

LAND AT POUND FARM
PLANNING APPLICATION

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT APPRAISAL
P03

on behalf of Bugler Homes Ltd

February 2026

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Enplan is a multi-disciplinary practice of planners, landscape architects and environmental consultants. Enplan were appointed by Bugler Homes Ltd to produce an initial Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal and Landscape Strategy for Ickneild Fields ('the Site') to accompany a hybrid planning application.

"Hybrid application for a mixed-use development to provide a total of up to 230 dwellings, a residential care home (Use Class C2), an Independent Special School (ISS) and new sports pitch, with access from Bedford Road, landscaping, parking and SuDS comprising: Phase 1 – Application for full planning permission for the erection of 100 dwellings, an ISS, new sports pitch and associated parking, landscaping, open space and SuDS; Phase 2 – An outline application on the remaining part of the site for the erection of up to 130 dwellings, a residential care home (Use Class C2) and associated works with access from Bedford Road (all matters reserved apart from access)".

- 1.2 The report defines the existing landscape conditions, assesses the character and quality of the landscape and analyses the visual and landscape effects of the proposals.
- 1.3 The baseline position against which this assessment has been undertaken is as per the current position on the ground. There are no extant planning permissions for the land.
- 1.4 The Study Area for this assessment has been defined to incorporate all parts of the landscape that potentially may have a view of the proposals (referred to later in this chapter as the Zone of Theoretical Visibility or ZTV) with buffers and is limited to a 3km radius area that is sufficient in size to define the broad landscape context of the site.
- 1.5 Assessments undertaken within this appraisal have been undertaken in accordance with the 3rd Edition of 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3). The assessment and landscape design work has been led by Richard Hodgetts BA Hons DipLA CMLI, Landscape Director of Enplan and a Chartered Landscape Architect with over 30 years' experience.
- 1.6 The proposal is to construct a mixed-use development to provide a total of up to 230 dwellings, a residential care home (Use Class C2), an Independent Special School (ISS) and new sports pitch, with access from Bedford Road, landscaping, parking and SuDS comprising: Phase 1 – Application for full planning permission for the erection of 100 dwellings, an ISS, new sports pitch and associated parking, landscaping, open space and SuDS; Phase 2 – An outline application on the remaining part of the site for the erection of up to 130 dwellings, a residential care home (Use Class C2) and associated works with access from Bedford Road (all matters reserved apart from access). The proposed masterplan has been designed by ON Architects and the details of the rationale for the design set out in the Design & Access Statement which accompanies the application.

2.0 METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH

- 2.1 The approach to the landscape and visual appraisal is in accordance with the 3rd Edition 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' (GLVIA3) and the notes and clarifications highlighted in the Landscape Institute's Technical Guidance Note 2024-01-GLVIA3-N&C. The assessment has been led by a Chartered Landscape Architect with over 30 years of experience in landscape and visual impact assessment.
- 2.2 The study area has been determined by the Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) exercise outlined below. This has determined the largest 'envelope' of likely effects, these being the visual effects.
- 2.3 A desktop study was undertaken to review available information in relation to topography, geology, land use, vegetation and landscape policy constraints, Public Rights of Way, a range of relevant landscape publications covering the landscape including assessments. The study reviewed the following specific information; all landscape and environmental designations and policies at local and national levels, existing OS geological and topographical mapping at 1:25,000 and 1:10,000 scales and selected aerial photographs.
- 2.4 A site visits was undertaken by the main assessor in November 2025. The assessor recognises that this assessment was undertaken in the late summer/ autumns and that in the winter unfiltered views maybe available of the Site.
- 2.5 A visual impact assessment was undertaken of the proposed development (this means all parts of the proposed development unless specifically stated) from a number of selected viewpoints based upon a recognised methodology. The visual impact assessment has considered both the illustrative scheme. The viewpoints have been selected because they are for the most part 'worst case' or at least notable views and represent a typical direction or type of view from the various available directions towards the site. They are not all of the available views.
- 2.6 The viewpoint photographs illustrate a range of representative publicly accessible views of the site (**Figures 10 to 32**). The photography and the visual representations have been undertaken in accordance with the Landscape Institute's Technical Guidance Note 06/19¹.

¹ Visual Representation of Development Proposals, Landscape Institute, Technical Guidance Note 06/19

- 2.7 The extent to which these findings would result in material harm to the visual amenity of the public right of way, highway or public open space was evaluated and from these conclusions were drawn as to the harm that would be caused to the character and appearance of the landscape.
- 2.8 An assessment of local landscape character was undertaken, including the site and adjoining areas. As there are up to date published landscape character assessments of an appropriate scale for considering the potential effects of a development proposal such as this, this assessment relies on these assessments for the determination of the various landscape character areas. The local character assessment work identifies the principal elements and features, the key characteristics and the value to be attached to the landscape character areas (as published) and the elements and key characteristics of the local area.
- 2.9 For the assessment of landscape effects, professional judgements have been made regarding landscape value, landscape susceptibility and landscape sensitivity. The process of landscape assessment, as advocated by the GLVIA3, involves the individual assessments and combining of these for value and for susceptibility, specifically to the type of development envisaged, to evaluate the landscape's overall sensitivity. As with the visual assessment, the assessment of the magnitude of landscape effects has considered both the illustrative scheme and the maximum parameters scheme, but the final assessment outcomes are based on the maximum parameters.
- 2.10 Tables 1-3 set out the criteria for the assessments of the value and susceptibility of visual receptors (i.e. people, typically pedestrians, walkers and residents at home) and, in combining these, to determine an overall assessment of visual receptor sensitivity. These are compatible with the principles outlined in paragraphs 6.30 – 6.41 of GLVIA3. Such categories are not strict, and receptors may be more or less sensitive within each category, depending on the particular circumstances. Tables 1, 2,3 and 4 sets out the terms and criteria used in the visual impact assessment to describe the magnitude of visual effects. The visual effects assessment is based on a detailed visual impact assessment undertaken at some 23 viewpoints. These viewpoints have been selected to represent a range of views from publicly accessible locations, representative of the views experienced by the potentially sensitive receptors (refer to Figures 1 and 6 for their location).
- 2.11 For landscape character effects, as per the principles outlined in paragraphs 5.38 – 5.57 of GLVIA3, assessments have been made as to landscape value and landscape susceptibility and, in combining these, to determine overall landscape sensitivity. The criteria used for assessing these are reproduced at **Tables 5 to 7**, Appendix A, and the

magnitude of landscape effects at **Table 8**. At **Table 9**, a matrix is used to help structure the assessment of the overall level of landscape or visual effect when the magnitude of change is combined with sensitivity. The gradation invites the decision-maker to consider the amount of weight that should be applied based on the degree of significance as part of the planning balance.

- 2.12 The general premise of the methodologies developed and practised by the landscape profession is essentially a test of the degree of change to a particular scene, in which the proposed elements are perceived to be different to the character of the scene and which usually result in an adverse effect where the proposal is not in character with that scene. Typically, for green field sites in rural scenes the general proposition is that new built forms are assessed to be out of keeping with character, thus having an adverse effect. This assessment adopts the approach whereby, on the precautionary basis, the effects would be adverse unless the contrary is demonstrated. GLVIA 3 advocates that effects should be identified as being adverse or beneficial. To this end all effects in this assessment can be considered to be adverse unless specifically stated.

3.0 LANDSCAPE RELATED PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 This section describes the background of relevant national and local planning policies, in so far as they relate to landscape matters, against which the development proposals will be determined. Rok Planning has prepared a Planning Statement which should be referred in conjunction with this report.

National Planning Policy

Planning Policy Framework:

- 3.2 The revised NPPF (the Framework) 2024 is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. The core message of the NPPF is the presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 3.3 Paragraph 8 is concerning achieving sustainable development and under 8b under a 'social objective' it states:
- to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being.*
- 3.4 Paragraph 11 establishes the presumption in favour of sustainable development which for decision taking means approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay.
- 3.5 Paragraph 20 identifies those strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and design qualities of places (to ensure outcomes support beauty and placemaking)
- 3.6 Paragraph 23 requires that allocations and their related strategic policies should bring land forward at a sufficient rate to address objectively assessed needs over the plan period in line with the presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 3.7 Paragraph 126 states that local planning authorities should take a proactive role in identifying and helping to bring forward land that may be suitable for meeting development needs.
- 3.8 Paragraph 136 identifies the contribution trees make to the character and quality of urban environments. It continues to state that planning policies and decisions should ensure that new streets are tree-lined, that opportunities are 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.

- 3.9 Specific to landscape within Section 15 “Conserving and enhancing the natural environment”, paragraph 187 requires that the planning policies and decisions contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by, inter alia, “protecting and enhancing valued landscapes....” and by “recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside”. The updated Framework, therefore, seeks the protection and enhancement of landscapes/countryside whether designated, valued or otherwise but distinguishes those that are “valued”, from those that are not, and attaches greater weight to those that are designated.

National Planning Policy Guidance

- 3.10 The NPPF is supplemented by Planning Practice Guidance, which incorporates elements of relevance to this Landscape and Visual Appraisal. In addition to design-related recommendations, the Planning Policy Guidance also incorporates issues related to the Natural Environment that reinforces the NPPF’s commitment to recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supports the use of landscape character assessment as a tool for understanding local distinctiveness and the use of Natural England’s guidance on landscape character assessment.

National Design Guide

- 3.11 The Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government published the National Design Guide in January 2021. Together with the National Model Design Code and Guidance Notes for Design Codes, the documents ‘illustrate how well-designed places that are beautiful, healthy, greener, enduring and successful can be achieved in practice’. It encompasses all current best practice thinking in urban design.

The National Design Guide identifies the components for good design and emphasises that good design should not only pay attention to buildings. Careful attention should also be given to the context for places and buildings, hard and soft landscape, technical infrastructure- transport, utilities and services such as drainage, and social infrastructure- social commercial, leisure uses and activities

Local Policy

- 3.12 A planning statement has been prepared by ROK Planning and should be referenced for planning policy relating to this planning application.
- 3.13 The Development Plan for North Hertfordshire consists of:
- The Local Plan (adopted November 2022)

- Neighbourhood Plans for the following areas:
 - Ashwell
 - Baldock, Bygrave & Clothall
 - Knebworth
 - Pirton
 - Preston
 - Wymondley

Policy SP9 of the Local Plan requires that strategic masterplans and planning applications for strategic housing sites and significant development to “create buildings, spaces and streets which positively reflect and respond to the local landscape, townscape and historic character”.

Policy D1: Sustainable Design sets out broad criteria that the design of development proposals should follow. The supporting text at paragraph 9.3 states that “a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) should be undertaken to assess the significance and effect of development proposals on the landscape and people’s views and visual amenity”.

Policy NE1 relates to strategic green infrastructure and states that development should protect the strategic green infrastructure network, particular assets of importance such as valued landscapes and the Chilterns AONB, rights of way networks, and long distance walking and cycling connections, e.g. the Chiltern Way, Hertfordshire way, National Cycle Route No. 12.

Policy NE2: Landscape states that “planning permission will be granted for development proposals that:

- a) Respect the sensitivities of the relevant landscape character area and have regard to the guidelines identified for built development and landscape management;
- b) Do not cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area or the landscape character area in which the site is located, taking account of any suitable mitigation measures necessary to achieve this;
- c) Are designed and located to ensure the health and future retention of important landscape features; and
- d) Have considered the long-term management and maintenance of any existing and proposed landscaping”.

- 3.14 The supporting text at paragraph 11.7 notes that there are 37 separate landscape character areas covering the District. These describe the distinctive landscape character area, based on factors such as the geology, landform, soil types and historical activities for each area. It goes on to state that “development should respect the sensitivities of each landscape character area and accord with the guidelines for managing change identified for each landscape character area in relation to built development and landscape management.”

4.0 LANDSCAPE CONTEXT

Landscape Character

- 4.1 Landscape character assessment (LCA) is the key tool for understanding the landscape and should be used to form the baseline for assessing landscape effects that may arise from development proposals. The main elements that make up the landscape are physical influences (geology, soils, landform, drainage and water bodies), land cover (types of vegetation and patterns and types of tree cover) and the influence of human activity (land use and management, character of settlements and buildings, pattern and type of fields and enclosure). The aesthetic and perceptual aspects of the landscape are also key factors such as scale, complexity, openness, tranquillity or wildness.
- 4.2 Many parts of the UK are already covered by existing character assessments at different scales, from broad-scale national or regional assessments, more detailed local authority assessments and in some cases fine-grain local or community assessments.

Published Landscape Character Assessments

- 4.3 The relevant published landscape character data and related assessments include the following:
- National Character Area Profile: Chilterns (NCA 110);
 - North Hertfordshire and Stevenage Landscape Character Assessment: Area 218 Pirton Lowlands

National Context

- 4.4 Countryside Character Volume 7: South East & London sets the Site and study area (**Figure 1**) within the Chilterns (NCA 110).
- 4.5 The key characteristics of the Chilterns relevant to this assessment are displayed as:
- *The chalk plateau is incised by parallel branching valleys gently shelving to the south-east into the London Basin. The large chalk aquifer is abstracted for water to supply London and its surrounds and also supports flows of springs, chalk streams and the River Thames.*
 - *There are several chalk streams. Features associated with a history of modification include historic mills, watercress beds, culverts and habitat enhancements.*
 - *The north-west-facing escarpment is an abrupt relief feature beside low-lying vales, breached notably by the Thames at the Goring Gap. The escarpment lowers northwards, terminating as distinct hills. The Chiltern ridge offers panoramic views.*

- *Within the Chilterns, views are enclosed within branching valleys, sunken routeways and extensive woodland and hedgerow-enclosed fields. There are hidden, tranquil pockets along single track lanes and rights of way.*
- *A mixture of arable, grassland and woodland and the numerous commons reflects the dominance of Grade 3 agricultural land. Ancient woodland has remained on extensive clay-with-flint deposits, while very steep slopes are rarely cultivated. There are, however, not inconsiderable areas of Grade 1 and 2 land that are associated with lower-lying areas and river valleys.*
- *The Chilterns are one of the most wooded lowland landscapes in England. The area is particularly renowned for its extensive native beechwoods, several of which are designated as part of the Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Other distinctive features include rare box woods, 'hanging' woods on steep slopes and rare yew woods, including Hartslock Wood SAC.*
- *Pre-18th-century fields defined by ancient, often sinuous hedged boundaries are scattered throughout, including co-axial fields. Parliamentary enclosure fields are limited. Large modern fields, usually with ancient boundaries, cover the better agricultural land, most notably in the north-east.*
- *Remnants of various historic land use types can combine rich and diverse habitats and archaeology. Many key places are publicly accessible, including Registered Parks and Gardens, historic downland and common land. Traditional flood plain landscapes and orchards are the most restricted in extent. Historic routeways, hedged boundaries and watercourses provide connectivity.*
- *Historic downland preserves prehistoric archaeology and supports high numbers of rare and scarce chalk grassland vascular plants, mosses and liverworts. Diversity is enhanced by a mosaic of chalk grassland, scrub and woodland, with Hartslock Wood SAC being one example.*
- *Species strongly associated with the Chilterns include the red kite, pasque flower, stag beetle, hiltern gentian, shepherd's needle, chalkhill blue butterfly and native box. Aston Rowant SAC protects an internationally important juniper scrub population. Farmland birds and deer are a feature of the wider countryside.*
- *Nucleated settlements of medieval origin and land farmed since prehistory are found alongside watercourses and springs in the through-valleys and at the foot of the scarp. Elsewhere, dispersed farmsteads dating from the medieval period and mid-19th-century development around commons are characteristic of the plateau.*

- *The River Thames and its flood plain mark a distinctive area in the south. The river is a focus for settlement, abstraction and recreation.*
- *Major transport routes, including motorways, radiate from adjacent Greater London, associated with significant 20th-century development and extensive urban fringe areas.*
- *Brick and flint are the dominant traditional building materials, with Totternhoe Stone (clunch) being less common, but still a distinctive*
- *Numerous parkland landscapes define large, historic estates. Designs by Humphry Repton and Lancelot 'Capability' Brown are represented, and the houses, follies and wooded features provide local landmarks.*
- *Extensive rights of way, commons, open access downland, woodland and some parklands provide access to the countryside. The Thames Path, the Ridgeway and the Grand Union Canal are high-profile recreation routes; locally promoted routes include the Chilterns Cycleway. Private leisure land uses, including golf courses and horse paddocks, are common near urban centres.*

4.6 In conclusion the landscape around the site displays many characteristics typical of the NCA such as hedgerow-enclosed fields....a mixture of arable, grassland and woodland There are hidden, tranquil pockets along single track lanes and rights of waylarge modern fields, usually with ancient boundaries, cover the better agricultural land used for arable and pasture land

District Context

- 4.7 In April 2002 North Hertfordshire District Council (NHDC) and Stevenage Borough Council (SBC) commissioned Jacobs Babbie (formerly the Babbie Group) to undertake the landscape character assessment of the District and the rural parts of Stevenage in accordance with current national guidance. The assessment process also required consultation with stakeholder groups.
- 4.8 The Landscape Character Assessment was adopted by NHDC as the Council's agreed Landscape Character Assessment for the District in March 2005. The information will be used for:
- Advising on development control matters for both NHDC and SBC
 - Policy development for future development plans
 - Providing a framework for other landscape planning

Countryside conservation and management activities, access and recreation projects and support to grant applications.

- 4.9 The site falls within Landscape Character Area 218 Pirton Lowlands. Its character is described as:

Large scale open, flat farming landscape given over predominantly to arable production. Remnant hedges, gappy and predominantly hawthorn but with occasional mature trees. Hedges generally well trimmed. Very little woodland cover except adjacent to settlements. Settlement pattern is nucleated with older settlements maintaining the use of local vernacular materials. Occasional farmsteads are less well integrated in terms of materials and general scale of farm buildings. Additionally the A600, Bedford Road, is quite prominent in the east.

- 4.10 The key characteristics are described as follows:

- *Large scale open flat farmland landscape*
- *Arable production*
- *Remnant hedgerows*
- *Woodland shelter around settlements*

- 4.11 The distinctive features comprise:

- *A600 Bedford Road*

- 4.12 The Character Area is then divided into the following subheadings, Physical Influences, Historical and Cultural Influences, Visual and Sensory Perception, Visual Impact, Accessibility, Community Views and Landscape Related Designations and the key points that relate to the Site are summarised below:

Physical Influences

Topography

- 4.13 *Flat, low lying but with a gentle fall to the north*

Degree of Slope

- 4.14 *Imperceptible*

Hydrology

- 4.15 *A number of local streams at Hexton and Pirton rising from the foot of the Chalk scarp to the south run northwards across the Character Area feeding minor tributaries of the river Ivel. Spring fed moats and ponds occurs at Pirton, Holwell and Hexton.*

Land Use and Land Cover

- 4.16 *The land use is given over predominantly to arable production. Very little woodland cover except that associated with local settlements, eg plantations of beech and sycamore at Hexton and Pirton Grange. Occasional pasture on fringes of settlements.*

Vegetation and Wildlife

- 4.17 *Remnant hedgerows include ash, willow and poplar trees. Hedges mainly hawthorn. Other roadside trees include ash, sycamore and occasional oak. White willows mark watercourses.*

This is a predominantly arable Character Area on flat ground. Arable weeds such as pansies and corn salads have become increasingly rare as agricultural practices have intensified, however, they can still be found at a few locations within the Character Area. Mature trees and the standing or fallen deadwood associated with them are very valuable from an ecological perspective supporting communities of saprophytic invertebrates and saproxylic animals in decline in the wider countryside. Hexton Manor Park has some of this wood pasture habitat.

