

WOOLFOX GARDEN VILLAGE, RUTLAND

SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL (SA) LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (LVIA)

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been prepared in support of the Sustainability Assessment (SA) for the proposed Woolfox Garden Village, Rutland. This LVIA considers the effects on landscape elements, character and visual amenity and provides a comparison of effects in relation to the other proposed garden village at St Georges Barracks, Edith Weston also being promoted through the emerging Local Plan.
- 1.2 The Concept Masterplan for Woolfox Garden Village shows that the promoters intend to deliver 2500 homes, employment land, secondary and primary schools, highways and green infrastructure within the Local Plan period up to 2036 under Phase 1. The remaining 7500 homes could be delivered beyond the Local Plan period post 2036 under Phase 2 to reach a total future housing provision of 10,000 homes.
- 1.3 The proposals would be designed to meet the assessment criteria of the Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government's (MHCLG) published garden community's prospectus to facilitate government support for future infrastructure provision. The promoters have previously submitted a position statement and vision document to describe the site in terms of landscape, cultural heritage, ecology, transport, design principles, green infrastructure and deliverability. This LVIA has been undertaken as an appendix to the SA in response to a request for further information from RCC.
- 1.4 This LVIA has been undertaken in accordance with the industry standards and best practice within the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition (GLVIA3) which 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

- 1.5 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

¹ Paragraph 1.1, Page 4, GLVIA 3rd Edition

stages in terms of the scale of investigation that is appropriate and proportional.”²

1.6 GLVIA3 also recognises 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

1.7 This LVIA has been undertaken by a landscape consultant or a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute (CMLI) and should be read in conjunction with the Woolfox Garden Village Position Statement and Vision Document (September 2018), other sections of the SA, and the detailed methodology provided on Appendix 1.

² Paragraph 1.17, Page 9, GLVIA 3rd Edition

³ Paragraph 2.23, Page 21, GLVIA 3rd Edition

2. WOOLFOX GARDEN VILLAGE PROPOSALS

2.1 The proposed development at Woolfox Garden Village would include the delivery of 2500 homes, 27 ha of employment land, secondary and primary schools, new highway junctions on the A1, and green infrastructure within the Local Plan period up to 2036 under Phase 1. The remaining 7500 homes could be delivered beyond the Local Plan period post 2036 reaching a total of 10,000 homes under Phase 2. The Concept Masterplan is shown on Figure 2 with the proposed phasing plan shown on Figure 3.

2.2 This LVIA has identified a number of opportunities and constraints within the site and its surroundings. The proposals intend to create a multi-functional, holistic environment which has been informed by the existing landscape elements, character and visual amenity. The proposals offer a number of opportunities in terms of land use, planning policy, landscape character, topography, watercourses, vegetation, public rights of way and green infrastructure. The Concept Masterplan would be designed in accordance with garden city principles to utilise the area of previously developed land within the former RAF Woolfox airfield with potential sustainable transport connections to the A1 highway.

2.3 Key opportunities and constraints have been identified as follows:

- Utilising an area of previously development land within the former RAF Woolfox airfield with historically removed field boundary hedgerows, enclosures and arable farmland during WWII;
- Location of the 2500 homes, employment land, secondary and primary schools, highways and green infrastructure under Phase 1 within the remnants of the airfield including disused concrete runways, hardstandings, perimeter tracks and ancillary buildings interspersed with arable farmland;
- Location of employment land immediately adjacent to the existing commercial buildings within Woolfox Depot and close to the A1 highway junctions for enhanced sustainable transport connections;
- Location of the remaining 7500 homes under Phase 2 within the gently undulating areas of arable farmland to the north which are physically and visually enclosed by Osbonall Wood, Clipsham Quarry, Big Pits Wood, Woolfox Wood and Greetham Wood Far;
- Retention and enhancement of the existing PROW network within green corridors including bridleway E163 passing through the centre, the Rutland Round trail E135 to the east, and bridleway E165 adjoining the golf course to the south east of the site;

- Retention and enhancement of the sloping areas of land to the north Osbonall Wood and Bidwell Farm within proposed parkland to protect the character, appearance and setting of Clipsham village to the north east and Stretton to the north west of the site;
- Provision of a central linear highway and green infrastructure corridor aligned along the former airfield runway to form a vista through the new settlement;
- Creation of a variety of public open spaces to include formal sports, play areas, allotments, trim trails, amenity space, ecological habitats, semi-natural greenspaces and SUDS attenuation;
- Creation of a number of woodland corridors, notably between Woolfox Wood, the Coppice and Hardwick Wood to enclose the Phase 1 development, and between Greetham Wood Far, Osbonall Wood and Bidwell Farm to enclose the Phase 2 development. The woodland corridors would be multi-functional to provide recreational, ecology and visual screening benefits; and
- The proposals would be designed in accordance with garden city principles to respect and compliment the character and appearance of the locality and to create a sense of place and distinctiveness within the garden village.

3. LANDSCAPE PLANNING POLICY

3.1 The relevant landscape planning policies are contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019), the RCC Core Strategy (Adopted July 2011), the Site Allocations and Policies DPD (adopted October 2014) and the consultation draft Local Plan 2016 - 2036 (July 2017).

National Planning Policy Framework

3.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019) sets out the governments planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. NPPF paragraph 10 advises that:

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

3.3 Section 12, Achieving well-designed places, paragraph 127 on page 38 states that:

“Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

...b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;

c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);

d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit; and

e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks.”

3.4 Section 15, Conserving and enhancing the natural environment, paragraph 170 on page 49 states that:

“Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);

b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and

other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;

d) minimising impacts and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;

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

- 3.5 Section 15, Conserving and enhancing the natural environment, paragraph 171 on page 49 states that:

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

- 3.6 The site is not located within any statutory or non-statutory landscape designations therefore is of lower importance within the hierarchy of designations. The southern area of the site is considered partly despoiled with the remnants of the former airfield including the disused concrete runways, hardstandings, perimeter tracks and ancillary buildings interspersed with the arable farmland. The northern area of the site was previously located within an Area of Particularly Attractive Countryside (APAC) as a non-statutory Local Plan designation within the now superseded Rutland Local Plan (2001). The APAC has not been carried forward into the emerging Local Plan.

Rutland Local Plan Development Framework Core Strategy (Adopted July 2011)

- 3.7 The relevant landscape policies from the adopted Rutland Core Strategy (July 2011) includes Policy CS19 Promoting Good Design which states that:

"All new development will be expected to contribute positively to local distinctiveness and sense of place, being appropriate and sympathetic to its setting in terms of scale, height, density, layout, appearance, materials, and its relationship to adjoining buildings and landscape features, and shall not cause unacceptable effects by reason of visual intrusion, overlooking, shading, noise, light pollution or other adverse impact on local character and amenities.

All new developments will be expected to meet high standards of design that:

a) are sympathetic and make a positive contribution towards the unique character of Rutland's towns, villages and countryside..."

3.8 Policy CS21 Natural Environment states that:

"Development should be appropriate to the landscape character type within which it is situated and contribute to its conservation, enhancement or restoration, or the creation of appropriate new features.

The quality and diversity of the natural environment of Rutland will be conserved and enhanced. Conditions for biodiversity will be maintained and improved and important geodiversity assets will be protected.

Protected sites and species will be afforded the highest level of protection with priority also given to local aims and targets for the natural environment. All developments, projects and activities will be expected to:

a) Provide an appropriate level of protection to legally protected sites and species;

b) Maintain and where appropriate enhance conditions for priority habitats and species identified in the Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Biodiversity Action Plan;

c) Maintain and where appropriate enhance recognised geodiversity assets;

d) Maintain and where appropriate enhance other sites, features, species or networks of ecological interest and provide for appropriate management of these;

e) Maximise opportunities for the restoration, enhancement and connection of ecological or geological assets, particularly in line with the Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Biodiversity Action Plan;

f) Mitigate against any necessary impacts through appropriate habitat creation, restoration or enhancement on site or elsewhere;

g) Respect and where appropriate enhance the character of the landscape identified in the Rutland Landscape Character assessment; h) Maintain and where appropriate enhance green infrastructure. (see Policy CS23)."

