

Growing Baldock

Environmental Statement Volume 1: Text
Chapter 7: Landscape and Visual



October 2025

Urban&Civic

Hertfordshire



CONTENTS

7.1	INTRODUCTION.....	1
7.2	RELEVANT POLICY.....	2
	National Policy	2
	Local Policy.....	2
	Any other relevant policy, legislation or guidance	4
7.3	ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY	5
	Scope	5
	Data Sources	5
	Assessment Approach	6
	Significance Criteria	7
	Uncertainties and Limitations	10
7.4	BASELINE CONDITIONS.....	13
	The Current Baseline.....	13
	The Projected Future Baseline	29
7.5	POTENTIAL EFFECTS.....	30
	Construction Stage	30
	Post-Completion Stage (Year 0).....	33
7.6	MITIGATION MEASURES.....	37
	Construction Stage	37
	Post-Completion Stage	37
7.7	RESIDUAL EFFECTS.....	40
	Post Mitigation Establishment Stage (Year 15)	40
	Summary of Effects	41
7.8	CUMULATIVE EFFECTS	48
7.9	REFERENCE LIST.....	50

APPENDICES

Appendix 7.1: Glossary of Terms
Appendix 7.2: LVIA Methodology
Appendix 7.3: Planning Policy and Guidance
Appendix 7.4: LVIA Supporting Figures
Appendix 7.5: Viewpoint Photographs - Winter
Appendix 7.6: Viewpoint Photographs – Summer
Appendix 7.7: AVR (Accurate Visual Representation) Viewpoint Wirelines
Appendix 7.8: Schedule of Likely Landscape Effects
Appendix 7.9: Schedule of Likely Visual Effects

7.1 INTRODUCTION

- 7.1.1 This chapter of the ES has been prepared by Bradley Murphy Design (BMD) and aims to identify and describe the nature and significance of the effects likely to arise as a result of the Proposed Development on the existing landscape (including physical landscape resources) and the visual amenity of people, identified through a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA).
- 7.1.2 This Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) chapter was carried out by Joanne John CMLI and reviewed by Richard Waddell CMLI, both chartered landscape architects from Bradley Murphy Design.
- 7.1.3 The LVIA ES chapter is supported by the following technical appendices, which are referenced as required throughout this chapter:
- Appendix 7.1: Glossary of Terms
 - Appendix 7.2: LVIA Methodology
 - Appendix 7.3: Planning Policy and Guidance
 - Appendix 7.4: LVIA Supporting Figures
 - Appendix 7.5: Viewpoint Photographs - Winter
 - Appendix 7.6: Viewpoint Photographs – Summer
 - Appendix 7.7: AVR Viewpoint Wirelines
 - Appendix 7.8: Schedule of Likely Landscape Effects
 - Appendix 7.9: Schedule of Likely Visual Effects
- 7.1.4 The landscape and visual effects have been considered in relation to the proposed land uses and the parameters that are defined by the submitted Parameter Plan and Development Specification (refer to Chapter 2: Proposed Development of the ES and the Parameter Plan at **Appendix 2.1**). The description of the Proposed Development is set out in Chapter 2: Proposed Development.
- 7.1.5 The chapter provides a description of the methods used in the assessment, followed by a description of the relevant baseline conditions of the Application Site and surrounding area. An assessment is then presented of the likely effects of the Proposed Development during demolition / construction works and once the Proposed Development is completed and operational. Mitigation measures are identified, where appropriate, to avoid, reduce, or offset any adverse effects, together with an assessment of the significance of any likely residual effects.
- 7.1.6 To aid the reader, a glossary of terms is provided at **Appendix 7.1**, a detailed LVIA methodology is provided at **Appendix 7.2** and a detailed review of planning policy of relevance to the consideration of landscape and visual value and suitable mitigation is provided in **Appendix 7.3**.

7.2 RELEVANT POLICY

- 7.2.1 The overarching planning policy framework applicable to this ES for the Proposed Development is outlined in Chapter 3: Policy Context. This section considers planning policy and guidance relevant to this landscape and visual assessment. A detailed review of all planning policy has been undertaken and those of greatest relevance to the Site, the Proposed Development and the LVIA are included at **Appendix 7.3** and illustrated on **Figure 7.6** at **Appendix 7.4**.

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework

- 7.2.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (updated February 2025) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and provides a framework within which the appropriate local council can produce local and neighbourhood plans - the NPPF is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.
- 7.2.3 The NPPF sets out three dimensions to achieve sustainable development that are economic, social and environmental considerations. High quality design and local character are repeating themes through the core planning principles. The NPPF also notes the importance that design 'evolves' in response to local issues and to the view of local communities and also sets out principles in relation to conservation and enhancement of the natural environment. The following paragraphs of the NPPF are relevant to the assessment of the LVIA, a detailed description is provided in **Appendix 7.3**:
- Chapter 2 Achieving sustainable development - paragraph 7
 - Chapter 3 Plan-making strategic policies - paragraph 20
 - Chapter 8 Promoting healthy and safe communities - paragraph 96
 - Chapter 11 Making effective use of land - paragraph 124
 - Chapter 12 Achieving well-designed and beautiful places - paragraphs 131, 135 and 137
 - Chapter 14 Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change – paragraph 164
 - Chapter 15 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment – paragraphs 187, 188 and 198
 - Chapter 16 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment – paragraphs 203 and 210

Local Policy

North Hertfordshire Local Plan (2022)

- 7.2.4 The Site is located within North Herts Council. The current Local Plan for the area is the North Hertfordshire Council Local Plan 2011-2031 (adopted 2022). The Site is allocated for housing and employment within the North Hertfordshire Council Local Plan 2011-2031.

7.2.5 The following planning policies are relevant to the assessment of the LVIA, a description is provided in **Appendix 7.3**:

- Policy SP1 – Sustainable development in North Hertfordshire
- Policy SP3 – Employment
- Policy SP5 – Countryside and Green Belt
- Policy SP8 – Housing
- Policy SP9 – Design and sustainability
- Policy SP10 – Healthy communities
- Policy SP12 – Green Infrastructure, landscape and biodiversity
- Policy SP13 – Historic Environment
- Policy SP14 – Site BA1 – North of Baldock
- Policy BA2 – Land south-west of Clothall Road (Clothall parish)
- Policy BA3 – Land south of Clothall Common (Clothall parish)
- Policy BA10 – Royston Road
- Policy CGB5 – Urban Open Land
- Policy D1 – Sustainable Design
- Policy NE1 – Strategic Green Infrastructure
- Policy NE2 – Landscape
- Policy NE5 – Protecting Open Space
- Policy NE6 – New and Improved Open Space
- Policy NE8 – Sustainable Drainage Systems
- Policy HE1 – Designated Heritage Assets

Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall Neighbourhood Plan (Referendum Version: January 2021)

7.2.6 The Site is located within Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall Neighbourhood Plan area.

7.2.7 The following planning policies are relevant to the assessment of the LVIA, a description is provided in **Appendix 7.3**:

- Policy G2 – Strategic Green Space
- Policy E2 – Green Infrastructure and Outdoor Recreation
- Policy E5 – Development north of the railway
- Policy E6 – Royston Road
- Policy E7 – Cambrai Farm and south of Clothall Common

Supplementary Planning Documents

7.2.8 The Sustainability Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (adopted on 23 September 2024) provides information regarding sustainability expectations for development in North Hertfordshire and offers good practice guidance to developers when developing proposals and submitting planning applications.

