character of this landscape and the Site is not of such value that it has warranted a national or local landscape designation, and the landscape is therefore not of high value in the context of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Paragraph 180(a).
- 5.25. Paragraph 180 notes that the planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by **"...(a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes..."** in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the Development Plan with 180 b) stating: **"recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services (...) and of trees and woodland..."**. This is further clarified in Paragraph 181 of the NPPF, which states: **"Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites..."** therefore, clearly establishing the principle of hierarchy between designated and non-designated countryside. This is further reinforced by the Planning Practice Guidance (its section 'Natural Environment') which puts more emphasis on protected landscapes such as National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs). The Site clearly falls at the lower end of the spectrum, with the local landscape not being designated and not identified in the Local Plan as a non-statutory landscape designation or any Policy that would indicate its special or unique character, or value, in landscape character terms. The Site should therefore be considered against Paragraph 180 b) alone.
- 5.26. The following paragraphs analyse the Site's landscape character, based on an on-Site assessment. By doing so this LVIA aims to identify the landscape value and landscape susceptibility to residential developments. The analysis has had regard to Box 5.1 of the GLVIA3, and Technical Guidance Note O2/21 prepared by the Landscape Institute.
- 5.27. The GLVIA3 clearly identifies a hierarchy of valued landscapes when discussing the level of importance which they signify. It clearly states that the value decreases from internationally valued landscapes such as World Heritage Sites to nationally valued landscapes such as National Parks and AONBs, to locally valued landscapes: **"...locally valued landscapes, for example, local authority landscape designations or, where these do not exist, landscapes assessed as being of equivalent value using clearly stated and recognised criteria..."** The Site and the surrounding landscape do not fall under any of the above categories. On that basis, the value of the Site landscape is assessed as medium.
- 5.28. Apart from a short section of public footpath between Holyhead Road and Newhouse Lane, there are no PRoW within the Site, and beyond the Site there is a low density of PRoW (see **Figure 2**). In terms of its recreational value, the Site is privately owned. The gently sloping topographical profile of the surrounding landscape combined with tree cover restricts opportunities to experience views towards the Site. Views across the wider landscape are frequently characterised by a combination of wooded horizons with elements of built form including residential development also visible in the majority of views.
- 5.29. The Site does not contain any landscape features that would be considered rare or unique, noting that areas of woodland are located beyond the Site's boundaries.

- 5.30. The Site's relationship with the suburban setting of Albrighton and the associated buildings on its arterial roads such as the Enterprise Business Park and traffic on the adjacent roads diminishes its scenic quality to some degree. The general condition of the Site is fair, noting that from a review of the historic mapping for the area (dated 1888) there has been a significant amount of hedgerow removal across both parcels of the Site, reflecting the impact of 20th century arable cultivation with mechanisation favouring larger fields. The characteristics of the Site are largely typical of the key characteristics identified for LCT 14: Sandstone Estatelands, with the exception of the presence of parkland.
- 5.31. The Site does not contain, or adjoin, any designated heritage or nature conservation assets, noting the Site is separated from the Boningale Conservation Area to the south by the A464. The Site is not covered by any landscape conservation designations that would relate to ecology or biodiversity and any localised value restricted to its peripheral and internal field boundary vegetation. There are also no known cultural associations with the Site or its local setting that have been recorded in notable works of literature or art.
- 5.32. The levels of tranquillity and the perceptual aspects associated with the Site are influenced by the Site's proximity to the A464 Holyhead Road, Cross Road, Patshull Road, and Newhouse Lane. The noise from passing traffic forms a backdrop whilst walking the PRoW routes in the locality. The Site and the immediate landscape context were not noted as being highly tranquil or for having particularly remote qualities during the Site visit.
- 5.33. Based on the above analysis the value of the Site is assessed as medium and the susceptibility of the Site is assessed as medium; resulting in a medium overall sensitivity. This assessment aligns with the assessment of the wider parcel contained within the Shropshire Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Study.

Effect on the Landscape Character of the Site and immediate context

- 5.34. The immediate landscape context is defined as the landscape between the Site and the residential edge of Albrighton to the north, between the Site and the A464 corridor to the south, between the Site and intermittent development along Cross Lane to the west, and between the Site and scattered development along Newhouse Lane to the east, extending further east to include the open fields crossed by two local public rights of way connecting the A464 and Newhouse Lane.
- 5.35. As part of the proposals, the retained vegetation and proposed trees, hedgerows and ornamental planting would be actively managed to create a pleasant and welcoming environment for residents and visitors. The new green infrastructure, and in particular the woodland belts along the southern and eastern edges of the Site, would over time aid in embedding the proposals in the wider landscape as well as further restricting visibility of new built development in the limited views available from the wider landscape to the south and southeast.
- 5.36. The planting strategy for the Site includes native species of local provenance as well as ornamental species for visual interest and focal planting. The proposed woodland planting around the Site would over time start to replicate the existing vegetation within the Site's wider setting.
- 5.37. The overall layout has been designed to broadly replicate the layout and form of the existing residential areas within Albrighton, in order that they form one cohesive area of residential development within which the developments interrelate with one another including the safeguarded land and potential development Sites between the existing village edge and the Site. The additional planting proposed as part of the development would not only aid in

creating a pleasant and welcoming environment for residents and visitors, but the areas of open space will also provide recreational opportunities for residents within the Site.

- 5.38. The magnitude of change within the Site, changing from open fields to a housing estate, albeit in within a well-considered outline layout that provides notable green infrastructure enhancement, results in a high magnitude of change and a major adverse effect upon baseline landscape character. It is also relevant to consider the effects of the Proposed Development upon the wider landscape character beyond the Site and the immediate context.

Effect on the Landscape Character of the wider countryside

- 5.39. Beyond the Site, there would be no changes to any of the key characteristics listed in the Shropshire Landscape Typology. Beyond the immediate vicinity of the Site, the opportunity to perceive indirect perceptual effects upon landscape character resulting from new street lighting or increased traffic movements, would be negligible. The effects upon visual amenity and longer-range views are set out in the following section 6 of the LVIA below.

6. Effects On Visual Amenity

Zone of Theoretical Visibility

- 6.1. The **Screened Zone of Theoretical Visibility (SZTV)** – **Figure 5** has modelled a maximum built development envelope of 2.5 storeys (12.3m high) within the Proposed Development cells on the Site. The SZTV model does not account for existing hedgerow vegetation or tree cover beyond woodland blocks, and consequently the resulting plan provides an exaggerated depiction of likely visibility that requires review in the field. It should also be considered that most of the land covered by the SZTV is private farmland, whilst the LVIA is necessarily focussed on publicly accessible locations including public roads, public rights of way and settlement edges.

Baseline Visual Context

- 6.2. The SZTV has been used to inform the selection of representative public viewpoints from all directions and distances from the Site with an emphasis on higher sensitivity receptors including settlement edges and public rights of way (see **Viewpoint Location Plan – Figure 6**). A series of annotated photoviews from Viewpoints 1–20 are included at **Figure 7**.
- 6.3. Residential views have been assessed as part of the settlement edge where public access is available, however an individual assessment of the impact upon the views of all individual scattered dwellings with potential views of the Proposed Development does not form part of the scope of this assessment. It should be noted that it is an established planning principle that there is 'no private right to a view', and consequently if suitable privacy distances between existing properties and Proposed Development are maintained, the impact upon any private views of new built development should not be a valid consideration in the determination of the planning application.