Historical and Cultural Influences

- 4.18 *The Domesday Survey records that Pirton was assessed at 10 hides and of these 2 hides were in demesne. At the village of Pirton itself there is a preserved motte and bailey castle (Toot Hill) and the 12th century parish church of St. Mary. An Anglo-Saxon cemetery is documented and to the northeast at Rectory Farm is a medieval moated site, and a Scheduled Ancient Monument. In the 13th century the manor of Ickleford was held by the lords of Pirton as a quarter of the knight's fee by the family of Foliot. A medieval settlement site lies on the northwest perimeter of Ickleford and contains the 12th century church of St. Katherine. Prehistoric and Romano-British sites represented by ring ditches, occupation material and burials are located between Pirton and Ickleford. The village of Hexton is recorded in the Domesday Book as Hegestanestone and contains a 13th century church of St. Faith. Cropmarks of a rectangular enclosure are situated to the west and a medieval moated lies to the south of Shillington.*

Field Pattern

The historic agricultural landscape comprises a mixture of prairie fields with relict elements within, prairie fields with post-1950s boundary loss and post-1950s enclosure. 18th century and later enclosure is concentrated to the northeast of Pirton and pre-18th century enclosure and informal medieval parkland to the south of Shillington. Today there are patchy unmanaged hedges, few hedgerow trees and large-scale remnant field pattern.

Transport Pattern

Roads follow the older pattern of winding lanes but with more recent straight roads cutting across the area. The A600 Bedford Road is visible in the surrounding landscape

Settlements and Built Form

- 4.19 *The historic settlement pattern is characterised by villages, estates and farms. Some more recent ribbon development at Holwell and the A600 Bedford Road. There are large scale farmstead developments. Many fine traditional buildings occur particularly in and around the nucleated settlement of Pirton. Examples here date from the 16th century and include a range of types and materials. The stone built Rectory Farm was apparently once the manor house of the rectory manor and has attached barns including a tithe barn of 16th century origin. Other examples include Old Hall which is built of flint with brick quoins and stone dressings, Hammonds Farm of timber and brick, c.1600 and the moated courtyard house of Pirton Grange is also dated to c.1600. An exception in the use of building materials can be found at the moated manor house of Old Ramerick, Ickleford which has a 17th century wing built of clunch with brick quoins*

Visual and Sensory Perception

- 4.20 Bland, featureless, vast scale landscape with remnant hedges. Farmsteads tend to be large scale and dominant features not integrated in to the landscape. Vehicles on the A600 prominent in the landscape.

This landscape type is not common in this part of the District. It is, however a common feature of the lowlands landscape to the north

Visual Impact

- 4.21 *Local farmsteads in modern materials are a prominent feature in the landscape. Vehicles on the A600.*

Accessibility

- 4.22 *A number of footpaths radiate out from Pirton village across the surrounding landscape. The area is generally well served by public rights of way.*
- 4.23 The Landscape character Citation then provides a table that compares Condition with Robustness and summaries that the condition is poor and the robustness is weak and should be reconstructed
- 4.24 Finally, the Landscape Character assessment provides a Strategy and Guidelines for Managing Change and the following that relate to the proposed Site are as follows:
- *Promote planting of new woodland to encourage a diverse woodland flora especially in relation to sub-urban fringe areas*

- *For existing woodlands, encourage diverse woodland management practice and replanting of conifer plantations with new deciduous woodlands*
- *Promote the creation of buffer-zones between intensive arable production and areas of semi- natural habitat and the creation of links between habitat areas*
- *Promote hedgerow restoration along the lines of historic field boundaries and for the creation of visual links between existing woodland areas*
- *Promote the use of traditional field hedges in place of post and wire enclosures to new grazing areas*
- *Protect and preserve the pattern of narrow winding lanes and associated hedge banks, sunken lanes, verges and hedges*
- *Promote the diversity of hedgerow species and the planting of standard hedgerow trees*
- *Maintain and extend the rights of way network*
- *Encourage the development of unimproved species-rich grassland habitats*
- *Promote the creation of new ponds and the retention of existing ponds for wildlife*
- *Encourage the planting of shelter belts*
- *Encourage the planting of trees and other appropriate vegetation along watercourses.*

4.25 The proposed development will follow the landscape guidelines stated above in Section 4.24 particularly in relation to the promotion of planting of new woodland to encourage a diverse woodland flora especially in relation to sub-urban fringe areas. Promote hedgerow restoration along the lines of historic field boundaries and for the creation of visual links between existing woodland areas. Promote the use of traditional field hedges in place of post and wire enclosures to new grazing areas. Promote the diversity of hedgerow species and the planting of standard hedgerow trees. Maintain and extend the rights of way network. Promote the creation of new ponds and the retention of existing ponds for wildlife. Encourage the planting of shelter belts. Encourage the planting of trees and other appropriate vegetation along watercourses.

Site Landscape Character

4.26 The site follows the description within the character area citation as follows:.... *Large scale open, flat farming landscape given over predominantly to arable production.*

Remnant hedges, gappy and predominantly hawthorn but with occasional mature trees. Hedges generally well trimmed. Very little woodland cover except adjacent to settlements. Settlement pattern is nucleated with older settlements maintaining the use of local vernacular materials. Occasional farmsteads are less well integrated in terms of materials and general scale of farm buildings. Additionally the A600, Bedford Road, is quite prominent in the east.

Site Context and Landscape Character

- 4.27 When viewed alongside the description of the proposed development the baseline study will form the basis for the identification of the changes that will result in the landscape and visual effects. Landscape Baseline aims to provide an understanding of the landscape in the area that may be affected by the development. This is done by examining the constituent elements which make up the landscape, such as its character, its spatial distribution, its geographical extent, its history and its condition.
- 4.28 The site is approximately 20 ha and is located to the north of the existing residential dwellings located on Ryder Way and Ryder Avenue with the western extremities of Ickleford. The Bedford Road runs along its eastern boundary behind a semi mature hedge. The site comprises of a broadly rhomboid shaped piece of arable farmland. It is contained by the urban edge of Ickleford along its southern boundary, a semi mature hedge along its eastern boundary and is open on the western and northern boundary. The access into the Site will be from Bedford Road.
- 4.29 Public Right of Way ref no 16 also known as Ickneild Way runs through the middle of the Site. There are also a number of public rights of way within the vicinity of the Site to the east and west which are identified on **Figures 6 and 7**. Some of these have views towards the Site from the west looking east.
- 4.30 The topography of the Site is flat at approximately 60m AOD. The Site sits at the bottom of the River Oughton valley and there is rising land to the east at Letchworth Garden City and to the south west at Great Offley and Pegdon Hills and Hoo Bic Nature Reserve. This site is shown on the Topography Plan on **Figure 2**.
- 4.31 A potential Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) with buffers is illustrated on **Figure 4**. The 'with buffers' represents the approximate zone within which it may be possible to see any part of the Site. Within the ZTV there may be a number of areas from which no views of the Site or development will be possible as a result of intervening landform, vegetation or built form, which may obscure views.
- 4.32 The site is relatively small in comparison to the broad character descriptions described in the National Character Area Profile: Chilterns (NCA 110) but does have some of the

characteristics of those described in the North Hertfordshire and Stevenage Landscape Character Assessment: Area 218 Pirton Lowlands

- 4.33 The existing character of the site can be seen on **Views A to D** on **Figures 8 and 9** for the location of these on **Figure 7 Landscape and Visual (Location of Viewpoints and Site Appraisal Views)**.

5.0 THE PROPOSALS

- 5.1 The proposed landscape proposals will provide a mitigation strategy that will absorb the proposed development into the surrounding landscape.
- 5.2 The accompanying **Illustrative Masterplan** on **Figure 33** provides a strategy identifying the landscape and mitigation proposals for the proposed development. The landscape strategy proposes a series of interconnected public green spaces developed to enhance local biodiversity, the community's access to nature, and provide a sympathetic setting for new homes and a special educational needs (SEN) school.
- 5.3 The open spaces are divided into four distinct character areas (described below) that establish a patchwork of landscape and habitat types:
- Wetland Park;
 - Green Link;
 - Meadow Edge, and
 - Bedford Road Park.

Wetland Park

- 5.4 The Wetland Park aligns the site's northern edge where levels are low. Winding paths, pockets of wet woodland, mixed scrub and meadows are supplemented by linear swales, ponds and SuDS features. Engaging educational features such as information boards, activity spaces, and pond dipping areas, are located adjacent to the school providing an enhanced opportunity for nature learning. A linear wet woodland will reinforce the green belt edge and filter views of housing.

Green Link

- 5.5 The Green Link is formed around the locally popular Icknield Way, that leads between Ickleford and Pirton. A generous park-like space, the Green Link will feature open meadows, swales, a large play space, hedgerow and a new PROW spur that connects directly into the onward route, without the existing dog-leg along Bedford Road. The footpaths will be widened and surfaced to encourage use and connect local residents to their adjacent countryside.

Meadow Edge

- 5.6 Creating strong boundaries through reinforcing the sparse site edge green infrastructure is a key aspect of the Meadow Edge. Linear paths with seating and informal playful elements, meadows, and tree and scrub belts will provide a valuable public amenity,

ecological connectivity and habitat creation, and soften views towards new housing and Ickleford from the surrounding countryside

Bedford Road Park

- 5.7 Bedford Road Park completes a near 200m loop of the development that provides the new and existing community a valuable informal amenity space. Similar to the Meadow Edge, the Bedford Road Park provides a buffer between new homes and Bedford Road to soften traffic impact and filter views of development from the surrounding landscape.
- 5.8 Further details of the design and landscape strategy are set out in the Design and Access Statement which accompanies this application site.

6.0 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 This landscape and visual assessment has been based upon the scheme defined above and as set out in the Planning Statement by Rok Planning

Visual Impact Assessment

- 6.2 The visual impact assessment of the proposed development is based upon an analysis of the Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) of the principal features of the scheme and on the individual impact assessment upon the 23 identified representative viewpoints, all of which has been undertaken to the methodology set out in Appendix A. Figure 4 illustrates the potential ZTV (with buffers) of the development proposals and the locations of the selected representative viewpoints as shown on Figures 1 and 7. The ZTV is a computer generated based on 3D LiDAR topographical data which includes buildings and vegetation within the model. These are 'working tools', to assist the assessment, in particular with identifying potential viewpoints within the landscape, but should not be interpreted too literally.

Visual Effects

- 6.3 The assessment of visual effects and the value, susceptibility and sensitivity of the visual receptors is set out below, together with a description of the view, the assessment of the magnitude of effect at Year 1 and Year 15, the significance of that effect together with a commentary. The assessment is based on the seasonal conditions at the time of the fieldwork and the illustrated viewpoint photographs, i.e. Autumn 2025. We recognise that if the assessment had been undertaken in winter months, then the effects may be more. The viewpoint locations are illustrated on **Figures 1 and 7** with photographs provided for each of the 23 selected viewpoints at **Figures 10 to 32**.

Viewpoints 1 and 2: Footpath adjacent to Bedford Road (VP1) and Public Right of Way ref no 14 (VP2) (See Figures 10 and 11)

- 6.4 The sensitivity of the viewpoint for recreational receptors is high taking account of the criteria set out in Table 3 in Appendix A. The receptors will experience open views towards the north-eastern edge of the proposed detailed application element of the proposals with the outline element beyond. The magnitude of change will be **Substantial** with a Major Effect at Year 1, leading to a **Negligible** change with a Moderate/Minor Effect at Year 15 when assessed against the criteria set out in Table 9 in Appendix A. An extensive mitigation strategy is proposed along the northern boundary to create a new edge to the development in line with the recommendations in the regional landscape character assessment (See section 4.25). This planting will comprise of a new buffer

strip comprising of native understorey with native trees above along the north-eastern boundary of the Site to screen the proposed SEN school and the residential areas beyond. Therefore, whilst the effects at Year 1 will be **Significant** at Year 15 they will be **Not Significant** and an improvement to the existing as identified in the methodology in Appendix A.

Viewpoint 3: Footpath adjacent to Bedford Road, Residential dwelling called The Scotland and Bedford Road (See Figure 12)

Receptor 2a: Footpath adjacent to the Bedford Road and Residential Dwelling called The Scotland

- 6.5 The sensitivity of the viewpoint for recreational/ residential receptors is high taking account of the criteria set out in Table 3 in Appendix A. The receptors will experience open views towards the eastern edge of the proposed detailed application element of the proposals with the outline element beyond. The magnitude of change will be **Substantial** with a Major Effect at Year 1, leading to a **Negligible** change with a Moderate /Minor Effect at Year 15 when assessed against the criteria set out in Table 9 in Appendix A. An extensive mitigation strategy is proposed along the northern boundary to create a new edge to the development in line with the recommendations in the regional landscape character assessment (See section 4.25). This planting will comprise of a new buffer strip comprising of native understorey with native trees above along the north-eastern boundary of the Site to screen the proposed residential areas beyond. As it matures it will filter and screen the development beyond. Therefore, whilst the effects at Year 1 will be **Significant** at Year 15 they will be **Not Significant** and an improvement to the existing as identified in the methodology in Appendix A.

Receptor 2b: Bedford Road

- 6.6 The sensitivity of the viewpoint for road user receptors is moderate, taking account of the criteria set out in Table 7.3 in Appendix. The receptors will experience open views towards the northern edge of the proposed detailed application element of the proposals with the outline element beyond. The magnitude of change will be **Substantial** with a Major/ moderate Effect at Year 1, leading to a **Negligible** change with a Moderate/ Minor Effect at Year 15 when assessed against the criteria set out in Table 9 in Appendix A. An extensive mitigation strategy is proposed along the northern boundary to create a new edge to the development in line with the recommendations in the regional landscape character assessment (See section 4.25). This planting will comprise of a new buffer strip comprising of native understorey with native trees above along the north-eastern boundary of the Site to screen the proposed residential areas beyond. As it matures it will filter and screen the development beyond. Therefore, whilst the effects at Year 1 will be **Significant** at Year 15 they will be **Not Significant** and an improvement to the existing as identified in the methodology in Appendix A

Viewpoint 4: Public Right of Way ref no 16 (See Figure 13)

- 6.7 The sensitivity of the viewpoint for recreational receptors is high taking account of the criteria set out in Table 3 in Appendix A. The receptors will experience open views towards the proposed detail planning application area of the residential development on either side of the Public Right of Way. The outline area will be visible beyond. The magnitude of change will be **Substantial** with a Major Effect at Year 1, leading to a **Slight** change with a Moderate /Minor Effect at Year 15 when assessed against the criteria set out in Table 9 in Appendix A. An extensive mitigation strategy is proposed along the either side of the Public Right of Way in line with the recommendations in the regional landscape character assessment (See section 4.25). This planting will comprise of a new native hedge planting with native trees evenly spaced within the hedgerow. This will help to filter views of the proposed residential areas to the north and south of the path. As it matures it will filter and partially screen the development beyond. Therefore, whilst the effects at Year 1 will be **Significant** at Year 15 they will be **Potentially Not Significant** and an improvement to the existing as identified in the methodology in Appendix A.

Viewpoints 5 and 6 Footpath adjacent to Bedford Road and residential dwellings called The Dairy, Stapleford, Roxley and Five Oaks (See Figures 14 and 15)

- 6.8 The sensitivity of the viewpoint for recreational and residential receptors is high taking account of the criteria set out in Table 3 in Appendix A. The receptors will experience glimpsed views towards the eastern boundary of the Site and the detailed planning application development beyond through the existing overgrown hedge located alongside Bedford Road. The existing hedge provides a good degree natural mitigation restricting views to the lower portions of the site beyond and as the proposed development is set back from Bedford Road the dwellings closest to the road edge may be partially screened. The magnitude of change will be **Substantial** with a Major/ Moderate Effect at Year 1, leading to a **Negligible** magnitude of change with a Moderate/ Minor effect at Year 15 when assessed against the criteria set out in Table 9 in Appendix A. An extensive mitigation strategy is proposed along the eastern boundary to expand the existing overgrown hedgerow with new tree planting and understorey and the creation of a linear landscape buffer in line with the recommendations in the regional landscape character assessment (See section 4.25). In addition, there will be the introduction of trees within the new development. The proposed development will be set back from the hedgerow and linear open space. The new tree and understorey planting will as it matures, help to screen views of the proposed development. Therefore, whilst the effects at Year 1 will be **Significant** at Year 15 they will be **Not Significant** and an improvement to the existing as identified in the methodology in Appendix A.

Viewpoint 7: Footpath adjacent to Bedford Road (See Figure 16)

- 6.9 The sensitivity of the viewpoint for recreational and residential receptors is high taking account of the criteria set out in Table 3 in Appendix A. The receptors will experience views towards the south eastern boundary of the Site and the detailed planning application development beyond through the existing hedge located alongside Bedford Road. The hedge as it runs along the southern boundary becomes lower and less dense and thus views can be obtained into the Site. The proposed new access road is located at the southern end of the existing hedge which will allow views into the immediate site although a new open space will be located here to provide a buffer between the existing dwellings on the southern boundary and the proposed Site. The outline application will be visible beyond. The magnitude of change will be **Substantial** with a Major Effect at Year 1, leading to a **Slight** change with a Moderate /Minor Effect at Year 15 when assessed against the criteria set out in Table 9 in Appendix A. A mitigation strategy is proposed along the new access road which will comprise of semi mature trees. To the south of the road will be an open space with native understorey and native tree planting in line with the recommendations in the regional landscape character assessment (See section 4.25). This will help to filter views of the proposed residential areas to the north and west. As it matures it will filter and partially screen the development beyond. Therefore, whilst the effects at Year 1 will be **Significant** at Year 15 they will be **Not Significant** and an improvement to the existing as identified in the methodology in Appendix A.

Viewpoint 8: Ryder Way (See Figure 17)

- 6.10 The sensitivity of the viewpoint for road user receptors is moderate, taking account of the criteria set out in Table 3 in Appendix A. The receptors will experience oblique and glimpsed views of parts of the proposed detail planning application of the development at the end of Ryder Way. The magnitude of change will be **Slight** with a Moderate/ Minor Effect at Year 1, leading to a **Negligible** magnitude of change with a Minor Effect at Year 15 when assessed against the criteria set out in Table 7.9 in Appendix A. An extensive mitigation strategy is proposed along the southern boundary to expand the existing hedgerow at the end of the adjoining gardens and the creation of a linear open space with new tree planting and understorey in line with the recommendations in the regional landscape character assessment (**See section 3.24**). In addition, there will be the introduction of trees within the new development. Therefore, the effects at both Year 1 and Year 15 will be **Not Significant** as identified in the methodology in Appendix A.