3.9 Policy CS23 Green Infrastructure, Open Space, Sports and Recreational Activities states that:

"The existing green infrastructure network will be safeguarded, improved and enhanced by further provision to ensure accessible multi-functional green spaces by linking existing areas of open space. This will be achieved by:

- a) the continued development of a network of green spaces, paths and cycleways in and around the towns and villages;
- b) requiring new development to make provision for high quality and multifunctional open spaces of an appropriate size and will also provide links to the existing green infrastructure network;
- c) resisting development resulting in the loss of green infrastructure or harm to its use or enjoyment by the public. Proposals involving the loss of green infrastructure will not be supported unless there is no longer a need for the existing infrastructure or an alternative is provided to meet the local needs that is both accessible and of equal or greater quality and benefit to the community;
- d) resisting the loss of sport and recreation facilities where they are deficient and supporting the provision of additional new facilities in an equally accessible location as part of the development, particularly where this will provide a range of facilities of equal or better quality on a single site or provide facilities that may be used for a variety of purposes.”

Site Allocations and Policies DPD (adopted October 2014)

- 3.10 The relevant landscape policies from the Site Allocations and Policies DPD (adopted October 2014) includes Policy SP23 Landscape Character in the Countryside which states that:

“Proposals to develop on land in the countryside will only be permitted where the development complies with either Policy SP6 (Housing in the countryside) or Policy SP7 (Non-residential development in the countryside) and Policy SP15 (Design and amenity) and Policy SP19 (Biodiversity and geodiversity conservation).

New development in and adjoining the countryside will only be acceptable where it is designed so as to be sensitive to its landscape setting. Development will be expected to enhance the distinctive qualities of the landscape character types in which it would be situated, including the distinctive elements, features, and other spatial characteristics as identified in the Council’s current Rutland Landscape Character Assessment.

Proposals will be expected to respond to the recommended landscape objectives for the character area within which it is situated.”

Rutland Local Plan 2016 - 2036 (consultation draft July 2017)

- 3.11 The relevant landscape policies from the consultation draft Local Plan (July 2017) includes Policy RLP42 Green Infrastructure, Sport and Recreation which states that:

“The existing green infrastructure network will be safeguarded, improved and enhanced by further provision to ensure accessible multi-functional green spaces by linking existing areas of open space. This will be achieved by:

a) the development of a network of green spaces public rights of way, footways and paths and cycleways in and around the towns and villages;

b) requiring new development to make provision for high quality and multifunctional open spaces of an appropriate size and will also provide links to the existing green infrastructure network;

c) resisting development resulting in the loss of green infrastructure or harm to its use or enjoyment by the public. Proposals involving the loss of green infrastructure will not be supported unless there is no longer a need for the existing infrastructure or an alternative is provided to meet the local needs that is both accessible and of equal or greater quality and benefit to the community; and

d) resisting the loss of sport and recreation facilities where they are deficient and supporting the provision of additional new facilities in an equally accessible location as part of the development, particularly where this will provide a range of facilities of equal or better quality on a single site or provide facilities that may be used for a variety of purposes.”

3.12 Policy RLP43 Important Open Space and Frontages states that:

“Development will only be acceptable where it does not have an adverse impact on an Important Open Space and/or Important Frontage as shown on the Policies Map having regards to:

a) its intrinsic environmental value by virtue of its landform, vegetation or tree cover, or the presence of any special features such as streams, ponds, important wildlife habitats or walls;

b) its contribution to enhancing the attractiveness of the town or village setting when viewed from surrounding land, particularly the approaches to the built up area;

c) the views and/or vistas out of and within the town or village that contribute to the character and attractiveness of the settlement;

d) its peripheral or transitional open character in contributing to preserving the form and character of the settlement;

e) its contribution, possibly in conjunction with other areas, to creating the overall character and attractiveness of the settlement;

f) its contribution to the form and character of the settlement in terms of the relationship of buildings and

structures one to another, to other open spaces or natural features; and

g) its contribution to the setting of a building or group of buildings or important natural features.”

3.13 Policy RLP45 Landscape Character states that:

“Subject to meeting the spatial strategy (Policy RLP3) new development on the edge of a settlement or within open countryside will only be acceptable where it is designed so as to be sensitive to its landscape setting.

Development will be expected to enhance the distinctive qualities of the landscape character types in which it would be situated, including the distinctive elements, features, and other spatial characteristics as identified in the Council’s current Rutland Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity studies...

...Proposals will be expected to respond to the recommended landscape objectives for the character area within which it is situated.”

Compliance with Planning Policy

3.14 The proposed Woolfox Garden Village could be designed to respect the landscape elements, character and visual amenity of the site and its surroundings. The garden village would comprise a new settlement within Rutland county and would utilise the previously developed land within the former RAF Woolfox airfield with sustainable transport connections to the A1 highway. The provision of circa 2500 homes under Phase 1 and a further 7500 homes under Phase 2 would be of sufficient housing capacity to meet the criteria of the MHCLG garden community’s prospectus to facilitate government support for significant green infrastructure enhancements. The proposed Woolfox Garden Village could be designed in a manner that would not materially conflict with the relevant NPPF paragraphs 10, 127, 170, 171; Core Strategy policies CS19, CS21, CS23; Site Allocations DPD policy SP23; and Local Plan Policy RLP42, RLP43 and RLP45.

4. BASELINE CONDITIONS

- 4.1 The site occupies approximately 490 ha within the former RAF Woolfox airfield and arable farmland adjacent to the A1 highway located between Stretton to the north west, Clipsham to the north east, Pickworth to the east, Stamford to the south east, and Colsterworth to the north (Figure 1, Site Location Plan).
- 4.2 The site boundaries are physically defined by Clipsham Road to the north, Bidwell Lane, Clipsham Quarry and Pickworth Great Wood to the east, the Coppice and Hardwick Wood to the south, the A1 highway, Woolfox Depot and Greetham Wood Far to the west. The visual characteristics of the site are shown on representative views 1 -12 on Figure 9 and on the site photos on Figure 10.

Land Use

- 4.3 The Phase 1 development would generally cover the area of the former RAF Woolfox airfield and Woolfox Depot to the south of the site at close proximity to the A1 highway. The Phase 1 area exhibits a reduced perception of tranquillity with traffic passing along the A1 highway and is partly despoiled by the disused airfield including concrete runways, hardstandings, perimeter tracks and ancillary buildings interspersed with arable farmland (Figure 10, Site Photos 1, 2 and 3).
- 4.4 The Phase 2 development would generally cover the gently undulating arable farmland between Bidwell Farm, Clipsham Quarry, Osbonall Wood, Greetham Wood Far and Woolfox Wood to the north of the former RAF Woolfox airfield (Figure 10, Site Photos 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8). The sloping areas of arable farmland to the north of Bidwell Farm between Stretton and Clipsham would be retained as proposed parkland to retain the character, appearance and setting of these outlying villages to the north of the site (Figure 9, Viewpoints 1, 2 and 12).

Woodland, Hedgerows and Trees

- 4.5 Extensive areas of broadleaf and mixed coniferous woodland are located within or adjoining the site including Osbonall Wood to the north, Pickworth Great Wood to the east, Hardwick Wood to the south, and Woolfox Wood to the west of the site. These areas of woodland are designated as Ancient Woodland, Local Wildlife Sites or candidate Local Wildlife Sites. Pickworth Great Wood is also designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) from an ecology perspective (Figure 4, Environmental Designations Plan).

4.6 Historically, the hedgerow and field enclosure patterns have been extensively removed to the south of the site within the Phase 1 area through the construction of the RAF Woolfox airfield in WWII. Agricultural intensification has also resulted in the loss of hedgerows to the north of the site within the Phase 2 area. However, there are number of hedgerows and treebelts following the brook to the north of the Phase 2 area between Bidwell Farm and Clipsham Road, between the disused quarry, Big Pit Woods, the Coppice and the golf course to the south east of the site. Areas of self-colonised native trees and shrubs are found on the edges of the concrete runways, perimeter tracks and storage areas that could not be cultivated as arable farmland. A semi-mature native treebelt extends along the boundary of the A1 highway to the west of the site.