Views from the north

- 6.4. The SZTV indicates that views of the proposals to the north may be available from the southern built-up edge of Albrighton and a selection of representative views are illustrated by **Viewpoint 1** (Cross Road at the junction with Patshull Road), **Viewpoint 2** (Cross Road), and **Viewpoint 3** (western end of Cross Road) where breaks in the hedgerows that define the Site boundary allow views across the Site. Elsewhere along Cross Road following the northwestern boundary of the Site, views of the ground level of the Site are largely screened by tall, clipped roadside hedgerows.
- 6.5. Further north of the Site, the undulating landform gently rises to a local ridgeline, where views towards the Site are theoretically available, but in reality, are screened by tall hedgerows along Green Lane, reinforced by intervening field boundary planting north of Cross Road. At the local highpoint from **Viewpoint 4** (Windmill Lane), views from the Cross Britain long distance footpath are fully restricted by intervening planting, even in winter. At the northern end of Newhouse Lane, views towards the Site are screened by hedgerows along the route and intervening planting. The tall hedgerow along the northern Site boundary is visible at **Viewpoint 5** from the public footpath on slightly elevated land south of Albrighton Primary School.

Views from the east

- 6.6. Views from Patshull Road that passes between the two parcels of the Site are typically restricted to the east by a combination of hedgerows and fencing close to Patshull Road, within the gardens of residential properties that are located as intermittent ribbon

development to the east of Patshull Road. Views to the west are also frequently restricted by hedgerow planting, however for a section of approximately 200m of the route, the field boundary of the Site is marked by remnant hedgerow sections and intermittent trees, allowing views across the Site (**Viewpoint 6**).

- 6.7. Close range views of the southern end of the Site and the proposed road corridor beyond Newhouse Lane are available from public rights of way crossing arable fields (**Viewpoints 7 and 8**). Views from the A464 further to the southeast are indicated by the SZTV, however where the route passes through the settlement of Boningale, buildings and planting close to the route typically restrict views. Approaching the junction with Church Lane, approximately 400m southeast of the Site there are less restricted views towards the southern end of the Site (**Viewpoint 9**), delineated by hedgerows along Newhouse Lane. Further east, the undulating landform gently rises and views towards the Site are available from the public rights of way network north of Boningale (**Viewpoint 10**). South of Boningale the landform rises more steeply (see **Figure 4 – Topography plan**), although opportunities for clear views towards the Site from publicly accessible locations are limited. There are restricted views from a short section of a public footpath west of Lower Pepperhill (**Viewpoint 11**), and views over 2km west of Site from the bridleway north of Wrottesley Lodge Farm, in the neighbouring county of Staffordshire (**Viewpoint 12**).

Views from the south

- 6.8. The southern boundary of the Site follows the A464 Holyhead Road corridor and there are fleeting views of the Site above a low clipped field boundary hedgerow for road users travelling in both directions (**Viewpoints 13 and 14**). Scattered dwellings adjacent to the Site are partially screened by garden planting.
- 6.9. Directly south of the A464, a clipped hedgerow with trees defines the northern edge of the Boningale conservation area. Further south within the historic core of the settlement, views from Church Lane towards the Site are typically fully restricted by tall hedgerows and intervening tree cover with limited glimpses towards the southern boundary available (**Viewpoint 15**). Further west at the junction of Church Lane and Patshull Road, roadside hedgerows provide an almost continuous screen with rare glimpses towards the Site available over field gates (**Viewpoint 16**). Views from private dwellings within Boningale are predicted to predominantly comprise occasional upper floor views filtered by intervening tree cover.
- 6.10. West of Boningale, the heavily treed grounds of Lea Hall and Lea House, beyond the Site boundary restrict views of the wider landscape from the A464. West of Lea House, the Site boundary is defined by the field boundary hedgerow along the northern edge of the A464 which is continuous in nature, preventing views of the ground level of the Site. At **Viewpoint 17**, opposite the entrance to Lea Farm, a break in the hedgerow at a field access point allows fleeting views across the Site towards the H.L Smith depot, north of the Site on Cross Road.
- 6.11. South of the A464, the land gently falls away and opportunities for publicly accessible views towards the Site are limited, as the area is devoid of public rights of way and the rural lanes are typically bordered by continuous mature hedgerows. At **Viewpoint 18**, on Rushey Lane there is a view through a field access close to the Shropshire Lodge that sits in the northwest corner of the Patshull Registered Park and Garden (RPG), noting that elsewhere mature woodland cover within the RPG prevents the opportunity for views towards the Site.

Views from the west

- 6.12. Views towards the Site for road users travelling from Whitton Cross and further to the northwest, are initially prevented by a local ridgeline, along which Green Lane and Burnhill Green Road pass (see **Figure 4**). Direct views from the A464 towards the Site are narrow, by

virtue of the roadside hedgerows. The Albrighton Feeds store and parking area that are situated directly west of the Site are clearly visible from the road corridor, both from the A464 and in oblique views from the southern end of Green Lane where there is a short break in the roadside hedgerow (**Viewpoint 19**). Views of the Site are limited by planting along Cross Road and within the curtilages of properties and the H.L Smith depot.

- 6.13. Potential views towards the Site from the local ridgeline to the southwest along Burnhill Green Lane are typically fully screened by roadside hedgerows. A fleeting glimpse is available for several meters of the route where the hedge is gappy (**Viewpoint 20**), although the majority of the Site is screened by intervening tree cover.

Visual Receptor Assessment

- 6.14. Based on the **SZTV (Figure 5)**, the field assessment, and the **Annotated Photoviews 1-20 (Figure 7)** indicated on the **Viewpoint Location Plan (Figure 6)**, the following receptors have been identified where public views of the Proposed Development would be available.
- 6.15. **Table 1** below sets out the assessment of receptor sensitivity in accordance with the **Detailed Methodology** at **Appendix 1**.

Table 1: Visual Receptor Sensitivity

Receptor	Viewpoints	Value	Susceptibility to change	Sensitivity
Settlement				
Albrighton	1, 2	Medium	High	High
Boningale (Church Lane)	15, 16	High	High	High
Public rights of way				
Cross Britain Way	4	Medium	High	High
Public Footpath O102/9/1	5	Medium	High	High
Public footpaths O111/4/1 and O111/3/1	7 & 8	Medium	High	High
Public Footpath O1111/1/1	10	Medium	High	High

Receptor	Viewpoints	Value	Susceptibility to change	Sensitivity
Public Footpath 0111/13/1 and Public Bridleway Perton 19	11 & 12	Medium	High	High
Highways				
A464 Holyhead Road	9, 13, 14, 17	Medium	Low	Medium
Patshull Road	6, 16	Medium	Medium	Medium
Cross Road	3	Medium	Medium	Medium
Newhouse Lane	7 & 13	Medium	Medium	Medium
Rushey Lane	18	Medium	Medium	Medium
Green Lane	19	Medium	Medium	Medium
Burnhill Green Road	20	Medium	Medium	Medium

- 6.16. Based on the Detailed Methodology at **Appendix 1** and with reference to the annotated visualisations (**Figure 7**) and field survey, **Table 2** below, sets out the assessment of the visual effects at Year 1 and Year 15 following construction. The assessment is based on the Layout Plan at **Appendix 5**, with the Year 15 assessment factoring in the growth of mitigation planting as illustrated on the Landscape Strategy Plan in **Appendix 6**.