Viewpoints 9, 10 and 11: Public Right of Way ref no 16 (See Figures 18,19 and 20)

- 6.11 The sensitivity of the viewpoint for recreational receptors is high taking account of the criteria set out in Table 3 in Appendix A. The receptors will experience direct views across the arable farmland towards the southern (Viewpoint 9) and western edge (Viewpoints 10 and 11) of the proposed outline planning application with the detailed element beyond. The views demonstrate the existing built-up edge of Ickleford to the right and middle of the view and the overgrown hedge screening Bedford Road in the

distance. The proposed development will run from the existing urban edge of Icklford but will be set behind a new 5 to 10m wide woodland buffer comprising of trees and understorey. The magnitude of change will be **Substantial** with a Major Effect at Year 1, leading to a **Negligible** magnitude of change with a Moderate/ Minor Effect at Year 15 when assessed against the criteria set out in Table 9 in Appendix A. An extensive mitigation strategy is proposed along the southern and western boundaries in line with the recommendations in the regional landscape character assessment (**See section 4.25**). In addition, there will be the introduction of trees within the new development. The proposed development will be set back from the woodland buffer. The new woodland buffer planting will, as it matures, help to screen views of the proposed development. Therefore, whilst the effects at Year 1 will be **Significant** at Year 15 they will be **Not Significant** and an improvement to the existing as identified in the methodology in Appendix A

Viewpoint 12: Public Right of Way ref no 21 (See Figure 21)

- 6.12 The sensitivity of the viewpoint for recreational receptors is high taking account of the criteria set out in Table 3 in Appendix A. The receptors will experience glimpsed views towards the southern side of the proposed outline planning application part of the development looking through the mature trees located along Public Right of Way ref no 16. There will be semi open views towards the northern part of the development until the mitigation planting has matured. The view demonstrates the built-up edge of Ickleford to the right of the view. The proposed development will run from the existing urban edge of Icklford running north to finish at Pound Farm. The magnitude of change will be **Substantial** with a Major Effect at Year 1, leading to a **Negligible** magnitude of change with a Moderate/ Minor Effect at Year 15 when assessed against the criteria set out in Table 9 in Appendix A. An extensive mitigation strategy is proposed along the northern, western and southern boundaries comprising of a new 5 to 10m wide woodland buffer comprising of trees and understorey in line with the recommendations in the regional landscape character assessment (**See section 4.25**). In addition, there will be the introduction of trees within the new development. The proposed development will be set back from the woodland buffer. The new woodland buffer planting will, as it matures, help to screen views of the proposed development. Therefore, whilst the effects at Year 1 will be **Significant** at Year 15 they will be **Not Significant** and an improvement to the existing as identified in the methodology in Appendix A

Viewpoint 13: Public Right of Way ref no 6 (See Figure 22)

- 6.13 The sensitivity of the viewpoint for recreational receptors is high taking account of the criteria set out in Table 3 in Appendix A. The receptors will experience glimpsed views towards the proposed development looking through the mature trees and hedgerow located along Public Right of Way ref no 6. The view demonstrates that from this

viewpoint due to the local topography the majority of the detailed and outline proposals will be obscured from view. The proposed development will run from the existing urban edge of Ickford but will be set behind a new 5 to 10m wide woodland buffer comprising of trees and understorey. The magnitude of change will be **Moderate** with a Major/ Moderate Effect at Year 1, leading to a **Negligible** magnitude of change with a Moderate/ Minor Effect at Year 15 when assessed against the criteria set out in Table.9 in Appendix A. An extensive mitigation strategy is proposed along the northern, western and southern boundaries comprising of a new 5 to 10m wide woodland buffer comprising of trees and understorey in line with the recommendations in the regional landscape character assessment (**See section 4.25**). In addition, there will be the introduction of trees within the new development. The proposed development will be set back from the woodland buffer. The new woodland buffer planting will, as it matures, help to screen views of the proposed development. Therefore, whilst the effects at Year 1 will be **Potentially Significant** at Year 15 they will be **Not Significant** and an improvement to the existing as identified in the methodology in Appendix A.

Viewpoint 14: Public Right of Way ref no 6 (See Figure 23)

- 6.14 The sensitivity of the viewpoint for recreational receptors is high taking account of the criteria set out in Table 3 in Appendix A. The receptors will experience glimpsed views towards the outline planning application part of the proposed development looking through the mature trees and hedgerow located along Public Right of Way ref no 6 with the detailed planning application area beyond. The view demonstrates the built-up edge of Ickleford to the right of the view. The magnitude of change will be **Substantial** with a Major Effect at Year 1, leading to a **Negligible** magnitude of change with a Moderate/ Minor Effect at Year 15 when assessed against the criteria set out in Table 9 in Appendix A. An extensive mitigation strategy is proposed along the western and southern boundaries comprising of a new 5 to 10m wide woodland buffer comprising of trees and understorey in line with the recommendations in the regional landscape character assessment (**See section 4.25**). In addition, there will be the introduction of trees within the new development. The proposed development will be set back from the woodland buffer. The new woodland buffer planting will, as it matures, help to screen views of the proposed development. Therefore, whilst the effects at Year 1 will be **Significant** at Year 15 they will be **Not Significant** and an improvement to the existing as identified in the methodology in Appendix A.

Viewpoint 15: Public Right of Way ref no 21 (See Figure 24)

- 6.15 The sensitivity of the viewpoint for recreational receptors is high taking account of the criteria set out in Table 3 in Appendix A. The receptors will experience open views to the northern part of the outline planning application with the detailed planning application area beyond. The existing hedge alongside Public right of Way ref no 21 provides natural mitigation screen of the southern part of both application areas. The magnitude of change will be **Moderate** with a Major/ Moderate Effect at Year 1, leading to a **Slight** magnitude of change with a Moderate Effect at Year 15 when assessed against the

criteria set out in Table 9 in Appendix A. An extensive mitigation strategy is proposed along the northern and western boundaries comprising of a new 5 to 10m wide woodland buffer comprising of trees and understorey in line with the recommendations in the regional landscape character assessment (**See section 4.25**). In addition, there will be the introduction of trees within the new development. The proposed development will be set back from the woodland buffer. The new woodland buffer planting will, as it matures, help to screen views of the proposed development. Therefore, whilst the effects at Year 1 will be **Potentially Significant** at Year 15 they will be **Potentially Not Significant** and an improvement to the existing as identified in the methodology in Appendix A.

Viewpoint 16: Public Right of Way ref no 14 (See Figure 25)

- 6.16 The sensitivity of the viewpoint for recreational receptors is high taking account of the criteria set out in Table 3 in Appendix A. The receptors will experience elevated views towards the northern parts of the outline application area with glimpsed views of the detailed planning application to the left of the view which will be partially screened by existing landform and existing intervening vegetation. The magnitude of change will be **Moderate** with a Major/ Moderate Effect at Year 1, leading to a **Slight** magnitude of change with a Moderate Effect at Year 15 when assessed against the criteria set out in Table 9 in Appendix A. An extensive mitigation strategy is proposed along the northern boundary to create a new edge to the development in line with the recommendations in the regional landscape character assessment (See section 3.24). This planting as it matures will screen views of the proposed development. Therefore, whilst the effects at Year 1 will be **Potentially Significant** at Year 15 they will be **Potentially Not Significant** and an improvement to the existing as identified in the methodology in Appendix A.

Viewpoint 17 and 18: Public Right of Way ref no 8 (See Figures 26 and 27)

- 6.17 The sensitivity of the viewpoint for recreational receptors is high taking account of the criteria set out in Table 7.3 in Appendix. The receptors will experience limited to no views towards the northern and eastern boundary of the Site due to the intervening trees and overgrown hedgerows located along side Bedford Road. The magnitude of change will be **Negligible** with a Moderate/ Minor Effect at Year 1 and Year 15. An extensive mitigation strategy is proposed along the northern boundary to create a new edge to the development in line with the recommendations in the regional landscape character assessment (See section 3.24). This planting as it matures will screen views of the proposed development. Therefore, the effects at both Year 1 and Year 15 will be **Not Significant** as identified in the methodology in Appendix A.

Viewpoints 19 and 20 : Public Right of Way ref no 18 and Wilbury Hill Picnic Area (See Figures 28 and 29)

- 6.18 The sensitivity of the viewpoint for recreational receptors is high taking account of the criteria set out in Table 3 in Appendix A. The receptors will experience limited to no views towards the Site due to the intervening rolling topography and the existing vegetation that surrounds Ickford. The magnitude of change will be **Negligible** with a Moderate/ Minor Effect at Year 1 and Year 15. Therefore, the effects at both Year 1 and Year 15 will be **Not Significant** as identified in the methodology in Appendix A.

Viewpoints 21, 22 and 23 : Public Right of Way ref no 27 (VP21) Hitchen Road (VP22) and Holwell Road (VP23) (See Figures 30, 31 and 32)

The sensitivity of the viewpoint for recreational receptors is high and moderate for road users taking account of the criteria set out in Table 3 in Appendix A. The receptors will experience limited to no views towards the Site due to the intervening rolling topography in the middle ground obscuring views of the proposed development. The magnitude of change will be **Negligible** with a Moderate/ Minor Effect at Year 1 and Year 15. Therefore, the effects at both Year 1 and Year 15 will be **Not Significant** as identified in the methodology in Appendix A

Summary of Visual Impact Assessment

- 6.19 In summary, the existing site is contained on its eastern boundary by a semi mature over grown hedge which helps to restrict views from the adjoining dwellings and the Bedford Road. The southern boundary is formed by the existing built up edge of Ickleford which contains it. There are immediate views from the north and west from the Ickneild way and the Public Rights of Way. An extensive area of woodland buffer planting will be located along the western, northern and southern boundaries and an expanded hedgerow with trees on the eastern boundary of the proposed development which will filter views from all directions towards the proposed development. The wider views to the north east and west will be filtered by existing topography and intervening vegetation.
- 6.20 There are twelve viewpoints (Viewpoints 1,2,3,4, 5, 6,7,9,10,11,12 and 14) which are significant at Year 1 as a result of the sensitivity of the receptors and their proximity to the development.
- 6.21 All the twelve will experience a temporary **Substantial** magnitude of change with a Major effect giving a **Significant** effect at Year 1. This will subsequently be mitigated by an extensive landscape strategy along the boundaries to create a new edge to the development in line with the recommendations in the regional landscape character assessment (See section 4.25). This planting will comprise of a new 5 to 10m wide woodland buffer comprising of native trees and understorey. As it matures it will filter and screen the development beyond. This will mitigate this temporary impact leading to a **Negligible** magnitude of change, resulting in a Moderate/ Minor effect which would result in a **Not Significant** impact at Year 15.

- 6.22 All the other viewpoints will have a **Not Significant** impact and therefore we conclude that the proposed development will be acceptable in terms of the Landscape and Visual Impact
- 6.23 The visual impacts of the construction process are likely to be more visible than the ultimate scheme, although these are of course temporary effects. It is likely that some parts of the construction process would be visible from some of the viewpoints at some time. The impacts of such temporary events are generally considered to be **Not Significant**.

Landscape Value, Susceptibility and Sensitivity

- 6.24 The consideration of landscape character effects takes two parts; the first relates to changes to the fabric of landscape features on the site and, the second, a consideration of how these changes would alter the key characteristics of the landscape of the site and its context. Evidently there is a link between the extent and degree of visual effects and the extent and degree of landscape character effects, as the former to a considerable degree is an expression of how such changes are perceived. As a consequence of the assessment of visual effects above and the limited visual harm to receptors within the landscape around the site the assessment of landscape character effects has been applied to the North Hertfordshire and Stevenage Landscape Character Assessment: Area 218 Pirton Lowlands.
- 6.25 In evaluating landscape value, it is appropriate to consider a range of factors (as defined GLVIA3 and the Landscape Institute's recent guidance note) to understand the specific attributes of value which a landscape may have to a greater or lesser degree. Such aspects may include whether the landscape is or has been afforded any local designation and/or any management policies which recognise particular values, its condition, distinctiveness, natural and cultural heritage interests, recreational value, functional value, perceptual aspects (such as scenic value and tranquillity/remoteness) and, also, its associations, typically in art or history. It is also important to define the area being considered. In this case, the appropriate area is the immediate landscape context of the potential site plus the site itself (as described in paragraphs 4.26 to 4.33 above); The table below sets out the assessment of landscape value against the criteria above.

Table 1: Landscape Value Assessment

Landscape unit	Landscape Designation	Landscape Value Aspects	Assessment (overall evaluation highlighted)
Immediate Landscape Context including the Application Site (as identified above)	The Site is undesignated	Condition	Good , Generally, in a good physical state as the site comprises of existing agricultural farmland
		Distinctiveness	Medium distinctiveness. The Site comprises of existing agricultural land surrounded by hedges and mature trees that are inherent with the character of landscape in the locality.
		Conservation Interests	Low The ecological integrity virtually will be minimal as all of the site comprises of existing arable farmland. The existing hedgerows may contain linear ecological foraging corridors for wildlife
		Heritage Interests	Low There are no heritage assets in the local landscape
		Recreational Value	High There are a number of public rights of way in the vicinity of the Site with a National Trail Ickneild Way running through the middle of the Site
		Functional Value	Medium . The site does form a function to the surrounding landscape.

		Perceptual Aspects (Scenic Quality)	Good value. The landscape has a semi rural feel Local views are available into the site but the longer distance views are filtered by existing mature trees, overgrown hedgerows and wider afield by intervening topography.
		Perceptual Aspects (Tranquillity and Remoteness)	Good value. The gently rolling landform, allows long distance views through the landscape to show up the landcover elements
		Associations	Good value. The Icknield Way runs through the middle of the site.

- 6.26 Overall, the landscape value can be catagorised as being of a **Local Value** landscape as stated in *Table 5* it states:

For undesignated landscapes and landscape features which are locally valued, and display evidence of responsible use and value.

- 6.27 The assessment of landscape susceptibility of the application site and its local landscape context is based on judgements of the degree of susceptibility of the landscape to the specific form of development envisaged. The landscape susceptibility of the application site, and its immediate landscape context, to a new residential development, open space and SEN school along with sports pitches and other infrastructure is considered to be **Moderate Susceptibility**. The methodology in *Table 6* states that a landscape of moderate susceptibility is described as follows:

Where the clarity of the key characteristics are clearly expressed and/or their robustness to change is moderately strong and/or views contribute to landscape character and/or policies and strategies promote or accept limited changes to key characteristics, and the changes to landscape character that could be brought

about by a development of the type, scale and location proposed would have a moderate compatibility with these factors.

- 6.28 Taken together with a **Local Value**, the **Moderate Susceptibility** of this landscape to the potential effects of this form of development means that the landscape character of this area of the Area 218 Pirton Lowlands is of **Moderate Sensitivity** to new development. As defined in *Table 7* as follows:

A landscape likely to be of local value and/or with features, elements, areas or special attributes of value or local value, that could have a moderate susceptibility to the type, scale and location of development proposed

Landscape Effects

- 6.29 Assessments of the magnitude of landscape effects are concerned with making “judgements about the size and scale of the effect, the extent of the area over which it occurs, whether it is reversible or irreversible and whether it is short or long term in duration”². Assessing the potential magnitude of the landscape effect requires consideration of the area and scale of the landscape that it is consider appropriate to consider for the purposes of assisting a decision-maker.
- 6.30 The consideration of landscape character effects takes two parts; the first relates to changes to the fabric of landscape features on the site and, the second, a consideration of how these changes would alter the key characteristics of the landscape of the site and its context.
- 6.31 In terms of the landscape elements that would be lost or altered, these can relate only to the site, and would include changes to the site’s topography, introduction of hard surfacing, lighting, the new dwellings and SEN school, sports pitches, open space and the soft landscape planting strategy. There would be the introduction of several positive, characteristic landscape elements that would assist in countering the other changes. These include the new native understorey and tree planting on the boundaries, new street trees and shrub and ground cover planting.
- 6.32 The changes to the topography would be minimal as the development will be located at a similar level to the existing topography using the natural contours to avoid excessive cut and fill. Together these would represent a **Moderate** adverse landscape change to the application site, which for a site of **Moderate** sensitivity would be of **Moderate** adverse and **Potentially Not Significant**.
- 6.33 Within the local landscape context around the site, and as perceived from these adjoining areas, there would be some **Moderate** adverse landscape effects to key perceptual characteristics, such as the sense of rurality, tranquillity, and scenic value of the landscape. These would be of **Moderate** adverse and **Potentially Not Significant**.

² Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 2013, Glossary, page 158

- 6.34 Beyond the local landscape context, in the context of the wider landscape the effects of the proposals would be minimal as a precedent for existing residential development in Ickleford to the south and south east has already been set adjacent to the Site and thus there would be little change to the landscape character and value.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The proposal is to construct a mixed-use development to provide a total of up to 230 dwellings, a residential care home (Use Class C2), an Independent Special School (ISS) and new sports pitch, with access from Bedford Road, landscaping, parking and SuDS comprising: Phase 1 – Application for full planning permission for the erection of 100 dwellings, an ISS, new sports pitch and associated parking, landscaping, open space and SuDS; Phase 2 – An outline application on the remaining part of the site for the erection of up to 130 dwellings, a residential care home (Use Class C2) and associated works with access from Bedford Road (all matters reserved apart from access).

Visual Impact

- 7.2 In summary, the existing site is contained on its eastern boundary by a semi mature over grown hedge which helps to restrict views from the adjoining dwellings and the Bedford Road. The southern boundary is formed by the existing built up edge of Ickleford which contains it. There are immediate views from the north and west from the Ickneild way and the Public Rights of Way. An extensive area of woodland buffer planting will be located along the western, northern and southern boundaries and an expanded hedgerow with trees on the eastern boundary of the proposed development which will filter views from all directions towards the proposed development. The wider views to the north east and west will be filtered by existing topography and intervening vegetation
- 7.3 There are twelve viewpoints (Viewpoints 1,2,3,4, 5, 6,7,9,10,11,12 and 14) which are significant at Year 1 as a result of the sensitivity of the receptors and their proximity to the development. All the twelve will experience a temporary Substantial magnitude of change with a Major effect giving a Significant effect at Year 1. This will subsequently be mitigated by an extensive landscape strategy along the boundaries to create a new edge to the development in line with the recommendations in the regional landscape character assessment (See section 4.25). This planting will comprise of a new 5 to 10m wide woodland buffer comprising of native trees and understorey. As it matures it will filter and screen the development beyond. This will mitigate this temporary impact leading to a Negligible magnitude of change, resulting in a Moderate/ Minor effect which would result in a Not Significant impact at Year 15.
- 7.4 The visual impacts of the construction process are likely to be more visible than the ultimate scheme, although these are of course temporary effects. It is likely that some parts of the construction process would be visible from some of the viewpoints at some time. The impacts of such temporary events are generally considered to be Not Significant.

Landscape Character

- 7.5 The changes to the topography would be minimal as the development will be located at a similar level to the existing topography using the natural contours to avoid excessive cut and fill. Together these would represent a **Moderate** adverse landscape change to the

application site, which for a site of **Moderate** sensitivity would be of **Moderate** adverse and **Potentially Not Significant**.

- 7.6 Within the local landscape context around the site, and as perceived from these adjoining areas, there would be some **Moderate** adverse landscape effects to key perceptual characteristics, such as the sense of rurality, tranquillity, and scenic value of the landscape. These would be of **Moderate** adverse and **Potentially Not Significant**.
- 7.7 Beyond the local landscape context, in the context of the wider landscape the effects of the proposals would be minimal as a precedent for existing residential development in Ickleford to the south and south east has already been set adjacent to the Site and thus there would be little change to the landscape character and value..