Agricultural Land Classification

4.7 The agricultural land classification (ALC) across the site is predominately grade 3 good to moderate quality land, with a small pocket of non-agricultural land near Pickworth Great Wood to the east of the site.

Topography

4.8 The Phase 1 area to the south of the site within the former airfield is located on generally flat plateau topography with limited variation between 105m AOD near the A1 highway to the west sloping to 90m AOD to the east of the airfield (Figure 10, Site Photos 1, 2 and 3).

4.9 The Phase 2 area to the north of the former airfield is more gently undulating between 107m AOD near Greetham Wood Far to the west and Bidwell Lane at 95m AOD to the east of the site (Figure 10, Site Photos 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8). The landform to the north of Bidwell Farm is more varied forming a local undulation and small valley at 85m AOD between Bidwell Farm and Clipsham Road to the north of the site (Figure 6, Topography Plan).

Watercourses

4.10 There are a relatively small number of drainage ditches, ponds, streams and brooks within the site. A small brook is located within the small valley to the north of Bidwell Farm which is located within an Environment Agency Flood Zone. A defined drainage ditch is located to the south of Osbonall Wood in addition to a dew pond at Swallow Hole within the arable farmland along bridleway E163 passing through the Phase 2 area. A drainage ditch follows the alignment of the A1 highway between

the Woolfox Depot and the access road to Hardwick Farm and Rutland County Golf Club to the west of the Phase 1 area.

Public Rights of Way

- 4.11 There are a number of public rights of way located within or at close proximity to the site. Bridleway E163 crosses through the centre of the site from west to east between the A1 highway, Woolfox Wood, arable farmland to Bidwell Lane to the south of Big Pits Wood to the east (Figure 10, Site Photo 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9). Byway E334 follows Bidwell Lane to east of the site between the Phase 2 area and Clipsham Quarry to connect into Bridleway E163 (Figure 10, Site Photo 12).
- 4.12 The Rutland Round trail E135 extends to the east of the site between Clipsham village, the quarry, Pickworth Great Wood and Pickworth village (Figure 10, Site Photo 10 and 11). A further bridleway E165 is located to the south east of the site between Hardwick Farm and the golf course connecting into bridleway E163 extending to the east of the site at Pickworth village. A short public footpath E132 is also located to the north west at Stretton village (Figure 9, Viewpoint 6). Further afield, there is a network of PROW within the Exton Estate to the west of the A1 highway including the Viking Way trail (Figure 9, Viewpoint 9).

Environmental Designations

- 4.13 The site is not located within any statutory or non-statutory landscape designations. The northern area of the site was previously located within an Area of Particularly Attractive Countryside (APAC) as a non-statutory designation within the now superseded Rutland Local Plan (2001). The villages of Clipsham to the north east and Stretton to the north west are located within designated conservation areas. The Exton Estate to the west of the A1 highway is designated as a registered park and garden. Osbonall Wood, Pickworth Great Wood, the Coppice, Hardwick Wood and Woolfox Wood are designated as ancient woodlands, local wildlife sites or candidate local wildlife sites. Pickworth Great Wood is also designated as Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The site is located within a mineral safeguarding area for limestone aggregates within the emerging Local Plan. The watercourse to the north is located within an Environment Agency flood zone (Figure 4, Environmental Designations Plan).

Landscape Character

- 4.14 The site is located within the Natural England, Kesteven Uplands, National Character Area 75 which is further described on Appendix 2. At the local level, the

site is also located within the Rutland Plateau Landscape Character Type (LCT) and the the Clay Woodlands (D ii) Landscape Character Sub-Area (LCSA) of the Rutland Landscape Character Assessment 2003 (Figure 5, Landscape Character Areas Plan).

Visual Receptors

- 4.15 The site is located within the surroundings of the following residential properties:
- Bidwell Farm within the site to the north east;
 - Residential properties to the south of Main Street, Clipsham including No. 1 - 4 Home Farm, Thoms Barn and Little Acre located 0.15km to the north east;
 - Lodge Farm and Manor House in Pickworth located 1.8km to the east;
 - The Lodge on Pickworth Lane located 0.8km to the south east;
 - Hardwick Farm located 0.14km to the south;
 - Horn House located 1.1km to the south west beyond the A1 highway;
 - Fort Henry House within the Exton Estate located 1.1km to the west beyond the A1 highway;
 - Mill Cottage located 0.35km to the west beyond the A1 highway;
 - Norvic Cottage and Lodge Farm located to the north and Greetham Wood Far located 0.588km to the west; and
 - Residential properties to the south of Rookery Lane and Manor Road within Stretton village including the Shires, Rectory Farm, Jacobs Barn, Erskine Barn, Croft Barn, Rectory Farm Cottage, Old Church Farmhouse, The Forge and Church Farm approximately 0.6km to the north west of the site.
- 4.16 The site is located within the surroundings of the following public highways:
- Clipsham Road between Clipsham and Stretton villages to the north;
 - Bidwell Lane to the north east;
 - Pickworth Lane approximately 0.7km to the south east; and
 - A1 highway to the west of the site.
- 4.17 The site is located within the surroundings of the following public rights of way as shown on the RCC definitive map including:
- Bridleway E163 crossing the centre of the site between the A1 highway, Woolfox Wood, Greetham Wood Far, Bidwell Lane and Pickworth village further to the east;
 - Byway E334 following Bidwell Lane adjacent to Clipsham Quarry to the north east;

- Rutland Round trail E135 between Clipsham village, the quarry, Pickworth Great Wood and Pickworth village to the east;
- Bridleway E165 between Hardwick Farm and the golf course to the south east;
- Public footpath E132 located to the north west at Stretton village; and
- Network of PROW within the Exton Estate to the west of the A1 highway including the Viking Way trail.

5. EFFECTS ON LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS

5.1 The effects on landscape elements are limited to within the site and includes the direct physical change to the fabric of the land, such as the removal of native woodland, hedgerows, trees, site topography, arable farmland, watercourses or public rights of way.

Native Woodland, Hedgerows and Trees

5.2 The native woodlands, hedgerows and trees within or adjoining the site are shown on the Landscape Elements Plan (Figure 7).

5.3 **Sensitivity:** The existing native woodland, hedgerows and trees are generally considered to be of high value, susceptibility and overall sensitivity due to the contribution these landscape elements make to the character and visual amenity of the site. However, the arboricultural survey recognises that there are variations in the quality, condition and long term contribution of these native woodland, hedgerows, and trees will make to the Phase 1 and 2 developments in the long term.

5.4 **Magnitude:** The extensive areas of woodland at Osbonall Wood to the north, Pickworth Great Wood to the east, the Coppice and Hardwick Wood to the south east, Woolfox Wood and Greetham Wood Far to the west would be retained and enhanced as part of the green infrastructure strategy. These woodlands contribute to the physical and visual enclosure of the Phase 1 and 2 developments within the wider landscape. The removal of native vegetation would generally be restricted to the provision of the new junctions on the A1 highway as part of the Phase 1 development, to connect into the Phase 2 development to the north of the airfield, and to provide a highways connection to Clipsham Road to the north of the site under the Phase 2 development beyond the plan period.

5.5 The new settlement would be designed in accordance with garden city principles therefore would seek to deliver significant areas of additional native woodland, hedgerow and tree planting as part of the green infrastructure strategy. Proposed areas of woodland under Phase 1 would likely include along the A1 highway and proposed junctions to the west, between the A1 highway, golf course and Hardwick Wood to the south, and to provide a linkage between Woolfox Wood and Hardwick Wood to visually enclose the Phase 1 development. Proposed areas of woodland under Phase 2 would likely include between Greetham Wood Far and Bidwell Lane to enhance the visual screening from Clipsham and Stretton to the north, and

between the Big Pits Wood, the disused quarry and the Coppice to the east. The existing woodlands, hedgerows and trees would be managed to increase the vegetation density, height and the visual screening surrounding the Phase 1 and 2 developments in the long term. On balance, the overall the magnitude of change would be medium.