Table 2: Operational Effects on Views from Visual Receptor Groups

Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Overall Effect
Settlement			
Albrighton (Viewpoints 1 & 2)	High	Year 1: Ground level views of the Proposed Development from the southern edge of Albrighton would be typically fully screened by offsite vegetation. The residential buildings set back into the Site would be visible at Viewpoint 1 beyond a new community open space at the northern end of the Site. At viewpoint 2 there may be glimpses of the roofscape of new development from very limited locations set beyond the safeguarded land that is likely to be developed for future housing. The overall magnitude of change would be low accounting for the limited geographical area of the settlement edge where views of the new buildings would be available.	Year 1: Moderate adverse
		Year 15: The growth of tree and hedgerow planting associated with the new community green space at the northern end of the Site would provide landscape enhancement, with the growth of planting reducing the proportion of the new built development visible. The overall magnitude of change would remain low relative to the baseline.	Year 15: Moderate adverse
Boningale (Church Lane) (Viewpoints 15 and 16)	High	Year 1: Ground level views towards the Site would be extremely localised and restricted to a single narrow view along the minor road connecting to the A464 (Viewpoint 15) and over a single field gate (Viewpoint 16) with the majority of the Proposed Development from Boningale fully screened by intervening existing planting, even in winter. The overall magnitude of change would be negligible.	Year 1: Negligible adverse
		Year 15: The growth of the woodland planting belt along the southern boundary and additional tree and shrub planting within the public open space would largely screen any glimpses of new residential development on the Site. The overall magnitude of change would remain negligible relative to the baseline.	Year 15: Negligible adverse

Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Overall Effect
Public rights of way			
Cross Britain Way (Viewpoint 4)	High	Year 1: Views from the majority of this long-distance footpath route would be fully screened by the intervening local ridgeline. At Viewpoint 4, the high point on the route, views towards the Site are fully screened by mature hedgerows along Green Lane reinforced by existing planting beyond. The overall magnitude of change would be no change.	Year 1: No effect
		Year 15: There would be no change to baseline views.	Year 15: No effect
Public Footpath 0102/9/1 (Viewpoint 5)	High	Year 1: There would be intermittent views of new residential development and the buildings on the school Site (the latter being set behind the potential development land outside the Site). The proposed buildings on the Site would be set behind and between intervening mature trees and hedgerows. The changes would be experienced in the context of existing scattered residential development of a low density along Newhouse Lane and Patshull Road. The overall magnitude of change would be low.	Year 1: Moderate adverse
		Year 15: The proposed reinforcement of existing field boundaries and a new woodland planting belt to the edge of the Site along Newhouse Lane would reduce the visibility of new built development over time. The overall magnitude of change would be negligible.	Year 15: Negligible adverse
Public footpaths 0111/4/1 and 0111/3/1 (Viewpoints 7&8)	High	Year 1: The upper floors and roofscape of the proposed residential development would be clearly visible above the existing hedgerow along Newhouse Lane. Users of public footpath 0111/4/1 would cross the new access road c.50m east of Newhouse Lane. The overall magnitude of change would be medium.	Year 1: Major adverse
		Year 15: The growth of the proposed woodland belts would largely screen views of the new built development, although the outline of the roofscape is likely to be perceptible in winter. The new access road would remain visible from a section of public footpath 0111/4/1, most apparent where the route crosses the highway.	Year 15: Moderate adverse

Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Overall Effect
		The overall magnitude of change, accounting for the growth of the planting would be low relative to the baseline.	
Public Footpath 0111/1/1 (Viewpoint 10)	High	Year 1: The upper floors and roofscape of the proposed residential development would be visible obliquely from the route, set above the existing hedgerow along Newhouse Lane and against a backdrop of existing vegetation on the horizon. Movement of vehicles on the new access road would be perceptible. The overall magnitude of change would be low.	Year 1: Moderate adverse
		Year 15: The growth of the proposed woodland belts would largely screen views of the new built development and the access road, although the outline of the roofscape could be perceptible in places in winter. The overall magnitude of change would be negligible relative to the baseline.	Year 15: Minor adverse
Public Footpath 0111/13/1 and Public Bridleway Perton 19 (Viewpoints 11 & 12)	High	Year 1: The proposed built development and vehicles on the new access road would be barely perceptible from localised sections of both routes due to intervening distance (1.4km to 2km+ from the Site). Frequent layers of intervening vegetation lie in front of the Proposed Development at the southern end of the eastern parcel of the Site. Glimpses of new built development would be set well below the horizon against a backdrop of existing planting. Consequently, the proposals would form a very small component of the views. The overall magnitude of change would be negligible.	Year 1: Negligible adverse
		Year 15: The growth of the proposed woodland belt along the southeastern edge of the Site and new access road would further reduce visibility of the built development. The overall magnitude of change would be negligible relative to the baseline to account for potential limited glimpses of the proposals in winter.	Year 15: Negligible adverse
Highways			
A464 Holyhead Road	Medium	Year 1: There are currently fleeting open views across the Site where the route follows the southern boundary for approximately 200m along the eastern parcel (Viewpoints 13 and 14). Views of the western parcel are more limited.	Year 1: Moderate adverse

Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Overall Effect
(Viewpoints, 9, 13, 14, 17)		where a tall hedge typically screens views of the ground within the Site and views of the land within the Site are restricted to field access points (Viewpoint 17). At the eastern parcel, new built development would be set approximately 150m from the road corridor behind new planting and public open space. At the western parcel the change would be most apparent from the new roundabout junction and approaches to it, where the existing hedgerow would be removed and new residential development would be clearly visible, set behind new planting. Given the relatively fleeting nature of views, as part of a longer journey, the overall magnitude is assessed to be medium.	
		Year 15: The growth of the proposed woodland belts and groups of tree planting along the southern boundary of the Site would substantially reduce views of the built development. The overall magnitude of change would be low relative to the baseline, noting that views of new built development would be most apparent from a relatively short section of the A464 on the approaches to the new roundabout junction, and even at this location views of built form would be restricted by the growth of the aforementioned planting.	Year 15: Minor adverse
Patshull Road (Viewpoints 6, & 16)	Medium	Year 1: At the northern end of Patshull Road (Viewpoint 6) new residential development would front onto a new internal access road replacing intermittent baseline views of an open field and scattered built development along Cross Road. Views across the Site from the northern end of Patshull Road, are however more typically prevented by an existing mature hedgerow and trees. An overall medium magnitude of change is assessed as experienced from the northern end of Patshull Road. Views south of the A464 (Viewpoint 16) and the section of Patshull Road north of the A464 where the route is bordered by existing buildings and gardens with notable tree cover, road users would experience limited changes to their views.	Year 1: Moderate adverse

Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Overall Effect
		Year 15: The growth of new infill hedgerow and tree planting would further reduce the proportion of built development visible and help integrate the proposals within the wider landscape context. An overall low magnitude of change for the route is predicted.	Year 15: Minor adverse
Cross Road (Viewpoint 3)	Medium	Year 1: At the southwestern end of Cross Road there is a c.30m long gap in the hedge that allows views across the Site (Viewpoint 3). Elsewhere along Cross Road, views of the Site are currently typically restricted by tall hedgerows. The proposal to create a new access junction into the Site and new footway along the northern c.250m of Cross Road would result in the removal of the existing hedgerow and views of new built development in the context of existing built development on the opposite side of the carriageway. An overall medium magnitude of change is predicted, noting the most noticeable and sustained changes to views would be perceived from the northern end of the route, in the context of existing residential development.	Year 1: Moderate adverse
		Year 15: The growth of the new replacement hedgerow planting set behind the new footway at the northern end of Cross Road and infill planting and a woodland belt at the southwestern end of Cross Road would help integrate the proposals within the wider landscape context although new built development, particularly upper stories, would be visible most notably at the new junction and northern end of the road opposite the existing built development. An overall low magnitude of change for the route is predicted.	Year 15: Minor adverse
Newhouse Lane (Viewpoints 7 & 13)	Medium	Year 1: The single-track lane is bounded by hedgerows and very narrow verges; hence the selected viewpoints necessarily illustrate representative views from a wide road verge of the A464 near the junction with Newhouse Lane (Viewpoint 13) and a public footpath a short distance to the east of Newhouse Lane (Viewpoint 7). From the central and southern parts of the lane itself there would be views of the upper parts of the proposed residential development set above the retained sections of the roadside hedgerow, in the context of	Year 1: Moderate adverse

Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Overall Effect
		existing ribbon development along the eastern side of the lane. There would be clear views into the Site at the new access road junction. The overall magnitude of change from the route is considered to be Medium.	
		Year 15: The growth of the woodland belt and tree planting within the Site would reduce the proportion of built development visible and would help integrate the proposals within the wider landscape context. An overall low magnitude of change is predicted.	Year 15: Minor adverse
Rushey Lane (Viewpoint 18)	Medium	Year 1: The single-track lane is bounded by hedgerows with very few opportunities for oblique views north towards the Site. At viewpoint 18 there is a >10 metre gap in the hedgerow at a field access. Ribbon development along the A464 is barely discernible at over 1.5km away and the Proposed Development would be seen behind this development along the skyline noting the proposed roundabout junction would be set behind existing dwellings and planting. Given the extremely fleeting visibility at a single location along the route views in the direction of the Site are likely to be missed by most road users and consequently the magnitude of change is assessed as negligible.	Year 1: Negligible adverse
		Year 15: The growth of the proposed woodland belt along the southern boundary of the Site would further reduce visibility of the built development. The overall magnitude of change would be reduced but would remain at a negligible level, and in winter it is predicted that barely discernible glimpses of the upper parts of the built development may be available.	Year 15: Negligible adverse
Green Lane (Viewpoint 19)	Medium	Year 1: At the southern end of Green Lane (Viewpoint 19) there is a c.30m long gap in the hedge that allows fleeting and oblique views towards the Site. Elsewhere along Green Lane, views towards the Site are typically restricted by the roadside hedgerow. At Viewpoint 19, the Site is partially visible in the context of the closer Albrighton Feeds store, the H.L Smith depot and other scattered development along the A464, south of the Site. There would be partial and fleeting views of the proposed	Year 1: Minor adverse

Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Overall Effect
		residential development set in the context of the existing scattered development. This would represent a low magnitude of change for the overall journey along Green Lane.	
		Year 15: The growth of infill hedgerow planting with a woodland belt set behind along the northern edge of the Site boundary, adjacent to Cross Road would reduce the proportion of new built development visible at Viewpoint 19, noting that elsewhere along Green Lane views of the proposals would remain fully restricted. An overall negligible magnitude of change is predicted.	Year 15: Negligible adverse
Burnhill Green Road (Viewpoint 20)	Medium	Year 1: Approximately 400m south of the junction with the A464, there is a c.10m long gap in the roadside hedgerow of Burnhill Green Road where fleeting glimpses towards the Site are possible (Viewpoint 20). Elsewhere along Burnhill Green Road, views towards the Site are typically restricted by the roadside hedgerow. At Viewpoint 20, the Wayside Guest House, and an evergreen conifer hedge screen views of the southwestern end of the Site. There would be very fleeting and oblique views of the proposed residential development beyond the A464 with the new highway junction likely largely screened by intervening planting and the Wayside Guest House. Views of Proposed Development on the remainder of the Site would be predominantly restricted by multiple layers of intervening tree cover. This would represent a low magnitude of change, accounting for the very fleeting nature of the view available.	Year 1: Minor adverse
		Year 15: The growth of the mitigation planting, including woodland belt, along the southern Site boundary, would slightly reduce the proportion of new built development visible at Viewpoint 20, noting that elsewhere along Burnhill Green Roads, views of the proposals would remain fully restricted. An overall negligible magnitude of change is predicted.	Year 15: Negligible adverse

Summary of Visual Effects

6.17. Based on the Detailed Methodology at **Appendix 1** and with reference to the annotated photoviews (**Figure 7**) and field survey, **Table 3** below sets out a summary of the visual effects at Year 1 and Year 15 following construction. The assessment is based on the Indicative Framework Plan at **Appendix 5**, with the Year 15 assessment factoring in the growth of mitigation planting as illustrated on the Illustrative Landscape Masterplan in **Appendix 6**.

Table 3: Summary of Effects upon Visual Receptor Groups

Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Overall Effect
Settlement			
Albrighton (Viewpoints 1 & 2)	High	Year 1: Low	Year 1: Moderate adverse
		Year 15: Low	Year 15: Moderate adverse
Boningale (Church Lane) (Viewpoints 15 and 16)	High	Year 1: Negligible	Year 1: Negligible adverse
		Year 15: Negligible	Year 15: Negligible adverse
Public rights of way			
Cross Britain Way (Viewpoint 4)	High	Year 1: No change.	Year 1: No effect
		Year 15: No change	Year 15: No effect
Public Footpath O102/9/1 (Viewpoint 5)	High	Year 1: Low	Year 1: Moderate adverse
		Year 15: Negligible.	Year 15: Negligible adverse
Public footpaths O111/4/1 and O111/3/1 (Viewpoints 7&8)	High	Year 1: Medium.	Year 1: Major adverse
		Year 15: Low	Year 15: Moderate adverse
Public Footpath O1111/1/1 (Viewpoint 10)	High	Year 1: Low	Year 1: Moderate adverse
		Year 15: Negligible	Year 15: Minor adverse
Public Footpath O1111/13/1 and Public Bridleway Perton 19 (Viewpoints 11 & 12)	High	Year 1: Negligible	Year 1: Negligible adverse
		Year 15: Negligible	Year 15: Negligible adverse

Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Overall Effect
Highways			
A464 Holyhead Road (Viewpoints, 9, 13, 14, 17)	Medium	Year 1: Medium	Year 1: Moderate adverse
		Year 15: Low	Year 15: Minor adverse
Patshull Road (Viewpoints 6, & 16)	Medium	Year 1: Medium	Year 1: Moderate adverse
		Year 15: Low	Year 15: Minor adverse
Cross Road (Viewpoint 3)	Medium	Year 1: Medium	Year 1: Moderate adverse
		Year 15: Low	Year 15: Minor adverse
Newhouse Lane (Viewpoints 7 & 13)	Medium	Year 1: Medium	Year 1: Moderate adverse
		Year 15: Low	Year 15: Minor adverse
Rushey Lane (Viewpoint 18)	Medium	Year 1: Negligible	Year 1: Negligible adverse
		Year 15: Negligible	Year 15: Negligible adverse
Green Lane (Viewpoint 19)	Medium	Year 1: Low	Year 1: Minor adverse
		Year 15: Negligible.	Year 15: Negligible adverse
Burnhill Green Road (Viewpoint 20)	Medium	Year 1: Low	Year 1: Minor adverse
		Year 15: Negligible	Year 15: Negligible adverse

7. Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework

- 7.1. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a material consideration in planning decisions and any development would need to accord with the following planning provisions. At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out at Paragraph 11. The NPPF sets out overarching objectives to achieve sustainable development: economic, social, and environmental. For decision-taking, a development that accords with a current development plan should be approved without delay; and, where the development plan is absent, silent, or relevant policies are out of date, permission should be granted 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 impact of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole."

- 7.2. Footnote 7 outlines the protected areas or assets of particular importance to the NPPF policies (rather than those in development plans) which relate to:

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

- 7.3. The Site and its immediate setting do not lie within any area designated for its landscape value. At Paragraph 8, criterion 'c' describes the 'environmental objective' to ***"protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy"***.

- 7.4. The Site is located in Green Belt and the policy back-ground and how the proposals would impact upon the openness and the purposes of the Green Belt is covered in a separate report by Pegasus Group. Consequently, no further reference to Green Belt policy is included in this section of the LVIA to avoid duplication.

- 7.5. Paragraph 20 refers to strategic policies that should make sufficient provision for the conservation and enhancement of the natural, built, and historic environment, including landscapes, and green infrastructure and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation. Paragraph 135 relates to achieving well-designed places, criterion 'b' requires developments to be ***"visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping"***. Criterion 'c' also sets out to ensure that developments ***"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)"***.

- 7.6. Para. 136 describes how trees make an **"important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments, and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change."** It states how **"new streets [should be] tree-lined"**, and **"that opportunities area taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments (such as parks and community orchards), that appropriate measures are in place to secure the long-term maintenance of newly-planted trees, and that existing trees are retained wherever possible"**. In respect to this matter, it is important to note that this is a recent addition to the NPPF and whilst this is an outline planning application, the requirements for tree-lined streets have been considered at this stage and seek to ensure that this can be provided within the outline scheme parameters.
- 7.7. Section 15: Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment specifies how planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. Paragraph 180a states that protection and enhancement of **"valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils"** should be **"in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan"**. It also notes that the **"intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services"** should be recognised.
- 7.8. Paragraph 181 makes it clear that there is a hierarchy to the importance and value attributed to landscapes, and that the development plan should identify the quality of particular landscapes that are not subject to statutory protection. Para. 182 describes how the **"scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas"**.
- 7.9. Within Section 16: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment, Paragraph 196 states how local authorities should take into account amongst other things, **"the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness"**.

Shropshire Local Development Framework (LDF)

- 7.10. The two key documents which make up the Shropshire Local Development Framework (LDF) are, Core Strategy DPD – adopted 24 February 2011 and, Site Allocations and Management of Development Adopted Plan – adopted 17 December 2015.
- 7.11. All other relevant planning policies and the emerging policies are covered in the separate Planning Statement that accompanies the planning application.

Core Strategy

- 7.12. The Core Strategy locates the Site and the settlements of Albrighton, Shifnal, Telford, Broseley and Bridgnorth within the East Spatial Zone, under the category of landscape character the text states that the **"River Severn flows through the east zone with sloping valley sides. The surrounding land constitutes mixed farming use, planned woodland and country houses with associated parklands."**
- 7.13. The policies within the Core Strategy which are of relevance to this development include:
- Core Strategy Policy 6: Sustainable Design and Development Principles
 - Core Strategy Policy 17: Environmental Networks
 - Core Strategy Policy 18: Sustainable Water Management

7.14. The CS6 policy text states that:

“To create sustainable places, development will be designed to a high quality using sustainable design principles, to achieve an inclusive and accessible environment which respects and enhances local distinctiveness and which mitigates and adapts to climate change. This will be achieved by:

- ***Requiring all development proposals, including changes to existing buildings, to achieve applicable national standards, or for water use, evidence based local standards as reflected in the minimum criteria set out in the sustainability checklist. This will ensure that sustainable design and construction principles are incorporated within new development, and that resource and energy efficiency and renewable energy generation are adequately addressed and improved where possible. The checklist will be developed as part of a Sustainable Design SPD;***
- ***Requiring proposals likely to generate significant levels of traffic to be located in accessible locations where opportunities for walking, cycling and use of public transport can be maximised and the need for car based travel to be reduced;***

And ensuring that all development:

- ***Is designed to be adaptable, safe and accessible to all, to respond to the challenge of climate change and, in relation to housing, adapt to changing lifestyle needs over the lifetime of the development in accordance with the objectives of Policy CS11;***
- ***Protects, restores, conserves and enhances the natural, built and historic environment and is appropriate in scale, density, pattern and design taking into account the local context and character, and those features which contribute to local character, having regard to national and local design guidance, landscape character assessments and ecological strategies where appropriate;***
- ***Contributes to the health and wellbeing of communities, including safeguarding residential and local amenity and the achievement of local standards for the provision and quality of open space, sport and recreational facilities.***
- ***Is designed to a high quality, consistent with national good practice standards, including appropriate landscaping and car parking provision and taking account of site characteristics such as land stability and ground contamination;***
- ***Makes the most effective use of land and safeguards natural resources including high quality agricultural land, geology, minerals, air, soil and water;***
- ***Ensures that there is capacity and availability of infrastructure to serve any new development in accordance with the objectives of Policy CS8.***

Proposals resulting in the loss of existing facilities, services or amenities will be resisted unless provision is made for equivalent or improved provision, or it can be

clearly demonstrated that the existing facility, service or amenity is not viable over the long term."