Landscape Strategy

- 7.8 The accompanying Illustrative Masterplan on Figure 33 provides a strategy identifying the landscape and mitigation proposals for the proposed development. The landscape strategy proposes a series of interconnected public green spaces developed to enhance local biodiversity, the community's access to nature, and provide a sympathetic setting for new homes and a special educational needs (SEN) school.
- 7.9 The open spaces are divided into four distinct character areas (described below) that establish a patchwork of landscape and habitat types:
- *Wetland Park;*
 - *Green Link;*
 - *Meadow Edge, and*
 - *Bedford Road Park.*

Wetland Park

- 7.10 The Wetland Park aligns the site's northern edge where levels are low. Winding paths, pockets of wet woodland, mixed scrub and meadows are supplemented by linear swales, ponds and SuDS features. Engaging educational features such as information boards, activity spaces, and pond dipping areas, are located adjacent to the school providing an enhanced opportunity for nature learning. A linear wet woodland will reinforce the green belt edge and filter views of housing.

Green Link

- 7.11 The Green Link is formed around the locally popular Icknield Way, that leads between Ickleford and Pirton. A generous park-like space, the Green Link will feature open meadows, swales, a large play space, hedgerow and a new PROW spur that connects

directly into the onward route, without the existing dog-leg along Bedford Road. The footpaths will be widened and surfaced to encourage use and connect local residents to their adjacent countryside.

Meadow Edge

- 7.12 Creating strong boundaries through reinforcing the sparse site edge green infrastructure is a key aspect of the Meadow Edge. Linear paths with seating and informal playful elements, meadows, and tree and scrub belts will provide a valuable public amenity, ecological connectivity and habitat creation, and soften views towards new housing and Ickleford from the surrounding countryside

Bedford Road Park

- 7.13 Bedford Road Park completes a near 200m loop of the development that provides the new and existing community a valuable informal amenity space. Similar to the Meadow Edge, the Bedford Road Park provides a buffer between new homes and Bedford Road to soften traffic impact and filter views of development from the surrounding landscape.

APPENDIX A: Methodology

Table 1: Visual Receptor Value Criteria

Value of Location or View	Description
Very High or National Value	A scenic view in a landscape that has been designated at a national level, e.g. National Parks or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, particularly views from a national long distance trail or promoted routes in these landscapes, or a recognised view to or from a distinctive feature designated at a national level, e.g. Scheduled Ancient Monument, Listed Building and Registered Historic Park & Garden.
High or County Value	A view from within a designated landscape or a popular view recognised in publications and/or visitor guides for promoted routes and locations of interest.
Moderate or Community Value	A view in an undesignated landscape which may be locally valued and displays evidence of responsible use.
Low or Unvalued	Where the landscape has been despoiled and there is evidence that society does not value the view or landscape.
Private Value	A private view, e.g. from a residential property, that is likely to be valued by the occupants.

Table 2: Visual Receptor Susceptibility

Receptor Group	Location Susceptibility
Residents	High - would view the proposed development in the primary views from their property (e.g. principal living rooms and sitting areas in gardens), would be stationary or moving slowly about their property, would see the development on a daily basis, could be orientated towards the development, and would value these views. High/Moderate - would view the proposed development in the secondary views from their property (e.g. bedrooms and driveway), would be stationary or moving slowly at these locations, would see the development on a daily basis, could be orientated towards the development, and would value these views. Moderate - would view the proposed development from limited locations on their property (e.g. bathrooms and attic windows), would be stationary or moving slowly at these locations, would see the development on a daily basis, could be orientated towards the development, and would value these views.
Recreational receptors	High - are stationary or moving slowly (e.g. walking, cycling or horse riding), can be orientated towards the development, are at that location primarily in order to enjoy the view/landscape.

	High/Moderate - are stationary or moving slowly (e.g. walking, cycling or horse riding), can be orientated towards the development, are at that location primarily in order to enjoy the view/landscape but also for other purposes. Moderate - are stationary or moving slowly, can be orientated towards the development, may be at that location in order to enjoy the view/landscape but would have another primary purpose for being there (e.g. playing sport).
Road and rail users (motorists, passengers, bus and train travellers)	High/Moderate – in locations where they are moving steadily/swiftly, can be orientated towards the development, are likely to be at that location primarily in order to enjoy the view/landscape. Moderate - in locations where they are moving steadily/swiftly, can be orientated towards the development, may be at that location in order to enjoy the view/landscape but may also have other purposes (e.g. journey to work). Moderate/Low - in locations where they are moving swiftly, with a direction of travel that is oblique or side-on to the development, are likely to be travelling for a purpose other than in order to enjoy the view (e.g. higher speed long distance travel).
Outdoor workers	Moderate - outdoor workers and school children in locations where they may be moving slowly, can be orientated towards the development, may experience the view on a daily basis, may be at that location in order to enjoy the view but will have other purposes. Medium/Low - outdoor workers in locations where they may be moving slowly, can be orientated towards the development, may experience the view on a daily basis, but are at that location primarily to undertake activities unconnected with the view.
Indoor workers	Low - indoor receptors with limited views in this direction, who are in that location primarily to undertake activities unconnected with the view.

Table 3: Visual Receptor Sensitivity Criteria

Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Description
Very High Sensitivity	Where the receptor would be stationary or moving slowly, would be likely to be exposed for consistent and prolonged periods and/or whose attention or main interest would be likely to be the landscape and views; particularly, but not necessarily limited to, users of promoted Public Rights of Way within landscapes designated at a national level, users of national trails and promoted long distance routes or at heritage assets, in these landscapes or other valued landscapes, where awareness of changes to visual amenity is likely to be acute.
High Sensitivity	Where the receptor would be stationary, moving slowly or steadily, would be likely to be exposed for consistent and prolonged periods and/or whose attention or interest is likely to include the landscape and views; typically residents at home, users of Public Rights of Way and country lanes, where awareness of changes to visual amenity is likely to be elevated.
Moderate Sensitivity	Where the receptor would be moving steadily or swiftly, would be likely to be exposed to the change for infrequent and short periods, and/or whose attention and interest may include the landscape or views but not primarily; typically travellers on roads, rail or other transport routes where awareness of change to visual amenity is likely to be limited.

Low Sensitivity	Where the receptor would be moving swiftly, would be exposed to the change occasionally and for very short periods, and/or whose attention or interest is not on views or landscape; typically people engaged in higher speed travel, engaged in organised outdoor sport (which does not involve an appreciation of views) and outdoor workers where the setting may be of importance to the quality of working life.
Negligible Sensitivity	Where the receptor would be predominantly inside and at their place of work focused on their work activity and where setting is not important to the quality of working life and awareness of change to visual amenity is likely to be negligible.

Table 4: Magnitude of Visual Effects Criteria

Magnitude of Change	Description
Very Substantial	Where the proposed development would be openly visible in its entirety or near entirety, the development would be in stark contrast to the landscape context and may be perceived to be close to the viewpoint, such that it would be the dominant adverse/beneficial feature in the scene.
Substantial	Where the proposed development would be visible in its entirety or partly screened, the development would contrast with the landscape context and may be perceived to be in the near or middle distance, such that it would stand out as a prominent adverse/beneficial feature in the scene.
Moderate	Where the proposed development would be visible in its entirety or partly screened, the development may contrast with the landscape context and may be perceived to be in the middle distance or at closer distances if more screened, such that it would be evident as a noticeable adverse/beneficial feature in the scene.
Slight	Where the proposed development would be visible in its entirety or partly screened, the development may contrast with the landscape context and may be perceived to be in the distance or far distance, or at closer distances and largely screened, such that it would be a visible adverse/beneficial feature in the scene.
Negligible	Where the proposed development would be almost entirely screened, the development may contrast with the landscape context and may be perceived to be in the far distance, or at closer distances and substantially screened such that it would be a barely discernible adverse/beneficial feature in the scene.

Table 5: Landscape Value Criteria

Landscape Value	Description
Very High or International Value	Where the landscape has been designated at an international level, e.g. a World Heritage Site, and the purposes of which include landscape and/or recreational opportunities.
High or National Value	Where the landscape has been designated at a national level, e.g. National Parks (England, Scotland and Wales), Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (England, Wales and NI), Heritage Coasts (England and Wales), LANDMAP VSAA Outstanding Overall Evaluation (Wales) or where a landscape feature has been designated at a national level, e.g. Scheduled Ancient Monument, and forms a highly distinctive landscape feature.
Moderate-high or County/District Value	Regional Parks, landscape designations in Structure, Unitary or Local Development Plans, LANDMAP VSAA High Overall Evaluation (Wales) or a landscape feature that has been designated at a County/Borough/District level and forms a distinctive landscape feature.
Moderate or Local Value	For undesignated landscapes and landscape features which are locally valued, LANDMAP VSAA Moderate Overall Evaluation (Wales) and display evidence of responsible use and value.
Low or Unvalued	Where the landscape and/or landscape features have been despoiled and there is evidence that society does not value the landscape and/or landscape features, e.g. fly tipping, abandoned cars, litter, vandalism, etc.

Table 6: Landscape Susceptibility Criteria

Landscape Susceptibility	Description
Very High susceptibility	Where the clarity of the key characteristics are very strongly expressed and/or their robustness to change is fragile and/or views are an essential characteristic, and/or policies and strategies aim to achieve “no change” to landscape character, and the changes to landscape character that could be brought about by a development of the type, scale and location proposed would be incompatible with these factors.
High Susceptibility	Where the clarity of the key characteristics are strongly expressed and/or their robustness to change is weak and/or views are an important characteristic and/or policies and strategies aim to conserve the key characteristics, and the changes to landscape character that could be brought about by a development of the type, scale and location proposed would have a poor compatibility with these factors.
Moderate susceptibility	Where the clarity of the key characteristics are clearly expressed and/or their robustness to change is moderately strong and/or views contribute to

	landscape character and/or policies and strategies promote or accept limited changes to key characteristics, and the changes to landscape character that could be brought about by a development of the type, scale and location proposed would have a moderate compatibility with these factors.
Slight susceptibility	Where the clarity of the key characteristics are vaguely expressed and/or their robustness to change is strong and/or views are incidental to landscape character and/or policies and strategies promote or accept that the landscape could evolve, and the changes to landscape character that could be brought about by a development of the type, scale and location proposed would have a good compatibility with these factors.
Negligible susceptibility	Where the key characteristics are muddled and/or their robustness to change is very strong and/or views are irrelevant to landscape character and/or policies and strategies promote or accept major changes to key characteristics and the changes to landscape character that could be brought about by a development of the type, scale and location proposed would have excellent compatibility with these factors.

Table 7: Landscape Sensitivity Criteria

Landscape Sensitivity	Description
Very High sensitivity	A landscape likely to be of international or national value and/or with features, elements, areas or special qualities of international or national value, that could be very susceptible to the type, scale and location of development proposed.
High sensitivity	A landscape likely to be of national or County/Borough/District value and/or with features, elements, areas or special attributes of value, that could be very susceptible or susceptible to the type, scale and location of development proposed.
Moderate sensitivity	A landscape likely to be of national, County/Borough/District or local value and/or with features, elements, areas or special attributes of value or local value, that could have a moderate or slight susceptibility to the type, scale and location of development proposed.
Low sensitivity	A landscape likely to be of local value and/or with features, elements, areas or special attributes of value, that could have a slight susceptibility to the type, scale and location of development proposed.
Negligible sensitivity	A landscape that is likely to be unvalued and/or with features, elements, areas or special qualities that are unvalued, and that could have a slight or a negligible susceptibility to the type, scale and location of development proposed.

Table 8: Magnitude of Landscape Effects Criteria

Magnitude of Change	Description
Very Substantial adverse (or beneficial)	Loss or modification of landscape elements and features, or addition of new elements and features, which result in a comprehensive change to the key characteristics and character of the landscape (including perceptual character).
Substantial adverse (or beneficial)	Loss or modification of landscape elements and features, or addition of new elements and features, which result in a large change to the key characteristics and character of the landscape (including perceptual character).
Moderate adverse (or beneficial)	Loss of landscape elements and features, or addition of new ones, which result in discernible changes to landscape characteristics and character (including perceptual character).
Slight adverse (or beneficial)	A perceptible but small change to landscape characteristics and character (including perceptual character) as a result of the loss of landscape elements and features or addition of new ones.
Negligible adverse (or beneficial)	A barely perceptible change to landscape characteristics and character.

Table 9: Overall Assessment of Landscape and Visual Effects Criteria (Significance)

	Magnitude of Change				
Sensitivity	<i>Very Substantial</i>	<i>Substantial</i>	<i>Moderate</i>	<i>Slight</i>	<i>Negligible</i>
<i>Very High</i>	Major ++	Major +	Major	Major - Moderate	Moderate
<i>High</i>	Major +	Major	Major - Moderate	Moderate	Moderate - Minor
<i>Moderate</i>	Major	Major - Moderate	Moderate	Moderate - Minor	Minor
<i>Low</i>	Major - Moderate	Moderate	Moderate - Minor	Minor	Minor - Negligible
<i>Negligible</i>	Moderate	Moderate - Minor	Minor	Minor - Negligible	Negligible

Key

	Significant effect
	Potentially significant effect considered with other viewpoint effect evaluations
	Not a significant effect

APPENDIX B

Visual Impact Assessment Summary Table

VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT TABLE

Viewpoint	Range	Sensitivity of Viewpoint/ Type Full/ Partial/Glimpse	Magnitude of Change at Year 1	Impact Effect and Significance Year 1	Magnitude of Change at Year 15	Impact Effect and Significance Year 15
1. Footpath adjacent to Bedford Road	10m	High (Recreational) Full Open	Substantial	Major Significant	Negligible	Moderate/ Minor Not Significant
2. Public Right of Way (ref no 14)	30m	High (Recreational) Limited	Substantial	Major Significant	Negligible	Moderate/ Minor Not Significant
3. Footpath adjacent to Bedford Road and Residential dwelling called The Scotland	10m	High (Recreational and Residential) Full Open	Substantial	Major Significant	Negligible	Moderate/ Minor Not Significant
Bedford Road		Moderate (Road) Full Open	Substantial	Major/ Moderate Significant	Negligible	Minor Not Significant
4. Public Right of Way (ref no 15)	15m	High (Recreational) Open	Substantial	Major Significant	Slight	Moderate/ Minor Potentially Not Significant
5. Public Right of Way (ref no 15)	15m	High (Recreational) Glimpsed	Substantial	Major Significant	Negligible	Moderate/ Minor Not Significant
6. Footpath adjacent to Bedford Road and Residential dwellings called Roxley and Five Oaks	15m	High (Recreational and Residential) Glimpsed	Substantial	Major Significant	Negligible	Moderate/ Minor Not Significant

7. Footpath adjacent to Bedford Road	25m	High (Recreational) Glimpsed	Substantial	Major Significant	Slight	Moderate/ Minor Potentially Not Significant
8. Ryder Way	170m	Moderate (Road) Glimpsed	Slight	Moderate/ Minor Not Significant	Negligible	Minor Not Significant
9. Public Right of Way (ref no 16)	210m	High (Recreational) Open	Substantial	Major Significant	Negligible	Moderate/ Minor Not Significant
10. Public Right of Way (ref no 16)	210m	High (Recreational) Open	Substantial	Major Significant	Negligible	Moderate/ Minor Not Significant
11. Public Right of Way (ref no 16)	210m	High (Recreational) Open	Substantial	Major Significant	Negligible	Moderate/ Minor Not Significant
12. Public Right of Way (ref no 21)	220m	High (Recreational) Open	Substantial	Major Significant	Negligible	Moderate/ Minor Not Significant
13. Public Right of Way (ref no 6)	490m	High (Recreational) Glimpsed	Moderate	Major/ Moderate Potentially Significant	Negligible	Moderate/ Minor Not Significant
14. Public Right of Way (ref no 6)	490m	High (Recreational) Glimpsed	Substantial	Major Significant	Negligible	Moderate/ Minor Not Significant
15. Public Right of Way (ref no 21)	490m	High (Recreational) Glimpsed	Moderate	Major/ Moderate Potentially Significant	Slight	Moderate Potentially` Not Significant
16. Public Right of Way (ref no 14)	620m	High (Recreational) Glimpsed	Moderate	Major/ Moderate Potentially Significant	Slight	Moderate Potentially` Not Significant
17. Public Right of Way (ref no 8)	350m	High (Recreational) Limited	Negligible	Moderate/ Minor Not Significant	Negligible	Moderate/ Minor Not Significant

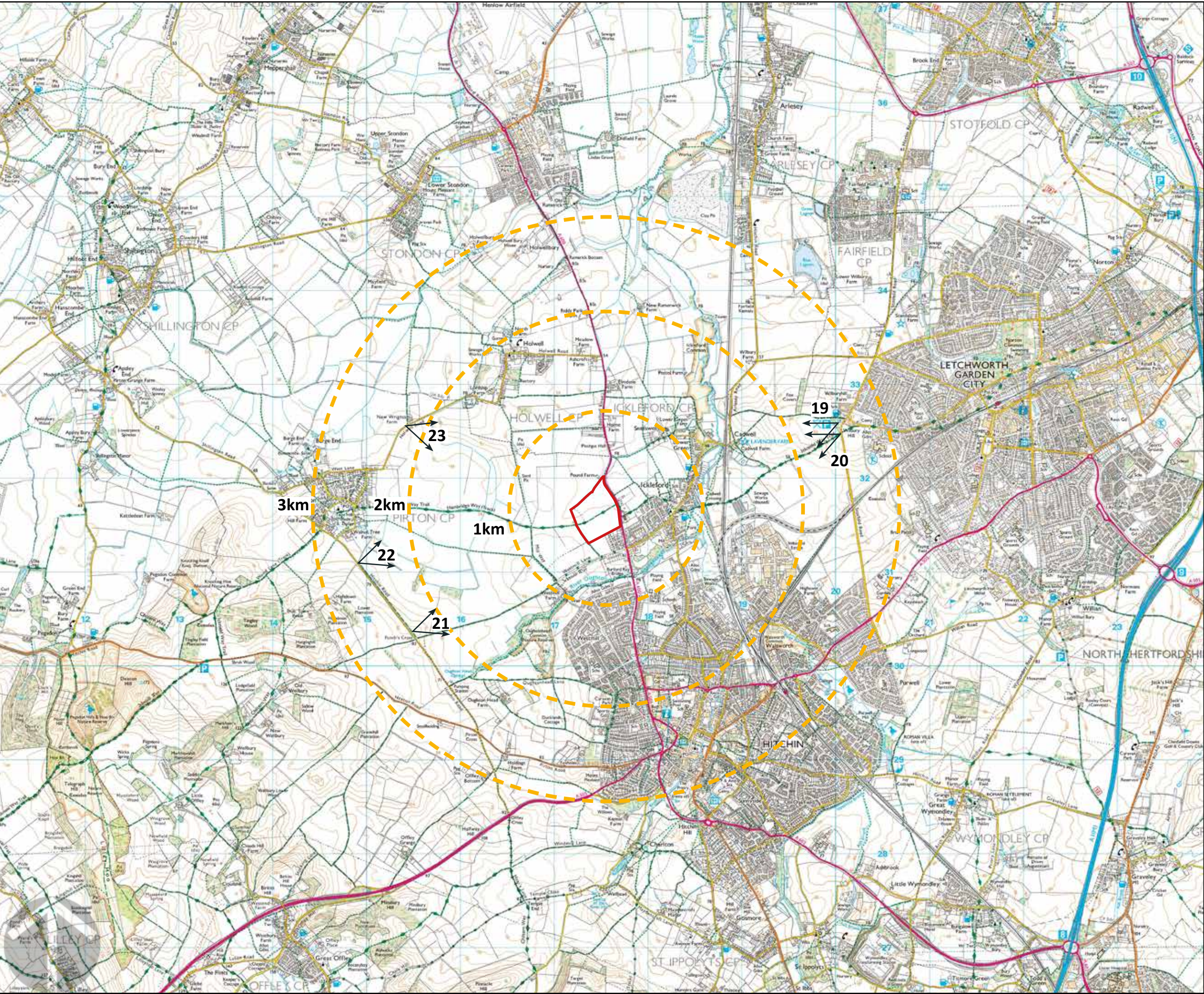
18. Public Right of Way (ref no 8)	350m	High (Recreational) Limited	Negligible	Moderate/ Minor Not Significant	Negligible	Moderate/ Minor Not Significant
19. Public Right of Way (ref no 18)	2.45 km	High (Recreational) Limited	Negligible	Moderate/ Minor Not Significant	Negligible	Moderate/ Minor Not Significant
20. Public Right of Way (ref no 21)	2.5km	High (Recreational) Limited	Negligible	Moderate/ Minor Not Significant	Negligible	Moderate/ Minor Not Significant
21. Public Right of Way (ref no 27)	2.1km	High (Recreational) Limited	Negligible	Moderate/ Minor Not Significant	Negligible	Moderate/ Minor Not Significant
22. Hitchin Road	2.35 km	Moderate (Road) Limited	Negligible	Minor Not Significant	Negligible	Minor Not Significant
23. Holwell Road	2.0km	Moderate (Road) Limited	Negligible	Minor Not Significant	Negligible	Minor Not Significant