- 5.6 **Effect:** With a high sensitivity and a medium magnitude of change, the proposals would result in a net gain and major beneficial effect on the native woodlands, hedgerows and trees within the Phase 1 and 2 areas.

Site Topography

- 5.7 The prevailing topography of the Phase 1 area is generally flat with limited variation between 105m AOD near the A1 highway to the west sloping gently to 90m AOD to the east of the airfield. The landform of the Phase 2 area to the north of the airfield is more gently undulating between 107m AOD near Greetham Wood Far to the west sloping to 95m AOD near Bidwell Lane and Clipsham Quarry to the east. A small valley and stream at 85m AOD are located to the north of Bidwell Farm and to the south the Clipsham Road (Figure 6, Topography Plan).

- 5.8 **Sensitivity:** The prevailing contours of the Phase 1 area within the former airfield are considered to be of low value, susceptibility and overall sensitivity due to the relatively low topographic variation. The prevailing contours of the Phase 2 area are considered to be of medium value, susceptibility and overall sensitivity due to the gentle to moderate undulations.

- 5.9 **Magnitude:** The prevailing contours of both of the Phase 1 and 2 areas would generally remain unchanged due to the limited requirement for ground engineering, highways infrastructure, development parcels, drainage and attenuation basins, local centres, secondary and primary schools and green infrastructure. A low degree of ground engineering would be required due to the gently sloping topography resulting in a low magnitude of change within the Phase 1 and 2 development areas.

- 5.10 **Effect:** With a medium or low sensitivity and a low magnitude of change, the Phase 1 and 2 developments would result in a minor adverse effect on site topography.

Arable Farmland

- 5.11 The Phase 1 and 2 areas comprise areas of arable farmland generally of grade 3 good to moderate agricultural land value.

- 5.12 **Sensitivity:** The arable farmland to the south of the site within the Phase 1 area is interspersed with remnants of the former airfield including the concrete runways, hardstandings, perimeter tracks and ancillary buildings. As such, this arable farmland within Phase 1 is considered to be of low value, susceptibility and overall sensitivity. The arable farmland to the north of the former airfield between Bidwell Lane, Osbonall Wood and Greetham Wood Far within the Phase 2 area is considered to be of medium value, susceptibility and overall sensitivity.
- 5.13 **Magnitude:** The new settlement would inevitably require the removal of the arable farmland within the Phase 1 and 2 areas and change to a garden village comprising residential, employment, local centres, primary and secondary schools, and green infrastructure. The magnitude of change on the arable farmland would inevitably be high for the Phase 1 and 2 areas.
- 5.14 **Effect:** With a low sensitivity and a high magnitude of change, the proposals would result in a moderate adverse effect on the arable farmland within the Phase 1 area. With a medium sensitivity and a high magnitude of change, the proposals would result in a major adverse effect on the arable farmland within the Phase 2 area.

Watercourses

- 5.15 There are a relatively small number of drainage ditches, ponds and streams within the site. A drainage ditch is located along the A1 highway in the Phase 1 area and a stream, drainage ditches and dew pond are located within the Phase 2 area.
- 5.16 **Sensitivity:** Watercourses are generally considered to be of medium value, susceptibility and overall sensitivity due the contribution these landscape elements make to the character and visual amenity of the site.
- 5.17 **Magnitude:** The existing watercourses, drainage ditches and ponds would be retained and enhanced as part of the green infrastructure strategy for recreation, ecology and visual amenity benefits. The magnitude of change on the existing and proposed watercourses would be high.
- 5.18 **Effect:** With a medium sensitivity and a high magnitude of change, the proposals would result in a major beneficial effect on the existing and proposed watercourses within the site.

Public Rights of Way

- 5.19 There are a number of public rights of way located within or at close proximity to the site. Bridleway E163 crosses through the centre, byway E334 follows Bidwell Lane to the east, the Rutland Round trail E135 extends to the east, and bridleway E165 follows the boundary of the golf course to the south east of the site.
- 5.20 **Sensitivity:** Public rights of way used by local residents and walkers are generally considered to be of high value, susceptibility and overall sensitivity as recreational routes.
- 5.21 **Magnitude:** The existing PROW would be retained and enhanced as part of the green infrastructure strategy. The Phase 1 and 2 developments would significantly improve the accessibility and recreational benefits across the site to connect into the established PROW network. The magnitude of change on the existing and proposed PROW would be high.
- 5.22 **Effect:** With a high sensitivity and a high magnitude of change, the proposals would result in a major beneficial effect on the PROW within the Phase 1 and 2 areas.
- 5.23 The effects on landscape elements within the site are summarised in Table 1:

Table 1, Summary of Effects on Landscape Elements					
Landscape elements	Value	Susceptibility	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Effect
Native Woodland, Hedgerows and Trees	<i>Phase 1</i> High	<i>Phase 1</i> High	<i>Phase 1</i> High	<i>Phase 1</i> Medium	<i>Phase 1</i> Major Beneficial
	<i>Phase 2</i> High	<i>Phase 2</i> High	<i>Phase 2</i> High	<i>Phase 2</i> Medium	<i>Phase 2</i> Major Beneficial
Site Topography	<i>Phase 1</i> Low	<i>Phase 1</i> Low	<i>Phase 1</i> Low	<i>Phase 1</i> Low	<i>Phase 1</i> Minor Adverse
	<i>Phase 2</i> Medium	<i>Phase 2</i> Medium	<i>Phase 2</i> Medium	<i>Phase 2</i> Low	<i>Phase 2</i> Minor Adverse
Arable Farmland	<i>Phase 1</i> Low	<i>Phase 1</i> Low	<i>Phase 1</i> Low	<i>Phase 1</i> High	<i>Phase 1</i> Moderate

					Adverse
	<i>Phase 2</i> Medium	<i>Phase 2</i> Medium	<i>Phase 2</i> Medium	<i>Phase 2</i> High	<i>Phase 2</i> Major Adverse
Watercourses	<i>Phase 1</i> Medium	<i>Phase 1</i> Medium	<i>Phase 1</i> Medium	<i>Phase 1</i> High	<i>Phase 1</i> Major Beneficial
	<i>Phase 2</i> Medium	<i>Phase 2</i> Medium	<i>Phase 2</i> Medium	<i>Phase 2</i> High	<i>Phase 2</i> Major Beneficial
Public rights of way	<i>Phase 1</i> High	<i>Phase 1</i> High	<i>Phase 1</i> High	<i>Phase 1</i> High	<i>Phase 1</i> Major Beneficial
	<i>Phase 2</i> High	<i>Phase 2</i> High	<i>Phase 2</i> High	<i>Phase 2</i> High	<i>Phase 2</i> Major Beneficial

6. EFFECTS ON LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

6.1 The effects on landscape character considers how the introduction of new landscape elements physically alters the landform, landcover, landscape pattern, and perceptual attributes of the site or how 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.”⁴

6.2 The site is located within the following Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) as shown on Figure 5 and further described on Appendix 2 and 3:

- Natural England, Kesteven Uplands (NCA 75); and
- Rutland Plateau (LCT) and Clay Woodlands (LCSA Dii).

6.3 The effects on landscape character at each representative viewpoint are also shown on the summary schedule on Appendix 4.