- 7.15. The explanatory text goes on to state that, "new developments are designed in order to adapt to the effects of climate change, so that they remain safe throughout their lifetime despite changing conditions. Consideration should therefore be given to appropriate siting, orientation, landscaping, and design of development, to account for flood levels, surface water run-off, dispersal or migration routes for wildlife, passive heating, natural shade and cooling and maximising energy efficiency."
- 7.16. The explanatory text goes on mention that trees and woodlands are important landscape, wildlife and cultural assets, and notes that are a large quantity of Tree Preservation Orders within Shropshire. It goes on to state that development should be sensitive to, protect and enhance trees and woodlands as valued features.
- 7.17. With regards to open space, the text acknowledge that new developments can make a positive contribution to the level of open spaces in towns and villages, and the connecting links between open spaces.
- 7.18. High quality design is noted as being expected in all new developments, to ensure that the development is appropriate to its setting and surroundings to ensure that the local character is reflected.

Core Strategy Policy 17: Environmental Networks

- 7.19. The CS17 policy text states that:

"Development will identify, protect, enhance, expand and connect Shropshire's environmental assets, to create a multifunctional network of natural and historic resources. This will be achieved by ensuring that all development:

- ***Protects and enhances the diversity, high quality and local character of Shropshire's natural, built and historic environment, and does not adversely affect the visual, ecological, geological, heritage or recreational values and functions of these assets, their immediate surroundings or their connecting corridors;***
- ***Contributes to local distinctiveness, having regard to the quality of Shropshire's environment, including landscape, biodiversity and heritage assets, such as the Shropshire Hills AONB, the Meres and Mosses and the World Heritage Sites at Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal and Ironbridge Gorge;***
- ***Does not have a significant adverse impact on Shropshire's environmental assets and does not create barriers or sever links between dependant sites;***
- ***Secures financial contributions, in accordance with Policies CS8 and CS9, towards the creation of new, and improvement to existing, environmental sites and corridors, the removal of barriers between sites, and provision for long term management and maintenance. Sites and corridors are identified in the LDF evidence base and will be regularly monitored and updated."***

- 7.20. The explanatory text for Policy CS17 notes that environmental networks can provide multifunctional benefits including for informal recreation for communities and tourists, alongside multiple other benefits, whilst also helping to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change.

- 7.21. The text goes on to note that new development should take account of features which generate local distinctiveness and that evidence from various studies including the Landscape Character Assessment, Historic Landscape Characterisation and Urban Characterisation Assessment should be used ensure proposals contribute towards enhancing the identified assets and therefore make a positive contribution to the environment.

Core Strategy Policy 18: Sustainable Water Management

- 7.22. The CS18 policy text states that:

“Developments will integrate measures for sustainable water management to reduce flood risk, avoid an adverse impact on water quality and quantity within Shropshire, including groundwater resources, and provide opportunities to enhance biodiversity, health and recreation, by ensuring that:

- ***Planning applications and allocations in the Site Allocations and Management of Development (SAMDev) DPD, are in accordance with the tests contained in PPS25, and have regard to the SFRA for Shropshire;***
- ***New development is designed to be safe, considering the lifetime of the development, and the need to adapt to climate change. Proposals should have regard to the design guidance provided in the SFRA for Shropshire;***
- ***All development within local surface water drainage areas, as identified by the Water Cycle Study, and any major development proposals, demonstrate that surface water will be managed in a sustainable and coordinated way. Proposals will be supported by either a Surface Water Management Statement or Plan, depending on the scale of the development;***
- ***All developments, including changes to existing buildings, include appropriate sustainable drainage systems (SUDS) to manage surface water. All developments should aim to achieve a reduction in the existing runoff rate, but must not result in an increase in runoff;***
- ***New development improves drainage by opening up existing culverts where appropriate;***
- ***Proposals within areas of infrastructure capacity constraint, as identified by the Water Cycle Study and the Implementation Plan, and any major development, demonstrates that there is adequate water infrastructure in place to serve the development;***
- ***New development enhances and protects water quality, including Shropshire’s groundwater resources;***
- ***New development, including changes to existing buildings, incorporate water efficiency measures, in accordance with the sustainability checklist in Policy CS6, to meet the water efficiency objectives within the Shropshire Water Cycle Study to protect water resources and reduce pressure on wastewater treatment infrastructure.”***

- 7.23. The explanatory text which accompanies the policy states that the effective management of water is important in the development of sustainable communities as it helps to enhance local amenity value and biodiversity through the provision of green space, given as one of

several reasons. It goes on to note that the use of sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) should be used to help manage surface water run-off.

Shropshire Council Site Allocations and Management of Development (SAMDev) Plan

7.24. The policies within the SAMDev Plan which are of relevance to this development include:

- Development Management Policy MD2: Sustainable Design
- Development Management Policy MD6: Green Belt
- Development Management Policy MD12: The Natural Environment

Policy MD2 Sustainable Design

7.25. The policy text states that,

“Further to Policy CS6, for a development proposal to be considered acceptable, it is required to:

1. Respond positively to local design aspirations, wherever possible, both in terms of visual appearance and how a place functions, as set out in Community Led Plans, Town or Village Design Statements, Neighbourhood Plans and Place Plans.

2. Contribute to and respect locally distinctive or valued character and existing amenity value by: i. Responding appropriately to the form and layout of existing development and the way it functions, including mixture of uses, streetscape, building heights and lines, scale, density, plot sizes and local patterns of movement; and ii. Reflecting locally characteristic architectural design and details, such as building materials, form, colour and texture of detailing, taking account of their scale and proportion; and iii. Protecting, conserving and enhancing the historic context and character of heritage assets, their significance and setting, in accordance with MD13; and iv. Enhancing, incorporating or recreating natural assets in accordance with MD12.

3. Embrace opportunities for contemporary design solutions, which take reference from and reinforce distinctive local characteristics to create a positive sense of place, but avoid reproducing these characteristics in an incoherent and detrimental style.

4. Incorporate Sustainable Drainage techniques, in accordance with Policy CS18, as an integral part of design and apply the requirements of the SuDS handbook as set out in the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy.

5. Consider design of landscaping and open space holistically as part of the whole development to provide safe, useable and well-connected outdoor spaces which respond to and reinforce the character and context within which it is set, in accordance with Policy CS17 and MD12 and MD13, including.

i. Natural and semi-natural features, such as, trees, hedges, woodlands, ponds, wetlands, and watercourses, as well as existing landscape character, geological and heritage assets and;

ii. providing adequate open space of at least 30sqm per person that meets local needs in terms of function and quality and contributes to wider policy objectives such as surface water drainage and the provision and enhancement of semi natural landscape features. For developments of 20 dwellings or more, this should comprise an area of functional recreational

space for play, recreation, formal or informal uses including semi-natural open space;

iii. where an adverse effect on the integrity of an internationally designated wildlife site due to recreational impacts has been identified, particular consideration will be given to the need for semi-natural open space, using 30sqm per person as a starting point. iv. ensuring that ongoing needs for access to manage open space have been provided and arrangements are in place for it to be adequately maintained in perpetuity.

6. Ensure development demonstrates there is sufficient existing infrastructure capacity, in accordance with MD8, and should wherever possible actively seek opportunities to help alleviate infrastructure constraints, as identified with the Place Plans, through appropriate design. 7. Demonstrate how good standards of sustainable design and construction have been employed as required by Core Strategy Policy CS6 and the Sustainable Design SPD.