APPENDIX C

Landscape Supporting Graphics

05-1088-P03
Land at Pound Farm
Landscape Supporting Graphics
February 2026





KEY

- Site Boundary
- Location of Wider Viewpoint
- 1km
Kilometre line from centre of the Site
- Public Right of Way

revision	date	description	dwn	chkd
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Gloucester House,
399 Silbury Boulevard
Milton Keynes
MK9 2AH

T 01908 303701
W www.enplan.net



project	scale
05-1088	1:25000 @ A3
Land at Pound Farm	date
	Feb 2026
title	drawn by
Site Context	ZX
(Location of Wider Viewpoints)	checked
	RH
drawing number	revision
Figure 1	P04



KEY

Site Boundary

<=35m AOD

35-40m AOD

40-45m AOD

45-50m AOD

50-55m AOD

55-60m AOD

60-65m AOD

65-70m AOD

70-75m AOD

75-80m AOD

80-85m AOD

85-90m AOD

90-95m AOD

95-100m AOD

100-105m AOD

105-110m AOD

110-115m AOD

115-120m AOD

120-125m AOD

125-130m AOD

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140-145m AOD

145-150m AOD

150-155m AOD

155-160m AOD

160-165m AOD

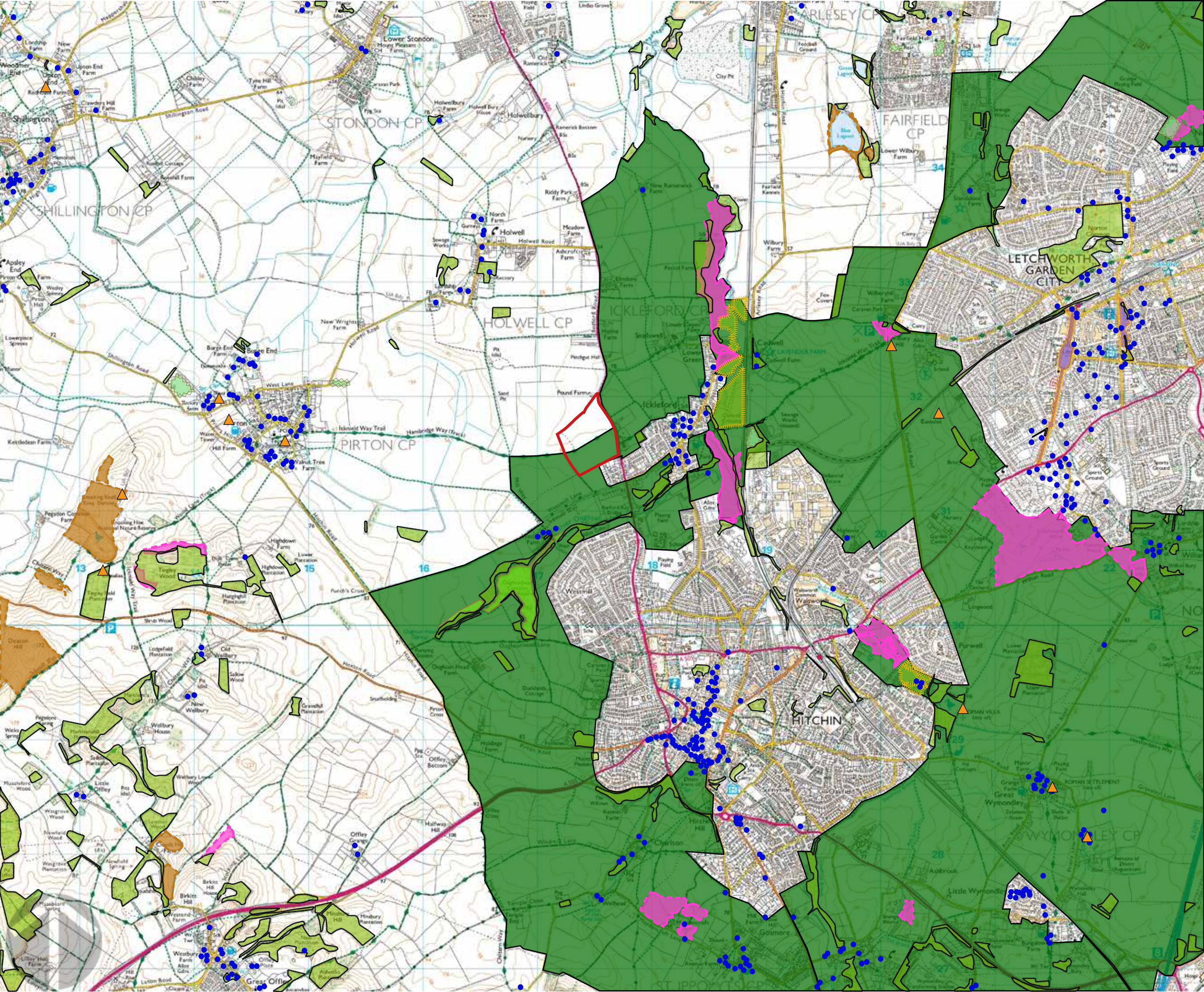
165-170m AOD

170-175m AOD

175-180m AOD

>180m AOD

revision	date	description	dwn	chkd
Gloucester House, 399 Silbury Boulevard Milton Keynes MK9 2AH T 01908 303701 W www.enplan.net				
project		scale		
05-1088		1:25000 @A3		
Land at Pound Farm		date		
		Feb 2026		
title		drawn by		
Topography Plan		ZX		
		checked		
		RH		
drawing number		revision		
Figure 2		P04		



KEY

- Site Boundary
- Listed Buildings
- Historic Monument
- Priority Habitat Inventory - Lowland Meadows
- Priority Habitat Inventory - Good quality semi-improved grassland
- Priority Habitat Inventory - Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh
- Priority Habitat Inventory - Lowland Calcareous Grassland
- Priority Habitat Inventory - Deciduous Woodland
- Priority Habitat Inventory - Traditional Orchards
- Registered Parks and Gardens
- Metropolitan Green Belt

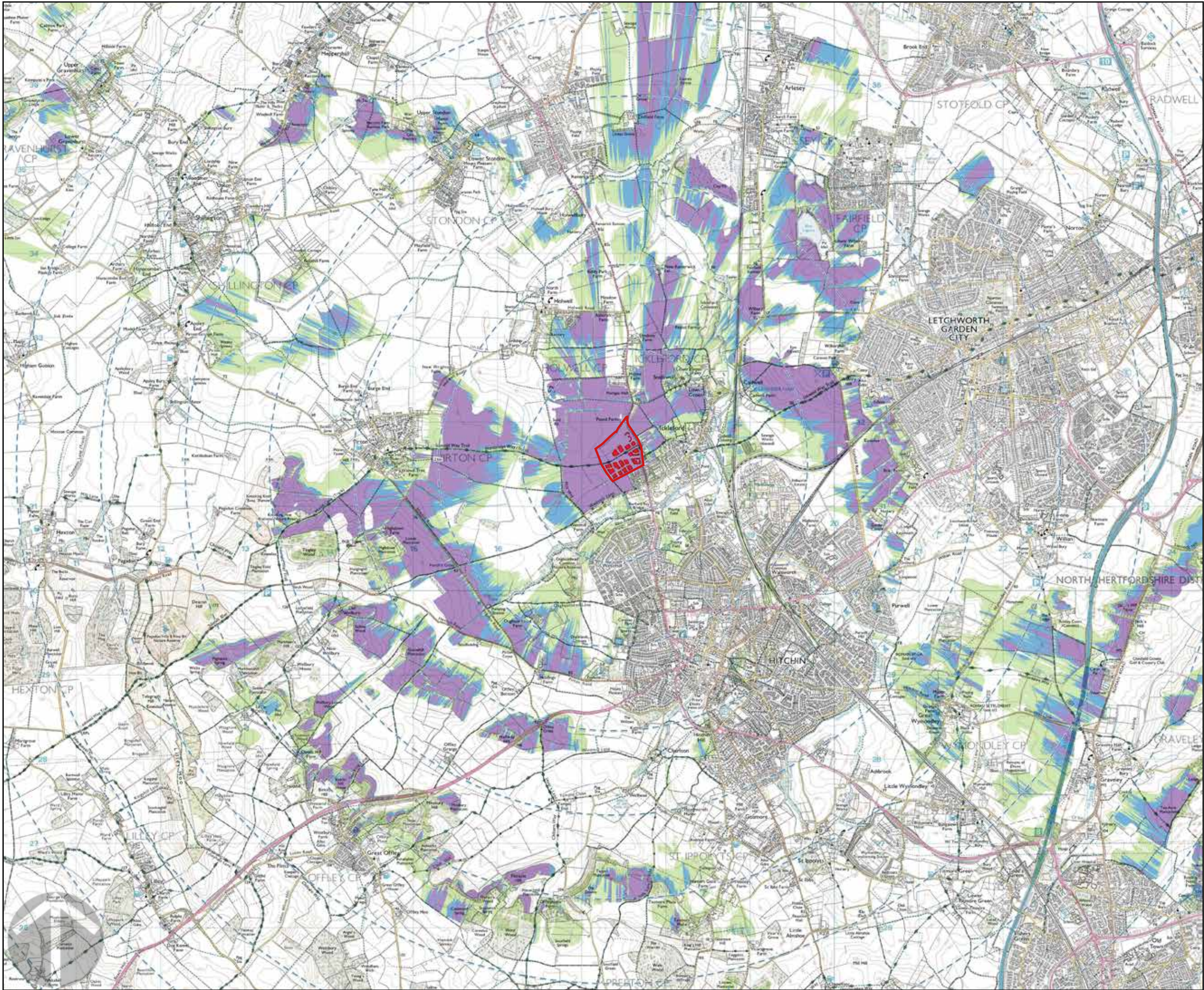
revision	date	description	dwn	chkd
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project	scale
05-1088	1:25000 @A3
Land at Pound Farm	date
	Feb 2026
title	drawn by
Designation Plan	ZX
	checked
	RH
drawing number	revision
Figure 3	P04



KEY

- Site Boundary
- Location of reference markers
- Radius lines from site centre in km
- Filtered Views
- Unfiltered Views

Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) with buffers

The reference marker is at the highest point of the proposed building above proposed ground level. A ZTV map illustrates the potential (or theoretical) visibility of an object in the landscape. The phrase "potential visibility" is used to describe the result because the analysis takes into account any landscape features such as trees, woodland or buildings, etc. The analysis is made on the basis of topography using O.S Terrain 5 data. Model resolution: Lidar data @1m grid, resampled to 2.5m grid. Map resolution: 1:25k analysis @ 2.5m per pixel (to print at 100 pixels per cm / 254 pixels per inch) Observer Height: 1.6m

Extent of ZTV: analysis performed to 5km radius. "potential screened/filtered views" faded beyond 2km.

Reference points were positioned along the ridges and around the edge of the proposed building and were set at the proposed finished roof level being 9m above ground level

Purple shading describes potential unobstructed, year-round views (visibility across the 'FZDSM' surface model). Green shading describes potential screened/filtered views, especially in winter (additional visibility across the 'DSM' model).



revision	date	description	dwn	chkd
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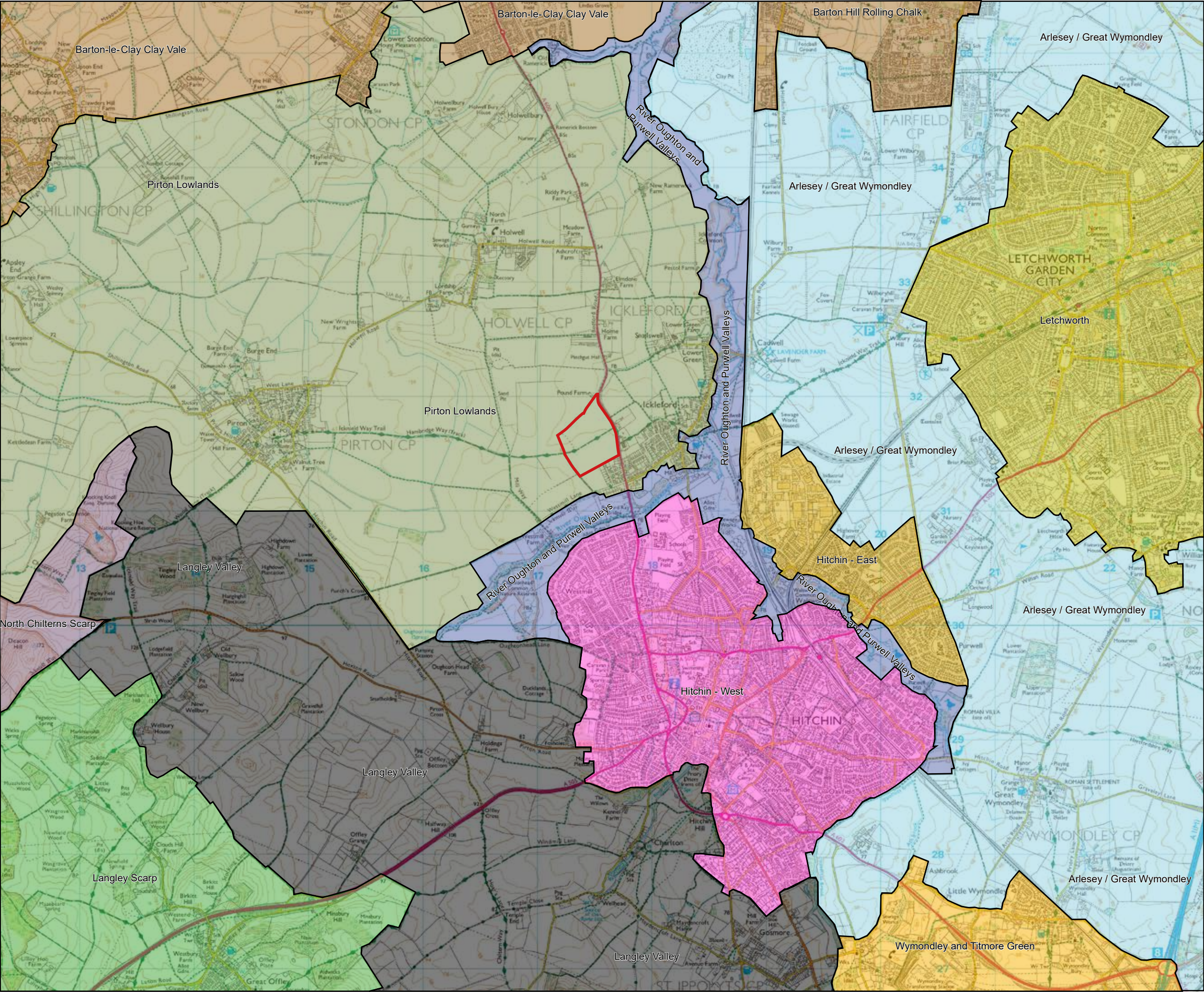
Gloucester House,
399 Silbury Boulevard
Milton Keynes
MK9 2AH