Natural England, National Character Area 75, Kesteven Uplands

6.4 Natural England has identified 159 geographical areas of similar landscape character known as National Character Areas (NCAs). This mapping, sometimes described as ‘The Character of England Map’ provides a description of landscape character at the national scale. It is considered that whilst the NCAs provide a national spatial framework, the scale of the mapping and information is of limited use as a strategic planning tool at the local scale. As previously identified, the proposals are located within the Natural England, Kesteven Uplands (NCA 75). The relevant characteristics include:

- **“Medium-scale, undulating mixed farmland landscape gently rising from the Fens in the east to the limestone ridge in the west. Large arable fields predominate on the higher ground of the Kesteven Plateau, with clipped and gappy hedgerows, while heavier land in the river valleys provides good grazing for cattle and sheep. Enclosure is generally by hedgerows and more locally by stone walls;**
- **Limestone quarries are scattered across the area, many of which are disused...;**
- **Significant areas of woodland including semi-natural and ancient woodland, commercial woodlands and parkland landscapes which, in combination with the topography, frame and contain views;**

⁴ Glossary, Page 157, GLVIA, 3rd Edition

- **Nucleated settlement pattern comprising small traditional villages with few isolated farmsteads or houses. Villages are evenly distributed throughout the area...;**
- **Picturesque villages and towns with buildings constructed in the local honeycoloured limestone, with roofs of the local yellowish Collyweston slate in the south and red pantiles in the north. Also present is a concentration of historic country houses with their associated parklands;**
- **An archaeologically rich area containing ancient trackways, Roman settlements, deserted medieval villages and Scheduled Ancient Monuments such as Car Dyke, which runs along the western edge of the Fens. Recreation includes restored sand and gravel quarries and long-distance routes and trackways; and**
- **Major roads and the East Coast Main Line run north-south dissecting the landscape (such as the major viaducts at Great Ponton)."**

Rutland Plateau (LCT) and Clay Woodlands (LCSA Dii)

- 6.5 The site is also located within the Rutland Plateau (LCT) and Clay Woodlands (LCSA Dii) of the Landscape Character Assessment of Rutland (2003) undertaken by David Tyldesley Associates. The relevant characteristics are described as:

"The Clay Woodlands is an extensive area of gently undulating, predominantly arable countryside in the County east of the North Brook. The key characteristics of this landscape sub-area are the medium to large scale mixed broadleaved and coniferous woodlands within large farming estates such as Holywell, Clipsham, Empingham and Tickencote. These woodlands, predominantly ash and sycamore with oak and blackthorn, are conspicuous features in most views within or into this area. Close to, they enclose views whilst providing an extensive backdrop in most distant views across well maintained farmland.

Mature tree-lined roads are also a feature in the north, for example on the approach to Stocken Park and Clipsham Park. Together with the woodlands, these help to screen the prison at Stocken...

...Remnant dry stone walls made of local limestone are characteristic features in some parts of the clay woodlands, probably originating from one of the many small quarries around Clipsham.

The settlements in the Clay Woodlands sub-area are Clipsham, Essendine, Pickworth and Stretton."

- 6.6 The recommended landscape objectives for the Clay Woodlands (LCSA Dii) are:

"To conserve and enhance the large-scale, gently undulating, agricultural landscapes with substantial woodlands and avenues, to enhance the sustainable management of existing woodlands and to create new

woodlands in the less wooded parts...especially where they would create skyline features. To improve the edges of the settlements and integrate large structures and modern buildings into the landscape where necessary. To protect historic features such as earthworks and restore characteristic drystone walls.”

- 6.7 **Sensitivity:** The site is located within the Natural England, Kesteven Uplands (NCA 75) and the Rutland Plateau (LCT) and Clay Woodlands (LCSA Dii) character areas. The Phase 1 area is located to the south of the site and generally covers the former RAF Woolfox airfield and is at closer proximity to the A1 and Woolfox Depot. Traffic travelling along the A1 highway reduces the perception of tranquillity within the site. The Phase 1 area is characterised by the remnants of the former airfield including disused concrete runways, hardstandings, perimeter tracks and ancillary buildings interspersed with open areas of arable farmland. The hedgerow and field enclosure pattern has been extensively removed through the construction of the airfield in WWII. The Phase 1 area is therefore considered to be low value, susceptibility and overall sensitivity in landscape character terms.
- 6.8 The Phase 2 area covers the arable farmland to the north of the former airfield between Bidwell Farm, Clipsham Quarry, Osbonall Wood, Greetham Wood Far and Woolfox Wood. Agricultural intensification has led to the loss of hedgerows to the north of the site. The Phase 2 area is more visible from the existing public rights of way passing through the centre site and from Bidwell Lane to the north east of the site. The Phase 2 area also includes the undulating and sloping areas of arable farmland to the north of Bidwell Farm between Stretton and Clipsham villages. The Phase 2 area is therefore considered to be medium value, susceptibility and overall sensitivity in landscape character terms.
- 6.9 **Magnitude:** The proposals would inevitably change the character of the former airfield and arable farmland to a new settlement comprising 2500 homes, employment land use, secondary and primary schools, highways junctions and green infrastructure within the Local Plan period up to 2036 under Phase 1. The Phase 1 development would utilise an area of previously developed land within the former airfield which has partly removed field boundary hedgerows and some areas of arable farmland.
- 6.10 The garden village would appear as a distinct new settlement strategically positioned between Stretton to the north west, Clipsham to the north east, Pickworth to the east, Stamford to the south east, and Colsterworth to the north. In this respect, the garden village would maintain the dispersed pattern of

settlement throughout the character area. The Phase 1 development would logically cluster the proposed employment land uses adjacent to the existing commercial buildings within the Woolfox Depot and the A1 highway within less sensitive areas to the south of the site.

- 6.11 The Concept Masterplan would be designed in accordance with garden city principles to utilise the area of previously developed land within the former airfield and to provide a comprehensive green infrastructure strategy for environmental improvement. The new settlement would create a variety of open spaces to include formal sports, play areas, allotments, amenity space, semi-natural open space and ecological habitats with additional areas for sustainable urban drainage. The new settlement would be designed to respect and compliment the architectural character of the locality using of local building materials to create a sense of place and distinctiveness.
- 6.12 The Phase 1 development would create a number of multi-functional woodland corridors or buffers along the A1 highway and junctions to the west, between the golf course and Hardwick Wood to the south, and to provide a linkage and recreational route between Woolfox Wood and Hardwick Wood to enclose the Phase 1 development. A central linear green corridor could be aligned along the former airfield runway to form a vista through the Phase 1 development leading to community greenspace. Whilst the new settlement would inevitably result in a change to the character of the site itself, opportunities to observe this change are restricted within the wider landscape due to the physical and visual enclosure provided by the surrounding woodlands. On balance, the magnitude of change on the landscape character resulting from the Phase 1 development is considered to be low.
- 6.13 The Phase 2 development would deliver the remaining 7500 homes beyond the Local Plan period post 2036. The Phase 2 development would only come forward as part of a co-ordinated extension to the Phase 1 development. In this respect, the character of the landscape to the south of the Phase 2 area would have already changed. The Phase 2 development would retain and enhance the existing PROW network including bridleway E163 passing through the centre, the Rutland Round trail E135 to the east, and bridleway E165 to the south east of the site. The Phase 2 development would retain the sloping areas of land to the north Bidwell Farm within proposed parkland to respect the character, setting and appearance of Stretton and Clipsham. On balance, the magnitude of change on landscape character resulting from the Phase 2 development is also considered to be low.

6.14 **Effect:** With a medium or low sensitivity, the proposals would result in a minor adverse effect on the Natural England, Kesteven Uplands (NCA 75) and the Rutland Plateau (LCT) and Clay Woodlands (LCA Dii) within the Phase 1 and 2 developments.

6.15 The effects on landscape character are summarised in Table 2:

Table 2, Summary of Effects on Landscape Character					
Landscape Character	Value	Susceptibility	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Effect
Kesteven Uplands (NCA 75) and the Rutland Plateau (LCT) and Clay Woodlands (LCSA Dii)	<i>Phase 1</i>	<i>Phase 1</i>	<i>Phase 1</i>	<i>Phase 1</i>	<i>Phase 1</i>
	Low	Low	Low	Low	Minor Adverse
	<i>Phase 2</i>	<i>Phase 2</i>	<i>Phase 2</i>	<i>Phase 2</i>	<i>Phase 2</i>
	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	Minor Adverse

7. EFFECTS ON VISUAL AMENITY

7.1 The effect on visual amenity considers the changes in views arising from the proposals in relation to visual receptors including surrounding settlements, residential properties, highways, public rights of way (PROW) and recreational areas; and the effect on representative viewpoints or specific locations within the study area. Visual amenity is defined in GLVIA3 as the:

“Overall pleasantness of the views people enjoy of their surroundings, which provides an attractive visual setting or backdrop for the enjoyment of activities of the people living, working, recreating, visiting or travelling through an area.”⁵

7.2 The representative viewpoints for the proposed Woolfox Garden Village are shown on Figures 8, 9 and 10 respectively.

General Visibility – Phase 1

7.3 In general terms, the Phase 1 development would appear physically and visually contained to the former airfield between Woolfox Wood to the north, the Coppice and Big Pits Wood the east, Hardwick Wood and Rutland County Golf Course to the south, and the A1 highway and Woolfox Depot to the west of the site.