- 7.26. The explanatory text for the policy states that Policy MD2 builds on Policy CS6 of the Core Strategy, providing additional detail on how sustainable design will be achieved, as high-quality sustainable design is a key planning objective.
- 7.27. The text goes on to state that the localised planning approach for Shropshire recognises that each place has its own visual, built and nature characteristics which provides a local sense of identity; and understanding this local context and the constraints and opportunities is an important design process for new development to ensure that it maintains and enhances a locations sense of place and positively responds to design aspirations.
- 7.28. With regards to local character and distinctiveness the text goes on to note that development should not have a detrimental impact on existing amenity value but respond appropriately to the context in which it is set, should respect the existing pattern of development, retain and enhance important views and landmarks, and respond appropriately to local environmental and historic assets.

Development Management Policy MD12: The Natural Environment

- 7.29. The policy text states that:

“In accordance with Policies CS6, CS17 and through applying the guidance in the Natural Environment SPD, the avoidance of harm to Shropshire’s natural assets and their conservation, enhancement and restoration will be achieved by:

 - 1. Requiring a project-level Habitats Regulations Assessment for all proposals where the Local Planning Authority identifies a likely significant effect on an internationally designated site. Permission will be refused where a HRA indicates an adverse effect on the integrity of a designated site which cannot be avoided or fully mitigated. Where mitigation can remove an adverse effect, including that identified by the HRA for the Plan or the Minerals HRA, measures will be required in accordance with; CS6, CS8, CS9, CS17, CS18, MD2; remedial actions identified in the management plan for the designated site and the priorities in the Place Plans, where appropriate.***
 - 2. Ensuring that proposals which are likely to have a significant adverse effect, directly, indirectly or cumulatively, on any of the following:***
 - i. the special qualities of the Shropshire Hills AONB;***
 - ii. locally designated biodiversity and geological sites;***

iii. priority species;

iv. priority habitats;

v. important woodlands, trees and hedges;

vi. ecological networks

vii. geological assets;

viii. visual amenity;

ix. landscape character and local distinctiveness. will only be permitted if it can be clearly demonstrated that:

a) there is no satisfactory alternative means of avoiding such impacts through re-design or by re-locating on an alternative site and;

b) the social or economic benefits of the proposal outweigh the harm to the asset. In all cases, a hierarchy of mitigation then compensation measures will be sought.

3. Encouraging development which appropriately conserves, enhances, connects, restores or recreates natural assets, particularly where this improves the extent or value of those assets which are recognised as being in poor condition.

4. Supporting proposals which contribute positively to the special characteristics and local distinctiveness of an area, particularly in the Shropshire Hills AONB, Nature Improvement Areas, Priority Areas for Action or areas and sites where development affects biodiversity or geodiversity interests at a landscape scale, including across administrative boundaries."

7.30. The explanatory text notes that the policy text sets out in details the level of protection assigned to Shropshire's natural assets, it then goes on to define that natural assets include, **"biodiversity and geological features; trees, woodlands and hedges in both rural and urban settings"** and that the way these assets combine to create locally distinctive and valued landscapes, and the contribution all the aforementioned assets make to visual amenity is also a consideration.

7.31. The text then goes on to state that principles behind MD12 follow the hierarchy of:

"i. avoid loss or damage;

ii. where the public benefits of the development clearly outweigh the value of any assets affected, provide adequate mitigation measures for any full or partial harm or loss;

iii. as a last resort, where neither avoidance nor mitigation is reasonably possible, provide adequate compensation measures."

7.32. Under the heading of natural assets trees, hedgerows and woodlands are mentioned as integral and significant features in Shropshire's landscape and townscapes, the text goes on to note that their conservation and proper management is an essential factor in maintaining local distinctiveness; and that important trees, woodland and hedgerows Both those with and without legal protection) are significant in terms of their **"...amenity, cultural, biodiversity, landscape, heritage, financial or ecosystem service values, or which make a significant contribution to the character of a building, a settlement or the setting thereof."**

- 7.33. Visual amenity is noted as being “**...a measure of visual quality of the site or areas as experienced by residents, workers of visitors**”, and goes on to state that visual amenity is strongly related to landscape character, although noting that the two are not the same.
- 7.34. Under the heading of deriving benefits from development, the text states that development has a positive role to play in not only conserving natural assets but in enhancing, restoring, re-creating, and connecting them.

West Midlands Design Charter (2020)

- 7.35. The West Midlands Design Charter is intended to promote, inspire, and encourage great design initiatives and delivery high quality place-making across the region.
- 7.36. The Design Charter sets out 12 principles under six themes, the principles relevant to this Green Infrastructure Strategy are set out below:
- Principle 1: Regional Ambition. Developers will be expected to produce unique, innovative proposals that are grounded in a sound understanding of the local context and acknowledge the diversity of the West Midlands’ communities and geography.
 - Principle 2: Local Distinctiveness. New development should respond to the qualities that characterise the locality’s ‘spirit of place’ for residents, businesses, and visitors. Schemes should contribute to the creative and cultural identity of the local environment and benefit local communities.
 - Principle 3: Regional Network. New development must contribute to enhancing regional connectivity by integrating effectively to existing and planned transport networks, thinking beyond both site and administrative boundaries.
 - Principle 4: Modal Shift. Proposals should demonstrate an understanding of the changing face of transport and movement patterns across the West Midlands; promoting walking, cycling and public transport use.
 - Principle 5: Climate Resilience. Developments should incorporate climate adaptation measures that respond to the short and long term impacts of climate change and address the environmental impact of the proposal across its lifecycle.
 - Principle 6: Delivering Low Carbon Development. Development proposals should seek to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by making clear, specific commitments to carbon reduction. The potential for new schemes to meet zero net carbon should be considered from the outset.
 - Principle 8: Building Active Communities. Development proposals should support healthy living environments and address health inequalities by providing access to nature and spaces for physical activity.
 - Principle 9: Promoting Wellbeing. New development should promote wellbeing and good mental health by fostering community, identifying opportunities to reduce social isolation and minimise loneliness.
 - Principle 10: Engagement. Consultation should reflect local social, economic, and geographic diversity and enable key stakeholders to shape design solutions from an early stage.
 - Principle 11: Stewardship. Public spaces and facilities should be designed to encourage long term civic pride in local places. Developers must give early consideration to

management and stewardship of places and put long term sustainable solutions in place.

- Principle 12: Securing Social Value. WMCA expects developers to promote social value throughout the development process and will seek to align all housing and regeneration investment decisions with its inclusive growth objectives through its Single Commissioning Framework.

7.37. The publication of this Design Charter illustrates the imperative for high quality design of new development. Proper planning for Green Infrastructure will be a significant contributing factor in achieving all of the above principles.

7.38. This Green Infrastructure Strategy identifies some of the specific opportunities to deliver the principles of the Design Charter.