7.2.9 The SPD covers numerous sustainability topics broadly split into eight themes, with the following of relevance to this LVIA, a description is provided in **Appendix 7.3**:

- Section 4 - Healthy Placemaking
- Section 5 - Promoting Biodiversity
- Section 8 - Incorporating Sustainable Drainage

7.2.10 The Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (January 2023) sets out detailed guidance on the type and scale of developer contributions that will be sought to support new development in the area. The SPD outlines the Open Space Standards North Hertfordshire will use in relation to the Proposed Development.

Any other relevant policy, legislation or guidance

7.2.11 Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework, including principles and standards, launched in January 2023, provides guidance for planning, designing and delivering high-quality green infrastructure (GI) across England.

7.2.12 The Green Infrastructure Framework is underpinned by 15 principles, which have been used as a basis for planning and designing green and blue infrastructure for the Proposed Development.

7.2.13 The Green infrastructure Framework is a voluntary framework that supports the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which stipulates that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by minimising the impact on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible.

7.2.14 The Green infrastructure Framework will complement mandatory mechanisms such as Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS), which form part of the requirements of the Environment Act 2021.

7.3 ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

Scope

- 7.3.1 The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) considers the potential landscape and visual effects as a result of the Proposed Development upon:
- Landscape character, including physical landscape resources; and
 - Views and visual amenity experienced by people.
- 7.3.2 To define the spatial scope of the assessment, Zones of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) have been modelled digitally to identify those areas of the landscape that theoretically would be visually connected to the Proposed Development.
- 7.3.3 **Figures 7.2 and 7.3 at Appendix 7.4** illustrate potential areas of visibility, taking account of the effect that settlements and woodland blocks / belts would have on views toward the Proposed Development. The ZTVs represent the potential for views of Proposed Built form within the Site, based on the maximum building heights outlined in SP3 of the Development Specification at **Appendix 2.2**.
- 7.3.4 A study area of 3km from the Site boundary has been determined and agreed with North Herts Council (NHC) through the EIA scoping process, to conduct baseline studies and assessment work. It is considered that any direct or indirect landscape or visual impacts, arising as a result of the Proposed Development, at a distance greater than this radius would be negligible at worst and therefore are not considered further as part of this assessment.

Data Sources

- 7.3.5 In order to capture a comprehensive description of the baseline position for landscape and visual receptors, information has been collated using desk study and field survey. The desk study identified potential sensitive / designated landscape resources by reference to national Geographic Information System (GIS) databases, OS maps, existing published landscape character studies, relevant planning policies / guidance and / or designated or protected views.
- 7.3.6 This stage has also enabled the identification of potential visual receptors such as PRoW, residential properties on settlement edges or designated areas.
- 7.3.7 Sources of baseline data (including planning policy documents already listed under context) referred to during this LVIA process are provided in **Appendix 7.2**.
- 7.3.8 A Scoping Report was submitted to NHC in April 2024, including an outline of the proposed scope, methodology and viewpoint locations for the LVIA. Comments were received from NHC in the form of a Scoping Decision Letter in September 2025 which confirmed the acceptance to the LVIA Methodology and scope. Further pre-application discussions were had with NHC in June 2025 regarding the selection of landscape and visual receptors and

the agreement of a key number of viewpoints featuring Accurate Visual Representation (AVR) wirelines.

Assessment Approach

7.3.9 The assessment was undertaken in accordance with the principles of good practice set out in the following published guidance, produced by the relevant professional organisations concerned with landscape and visual impact assessment:

- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition (2013), (GLVIA3), Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment;
- GLVIA3 Statements of Clarification (2013 - 2015), Landscape Institute;
- An Approach to Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (Natural England, 2019);
- Natural England's 'An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment' (2014);
- Landscape Institute (2019), Technical Guidance Note 06/19, Visual Representation of Development Proposals; and
- Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 02/21: Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations (LI, 2021).

7.3.10 Full details of the methodology are included at **Appendix 7.2**. The approach used to identify and assess landscape and visual effects is summarised as follows:

- Determine the scope of the assessment;
- Collate baseline information for landscape and visual receptors, including completing desk study research, undertaking field survey work, identifying appropriate receptors and establishing their **value**;
- Review the type of development proposed and determine the **susceptibility** of the landscape and visual receptors to the type of change proposed;
- Combine value with susceptibility to determine the **sensitivity** of landscape and visual receptors to the nature of the development proposed;
- Describe the nature and magnitude of change (**impact**) likely to be experienced by landscape and visual receptors as a result of the Proposed Development;
- Judge the combination of sensitivity and impact to assess the scale of **effects** for landscape and visual receptors without mitigation measures;
- Describe any measures (**mitigation**) to avoid or reduce the magnitude of any adverse impact;
- Assess the **significance of effects** for landscape and visual receptors in relation to the Proposed Development, through a clear description of judgements on sensitivity and magnitude of impact; and
- Identify those effects that are considered significant and therefore relevant to decision making.

Significance Criteria

7.3.11 Following the LVIA methodology summarised above, the following steps are applied to derive the significance of any landscape or visual effects.

Sensitivity

7.3.12 The sensitivity of a landscape resource or visual receptor is derived by determining its value (defined by qualities including whether it is a protected landscape or view, its level of tranquillity, cultural associations, condition etc.) and combining this with its susceptibility to the nature of development proposed (ability of the landscape or view to accommodate the change proposed). **Tables 7.01 and 7.02 at Appendix 7.2** define the criteria for determining the value of landscape and visual receptors, whilst **Tables 7.03 and 7.06 at Appendix 7.2** define the criteria for determining the susceptibility of landscape and visual receptors. **Table 7.1** below defines how these criteria are combined to derive the sensitivity of landscape or visual receptors.

Table 7.1 Matrix for determining sensitivity of landscape or visual receptors

	VALUE					
SUSCEPTIBILITY		Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
	Very Low	Negligible	Low	Low	Medium	Medium
	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	High
	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium	High	High
	High	Medium	Medium	High	High	Very High
	Very High	Medium	High	High	Very High	Very High

Magnitude of Impact

7.3.13 The magnitude of impact for landscape or visual change is influenced by a number of factors, including the extent to which landscape features are lost and / or altered, the introduction of new features into the landscape and the resulting change in the physical and / or perceptual characteristics of the landscape or view. It is determined by, but not limited to:

- the size and scale of the impact;
- the extent of the geographical area over which the change is likely to be felt;
- the duration of the impact and its potential reversibility; and
- the proximity of the receptor to the change and the nature of the effect.

7.3.14 **Tables 7.05 and 7.08 at Appendix 7.2** define the criteria for determining the magnitude of impact on landscape and visual receptors. As an example, **Table 7.2** below provides the criteria for determining the magnitude of impact for landscape change.