7.4 Close proximity views of the Phase 1 development would be visible from bridleway E165 and the golf course to the south east (Viewpoint 6), the access road to Hardwick Farm and the golf club to the south (Viewpoint 7) and from the A1 highway near the Woolfox Depot to the west of the site (Viewpoint 8).

7.5 Medium proximity views of the Phase 1 development would be partially visible from bridleway E163 near the A1 highway, the disused quarry and Woolfox Wood to the north west, and from Pickworth Lane between Pickworth village and the golf club to the south east of the site (Viewpoint 6).

7.6 Distant views of the Phase 1 development would be limited by the surrounding woodland although barely perceptible from the Rutland Round trail E135 near Pickworth Great Wood to the north east (Site Photo 10), the Viking Way trail within the Exton Estate to the west (Viewpoint 9) and from the B668 Stretton Road near Greetham to the north west of the site (Viewpoint 10).

⁵ Glossary, Page 158, GLVIA 3rd Edition

General Visibility – Phase 2

- 7.7 The Phase 2 development would only come forward as part of a co-ordinated extension of the Phase 1 development. In general terms, the Phase 2 development would appear physically and visually contained between Bidwell Farm and Osbonall Wood to the north, Clipsham Quarry, Big Pits Woods and Pickworth Great Woods to the east, the Phase 1 development to the south, and between Woolfox Woods and Greetham Far Woods to the west of the site.
- 7.8 Close proximity views of the Phase 2 development would be visible from bridleway E163 crossing the centre of the site between the A1 highway, Woolfox Wood and Greetham Wood Far (Site Photo 5), arable farmland to the south of Osbonall Wood (Site Photos 6 and 7) and near the disused quarry and Big Pits Wood (Site Photo 9). The Phase 2 development would also be visible at close proximity from the byway along Bidwell Lane to the east (Site Photo 12).
- 7.9 Medium proximity views of the Phase 2 development would be partially visible from the Clipsham Road to the north (Viewpoint 1) and from the Rutland Round trail E135 near Clipsham village to the north east of the site (Viewpoint 2). However, the Phase 2 development would not be visible from Stretton village to the north west of the site (Viewpoint 11). Distant views of the Phase 2 development would generally be restricted by Osbonall Woods and the proposed parkland to the north, Big Pits Woods and Pickworth Great Woods to the east, Woolfox Woods and Greetham Far Woods to the west of the site.

Residential Properties

- 7.10 The Phase 1 development is located within the surroundings of existing residential properties including The Lodge on Pickworth Lane to the south east, Hardwick Farm to the south, Horn House to the south west, Fort Henry House within the Exton Estate to the west, and Mill Cottage to the west of the site beyond the A1 highway.
- 7.11 The Phase 2 development is located within the surroundings of existing residential properties including Clipsham to the north east, Norvic Cottage and Lodge Farm located to the west, and residential properties within Stretton village to the north west of the site.
- 7.12 **Sensitivity:** Views from residential properties are generally considered to be of high value, susceptibility and overall sensitivity.

- 7.13 **Magnitude:** The garden village would be designed to maintain privacy and would not appear oppressive, overwhelming or unattractive. The Phase 1 development would be partially visible from Hardwick Farm to the south of the site resulting in a low magnitude of change. The Phase 1 development would not generally be visible from The Lodge on Pickworth Lane, Horn House, Fort Henry House or Mill Cottage resulting in a negligible magnitude of change.
- 7.14 The Phase 2 development would be perceptible from residential properties to the south of Main Street, Clipsham including No. 1 - 4 Home Farm, Thoms Barn and Little Acre resulting in a low magnitude of change. However, the proposals would not generally be visible from Norvic Cottage and Lodge Farm to the west, or from Stretton to the north west resulting in a negligible magnitude of change.
- 7.15 **Effect:** With a high sensitivity and a low magnitude of change, the Phase 1 development would result in a moderate adverse effect on Hardwick Farm. However, the Phase 1 development would result in negligible effects on Pickworth village, The Lodge on Pickworth Lane, Horn House, Fort Henry House or Mill Cottage to the west of the A1 highway.
- 7.16 With a high sensitivity and a low magnitude of change, the Phase 2 development would result in a moderate adverse effect on the residential properties to the south of Main Street, Clipsham. However, the Phase 2 development would result in a negligible effect on Norvic Cottage, Lodge Farm and Stretton village.

Public Highways

- 7.17 The Phase 1 development is located near Pickworth Lane to the south east and the A1 highway to the west of the site. The Phase 2 development is located near Clipsham Road to the north of the site.
- 7.18 **Sensitivity:** Views from motorists using public highways and rural lanes are generally considered to be of medium value, susceptibility and overall sensitivity due to the oblique, transient nature of passing views during travel.
- 7.19 **Magnitude:** The garden village would be designed to screen views from the surrounding public highways as part of the green infrastructure strategy. The Phase 1 development would be visible from the A1 highway to the west in the northbound and southbound direction resulting in a high magnitude of change with the provision of a new junctions leading into the Phase 1 development. However, the Phase 1 development would be barely perceptible when travelling along Pickworth

Lane to the south east, from a limited number of isolated field gate openings resulting in a low magnitude of change.

- 7.20 The Phase 2 development would be partially visible to the south of the Clipsham Road along the higher ground between Bidwell Farm and Greetham Wood Far. However, these views would be mitigated by the retention of proposed parkland to protect the character, setting and appearance of Stetton and Clipsham. The magnitude of change is therefore considered to be low.
- 7.21 **Effect:** With a medium sensitivity and a high magnitude of change, the Phase 1 development would result in a major adverse effect on the A1 highway directly to the west with the provision of new junctions. With a low magnitude of change, the Phase 1 development would result in a minor adverse effect on Pickworth Lane to the south east of the site.
- 7.22 With a medium sensitivity and a low magnitude of change, the Phase 2 development would result in a minor adverse effect on Clipsham Road to the north of the site.

Public Rights of Way

- 7.23 The Phase 1 development is located in the surroundings of bridleway E165 between Hardwick Farm and the golf course to the south east of the site and the network of PROW including the Viking Way trail within the Exton Estate to the west of the A1 highway.
- 7.24 The Phase 2 development is crossed by bridleway E163 through the centre of the site, byway E334 following Bidwell Lane to east, the Rutland Round trail E135 between Clipsham village, Pickworth Great Wood and Pickworth village to the east. Public footpath E132 is also located to the north west of the Phase 2 area at Stretton village.
- 7.25 **Sensitivity:** Views from PROW used by local residents and walkers are generally considered to be of high value, susceptibility and overall sensitivity as recreational routes.
- 7.26 **Magnitude:** The garden village would be designed to integrate the existing PROW network into the proposed green infrastructure strategy. The Phase 1 development would be visible from limited sections of bridleway E165 between Hardwick Farm and the golf course to the south east resulting in a medium magnitude of change. The Phase 1 development would not generally be visible from the network of PROW

within the Exton Estate to the west of the site beyond the A1 highway resulting in a negligible magnitude of change.