Natural Environment Supplementary Planning Document (Scoping Draft, July 2014)

7.39. The SPD will form part of the Shropshire Local Development Framework and builds upon the national planning policy and expands on policies concerning landscape, biodiversity and trees in the Core Strategy adopted in March 2011 and the Site Allocation and Management of Development Plan 2014, this SPD provides additional details on how these policies will be interpreted and implemented.

8. Summary and Conclusions

- 8.1. A LVIA was prepared following best practice guidance, to establish the landscape and visual effects predicted from the proposed mixed-use development on a 47.29ha Site on the southern edge of Albrighton, Shropshire.
- 8.2. The Site is predominantly cultivated for arable crops and comprises two main parcels. The western Site parcel is broadly triangular and bounded by Cross Road to the northwest, Patshull Road to the east and the A464 Holyhead Road to the south. The eastern Site parcel is located between Patshull Road and New House Lane. 'Safeguarded Land' for potential future development lies between the existing edge of Albrighton and the northern boundary of the eastern Site parcel.
- 8.3. There is little variation in landform across the Site, with the height of the land sitting between approximately 90-100m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD).
- 8.4. Field boundaries of the Site are typically defined as low clipped hedgerows which are gappy in places, with occasional mature hedgerow trees. Other notable planting present on the Site includes several small woodland copses and mature trees around field ponds.
- 8.5. The entire Site is currently maintained as private farmland and there is currently no formal authorised access to the Site such as designated Public Rights of Way (PRoW) apart from a public footpath which crosses the proposed access road corridor at the southeast corner of the Site. Beyond the Site, several PRoW provide access across the wider landscape with bridleways and footpaths being the most prevalent type.
- 8.6. Land use beyond settlement boundaries is predominantly agricultural and formed of a mix of larger-scale geometric arable fields and smaller-scale more organically shaped fields used for pastoral farming.
- 8.7. The Illustrative Landscape Masterplan and Environmental Enhancement Strategy includes several new landscape features comprising woodland belts to the southern and eastern boundaries of the Site, a community orchard, wildflower meadows, sustainable drainage systems and tree planting with public open space.
- 8.8. Several additional proposals have the potential to be integrated within the public open space including educational, play and fitness opportunities e.g., Forest School, a trim trail, a Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP), informal play opportunities and public art throughout the Site.
- 8.9. The iterative design of the scheme has been landscape and heritage led and has considered opportunities within the green infrastructure network for planting that, once established, has the potential to minimise the visibility of built elements from the surrounding area.
- 8.10. The assessment concludes that there would be a major adverse effect on landcover from the loss of arable farmland and a minor adverse effect upon topography where the landform would be largely retained at existing levels. Very few existing trees would be lost, and localised sections of hedgerows would be removed to accommodate pedestrian and vehicular access. They would be a notable quantity of new tree planting comprising belts of native woodland planting, a community orchard and tree lined streets with further tree planting along the perimeter of the Site. There would be a moderate beneficial effect upon the baseline tree resource and the potential for minor beneficial effects upon hedgerows.
- 8.11. In terms of public rights of way, there would be a notable increase in public access across the Site including walking routes (and trim trail) within the public open space and pedestrian links to the proposed play area, local centre, and potential connections to the wider existing

public rights of way network. A section of public footpath at the eastern end of the Site that connects Holyhead Road and Newhouse Lane would be retained on its current alignment with a crossing of the new access road.

- 8.12. The baseline landscape character has been considered with reference to National Character Area 66 and the Shropshire Landscape Typology (2006) that identifies the Site as lying within the 'Sandstone Estatelands' Landscape Character Type (LCT). The Shropshire Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Study (2018) assessed the landscape around settlements identified for growth. The Site falls within one of the four parcels that are located on the edge of Albrighton and concludes the parcel has a medium landscape and visual sensitivity to new housing.
- 8.13. The magnitude of landscape character change within the Site, considers the replacement of the open fields that form the baseline with a new mixed-use development dominated by housing estate, including significant areas of public open space and beneficial changes to landscape elements including new tree and hedgerow planting. It is assessed that there would be a high magnitude of change and a major adverse effect upon the baseline landscape character of the Site.
- 8.14. Beyond the Site, there would be no change to any of the listed key characteristics of the 'Sandstone Estatelands' LCT, Beyond the immediate vicinity of the Site, the opportunity to perceive indirect perceptual effects upon landscape character from lighting or increased traffic movements would be negligible.
- 8.15. A computer-generated Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) has been used to inform the selection of representative public viewpoints from all directions and distances from the Site, with an emphasis on high sensitivity receptors including settlement edges and public rights of way.
- 8.16. It is an established planning principle that there is 'no private right to a view', and consequently if suitable privacy distances between existing properties and Proposed Development are maintained, any private views of new built development should not be a valid consideration in the determination of the planning application.
- 8.17. The Site has a localised visual envelope due to surrounding hedgerow cover, landform characteristics and the relatively limited number of publicly accessible locations where views towards the Site are available.
- 8.18. The visual impact assessment concludes there would be moderate adverse effects as a result of the proposals from the southern edge of Albrighton in a localised area near the junction of Cross Road and Patshull Road. A negligible adverse visual effect is predicted from the settlement of Boningale where existing tree cover restricts views from the settlement separated from the village by the A464 Holyhead Road corridor.
- 8.19. In terms of public rights of way, major effects upon visual amenity are predicted at Year 1 from public footpaths O111/4/1 and O111/3/1 at the southeastern part of Site that includes the new access road, reducing to a moderate adverse effect by year 15 following the growth of the proposed woodland planting. Moderate effects upon visual amenity are predicted further from the Site at Year 1 from public footpaths O102/9/1 and to the northeast and from public footpath O111/1/1 which following the growth of mitigation planting would reduce to negligible and minor adverse effects respectively. The visual amenity of other public rights of way users would be typically unaffected or users would experience negligible effects. No views of the proposals are predicted from the promoted Cross Britain Way long distance footpath route.
- 8.20. The visual impact upon road users close to the Site, including localised sections of the A464 Holyhead Road, Patshull Road, Cross Road, and Newhouse Lane would be Moderate adverse

at Year 1, typically reducing to a minor adverse level by Year 15 following the growth of mitigation planting. Views from minor roads in the wider landscape including Green Lane, Rushey Lane, and Burnhill Green Road are typically flanked by tall hedgerows that limit views to the surrounding countryside, including the Site. Minor adverse effects are predicted from localised sections of these routes, reducing to negligible effects at Year 15 following the growth of mitigation planting.

- 8.21. A review of the NPPF and the Shropshire Local Development Framework indicates that the Proposed Development has the potential to comply with the relevant landscape planning policies. This has been achieved by the adoption of a landscape and heritage led approach to the indicative development layout that has minimised adverse effects upon visual amenity and existing landscape features. Furthermore, the proposals would respect the surrounding landscape context and relationship to the existing village edge. The Illustrative Landscape Masterplan and Environmental Enhancement Strategy illustrates the potential landscape benefits of the scheme. Proposed features include a community orchard, public open space, a play area, informal play opportunities and a trim trail. The potential establishment of a Forest School area utilising the different landscape habitats on Site could also provide an educational resource.

Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

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