Table 7.2 Criteria for determining magnitude of impact for landscape change

MAGNITUDE	CRITERIA
Very Large	The size and scale of change is considered to be very high due to the total loss of or alteration to existing landscape character or highly distinctive / important features and elements, and / or the addition of uncharacteristic conspicuous features and elements, resulting in a complete change to key aesthetic or perceptual qualities. The geographical extent of change would influence the landscape at a national level. Impacts would be considered long term and would either be irreversible or very difficult to reverse in practical terms.
Large	The size and scale of change is considered to be high due to the notable loss of or alteration to existing landscape character or distinctive / important features and elements, and / or the addition of uncharacteristic noticeable features and elements, degrading the integrity of key aesthetic or perceptual qualities. The geographical extent of change would influence the landscape at a regional level. Impacts would be considered long term and would either be irreversible or very difficult to reverse in practical terms.
Medium	The size and scale of change is considered to be medium due to the partial loss of or alteration to existing landscape character or features and elements, and / or the addition of uncharacteristic features and elements, resulting in key aesthetic or perceptual qualities out of scale or at odds with the local pattern and landform. The geographical extent of change would influence the landscape at a local level. Impacts would be considered medium term and / or potentially reversible, although it may not be practical to do so.
Small	The size and scale of change is considered to be low due to minor loss or alteration of existing landscape features and elements, resulting in a discernible negative effect to key aesthetic or perceptual qualities. The geographical extent of change would influence the immediate setting of the proposed development. Impacts would be considered short term and / or potentially reversible and in practical terms would easily be achievable.
Negligible	The size and scale of change to existing landscape features and elements is considered to be barely discernible. The geographical extent of change would influence the site only. Impacts would be considered short term / temporary and / or easily reversible and in practical terms would very easily be achievable.

Significance Evaluation

7.3.15 The final conclusion for both landscape and visual effects are based on a combination of sensitivity and magnitude of change (impact). The overall judgement on the nature and level of these effects, referred to as significance, is based on the sequential combination of each criteria, leading to a balanced justification as described by the criteria provided in the **Tables**

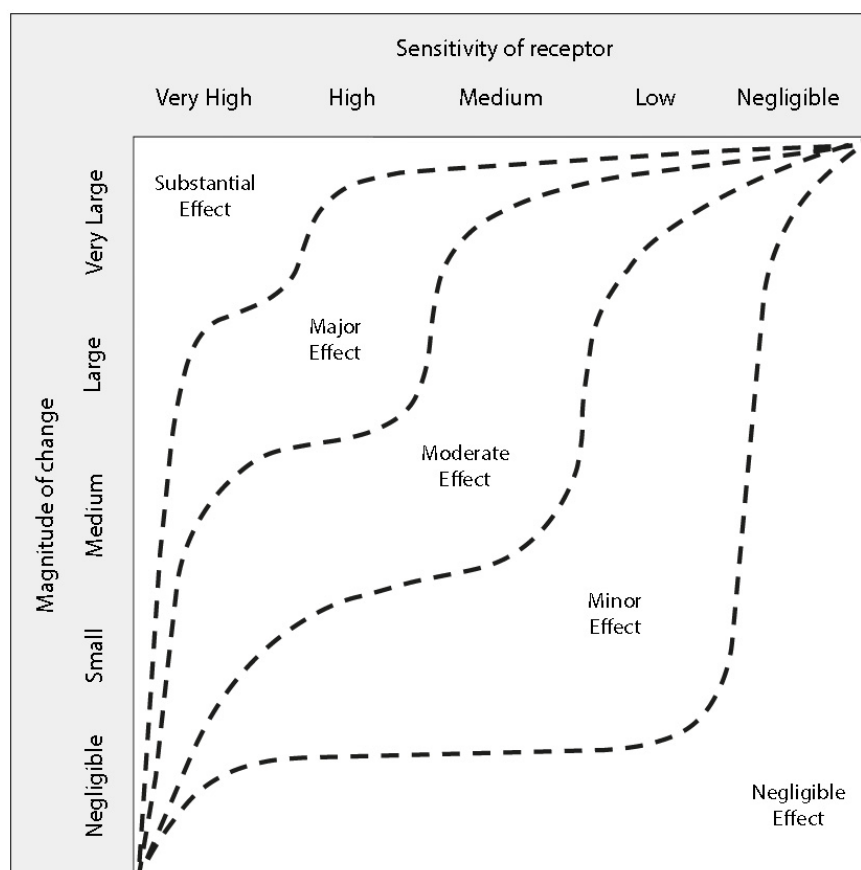
7.10 and **7.11** at **Appendix 7.2**, with professional judgement applied to inform this determination. The matrix in **Table 7.3** below provides an indication of how significance is determined by this combination of sensitivity and magnitude but it is not applied without due consideration of the specific details of the Site and development under consideration.

7.3.16 Describing effects likely to arise as a result of the Proposed Development and determining their significance requires the application of professional judgement to weigh the findings of the sensitivity of receptors against the predicted magnitude of change (impact), which can be beneficial, adverse or neutral.

7.3.17 For the purpose of this assessment, effects are described in relation to their relevance to decision making and have been defined as follows:

- **Substantial** – Considerable effect (by extent, duration or magnitude of impact) of more than local importance or in breach of recognised acceptability, legislation, policy and / or standards. Considered to be very important and material to decision making and significant in EIA terms.
- **Major** – Obvious effect (by extent, duration or magnitude of impact) considered to be important and material to the decision making process and significant in EIA terms.
- **Moderate** – Potential to be material to decision making and potentially significant in EIA terms.
- **Minor** – Slight, very short or highly localised effect, not important for decision making and not considered significant in EIA terms.
- **Negligible or Neutral** – No important effect, not relevant to decision making and not considered significant in EIA terms.

Table 7.3 Criteria for determining magnitude of impact for landscape change



7.3.18 As described in the LVIA methodology at **Appendix 7.2**, Major and Substantial effects are considered to be material to decision making and considered significant in EIA terms, whilst Moderate effects have the potential to be material to decision making and considered potentially significant in EIA terms. Minor, Negligible and Neutral effects are considered not significant in EIA terms.

Uncertainties and Limitations

7.3.19 Landscape results from the interplay between the natural, physical and cultural components of the environment and as such the assessment of landscape and visual effects is a process closely linked with other topics, notably ecology and the historic environment. The LVIA considers the contribution heritage and ecological features make to the character and value of the landscape and visual receptors, along with an assessment of the likely effect of the Proposed Development on the landscape character and views associated with heritage features. The LVIA has been carried out in landscape and visual terms only, as an assessment of effects on heritage assets and their wider cultural setting (e.g. impacts on cultural and historic associations) are considered to be beyond the remit of this LVIA. The LVIA does not assess direct or any other indirect effects on heritage or ecological resources, which have been assessed within Chapter 11: Ecology, Chapter 8: Built Heritage and Chapter 9: Archaeology.

- 7.3.20 The LVIA is based on views from publicly accessible locations. Where an impact on residential and other private views (e.g. commercial properties) is noted this has, necessarily, been estimated. The viewpoints identified in the LVIA are illustrative of the worst-case potential impact from a representative range of receptors including residences, rights of way, public open spaces, private open space, commercial operations, the road and rail network etc. This LVIA does not necessarily identify all locations from where the Proposed Development would potentially be visible.
- 7.3.21 In the absence of a detailed design and layout the effects of lighting cannot be accurately determined however an assessment is provided on: the likely effects of temporary lighting resulting from construction; the change to the baseline sky glow; and, the change to the landscape and views as a result of the introduction of lighting as part of the Proposed Development.
- 7.3.22 The Proposed Development would be phased, with development commencing in site BA2 (Phase 1) and thereafter progressing in BA1 from a west to easterly direction (from North Road) alongside the build out of BA10. The final phase would comprise BA3 (dependent on the decision regarding secondary school provision). Infrastructure would be delivered at appropriate triggers throughout the development, to be agreed as part of the S106 agreement. Construction is anticipated to commence in 2027 with the first completions (in BA2) in 2028. The Proposed Development completion date is envisaged to be approximately 2043 with an average annual housing completion rate of 200 dwellings per annum.
- 7.3.23 As the effects for each receptor would be constrained to their facing edge and proposals in the background toward the centre of the Site, it is assumed that all construction work would commence and be completed at the same time. It is assumed that landscape mitigation would be implemented in various parts of the Site throughout the implementation period, alongside or at the end of the respective phase, with the potential for early planting to be established before the end of the implementation period). However, for assessment purposes, to avoid over-complication in interpretation of the LVIA, it is assumed that all construction work would commence and be completed at the same time. As a result, the post-completion (Year 0) and post mitigation establishment (Year 15) stages are assumed as being achieved concurrently around the Site.
- 7.3.24 The landscape and visual effects have been considered in relation to the proposed land uses and the parameters that are defined by the submitted Parameter Plan and Development Specification. For the BA3 part of the Site, there is an identified flexible land use for either residential or education, or both, with three potential development options (listed below). The spatial extent and maximum height of the residential and education land use on the Parameter Plan for BA3 is the same for all options, therefore the LVIA considers the potential landscape and visual effects in relation to all, comprising the following options:

- Option 1 – Knights Templar expansion and relocation to BA3 - Relocation and expansion (up to 12FE) of Knights Templar school to BA3. BA3 to accommodate SEND school and secondary school;
- Option 2 – Knights Templar expansion - Expansion of Knights Templar on existing site (up to 10FE). BA3 to accommodate SEND school and residential (c. 250 units);
or
- Option 3 – Additional secondary school on BA3 - Provision of additional secondary school (up to 5FE) on BA3 . BA3 to accommodate SEND school, secondary school and residential (c.90 units).

7.3.25 The assessment considers the nuisances of visibility for each of the options as described in the Schedule of Likely Visual Effects at **Appendix 7.9**.

7.3.26 No limitations have been identified that would affect the conclusions of this assessment for EIA purposes.

7.4 BASELINE CONDITIONS

The Current Baseline

Site Location and Context

- 7.4.1 The adopted North Herts Local Plan allocates land to the north and east of Baldock as a sustainable extension to accommodate up to 3,300 homes, employment, local centres, schools and community facilities, sustainable transport connections and green infrastructure.
- 7.4.2 The Site is located to the north and east of the historic market town of Baldock (population c.10,000), within the administrative area of North Hertfordshire. The Site comprises a series of land parcels, separated by rail and road infrastructure, of predominantly agricultural land immediately adjoining the urban area.
- 7.4.3 The Site comprises a collection of housing and employment allocation sites collectively referred to as 'Baldock Strategic Sustainable Extension' and includes the following references (as illustrated at **Appendix 7.4** on **Figure 7.1**: Site Location and Study Area):
- BA1: land bound to the west by the A507 North Road, to the north by the Millers Way Public Right of Way and to the south by the railway line;
 - BA10: land between the Hitchin-Cambridge railway line to the north and the B656 Royston Road to the south;
 - BA2: land to south west of Clothall Road and north east of the Baldock Park Homes (Hillside Park) site and Weston Hills Local Nature Reserve;
 - BA3: land to the south of Royston Road and north west of the A505, wrapping around the eastern edges of existing housing at Clothall Common;
 - Urban Open Land: area of open space located between BA2 and BA3; and
 - Walls Field: area of open space which comprises part of a Scheduled Monument. This is located to the northeast of Clothall Road, north west of Wallington Road and to the south east of the Hartsfield Infant and Junior School.
 - Land West of North Road: small parcel of land west of North Road and east of the Ivel Springs Local Nature Reserve.
- 7.4.4 Due to the scale of the Site (approximately 220 hectares) and the distribution of parcels noted above, these references are used throughout this LVIA chapter to refer to specific areas:
- BA1– This area is bound by the A507 North Road to the west, public bridleway (Ref: Bygrave 001) to the north and Cambridge railway line to the south. The land use in this part of the Site is predominantly arable farmland. The northern fields are open and large scale, principally as a result of a lack of features to provide enclosure, with undulating chalk topography, few dwellings and a uniformity of land cover. The scale of the landscape south of Bygrave Road/Ashwell Road is smaller than the un-enclosed fields to the north.

- BA2– This area is a combination of grazing paddocks associated with Cambrai Farm and arable farmland, bound to the north west by the settlement edge of Baldock, Hillside Park mobile home site to the south west and by the A505 Baldock bypass to the south.
- BA3– The southern part features arable farmland bound by Wallington Road and the settlement edge of Clothall Common to the north and west and the A505 Baldock bypass to the east. The northern part features an elevated unmanaged area of land created after the construction of the Baldock bypass and is currently used locally by the community as an area for informal recreation, albeit is not designated for such use.
- BA10– This is a linear piece of landscape bound to the north by the Cambridge railway line and to the south by Royston Road. The land use is predominantly arable farmland with a few grazing pastures to the west and interspersed with small farmsteads and industrial uses along Royston Road.
- Walls Field (Scheduled Monument) – Baldock has an important history, as a Roman settlement, which was centred on Walls Field to the east of the town centre. The Scheduled Monument forms part of the Site and is currently under intensive agricultural use.
- Urban Open Land – To the north of Clothall Road and east of Walls Field, designated under Policy G2 Strategic Green Space in the Baldock, Bygrave & Clothall Neighbourhood Plan 2021 - this land is currently arable farmland.
- Land West of North Road – a small parcel of land west of North Road and east of the Ivel Springs Local Nature Reserve, currently bound by hedgerow, featuring unmanaged grassland, used locally by the community as an area for informal recreation, albeit is not designated for such use.

Physical Landscape Resource

Land Use

- 7.4.5 The Site, for the majority (c.90%), is in active arable farming use including areas: to the north and south of Bygrave Road (BA1); to the north of Royston Road (BA10); between Wallington Road and the A505 (BA3); and Walls Field and the Urban Open Land. Small pasture fields feature in BA2 and in the south western parts of BA1 between Bygrave Road and the railway line.

Topography and Landform

- 7.4.6 The Site's topography and landform, as illustrated at **Appendix 7.4** on **Figure 7.4**, is influenced and characterised by the rolling chalk landscape of north Hertfordshire. The northern part of the Site (BA1) is large scale, open, rolling chalk landform featuring rounded ridges and valleys running in a generally east-west direction (at circa +60 to +75m AOD). Between Bygrave Road / Ashwell Road and Royston Road (BA1 and BA10), the landform becomes flat and even (at circa +60m AOD), rising only gently eastwards. The localised

elevated landform on the northern part of BA3 (at circa +85m AOD) was artificially created after the construction of the A505 Baldock bypass. Closer to the settlement edge of Baldock the landform becomes flatter, particularly land south of Clothall Common, Walls Field and the Urban Open Land around Clothall Road.

- 7.4.7 The Site and immediate study area are drained by a limited network of local streams and ditches. The only watercourses are beyond the Site, including the seasonal Cat Ditch to the east and Ivel Springs and ponds to the west. Springs and ponds are a distinctive local feature at Bygrave to the east.