- 7.27 The Phase 2 development would be visible at close proximity from bridleway E163 passing through the site and byway E334 following Bidwell Lane directly to the east of the site resulting in a high magnitude of change. The Phase 2 development would also be partially visible from the Rutland Round trail E135 between Clipsham village and Pickworth Great Wood to the east within the proposed playing fields, sports pitches and community allotments resulting in a low magnitude of change.
- 7.28 **Effect:** With a high sensitivity and a medium magnitude of change, the Phase 1 development would result in a major adverse effect on limited sections of bridleway E165 between Hardwick Farm and the golf course to the south east. However, the Phase 1 development would not generally be visible from the Exton Estate to the west of the A1 highway resulting in a negligible effect.
- 7.29 With a high sensitivity and a high magnitude of change, the Phase 2 development would result in a major adverse effect on limited sections of bridleway E163 retained and byway E334 following Bidwell Lane within the site. The Phase 2 development would result in a moderate adverse effect on the Rutland Round trail E135 to the south Clipsham to the north east and a negligible effect on public footpath E132 to the north west of the Phase 2 development at Stretton village.
- 7.30 The effects on the representative viewpoints are summarised in Table 3:

Table 3, Summary of Effects on Representative Viewpoints					
Representative Viewpoint	Value	Suscep- tibility	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Effect
Viewpoint 1 – Junction of Stretton Road and Bidwell Lane	Medium	Medium	Medium	<i>Phase 1</i> Negligible	<i>Phase 1</i> Negligible
				<i>Phase 2</i> Low	<i>Phase 2</i> Minor Adverse
Viewpoint 2 – Rutland Round trail E135 near Clipsham village	High	High	High	<i>Phase 1</i> Negligible	<i>Phase 1</i> Negligible
				<i>Phase 2</i> Low	<i>Phase 2</i> Moderate Adverse

Viewpoint 3 – Rutland Round trail E135 to south of Pickworth Great Wood	High	High	High	<i>Phase 1</i> Negligible	<i>Phase 1</i> Negligible
				<i>Phase 2</i> Negligible	<i>Phase 2</i> Negligible
Viewpoint 4 – Rutland Round trail E135 near Pickworth village	High	High	High	<i>Phase 1</i> Negligible	<i>Phase 1</i> Negligible
				<i>Phase 2</i> Negligible	<i>Phase 2</i> Negligible
Viewpoint 5 – Pickworth Lane between The Lodge and Pickworth village	Medium	Medium	Medium	<i>Phase 1</i> Low	<i>Phase 1</i> Minor Adverse
				<i>Phase 2</i> Negligible	<i>Phase 2</i> Negligible
Viewpoint 6 – Bridleway E165 within Rutland County Golf Club	High	High	High	<i>Phase 1</i> High	<i>Phase 1</i> Major Adverse
				<i>Phase 2</i> Negligible	<i>Phase 2</i> Negligible
Viewpoint 7 – Access road to Rutland County Golf Club near A1 highway	Medium	Medium	Medium	<i>Phase 1</i> Medium	<i>Phase 1</i> Moderate Adverse
				<i>Phase 2</i> Negligible	<i>Phase 2</i> Negligible
Viewpoint 8 – Layby near Woolfox Depot	Low	Low	Low	<i>Phase 1</i> High	<i>Phase 1</i> Moderate Adverse
				<i>Phase 2</i> Negligible	<i>Phase 2</i> Negligible
Viewpoint 9 – Viking Way trail near Tunneley Wood within Exton Estate	High	High	High	<i>Phase 1</i> Negligible	<i>Phase 1</i> Negligible
				<i>Phase 2</i> Negligible	<i>Phase 2</i> Negligible

Viewpoint 10 – B668 Stretton Road near Greetham village	Medium	Medium	Medium	<i>Phase 1</i> Low	<i>Phase 1</i> Minor Adverse
				<i>Phase 2</i> Negligible	<i>Phase 2</i> Negligible
Viewpoint 11 – Public footpath E132 near Stretton village	High	High	High	<i>Phase 1</i> Negligible	<i>Phase 1</i> Negligible
				<i>Phase 2</i> Negligible	<i>Phase 2</i> Negligible
Viewpoint 12 – B668 Clipsham Road between Stretton and Bidwell Lane	Medium	Medium	Medium	<i>Phase 1</i> Negligible	<i>Phase 1</i> Negligible
				<i>Phase 2</i> Low	<i>Phase 2</i> Minor Adverse

8. COMPARISON WITH ST GEORGES BARRACKS GARDEN VILLAGE, NORTH LUFFENHAM

- 8.1 A garden village is also being promoted through the emerging Local Plan at St Georges Barracks, North Luffenham (Figure 11, Site Location Plan). RCC have revised the timetable for the delivery of the emerging Local Plan in April 2018 to consider the inclusion of these proposals. RCC have been working with the MOD to consider the redevelopment of the barracks and have agreed a Memorandum of Understanding to declare that this site is surplus to requirements and could be disposed by 2020/2021.
- 8.2 The evolving masterplan 2050 for the St Georges Barracks garden village is shown Figure 12 with an executive summary and vision document provided on their website at <https://www.stgeorgesrutland.co.uk/>. These submissions indicate that the proposals would include the phased delivery of 2215 homes, 14 ha employment land, primary school, a local centre and country park. The proposals would similarly be designed in accordance with garden city principles including an array of green infrastructure benefits.

Baseline Conditions

- 8.3 The site covers the currently operational St Georges Barracks MOD site located to the south east of Rutland Water between the villages of Edith Weston, Normanton and North Luffenham. The site, in comparison to the proposed Woolfox Garden Village, is located at closer proximity to a high number of environmental sensitivities including Rutland Water at Edith Weston which forms a popular recreational and ecology asset and is designated as a country park, SSSI, SPA and RAMSAR site. Edith Weston village is also designated as a conservation area with a number of listed buildings from a cultural heritage perspective. The Rutland Round trail also extends along Wytchley Warren Lane to the north of the site (Figure 13, Environmental Designations Plan).
- 8.4 The St Georges Barracks site is located within the Natural England, Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire Wolds (NCA 74), the Rutland Plateau (LCT) and the Ketton Plateau (LCSA Dii) as shown on Figure 14, Landscape Character Areas Plan. The site is characterised by an exposed area of elevated plateau landform comprising the military barracks, officers mess, hangers and training areas to the north west, a golf course to the north, together with the disused airfield including runways, perimeter tracks, derelict buildings, commercial buildings and open areas of grassland to the south and west. The North Luffenham golf course is located

between the operational military barracks and the disused airfield. Treecover is sparse and limited within the site with the majority of trees concentrated to small groups or isolated trees within the existing barracks to the north west near Edith Weston village (Figure 16, Landscape Elements Plan).

- 8.5 The site is perched upon the elevated plateau to the south east of Rutland Water at approximately 110m AOD with expansive views towards the site from the undulating hillsides to the south and west (Figure 15, Topography Plan). The surrounding topography falls steadily to the south towards the river Chater and the railway line at approximately 60m AOD to the south before rising again to form a series of hillsides with expansive views towards the site from South Luffenham to the south and from Wing village to the west. The topography of the site on the elevated plateau and expansive views to the south and west presents a constraint to the future expansion of the St Georges Barracks site beyond the Local Plan period post 2036.

Effects on Landscape Character

- 8.6 The proposals would inevitably change the character of the St Georges Barracks site and former airfield to a new settlement comprising 2215 homes, employment land, primary school, local centre and country park. The proposals would similarly utilise an area of previously developed land including the military barracks and former airfield once disposed by 2020/2021.
- 8.7 The evolving masterplan for St Georges Barracks shows that development would be concentrated to the north west of the site at close proximity to the Edith Weston village conservation area and the Rutland Water Country Park, SSSI, SPA and RAMSAR site. Whilst the proposals would partly develop land which has been occupied by the military barracks, the scale of development would be more than double that of the existing village at Edith Weston adjoining the site which is protected within the conservation area and Rutland Water policy RLP24. The proposals would result in the loss of spatial separation between settlements and the perception of merger between Edith Weston, Normanton and North Luffenham villages surrounding the site.
- 8.8 The scale of the development would appear uncharacteristically large in the surroundings of Rutland Water reservoir which forms part of valued landscape under policy RLP24 and which is generally surrounded by small scale characterful villages and hamlets. The St Georges Barracks proposals would therefore appear disproportionate to the scale, character and appearance of the other villages in the

surroundings of Rutland Water. The proposed Woolfox Garden Village is not located with the setting of other settlements therefore considered to be more of a 'blank canvas' in terms of landscape and visual sensitivity. The representative viewpoints for the St Georges Barracks development are shown on Figures 17 and 18.