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project	scale
05-1088	1:25000 @ A3
Land at Pound Farm	date
	Feb 2026
title	drawn by
Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) with Buffers	ZX
	checked
	RH

drawing number	revision
Figure 4	P04

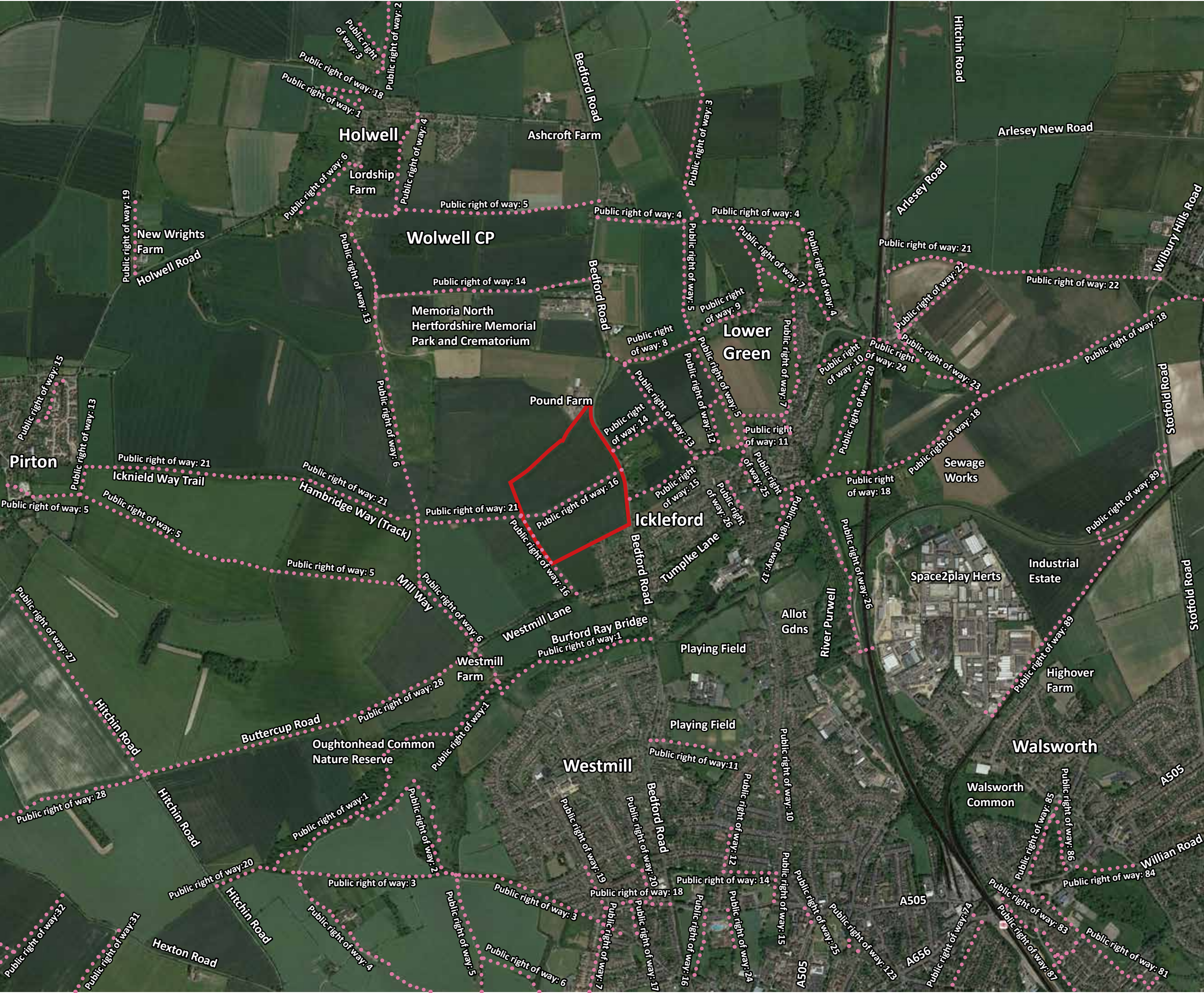


KEY

Site Boundary

Pirton Lowlands

revision	date	description	dwn	chkd
Gloucester House, 399 Silbury Boulevard Milton Keynes MK9 2AH				
T 01908 303701 W www.enplan.net				
project		scale		
05-1088		N/A		
Land at Pound Farm		date		
		Feb 2026		
title		drawn by		
Landscape Character Areas		ZX		
		checked		
		RH		
drawing number		revision		
Figure 5		P04		



KEY

Site Boundary

Location of Wider Viewpoints

Public Right of Way

revision	date	description	dwn	chkd
----------	------	-------------	-----	------

Gloucester House,
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Milton Keynes
MK9 2AH

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project	scale
05-1088	N/A
Land at Pound Farm	date
	Feb 2026
title	drawn by
Landscape and Visual (Location of Site in Wider Context)	ZX
	checked
	RH
drawing number	revision
Figure 6	P04



KEY

Site Boundary

Location of Site Views

revision	date	description	dwn	chkd
Gloucester House, 399 Silbury Boulevard Milton Keynes MK9 2AH T 01908 303701 W www.enplan.net enplan				
project			scale	
05-1088			N/A	
Land at Pound Farm			date	
			Feb 2026	
title			drawn by	
Landscape and Visual (Location of Viewpoints and Site Appraisal Views)			ZX	
			checked	
			RH	
drawing number			revision	
Figure 7			P04	



View A - View looking south west across the Application Site from the north eastern corner



View B - View looking north west from the south eastern corner across the Application Site

revision

date

description

dwn

chkd

Gloucester House,
399 Silbury Boulevard
Milton Keynes
MK9 2AH

T 01908 303701
W www.enplan.net

enplan

project		scale
05-1088		N/A
Land at Pound Farm		date
		Feb 2026
title		drawn by
Views A & B		ZX
		checked
		RH
drawing number		revision
Figure 8		P04

DO NOT SCALE FROM THIS DRAWING

I

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View C - View looking north east across the Application Site from south western corner.

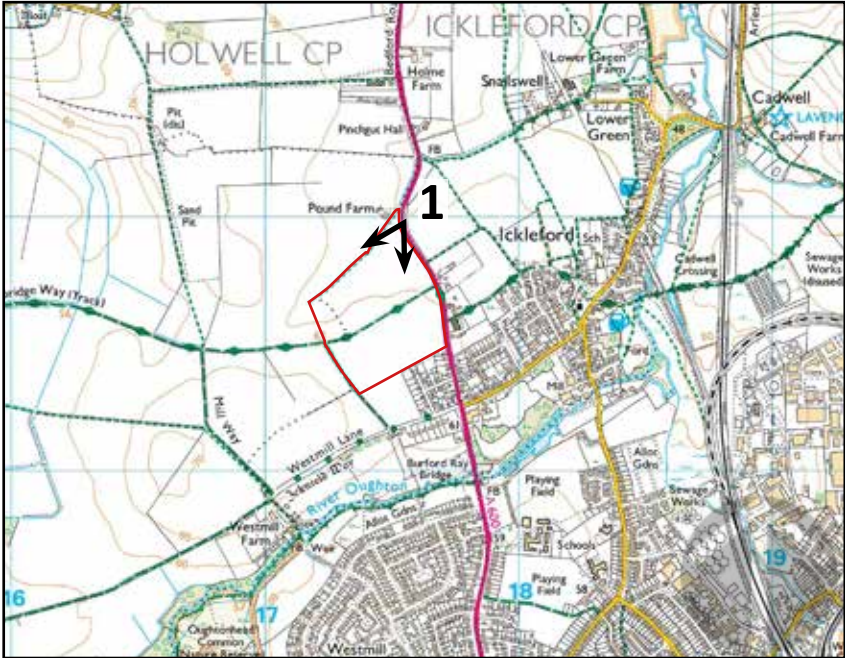


View D - View looking south east across the Application Site from the north western corner.

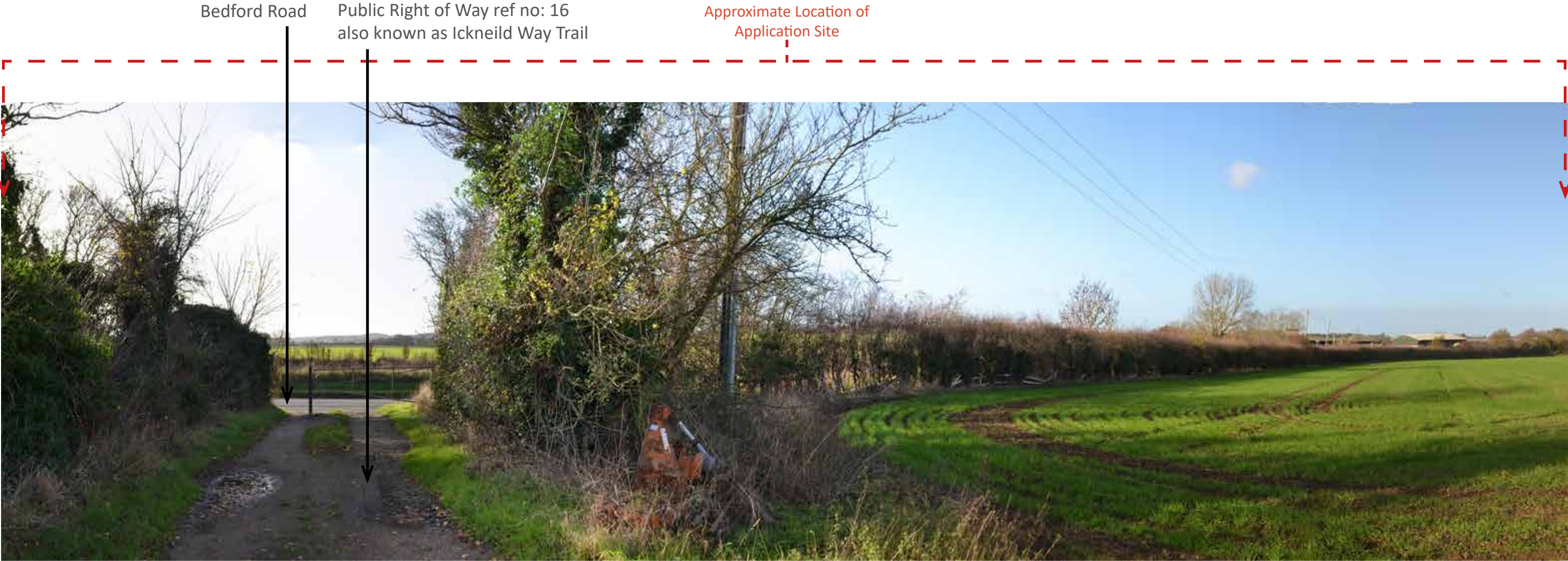
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Gloucester House, 399 Silbury Boulevard Milton Keynes MK9 2AH T 01908 303701 W www.enplan.net en plan				
project			scale	
05-1088			N/A	
Land at Pound Farm			date	
			Feb 2026	
title			drawn by	
Views C & D			ZX	
			checked	
			RH	
drawing number			revision	
Figure 9			P04	
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Viewpoint 1	Viewpoint taken from the footpath adjacent to Bedford Road looking south west towards the Application Site. (Movement Corridor)
Visual Sensitivity	Moderate (Users of the Public Highway)
Camera Type	Nickon D3100 with 35mm lens equivalent
Date	17.11.2025
Approx Elevation	58m AOD
Distance to Site	10m



revision	date	description	dwn	chkd
Gloucester House, 399 Silbury Boulevard Milton Keynes MK9 2AH T 01908 303701 W www.enplan.net				
			project	
			scale	
05-1088 Land at Pound Farm			N/A	
			date	
			Feb 2026	
			title	
Viewpoint 1			drawn by	
			ZX	
			checked	
			RH	
drawing number			revision	
Figure 10			P04	
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Viewpoint 2	Viewpoint taken from the public right of way No.14 adjacent to Bedford Road looking south west towards the Application Site. (Recreational and Movement Corridor)
Visual Sensitivity	High (Users of the Footpath) Moderate (Users of the Public Highway)
Camera Type	Nikon D3100 with 35mm lens equivalent
Date	17.11.2025
Approx Elevation	61m AOD
Distance to Site	30m



revision	date	description	dwn	chkd
Gloucester House, 399 Silbury Boulevard Milton Keynes MK9 2AH T 01908 303701 W www.enplan.net 				
project			scale	
05-1088			N/A	
Land at Pound Farm			date	
			Feb 2026	
title			drawn by	
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			checked	
			RH	
drawing number			revision	
Figure 11			P04	
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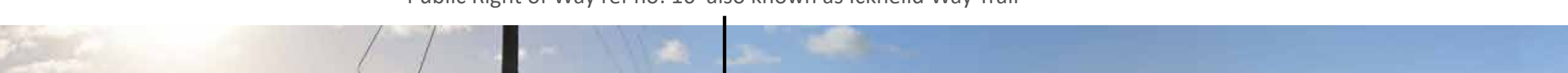


Viewpoint 3	Viewpoint taken from the footpath adjacent to Bedford Road and also representative of the views from the dwelling call The Dairy and Stapleford looking south west towards the Application Site. (Recreational and Residential Corridor)
Visual Sensitivity	High (Users of the Footpath) High (Residential)
Camera Type	Nikon D3100 with 35mm lens equivalent
Date	17.11.2025
Approx Elevation	61m AOD
Distance to Site	10m



revision	date	description	dwn	chkd
Gloucester House, 399 Silbury Boulevard Milton Keynes MK9 2AH T 01908 303701 W www.enplan.net 				
project			scale	
05-1088			N/A	
Land at Pound Farm			date	
			Feb 2026	
title			drawn by	
Viewpoint 3			ZX	
			checked	
			RH	
drawing number			revision	
Figure 12			P04	
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Public Right of Way ref no: 16 also known as Ickneild Way Trail



Viewpoint 4	Viewpoint taken from the public right of way No.16 adjacent to Bedford Road looking south west towards the Application Site. (Recreational and Movement Corridor)
Visual Sensitivity	High (Users of the Footpath) Moderate (Users of the Public Highway)
Camera Type	Nikon D3100 with 35mm lens equivalent
Date	17.11.2025
Approx Elevation	61m AOD
Distance to Site	0m

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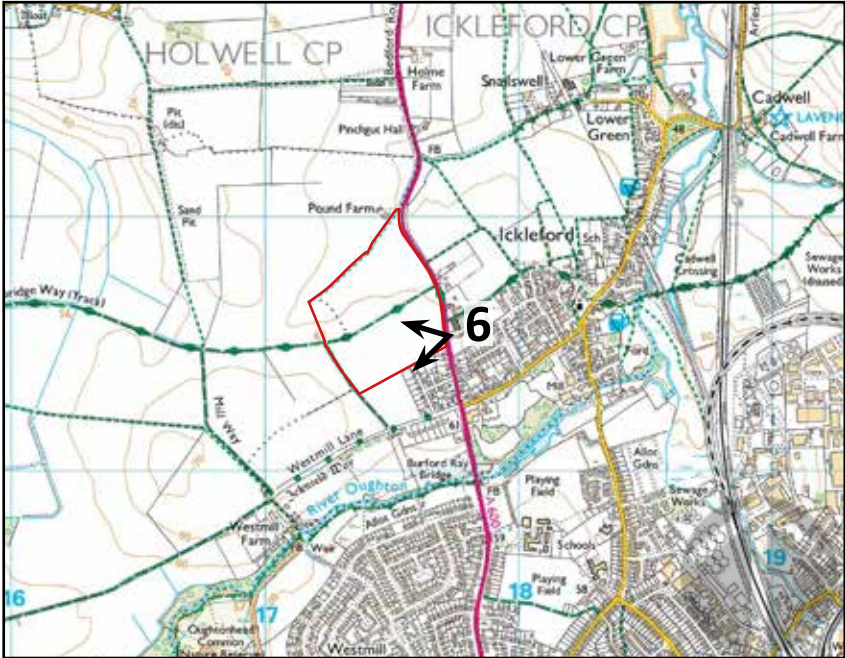
Viewpoint 5	Viewpoint taken from the public right of way No.15 adjacent to Bedford Road looking south west towards the Application Site. (Recreational and Movement Corridor)
Visual Sensitivity	High (Users of the Footpath) Moderate (Users of the Public Highway)
Camera Type	Nikon D3100 with 35mm lens equivalent
Date	17.11.2025
Approx Elevation	62m AOD
Distance to Site	15m



revision	date	description	dwn	chkd
Gloucester House, 399 Silbury Boulevard Milton Keynes MK9 2AH T 01908 303701 W www.enplan.net				
				
project			scale	
05-1088			N/A	
Land at Pound Farm			date	
			Feb 2026	
title			drawn by	
Viewpoint 5			ZX	
			checked	
			RH	
drawing number			revision	
Figure 14			P04	
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Viewpoint 6	Viewpoint taken from the footpath adjacent to Bedford Road and also representative of the views from the dwellings called Roxley and Five Oaks looking west towards the Application Site. (Recreational and Residential Corridor)
Visual Sensitivity	High (Users of the Footpath) High (Residential)
Camera Type	Nikon D3100 with 35mm lens equivalent
Date	17.11.2025
Approx Elevation	62m AOD
Distance to Site	15m



revision

date

description

dwn

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project			scale	
05-1088			N/A	
Land at Pound Farm			date	
			Feb 2026	
title			drawn by	
Viewpoint 6			ZX	
			checked	
			RH	
drawing number			revision	
Figure 15			P04	

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Viewpoint 7	Viewpoint taken from the footpath adjacent to Bedford Road looking north west towards the Application Site. (Recreational Corridor)
Visual Sensitivity	High (Users of the Footpath)
Camera Type	Nikon D3100 with 35mm lens equivalent
Date	17.11.2025
Approx Elevation	62m AOD
Distance to Site	25m



revision

date

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project			scale	
05-1088			N/A	
Land at Pound Farm			date	
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title			drawn by	
Viewpoint 7			ZX	
			checked	
			RH	
drawing number			revision	
Figure 16			P04	

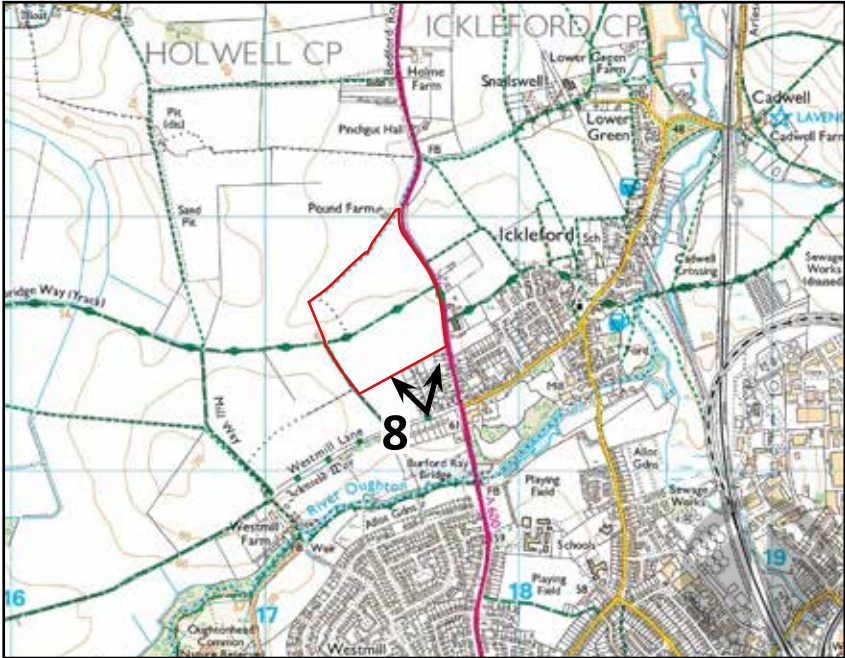
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Viewpoint 8	Viewpoint taken from Ryder Way looking north towards the Application Site. (Movement and Residential Corridor)
Visual Sensitivity	Moderate (Users of the Public Highway) High (Residential)
Camera Type	Nikon D3100 with 35mm lens equivalent
Date	17.11.2025
Approx Elevation	64m AOD
Distance to Site	170m



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project			scale	
05-1088			N/A	
Land at Pound Farm			date	
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title			drawn by	
Viewpoint 8			ZX	
			checked	
			RH	
drawing number			revision	
Figure 17			P04	