Geology and Soils

- 7.4.8 The Site and the immediate study area are located within National Character Area (NCA) 87, East Anglian Chalk, where the underlying and solid geology is dominated by Upper Cretaceous Chalk, a narrow continuation of the chalk ridge that runs south west to north east across southern England, continuing into the Chilterns and along the eastern edge of the Wash. The chalk bedrock has given the NCA its nutrient-poor and shallow soils. The North Hertfordshire and Stevenage Landscape Character Assessment (2011), describes the geology and soil of the North Baldock Chalk Uplands, which the Site and immediate study area are located within, as chalk overlain by free draining calcareous to neutral loamy brown soils. Thin drift deposits of Boulder Clay and glacial gravel on the upper slopes.
- 7.4.9 Overlying soils are predominantly freely draining lime-rich soils, supporting a landcover of arable with grassland at higher altitudes (<http://www.landis.org.uk/soilscapes/>). Also present are small areas of shallow lime-rich soils over chalk, supporting a similar landcover.

Existing Vegetation

- 7.4.10 Chapter 11: Ecology and supporting **Appendix 11.1** Preliminary Ecological Appraisal establish the baseline quality and condition of the existing on-site habitats. The report highlights the majority of the Site is arable farmland of low ecological value, with a few notable landscape features limited to fragmented hedgerows, trees and woodland - associated with field boundaries and infrastructure corridors (railway and North Road). Habitats identified on the Site from the Phase 1 habitat survey (as illustrated at **Appendix 7.4** on **Figure 7.8**) include scattered trees, dense scrub, semi-improved grassland, tall ruderal, arable fields, amenity grassland and hedgerows.
- 7.4.11 Chapter 11: Ecology and supporting **Appendix 11.1** Preliminary Ecological Appraisal identifies the following habitats and landscape features worth retaining and ecological sensitivities associated with the Site:
- The northern elevated part of BA3 between Royston Road, the A505 Baldock bypass is identified as having an 'elevated' ecological value compared with the rest of the Site, featuring semi-improved grassland and a scrub habitat mosaic;

- Several of the road verges along Bygrave Road (BA1) support thin strips of semi-improved neutral grassland, including Bygrave Road LWS;
- An array of species rich and species poor hedgerows occur throughout the Site all meeting UK Priority Habitat criteria, with the hedgerow (ref: H28) along the northern boundary of Walls Field at the boundary with Clothall Common identified to be 'Important' under The Hedgerow Regulations 1997;
- There are also areas of dense scrub within the Site. The scrub habitat within the Site is of some conservation value because this habitat forms an important habitat corridor in a largely arable landscape;
- Multiple broad-leaved and coniferous trees with a range of ages were recorded on Site generally associated with field boundaries and farmyard / residential properties within the Site. Those present within the Site comprise a limited range of common species in a small area but are still considered to be of Local value;
- There are groupings of trees located around and along Bygrave Road (BA1) and north of Royston Road that are worth exploring for retention; and
- A strip of broad-leaved semi-natural woodland was located in the south-western corner of the northern portion of the Site (BA1), east of Larkins Close. Although the semi-natural broad-leaved woodland has some features of a lowland deciduous woodland, there is a lack of species diversity and ground flora in this woodland which means this woodland area is not considered to meet the criteria of Priority Habitat.

7.4.12 The Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA), which accompanies the Outline Planning Application, identifies trees and woodland on the Site and in its surrounding context. The key arboricultural context is summarised below:

- The majority of the Site is arable farmland with existing hedgerows and trees associated with field boundaries and farmsteads. There are no ancient woodlands, Tree Preservation Order (TPO), notable or veteran trees located on the Site.
- The arboricultural tree survey identified multiple broad-leaved and coniferous trees on Site are category B (moderate value) and category C (low value). There was only one category A tree (high value) identified (ref:T67), a Common Walnut on the north western boundary of BA2.
- Existing native hedgerow field boundaries, identified to be of moderate value (category B) include the Site's northern boundary (ref H30 - BA1), North Road boundary (ref H35) and Clothall Road boundary (ref H4).
- Important linear groupings of vegetation, identified to be of moderate value (category B) include the vegetation bordering Walls Field (G33) and the vegetation between Clothall Common and BA3 (G22 – G26).

Environmental Designations

7.4.13 The environmental designations of relevance are summarised below and illustrated on **Figure 7.7: Environmental Designations at Appendix 7.4:**

- There are no statutory ecological designations covering any part of the Site.
- The Site lies adjacent to two statutory sites of nature conservation importance including Weston Hills and Ivel Springs (Local Nature Reserves and Local Wildlife Sites).
- Weston Hills borders the Site at the south east boundary of BA2. Weston Hills is designated for its calcareous grassland habitat, beech and ash woodland and wildflower grassland that are managed for conservation purposes.
- Ivel Springs is located opposite the Site (BA1) at North Road. This site is designated for its mosaic of habitats including wildflower meadows, glades, chalk grassland, wetland and springs that are a key source for the river.
- Ten non-statutory designated sites of nature conservation, six priority habitats and two notable habitats are located within 1km of the Site.
- The Bygrave Road Local Wildlife Site (LWS), an area of semi-improved neutral grassland, is located within the centre of the Site, contiguous with Bygrave Road.

Heritage Designations

7.4.14 The heritage designations of relevance are summarised below and illustrated on **Figure 7.9: Heritage Features at Appendix 7.4:**

- Baldock Conservation Area: The Site is located circa 100m beyond the boundaries of the Conservation Area.
- Scheduled Monuments: The Site lies adjacent to Ivel Springs and the Site itself comprises the Romano-British small town and Late Iron Age Settlement off Clothall Road (referred to as Walls Field). Both Scheduled Monuments are experienced as areas of open greenspace on the edges of Baldock, but are not visually tangible historic features (i.e. there is no visible built form or clear earthworks which give them prominence). The significance of these monuments stems principally from their archaeology.
- Individual listed buildings: Outside of the conservation area, which include four Grade II listed dwellings along North Road (namely The Nook, Long Bailey, Blackhouse Farmhouse and The Compasses).
- Grade I Church of St Mary, Baldock: The church is situated in the centre of the Baldock Conservation Area, however Chapter 8: Built Heritage describes it as the most prominent asset in the area, therefore it is considered as an individual heritage asset.

7.4.15 In the wider study area, there are several other listed buildings and heritage designations however, due to the extent of intervening built form, topography and vegetation, it is considered that the nature of the Proposed Development on Site would not have any impact on these receptors.

Archaeology

- 7.4.16 Areas of archaeological interest in relation to the Site are summarised below and illustrated on **Figure 7.9: Heritage Features** at **Appendix 7.4**. The LVIA considers the contribution of archaeology on the character of the landscape but does not assess direct or any other indirect effects on archaeology resources, which have been assessed within Chapter 9: Archaeology.
- 7.4.17 Chapter 9: Archaeology of the ES concluded that, the large number of HER records present within the Site reflect the importance of this local settlement landscape from the late Prehistoric and throughout the Roman period. Subsequent periods are foremost characterised by low-level settlement within an agricultural landscape to the east of Baldock, the latter rising to prominence as a medieval market and post-medieval coaching town. The Late Iron Age and Roman settlement of Baldock has been the focus of much investigation, revealing a continuity of local settlement activity including a large number of cemeteries.
- 7.4.18 Within the Site, pre-Roman remains include Neolithic pits, elements of Bronze Age barrow cemeteries, albeit much stripped by ploughing, Iron Age field enclosures and part of an Iron Age pit alignment. The majority of recorded archaeology within the Site relates to Late Iron Age and Roman agriculture, to the east of Baldock, including ditched enclosures, fields and trackways and an area of possible settlement. Whilst past evaluations suggested low-status activities, the discovery of painted wall plaster gives indications of high status early Roman settlement in the vicinity. It has been suggested that activity in this area may have been influenced by the presence of a winterbourne (a stream that is dry throughout the summer months). The course of the Icknield Way – an important Prehistoric and later communications route – also passes (on a purported broad course) through the Site. The principally agricultural character of the Site appears to persist throughout the post-Roman era, with only limited evidence of early medieval settlement within the study area. However, the site of a 10th to 12th century AD hamlet, including a trackway and possible post-built structure, is recorded within the area of Bygrave Common. This early Medieval settlement is located within the vicinity of a spring.