- 8.9 The evolving masterplan for the St Georges Barracks site shows that the development would extend over an area of elevated plateau to the south east of Rutland Water. The topography plan on Figure 15 shows that the landform moderately slopes away to the south and west of the site. The site therefore exhibits limited capacity for future housing delivery beyond the Local Plan period post 2036 as further growth across the plateau would be physically constrained by this sloping landform with expansive views towards the site. The proposed Woolfox Garden Village exhibits no such constraint and could deliver phased housing beyond the Local Plan period to meet future housing need as part of a co-ordinated masterplan.

Effects on Visual Amenity

- 8.10 Due to the location of the site on the elevated plateau to the south east of Rutland Water, the St Georges Barracks development would appear more prominent over extensive areas of undulating landscape and hillsides to south and west. The representative viewpoints for the proposed St Georges Barracks development are shown on Figures 17 and 18 respectively.
- 8.11 The proposals would be visible at close proximity from Pennine Drive and Welland Road at Edith Weston to the north, Wytchley Warren Lane and Empingham Road to the north east (Viewpoints 1 and 2), Station Road at North Luffenham to the south west (Viewpoint 5), and the Edith Weston Road to the west of the site (Viewpoint 6). The proposals would not generally be perceptible from Ketton Road to the south due to the moderately sloping landform.
- 8.12 The location of proposals perched on the elevated plateau at approximately 110m AOD would be visible within medium and long distance views to the south and west of site in the wider landscape. The proposals would be visible from the A6121 Stamford Road, Wireless Hill and South Luffenham approximately 1.7km to the south (Viewpoint 3), the A45 Peterborough Road layby following the ridgeline approximately 3.5km to south west, and near Wing village approximately 3.8km to the west of the site (Viewpoint 4). Due to elevated plateau character of the site, the St Georges Barracks development would be more visible over an extensive area in comparison to the Woolfox Garden Village proposals. The St Georges Barracks

development would be reliant on the proposed mitigation or woodland planting to provide visual screening to south and west of the site whereas the proposed Woolfox Garden Village is already self-contained by the existing woodlands.

Summary

- 8.13 The proposed development at St Georges Barracks is located within the surroundings of a higher concentration of landscape and visual sensitivities in comparison to the Woolfox Garden Village proposals. Due to the location of the site on an elevated plateau with landscape and visual constraints, the proposals offer comparatively limited scope to deliver further housing beyond the plan period or meet the assessment criteria of the MHCLG garden community's prospectus required to facilitate government support for infrastructure provision. The proposed Woolfox Garden Village is less constrained in landscape and visual terms and offers the potential for future expansion, housing supply and green infrastructure provision beyond the Local Plan period post 2036.

9. CONCLUSIONS

- 9.1 This Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been prepared in support of the Sustainability Assessment (SA) for the proposed Woolfox Garden Village, Rutland. This LVIA considers the effects on landscape elements, character and visual amenity and provides a comparison of effects in relation to the other proposed development at St Georges Barracks, North Luffenham also under consideration within the emerging Local Plan.
- 9.2 The promoters of the proposed Woolfox Garden Village intend to deliver 2500 homes, employment land, secondary and primary schools, highways and green infrastructure within the Local Plan period up to 2036 under Phase 1. The remaining 7500 homes could be delivered beyond the Local Plan period post 2036 under Phase 2 to reach a total future housing provision of 10,000 homes. The proposals would be designed in accordance with garden city principles to utilise an area of previously developed land within the former RAF Woolfox airfield and would provide a comprehensive green infrastructure strategy for environmental improvement.
- 9.3 The site occupies approximately 490 ha of the former RAF Woolfox airfield and arable farmland between Stretton to the north west, Clipsham to the north east, Pickworth to the east, Stamford to the south east, and the A1 highway and Woolfox Depot to the west. The site is located within the Natural England, Kesteven Uplands, National Character Area 75 and the Clay Woodlands (Dii) Landscape Character Sub-Area of the Rutland Landscape Character Assessment (2003). The site is not located within any statutory or non-statutory landscape designations.

Phase 1 development within the Local Plan period to 2036

- 9.4 The Phase 1 development is located to the south of the site and generally covers the former RAF Woolfox airfield at close proximity to the A1 highway and the Woolfox Depot. Traffic travelling along the A1 reduces the perception of tranquillity within the site. The Phase 1 area is characterised by the remnants of the airfield including concrete runways, hardstandings, perimeter tracks and ancillary buildings interspersed with open areas of arable farmland. The hedgerow and field enclosure pattern has historically been removed through the construction of the airfield in WWII.
- 9.5 The Phase 1 development would inevitably change the character of the former airfield and arable farmland to a new settlement comprising 2500 homes, employment land, secondary and primary schools, highways junctions and green

infrastructure. However, the proposals would utilise areas of the former airfield and align the development adjacent to Woolfox Depot and the A1 highway within less sensitive areas to the south of the site. The garden village would strategically maintain the dispersed pattern of settlements throughout the character areas.

- 9.6 The Phase 1 development would inevitably change the character of the site itself, however, opportunities to observe this change are restricted within the wider landscape due to the physical and visual enclosure provided by the surrounding woodlands. The proposals would appear contained to the former airfield between Woolfox Wood to the north, the Coppice to the east, Hardwick Wood and the golf course to the south east, and the A1 highway and Woolfox Depot to the west of the site.
- 9.7 Close proximity views of proposals would be visible from bridleway E165, the golf course and Hardwick Farm to the south, and from the A1 highway near the Woolfox Depot to the west. Medium proximity views would be partially visible from bridleway E163 near the A1 highway and Woolfox Wood to the north west and from limited sections of Pickworth Lane to the south east of the site. Distant views would be limited by the surrounding woodland although perceptible from the Rutland Round trail E135 near Pickworth Great Wood to the north east, and from the B668 Stretton Road near Greetham to the north west of the site.

Phase 2 development beyond the Local Plan period

- 9.8 The Phase 2 development would deliver the remaining 7500 homes beyond the Local Plan period post 2036. The Phase 2 development would only come forward as part of a co-ordinated extension to the Phase 1 development. The proposals cover the arable farmland to the north between Bidwell Farm, Osbonall Wood, Greetham Wood Far and Woolfox Wood. The proposals would retain the existing PROW network within the Phase 2 area as part of the green infrastructure strategy. The Phase 2 development would retain the sloping areas of land to the north Bidwell Farm within parkland to respect the character, setting and appearance of the outlying Stretton and Clipsham villages.
- 9.9 Close proximity views would be visible from bridleway E163 crossing the centre of the site between Woolfox Wood, Osbonall Wood, the disused quarry, Big Pits Wood and Bidwell Lane to the east. Medium proximity views would be partially visible from the Clipsham Road to the north, and from the Rutland Round trail near Clipsham village to the north east. The proposals would not generally be visible from Stretton village to the north west. Distant views of the Phase 2 development

would be restricted by Osbonall Wood to the north, Big Pits Woods to the east, and Greetham Far Woods to the west of the site.

Comparison with St Georges Barracks Garden Village

- 9.10 A garden village is also being promoted through the emerging Local Plan at the St Georges Barracks, North Luffenham. The evolving masterplan shows that these proposals would include the phased delivery of 2215 homes, employment land, primary school, local centre and a country park. The proposed garden village at St Georges Barracks is located within the surroundings of a higher concentration of landscape and visual sensitivities in comparison to the Woolfox Garden Village site.
- 9.11 Due to the location of the site on an exposed area of elevated plateau with landscape and visual constraints, the proposals offer comparatively limited scope to deliver further housing beyond the plan period or meet the criteria of the MHCLG garden community's prospectus. The proposed Woolfox Garden Village is less constrained in landscape and visual terms and offers the potential for future expansion, housing supply and green infrastructure beyond the Local Plan period post 2036.

Summary

- 9.12 The proposed Woolfox Garden Village could be designed to respect the landscape elements, character and visual amenity of the site and its surroundings. The garden village would comprise a new settlement within Rutland county and would utilise the previously developed land within the former RAF Woolfox airfield with sustainable transport connections to the A1 highway. The proposed Woolfox Garden Village could be designed in a manner that would not materially conflict with the relevant NPPF paragraphs 10, 127, 170, 171; Core Strategy policies CS19, CS21, CS23; Site Allocations DPD policy SP23; and Local Plan Policy RLP42, RLP43 and RLP45.