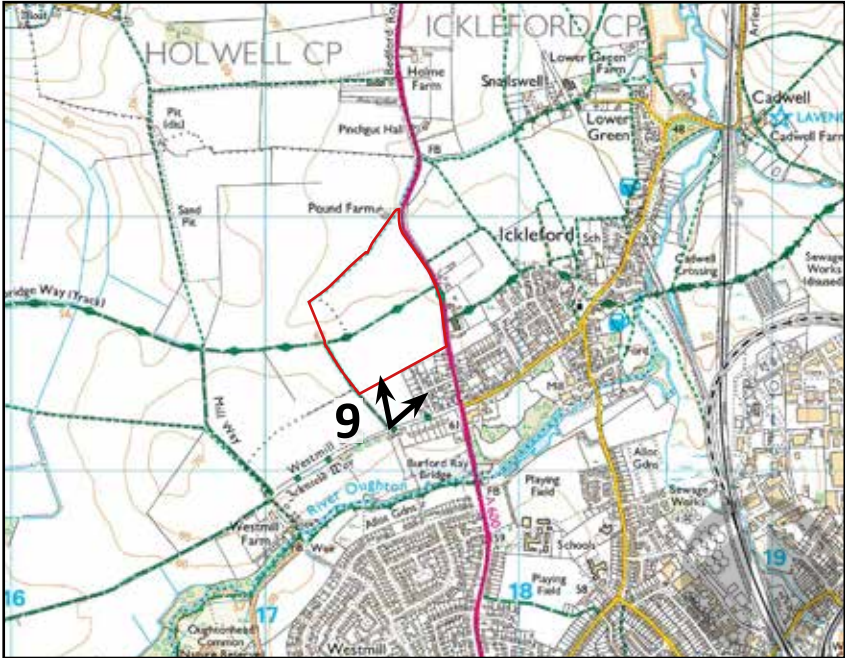
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Viewpoint 9	Viewpoint taken from the public right of way No.16 looking north east towards the Application Site. (Recreational Corridor)
Visual Sensitivity	High (Users of the Public right of way)
Camera Type	Nikon D3100 with 35mm lens equivalent
Date	17.11.2025
Approx Elevation	66m AOD
Distance to Site	210m



revision	date	description	dwn	chkd
Gloucester House, 399 Silbury Boulevard Milton Keynes MK9 2AH T 01908 303701 W www.enplan.net 				
project			scale	
05-1088			N/A	
Land at Pound Farm			date	
			Feb 2026	
title			drawn by	
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			RH	
drawing number			revision	
Figure 18			P04	
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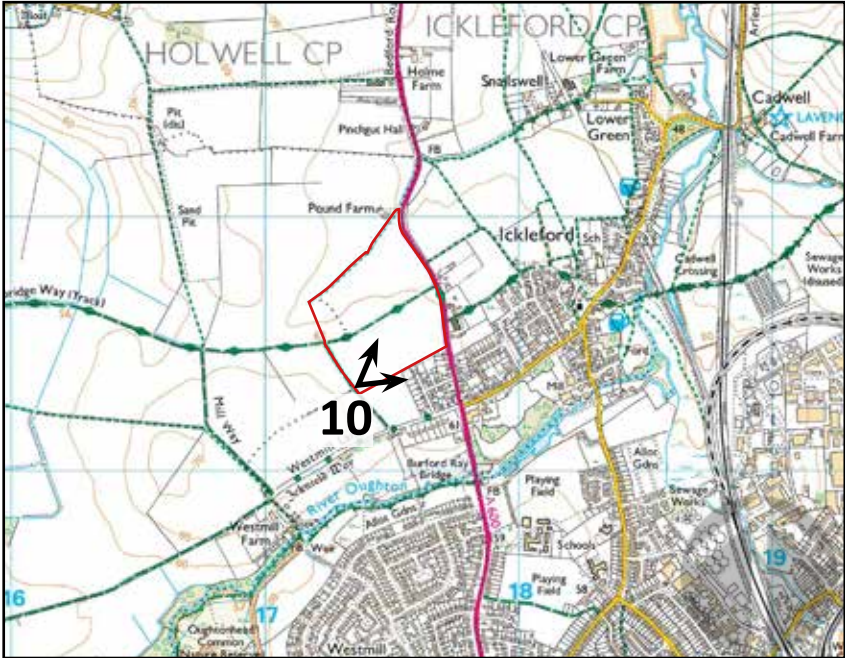
Public Right of Way ref no: 16
also known as Ickneild Way Trail

Approximate Location of
Application Site

Ickleford



Viewpoint 10	Viewpoint taken from the public right of way No.16 looking north east towards the Application Site. (Recreational Corridor)
Visual Sensitivity	High (Users of the Public right of way)
Camera Type	Nikon D3100 with 35mm lens equivalent
Date	17.11.2025
Approx Elevation	67m AOD
Distance to Site	0m



revision

date

description

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project		scale
05-1088		N/A
Land at Pound Farm		date
		Feb 2026
title		drawn by
Viewpoint 10		ZX
		checked
		RH
drawing number		revision
Figure 19		P04

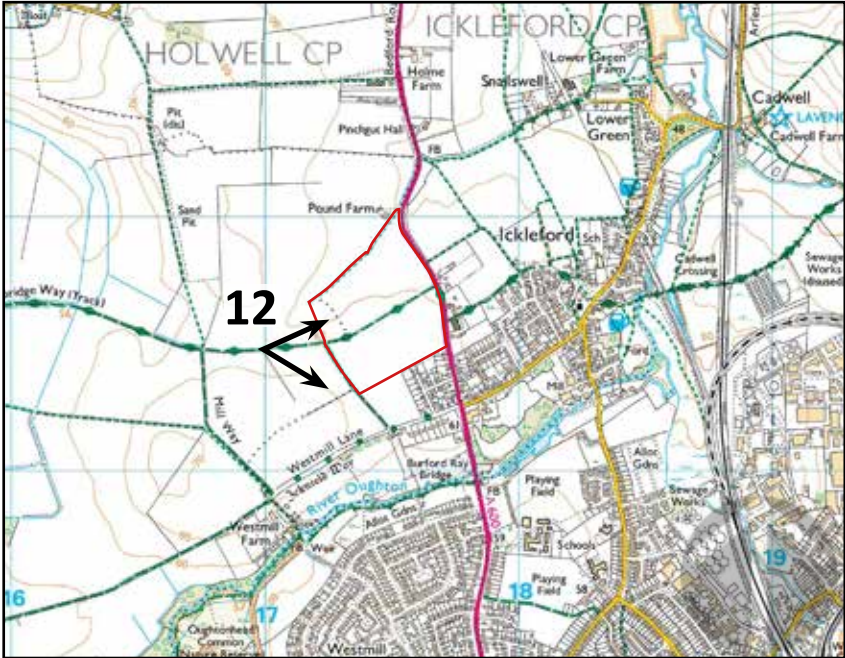
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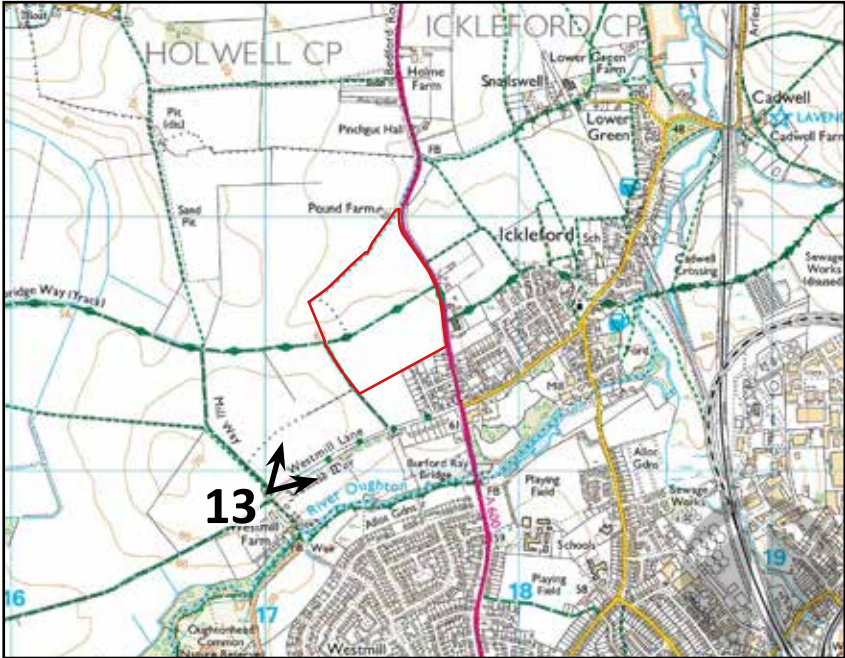
Viewpoint 12	Viewpoint taken from the public right of way No.21 looking east towards the Application Site. (Recreational Corridor)
Visual Sensitivity	High (Users of the Public right of way)
Camera Type	Nikon D3100 with 35mm lens equivalent
Date	17.11.2025
Approx Elevation	65m AOD
Distance to Site	220m



revision	date	description	dwn	chkd
Gloucester House, 399 Silbury Boulevard Milton Keynes MK9 2AH T 01908 303701 W www.enplan.net 				
project			scale	
05-1088			N/A	
Land at Pound Farm			date	
			Feb 2026	
title			drawn by	
Viewpoint 12			ZX	
			checked	
			RH	
drawing number			revision	
Figure 21			P04	
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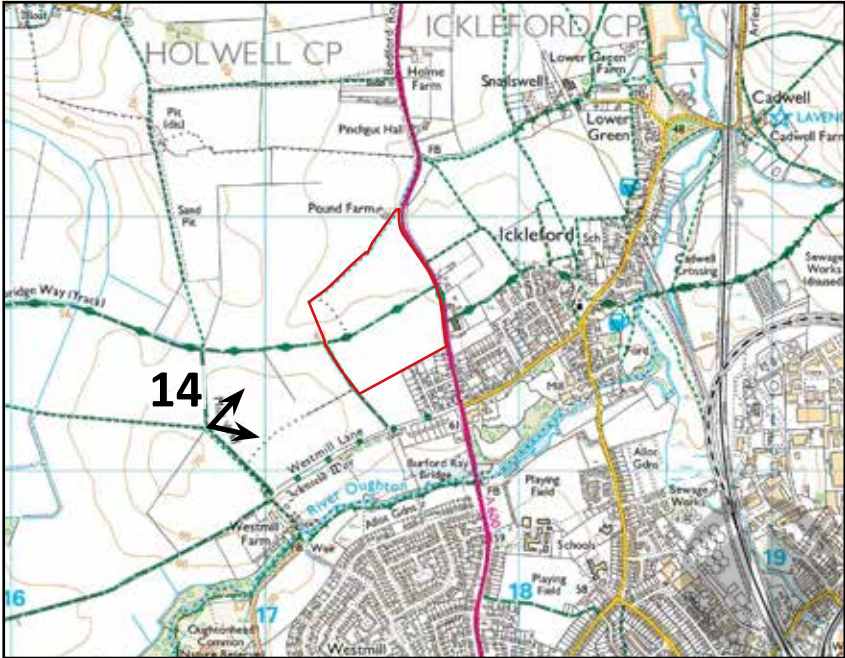
Viewpoint 13	Viewpoint taken from the public right of way No.6 looking north east towards the Application Site. (Recreational Corridor)
Visual Sensitivity	High (Users of the Public right of way)
Camera Type	Nikon D3100 with 35mm lens equivalent
Date	17.11.2025
Approx Elevation	68m AOD
Distance to Site	490m



revision	date	description	dwn	chkd
Gloucester House, 399 Silbury Boulevard Milton Keynes MK9 2AH T 01908 303701 W www.enplan.net				
			project	
			scale	
05-1088 Land at Pound Farm			N/A	
			date	
title			Feb 2026	
			drawn by	
Viewpoint 13			ZX	
			checked	
drawing number			RH	
			revision	
Figure 22			P04	
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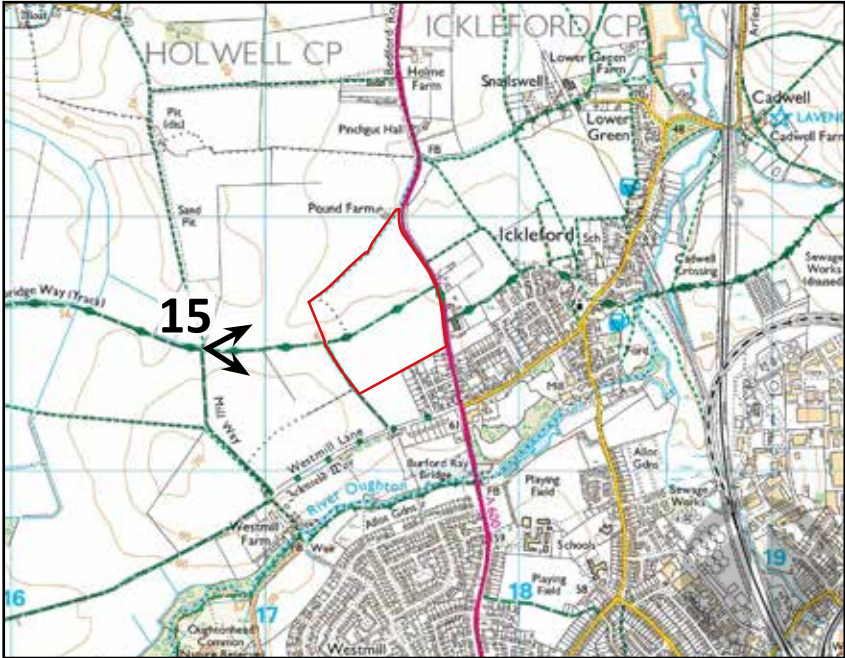
Viewpoint 14	Viewpoint taken from the public right of way No.6 looking east towards the Application Site. (Recreational Corridor)
Visual Sensitivity	High (Users of the Public right of way)
Camera Type	Nikon D3100 with 35mm lens equivalent
Date	17.11.2025
Approx Elevation	72m AOD
Distance to Site	580m



revision	date	description	dwn	chkd
Gloucester House, 399 Silbury Boulevard Milton Keynes MK9 2AH T 01908 303701 W www.enplan.net				
				
project			scale	
05-1088			N/A	
Land at Pound Farm			date	
			Feb 2026	
title			drawn by	
Viewpoint 14			ZX	
			checked	
			RH	
drawing number			revision	
Figure 23			P04	
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Viewpoint 15	Viewpoint taken from the intersection point of public right of way No.6 and No. 21 looking south towards the Application Site. (Recreational Corridor)
Visual Sensitivity	High (Users of the Public right of way)
Camera Type	Nikon D3100 with 35mm lens equivalent
Date	17.11.2025
Approx Elevation	65m AOD
Distance to Site	450m

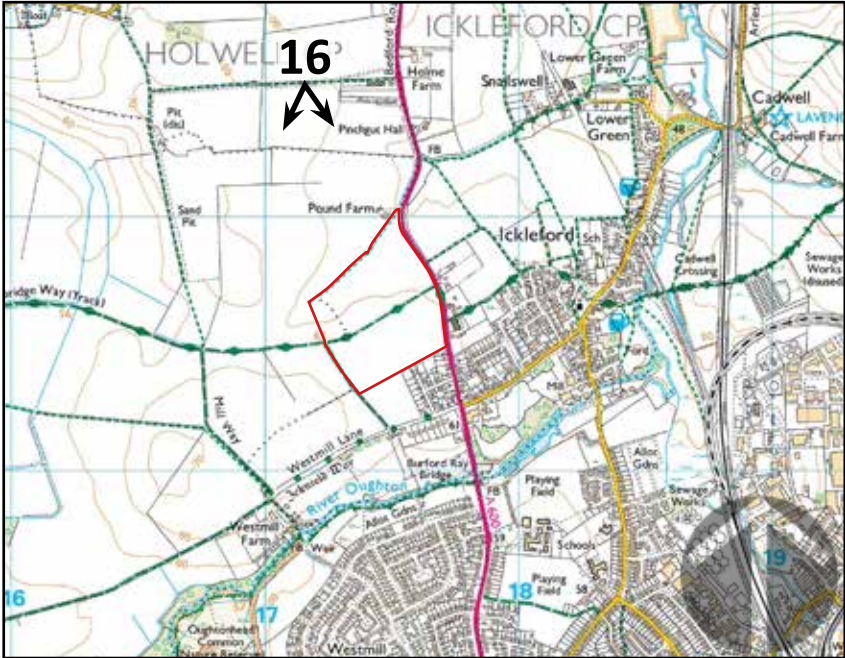


revision	date	description	dwn	chkd
Gloucester House, 399 Silbury Boulevard Milton Keynes MK9 2AH T 01908 303701 W www.enplan.net				
				
project			scale	
05-1088			N/A	
Land at Pound Farm			date	
			Feb 2026	
title			drawn by	
Viewpoint 15			ZX	
			checked	
			RH	
drawing number			revision	
Figure 24			P04	
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Approximate Location of
Application Site



Viewpoint 16	Viewpoint taken from the Public Right of Way No.14 looking south towards the Application Site. (Recreational Corridor)
Visual Sensitivity	High (Users of the Public right of way)
Camera Type	Nikon D3100 with 35mm lens equivalent
Date	17.11.2025
Approx Elevation	62m AOD
Distance to Site	620m

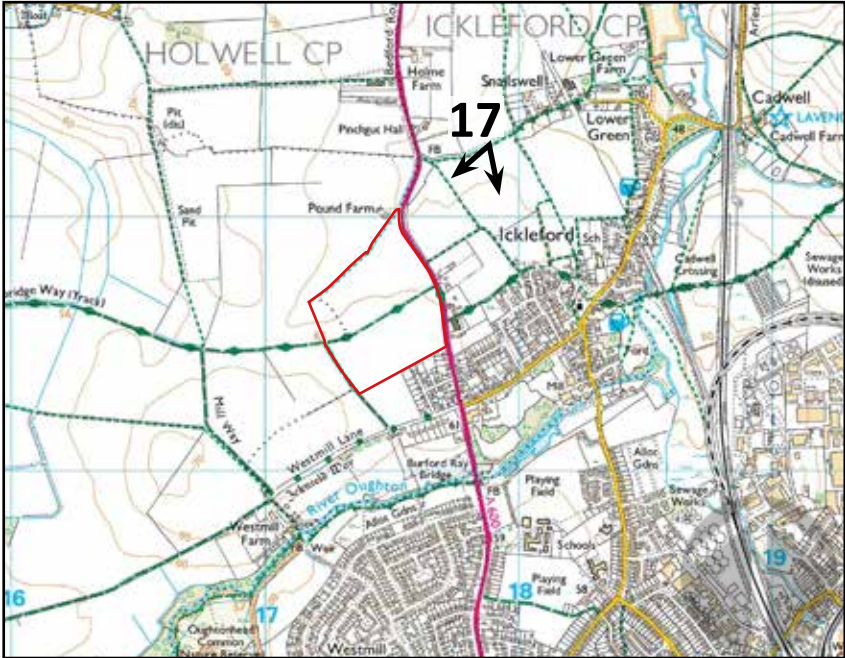


revision	date	description	dwn	chkd
Gloucester House, 399 Silbury Boulevard Milton Keynes MK9 2AH T 01908 303701 W www.enplan.net				
			project	
			scale	
05-1088 Land at Pound Farm			N/A	
			date	
title Viewpoint 16			Feb 2026	
			drawn by	
			ZX	
			checked	
			RH	
drawing number			revision	
Figure 25			P04	
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Approximate Location of
Application Site