Undesignated Heritage Features

- 7.4.19 Non-designated heritage features are buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions because of their heritage interest but which do not meet criteria for designated heritage assets (as defined in Annex 2 of the NPPF).
- 7.4.20 Chapter 9: Archaeology identified a number of buried archaeological remains, these are also illustrated on **Figure 7.9: Heritage Features** at **Appendix 7.4**:
- Bygrave Common: The Bygrave Tithe Map of 1847, shows the vast majority of the Site is characterised by strip fields, being vestigial remains of medieval agricultural system. Strip-field farming, also known as an open field system, was introduced

during the Medieval period as a way for villagers to share land. The field would have been owned by a land owner and the villagers would rent strips in which to grow their own crops. The 1884 OS map shows the Site occupying open farmland with the northern part referred to as Bygrave Common. Remnants of strip field remain, suggesting they were still in use.

- **Millers Way:** A historic trackway is recorded within the area of Bygrave Common. It ran between Blackhorse Mill and the village of Bygrave, along the Site's northern boundary and now the route of public bridleway Bygrave 001. It is marked as 'Mill Way' on Bryant's 1822 map of Hertfordshire. It is later referred to as 'Miller's Way' in the Victoria County History of 1912.
- **Paleo Channel – Winter River Route:** A palaeochannel (an ancient stream-bed now infilled with soil) passes through the Site (BA10 and BA1). Part of the channel was investigated when the A505 Baldock Bypass was being built in 2003. Archaeologists discovered that it probably began to fill up after about 18,000 years ago, long after mammoths had become extinct in Britain, but during the final part of the Ice Age. At this time, the tundra began to thaw, and melting permafrost brought vast quantities of sediment down into valleys.

Heritage Influence with LVIA

- 7.4.21 The LVIA considers the contribution of heritage assets on the character of the landscape and views but does not assess direct or any other indirect effects on heritage resources, which have been assessed within Chapter 8: Built Heritage.

Access and Recreation Routes

- 7.4.22 The access and recreational routes, including major and local roads, Public Rights of Way (PRoW) and circular strategic recreational routes of relevance are summarised below and illustrated **on Figure 7.5: Movement & Access at Appendix 7.4:**

- **BA1 North of Baldock – Public bridleway Bygrave 001** (referred to as Millers Way) runs along the Site's northern boundary from North Road in the west to Ashwell Road in the east. Public bridleway Bygrave 002 runs north / south through the western part of the Site, from Bygrave Road at Laymore Farm, extending north to restricted byway Bygrave 014 beyond the Site. There is also public footpath Bygrave 015 on the eastern extent of BA1, which runs north / south from Ashwell Road, across farmland and over the railway line to Royston Road, also on the eastern edge of BA10.
- **BA3 Land south of Clothall Common – Public bridleway Clothall 003** runs from Royston Road, south through the Site towards the A505, where it forks with one part continuing over the A505 and the other staying within the Site and becoming bridleway Clothall 027, heading west towards Clothall Common.
- **Urban Open Land and Walls Field –** Within the land designated Urban Open Land, public footpath Clothall 001 runs between Clothall Road and Wellington Road. Within

Walls Field, public footpath Baldock 037 bisects the land centrally, running from Clothall Road to Mercia Road. Public footpath Baldock 036 runs along the north eastern boundary of Walls Field at the interface with Clothall Common settlement edge.

- The Icknield Way Trail, long distance footpath, borders the Site's southern-most Site boundary (BA2), running in a south east / north west direction, passing through Baldock and providing onward connection to Letchworth Garden City in the west - and joining with the Hertfordshire Way in the east.
- National Cycle Route 12 (NCR 12) runs through the western part of Baldock, passing between Letchworth Garden City and Baldock, along the A1(M) road corridor.
- Baldock North Circular: Baldock to Ashwell - a 12.2 miles circular walk which starts in the town and extends through the BA1 Site to Ashwell.
- Baldock South Circular: Baldock to Wallington - a 8.2 circular walk from Baldock to Wallington across the elevated Wallington scarp slopes.
- The Kingfisher Way - a 20 mile walk from Baldock to Stotfold, following the course of the River Ivel.
- Letchworth Greenway - a 13.6 mile circular route around the Garden City suitable for the enjoyment of walkers, runners and cyclists. The Greenway passes through the western and south western edges of Baldock, at its closest points crossing Norton Road to the west of Ivel Springs and along Weston Road, passing Knights Templar Sports Centre.

Landscape Character

7.4.23 Published landscape character assessments relevant to the Proposed Development and wider study area have been reviewed and their extents illustrated **on Figure 7.10 at Appendix 7.4**. These assessments include:

- National Character Area Profile (Natural England); and
- North Hertfordshire and Stevenage Landscape Character Assessment (2011).

7.4.24 The published assessments provide a hierarchical appraisal of the character of the Site, its surroundings and the wider region through a recognised process of landscape characterisation. It should be noted that there are often subtle differences between and within individual landscape character areas that can give rise to variations in both actual and perceived value, quality, condition and susceptibility to change. Furthermore, boundaries between character areas do not always follow recognised features within the landscape such as rivers, settlement edges or field boundaries where there is a gradual change in character and is often the case with landscapes at the national and regional level.

7.4.25 Character areas at the national level have been reviewed as part of the assessment. It is considered that, whilst these assessments inform the context for district or local character assessments, they do not provide a sufficient level of detail appropriate to the nature of effects likely to arise at a local level as a result of the Proposed Development.

7.4.26 In addition, given the scale of these character areas and the local scale of effects likely from the Proposed Development, any effects on the national character areas would be negligible at most. Therefore, in line with the recommendations of GLVIA3, to ensure that the scale of assessment is appropriate and proportionate to the scale of the Proposed Development, national character areas have not been considered further as part of the assessment.

District Landscape Character

7.4.27 At a district level, as illustrated on **Figure 7.10** at **Appendix 7.4**, the study area and the Site falls within the published Landscape Character Assessment: North Hertfordshire and Stevenage Landscape Character Assessment (2011). A detailed description of each baseline Landscape Character Area (LCA) of the Site is assessed and included in Appendix 7.8 and should be read with reference to this section.

7.4.28 The Site is wholly located within LCA 224: North Baldock Chalk Uplands, which is described as “rolling chalk landform, eroded by a complex network of shallow dry valleys. Small rounded chalk knolls common. Large scale arable fields often with remnant field boundaries, mainly well trimmed hawthorn hedges. The core has a pattern of regular rectilinear fields often with curving boundaries. Boundaries often based on older more organic pattern of lanes and primary boundaries”. Key characteristics, of relevance to the Site and immediate study area, include:

- Rolling chalk landform
- Small rounded chalk knolls
- Large rectilinear fields in arable
- Nucleated settlements
- A1(M), A505, railway
- Lower Icknield Way
- Abuts suburban edge of Baldock
- Pylons crossing the western edge
- Ivel valley

7.4.29 A number of landscape management objectives are set out for the LCA, those of relevance to the Site include:

- Promote creation of new woodland and for existing woodlands encourage a diverse woodland flora.
- 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 to create visual links between existing woodland areas.
- Promote the diversity of hedgerow species and planting of standard hedgerow trees.
- Maintain and extend the rights of way network.

7.4.30 A number of built development guidelines are set out for the LCA, those of relevance to the Site include:

- Maintain the open character of North Baldock Chalk Uplands.
- Retain the rural character of the area ensuring any new development is appropriately sited and of a scale, form and style appropriate to the character area.
- Planting mitigation should be appropriate to local character and not necessarily fully enclose development.
- Ensure that new development does not necessitate the removal of existing woodland blocks or hedgerow.
- Protect and preserve the pattern of narrow open lanes and occasional rows or avenues of trees.
- Ensure lighting necessitated by new development minimises the impact on the Character Area.

7.4.31 The Site lies directly adjacent to the following District Landscape Character Areas (LCAs), which are considered as part of the LVIA, a detailed description of each LCA baseline is included in Appendix 7.8:

- LCA 216 : Arlesey / Great Wymondley
- LCA 219 : Baldock Gap

7.4.32 Given the distance from the Site, combined with the extent of existing intervening urban form and green infrastructure in the context surrounding the Site, the effect on all other North Hertfordshire landscape character areas identified by the assessment noted above and illustrated on **Figure 7.10** at **Appendix 7.4** would be negligible at most, therefore these were scoped out and are not considered further as part of the LVIA.

Landscape Character of the Site

7.4.33 The following section provides an overview of the character of the Site and immediate context at a more localised level than the previous higher level characterisations. Due to the scale of the Site and parcelisation, the different allocation areas have been used and are considered further in more detail as part of the assessment at **Appendix 7.8**.

Visual Amenity

7.4.34 The visual baseline identifies views toward the Site with the potential to be impacted by the Proposed Development.

7.4.35 The baseline situation for these views is described through a series of viewpoint photographs, taken from publicly accessible locations which, alongside representing the views experienced by people at the viewpoint, are also representative of potential views for other receptors in its vicinity.

- 7.4.36 Viewpoint Photographs are contained in **Appendix 7.5 (winter)** and Appendix 7.6 (summer), with the viewpoint locations illustrated on **Figure 7.11** at **Appendix 7.4**. A detailed description of each baseline view assessed is included in **Appendix 7.9** and should be read with reference to these photographs and their relative positions within the ZTV, as illustrated on **Figures 7.2** and **7.3** at **Appendix 7.4**.
- 7.4.37 Following Pre App discussions with NHC in April and May 2025, key viewpoints were agreed and AVR wirelines modelled, illustrating the Proposed Development outline as illustrated on the Parameter Plan and maximum storey heights to ridge as outlined in the Development Specification. The wirelines give an indication of the maximum height ceiling of the Proposed Development, in relation to the baseline view - but not the overall mass, scale and location of the Proposed Development (which requires further detailed design and interpretation). The AVR viewpoint photographs and methodology used to create the AVR wireline views is set out in the Vista3D document at **Appendix 7.7**.
- 7.4.38 Viewpoint photographs were taken in July 2022, March 2023 and June 2025 and represent the respective winter and summer view from each location.
- 7.4.39 Views from each viewpoint may be representative of more than one receptor, for example, a viewpoint taken from a PRow will be representative of views experienced by users of the PRow, however it may also be representative of views experienced from nearby roads or the vicinity of nearby residential properties of a settlement - receptors which are considered to be represented by each viewpoint location are noted in **Appendix 7.9** and on each viewpoint photograph sheet at **Appendix 7.5** and **7.6**. The nature and value of these views is relative to the type of receptor experiencing the view, as reflected in the visual baseline and determination of sensitivity provided in **Appendix 7.9**.

Visibility of the Site & Context

- 7.4.40 The process used to determine the ZTV and visual envelope for the Proposed Development is described in the LVIA Methodology at **Appendix 7.2**.
- 7.4.41 The ZTV represents the starting point for understanding the visual baseline for the Site and the Proposed Development. The findings of the ZTV were verified during field survey, which in turn led to the selection of receptors appropriate to assess the likely visual effects of the Proposed Development.
- 7.4.42 It is impractical, and disproportionate to the LVIA (as required by GLVIA3) to assess views from all receptors within the study area, therefore representative viewpoints have been selected, as agreed with NHC. These viewpoints are chosen to represent views experienced from the location of the viewpoint and for other similar views within the study area. During the field survey, some locations which appeared on the ZTV were found to have no visibility of the Site and no likely visibility of the Proposed Development.

7.4.43 Baldock is a compact and historic market town, set within the rolling chalk landscape of North Hertfordshire. Visually, Baldock market town lies in a 'bowl', largely hidden from many surrounding locations but with relatively distant views across the town from elevated positions on the surrounding chalk ridgelines and scarp slopes.

7.4.44 Existing, large, pale buildings along Royston Road (at Ashville Trading Estate) – along with the Letchworth retail and business park – serve as detracting features, in views from the surrounding countryside, when looking back towards Baldock. Electricity pylon towers dominate the skyline in views from the north and west. Linear transport routes, including the Cambridge railway line and Baldock A505 bypass, server views – with their alignments partly picked out by flanking existing vegetation, along with associated infrastructure (bridges over the A505, the Weston Hills tunnel and signage at the Royston Road junction).

Views from Residential Receptors – Baldock

7.4.45 To the north east of Baldock, at Lower Bygrave, properties fronting Ashwell Road (Viewpoint 1) experience open views across arable farmland, due to the lack of any hedgerow or tree vegetation along field boundaries. The landform in this location is undulating and rises towards the Site's north eastern boundary (BA1), before falling to a localised valley - which also forms the Site's northern boundary, before rising again in the distance to a treed ridgeline (restricted byway Bygrave 014), with electricity pylons serving as visual detractors along the horizon. Farmsteads and residential properties on Bygrave Road and Salisbury Road, on the northern settlement edge of Baldock are visible – along with industrial units within Ashville Trading Estate – flanked by vegetation, in the middle to long distance, urbanising the view and providing a visual connection to Baldock. Residential receptors on the southern part of Ashwell Road have the potential to experience open, direct, middle to long distance views towards the northern parts of the Site (BA1) and filtered, glimpsed oblique views towards the central parts of the Site, along Royston Road (BA10).

7.4.46 Residential properties fronting onto Clothall Road (A507) and Walls Field scheduled monument (Viewpoint 8) currently experience direct, open views across Clothall Road towards the Site's arable farmland in the foreground, extending to the middle distance where the residential properties within Clothall Common are discernible through tree and hedgerow boundary vegetation.

7.4.47 To the south east of Baldock, residents on Walnut Avenue, Laxton Gardens and Baldock Park Homes - whose properties directly back and side onto the Site (BA2) - have the potential to experience direct and oblique views across the existing pasture and arable farmland within the Site. The land within this part of the Site (BA2) rises from the settlement edge of Baldock in a south easterly direction, towards the A505 Baldock bypass (Viewpoint 9B).

7.4.48 Residential properties on North Road (A507), between Salisbury Road and Bygrave Road, have the potential to experience direct views from their upper storey windows towards the north western part of the Site - located adjacent to Baldock allotments and Ivel Springs LNR.

This part of the Site is visually enclosed at ground level by an existing hedgerow along North Road (Viewpoint 14).