Viewpoint 17	Viewpoint taken from Public Right of Way ref no 8 looking south east towards the Application Site. (Recreational Corridor)
Visual Sensitivity	High (Users of the Footpath)
Camera Type	Nickon D3100 with 35mm lens equivalent
Date	17.11.2025
Approx Elevation	55m AOD
Distance to Site	350m



revision

date

description

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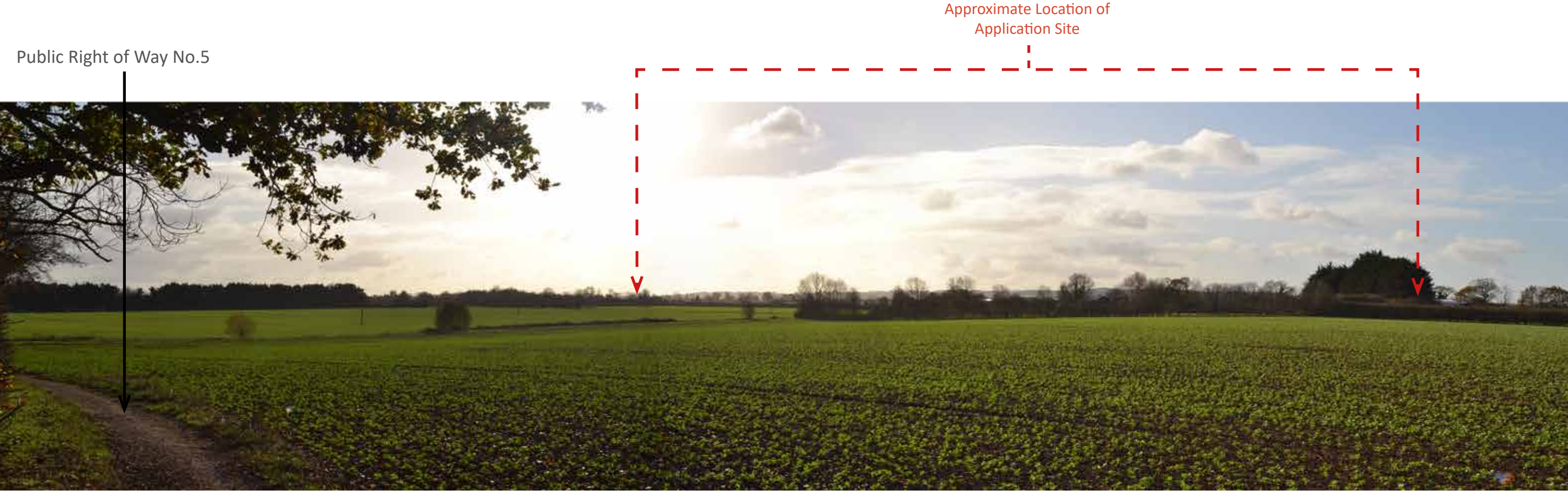
plan

project		scale
05-1088		N/A
Land at Pound Farm		date
		Feb 2026
title		drawn by
Viewpoint 17		ZX
		checked
		RH
drawing number		revision
Figure 26		P04

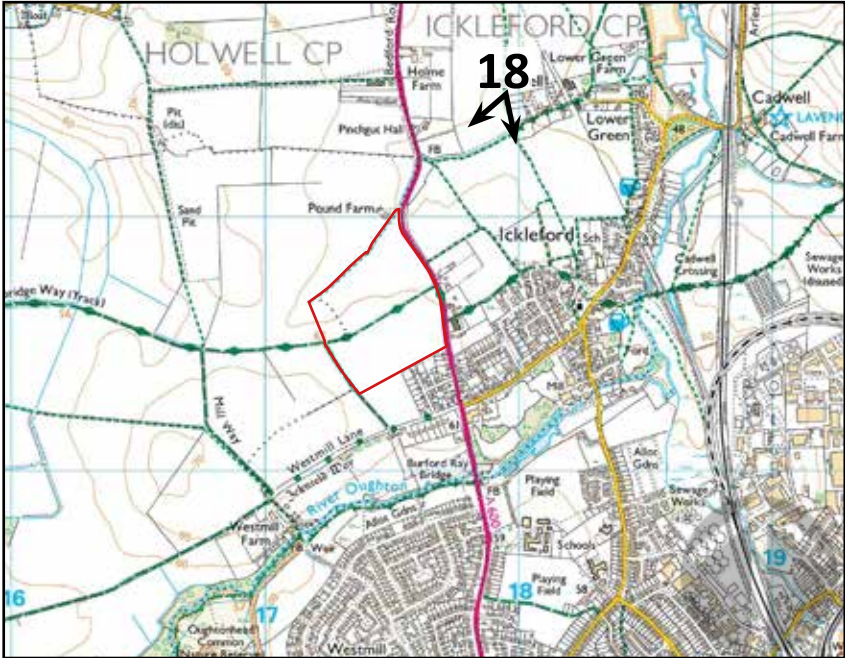
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Viewpoint 18	Viewpoint taken from Public Right of Way ref no.5 looking south east towards the Application Site. (Recreational Corridor)
Visual Sensitivity	High (Users of the Footpath)
Camera Type	Nickon D3100 with 35mm lens equivalent
Date	17.11.2025
Approx Elevation	57m AOD
Distance to Site	630m



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date

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project		scale
05-1088		N/A
Land at Pound Farm		date
		Feb 2026
title		drawn by
Viewpoint 18		ZX
		checked
		RH
drawing number		revision
Figure 27		P04

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Public Right of Way ref no: 18 also known as Ickneild Way Trail

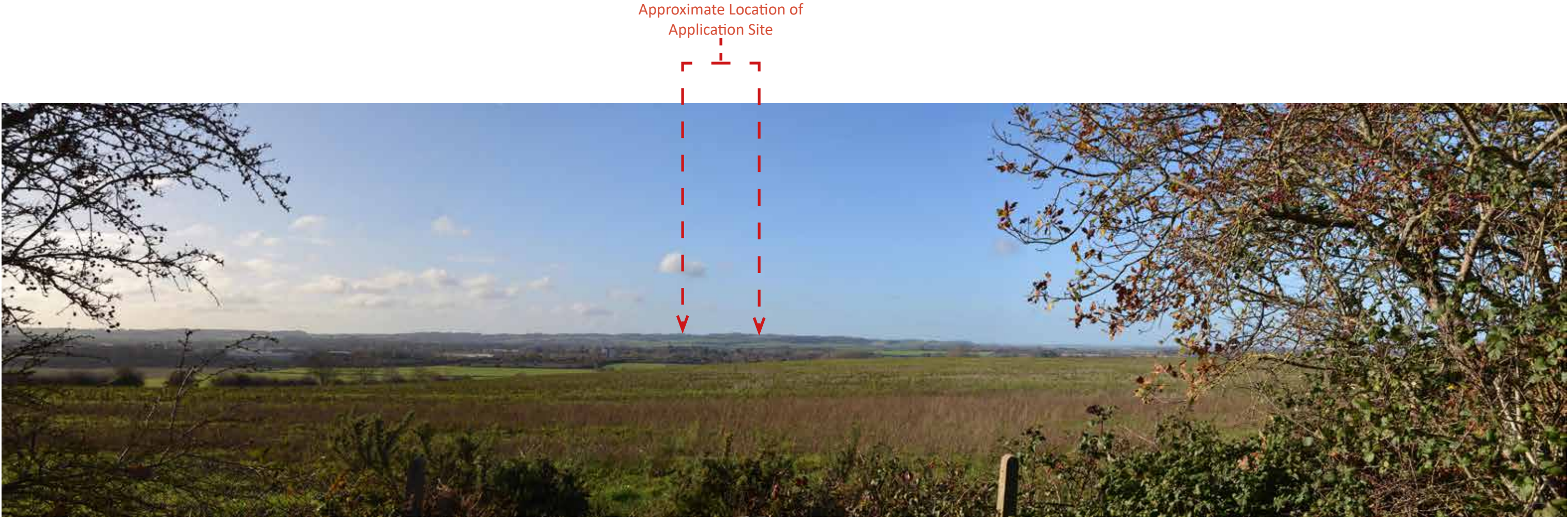
Approximate Location of Application Site



Viewpoint 19	Viewpoint taken from the public right of way No.18 looking south east towards the Application Site. (Recreational Corridor)
Visual Sensitivity	High (Users of the Public right of way)
Camera Type	Nikon D3100 with 35mm lens equivalent
Date	17.11.2025
Approx Elevation	82m AOD
Distance to Site	2.45 km



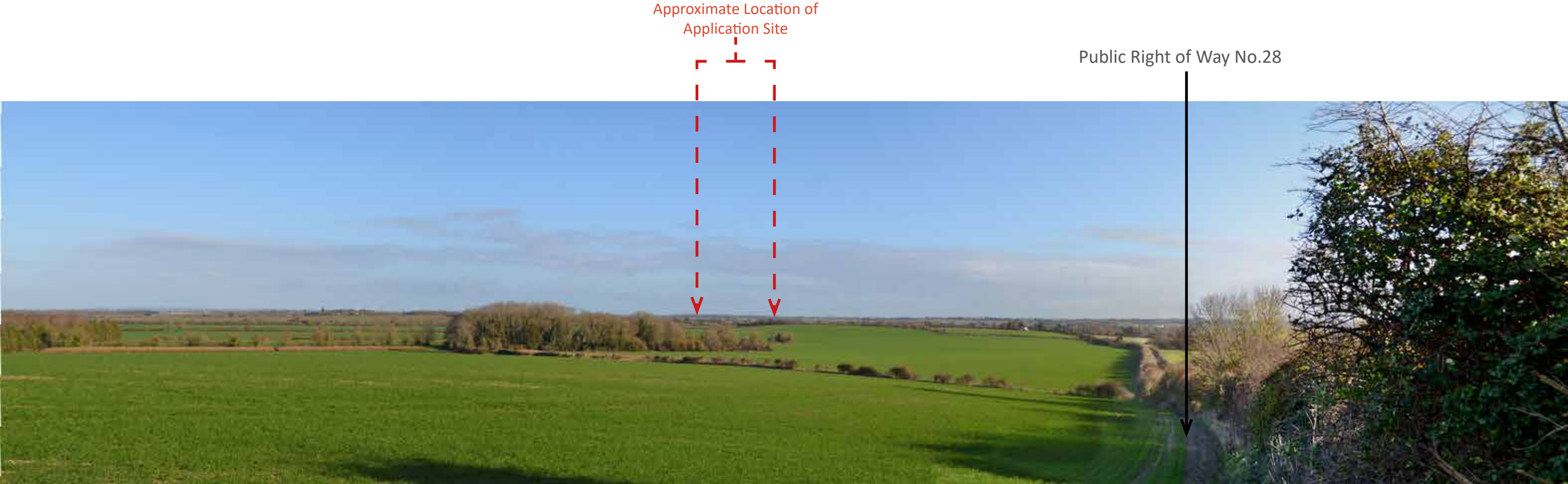
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Gloucester House, 399 Silbury Boulevard Milton Keynes MK9 2AH T 01908 303701 W www.enplan.net				
			project	
			scale	
05-1088 Land at Pound Farm			N/A	
			date	
			Feb 2026	
			title	
Viewpoint 19			drawn by	
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			checked	
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drawing number			revision	
Figure 28			P04	
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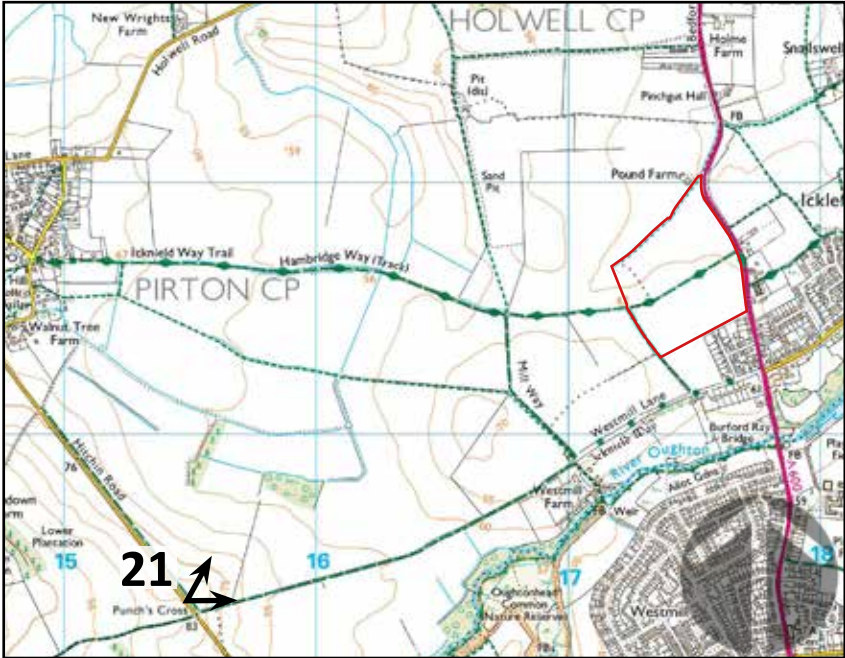
Viewpoint 20	Viewpoint taken from the Wilbury Hill Picnic Area, footpath connecting public right of way No.18 and No.22 looking south east towards the Application Site. (Recreational Corridor)
Visual Sensitivity	High (Users of the Public right of way)
Camera Type	Nikon D3100 with 35mm lens equivalent
Date	17.11.2025
Approx Elevation	89m AOD
Distance to Site	2.5 km



revision	date	description	dwn	chkd
Gloucester House, 399 Silbury Boulevard Milton Keynes MK9 2AH T 01908 303701 W www.enplan.net 				
project			scale	
05-1088			N/A	
Land at Pound Farm			date	
			Feb 2026	
title			drawn by	
Viewpoint 20			ZX	
			checked	
			RH	
drawing number			revision	
Figure 29			P04	
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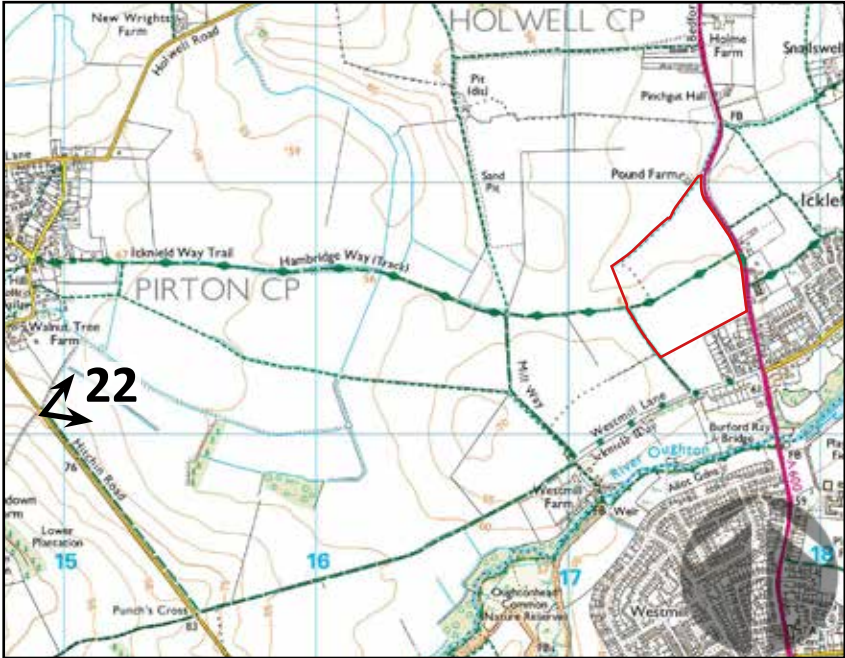
Viewpoint 21	Viewpoint taken from the Public Right of Way No.27 looking north east towards the Application Site. (Recreational Corridor)
Visual Sensitivity	High (Users of the Public right of way)
Camera Type	Nikon D3100 with 35mm lens equivalent
Date	17.11.2025
Approx Elevation	84m AOD
Distance to Site	2.1 km



revision	date	description	dwn	chkd
Gloucester House, 399 Silbury Boulevard Milton Keynes MK9 2AH T 01908 303701 W www.enplan.net				
				
project			scale	
05-1088			N/A	
Land at Pound Farm			date	
			Feb 2026	
title			drawn by	
Viewpoint 21			ZX	
			checked	
			RH	
drawing number			revision	
Figure 30			P04	
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Viewpoint 22	Viewpoint taken from Hitchen Road looking east towards the Application Site. (Movement Corridor)
Visual Sensitivity	Moderate (Users of the Public Highway)
Camera Type	Nikon D3100 with 35mm lens equivalent
Date	17.11.2025
Approx Elevation	75m AOD
Distance to Site	2.35km

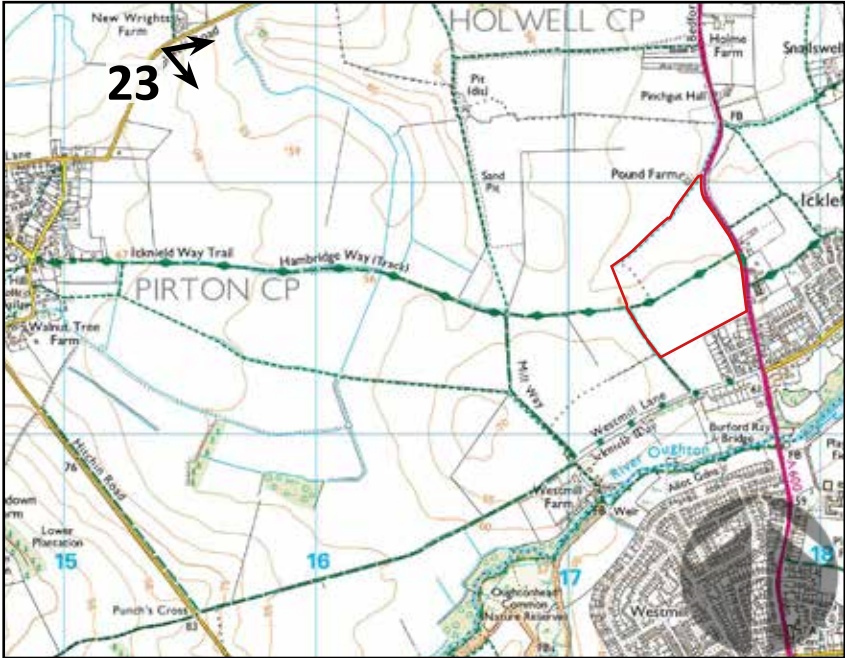


revision	date	description	dwn	chkd
Gloucester House, 399 Silbury Boulevard Milton Keynes MK9 2AH T 01908 303701 W www.enplan.net 				
project			scale	
05-1088			N/A	
Land at Pound Farm			date	
			Feb 2026	
title			drawn by	
Viewpoint 22			ZX	
			checked	
			RH	
drawing number			revision	
Figure 31			P04	
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Approximate Location of Application Site

Viewpoint 23	Viewpoint taken from Holwell Road adjacent to the public right of way No.19 looking south east towards the Application Site. (Movement Corridor)
Visual Sensitivity	Moderate (Users of the Public Highway)
Camera Type	Nikon D3100 with 35mm lens equivalent
Date	17.11.2025
Approx Elevation	60m AOD
Distance to Site	2km



revision	date	description	dwn	chkd
Gloucester House, 399 Silbury Boulevard Milton Keynes MK9 2AH T 01908 303701 W www.enplan.net				
project			scale	
05-1088 Land at Pound Farm			N/A	
title			date	
Viewpoint 23			Feb 2026	
			drawn by	
			ZX	
			checked	
			RH	
drawing number			revision	
Figure 32			P04	

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project	scale
05-1088	N/A
Land at Pound Farm	date
	Feb 2026
title	drawn by
Illustrative Masterplan	ZX
	checked
	RH

drawing number	revision
Figure 33	P04