7.4.49 On the northern, outer residential edge of Baldock, from properties on Salisbury Road (Viewpoint 15), there are direct and oblique views of the north western parts of the Site (BA1). Existing vegetation within rear gardens provides a degree of filtering, particularly in summer months, however the lack of hedgerow and tree boundaries to fields in the northern parts of the Site – along with the open undulating nature of the landscape – affords distant views across the arable farmland towards the treed ridge line in the distance.

7.4.50 There are isolated views from a small number of farmsteads along Bygrave Road, near Half Way Farm, in the centre of the BA1 part of the Site. These farmstead residents have direct, partial to filtered views towards BA1, the surrounding rural landscape and the settlement edge of Baldock (Viewpoints 18A and 18B).

Views from Residential Receptors – Clothall Common

7.4.51 Residents on Downlands, Weavers Way, Mercia Road and Westell Close (off Yeomanry Drive, on the south western residential edge of Clothall Common) whose properties directly back or side onto Walls Field (scheduled monument) have the potential for oblique filtered to glimpsed views of the Site in this location - due to the visual enclosure created by existing tree and scrub vegetation on field boundaries (Viewpoint 8).

7.4.52 A small proportion of residents on Wallington Road - where it transitions to Yeomanry Drive and whose properties either side, back or front onto the road in this location - have the potential for oblique filtered to glimpsed views across the open arable farmland within BA3. Residents on the southern edge of Clothall Common on Barley Rise, Chauncy Gardens and Merchants Walk - whose properties directly back or side onto the BA3 part of the Site - have the potential for oblique filtered to glimpsed views to this part of the Site, due to the visual enclosure created by rear garden fencing and existing tree planting along boundaries (Viewpoint 10).

7.4.53 Residents on Aleyn Way and Merchants Way (on the eastern edge of Clothall Common) - whose properties directly back or side onto the Site (northern part of BA3) - currently experience direct to oblique filtered views across this part of the Site. The elevated nature of this unmanaged overgrown part of the Site (created artificially from the construction of the A505 Baldock bypass), visually encloses views beyond the Site to the east. There is an existing landscaped bund, featuring tree and scrub vegetation, between Royston Road and Yeomanry Drive, which currently limits views north from Clothall Common to the Site. There is the potential for residential receptors in the north eastern part of Clothall Common, whose properties directly side or back onto Yeomanry Drive to experience oblique filtered to glimpsed views of BA10 (Viewpoints 19A, 19B and 19C).

Views from Residential Receptors – Bygrave

- 7.4.54 Bygrave is a village in North Hertfordshire, about 3.2km north east of Baldock and approximately 1.1km from the Site's north eastern boundary. Due to the nature of vegetation within and on the edges of Bygrave, views out from residential receptors are restricted. Properties on Ashwell Road within Lower Bygrave are considered above under 'Baldock' (Viewpoint 1).

Views from Public Rights of Way

- 7.4.55 Receptors on public footpath Bygrave 015, heading south from Ashwell Road, experience open views across the undulating arable farmland, due to lack of hedgerow and tree vegetation - including near to middle distance views, of the north eastern parts of the Site (BA1) and filtered, glimpsed oblique views towards the central parts of the Site, along Royston Road (BA10) (Viewpoint 1).
- 7.4.56 Receptors on public bridleway Bygrave 001, heading south west from Ashwell Road, towards the northern part of BA1, currently experience open views across the large scale open rolling arable landscape. A localised ridgeline, featuring scattered trees and scrub, is visible in the near distance along the horizon, defining the Site's BA1 north eastern boundary. There are direct, near distance views towards the north eastern parts of BA1, where the landform slopes down to a localised valley depression - which also forms the Site's northern boundary, before rising again in the distance, to a treed ridgeline, where built form within the village of Norton is discernible in distant views. Electricity pylons are visible detractors running across the skyline of the view in the distance (Viewpoint 2).
- 7.4.57 Receptors on the outer edge of Bygrave village, on public footpath Bygrave 004, experience elevated views across the rolling arable landscape (Viewpoint 3). The land falls away in the south, towards the northern settlement edge of Baldock, where residential properties on Salisbury Road and industrial units associated with Letchworth business park are discernible in distant views. Due to the nature of intervening topography and vegetation, receptors have the potential to experience partial distant views of the northern parts of BA1 (between North Road and bridleway Bygrave 001) and partial to glimpsed distant views of BA2 in the direction of the A505 Weston Hills tunnel. As receptors head further east onto public footpath Bygrave 005/006, views towards the northern part of the Site (BA1) reduce - with the potential for partial to glimpsed distant views, due to the layers of existing intervening vegetation (Viewpoint 4). From this location receptors currently experience elevated, distant views of the south eastern parts of the Site including BA1 between Ashwell Road and the railway line, the land between Royston Road and the A505 Baldock bypass and parts of BA3 and BA2.
- 7.4.58 Receptors on public bridleway Rushden and Wallington 041 currently experience open views across undulating arable farmland. Baldock is visible in the distance with residential built form assimilated into the treed skyline (Viewpoint 5). There are partial to glimpsed distant views of the northern parts of the Site (associated with BA1) and partial distant views of the elevated unmanaged part of the Site between Royston Road and the A505 Baldock bypass.

- 7.4.59 Receptors on public bridleway Clothall 028 currently experience elevated, open views across arable farmland between the A505 Baldock bypass and the settlement edge of Clothall Common and Baldock (Viewpoint 6). Farmsteads and industrial units on Bygrave Road are visible in the distance, to the rear of a linear belt of vegetation bordering the railway line. Beyond the land rises and undulating arable farmland is visible in the distance along the horizon, including part of BA1. To the far left of the view, the settlement edges of Clothall Common are partially visible in the middle distance, at the interface with BA3, including the footbridge which connects into the Site.
- 7.4.60 Receptors on Icknield Way Trail and public bridleway Clothall 006, at the junction with Warren Lane, experience panoramic elevated views across the undulating arable landscape associated with the Wallington scarp slopes - down towards Baldock, which lies in a bowl in the distance. There are partial, glimpsed, distant views of the south eastern parts of the Site, including Walls Field and the Urban Open Land at Clothall Road (Viewpoint 7).
- 7.4.61 Receptors on public footpath Baldock 037 and 036 experience direct, open views across the Walls Field (scheduled monument) part of the Site next to Clothall Road, which is currently under intensive agricultural use (Viewpoint 8).
- 7.4.62 Receptors on public footpath Clothall 001 experience direct, open views across the Urban Open Land and BA3 between Clothall Road and Wallington Road, which is currently arable farmland (Viewpoint 9A).
- 7.4.63 Receptors on the permissive footpath which borders the southern settlement edge of Clothall Common - experience direct, open views across the Site's arable farmland (BA3) towards the undulating Wallington scarp slopes in the distance (Viewpoint 10).
- 7.4.64 Receptors on public footpath Bygrave 015 experience direct, open views across arable farmland from Royston Road to BA10 (Viewpoint 11A). Heading north across the railway line, receptors experience direct, open views across arable farmland, passing directly through the south eastern part of BA1. Receptors on public bridleway Clothall 003 experience direct, open views across the northern part of BA3, the elevated unmanaged overgrown part of the Site (created artificially from the construction of the A505 Baldock bypass) (Viewpoint 11B).
- 7.4.65 Receptors on public bridleway Weston 001 and the Icknield Way Trail long distance footpath (on the footbridge crossing the A505 Baldock bypass) experience partial views of BA2, the Urban Open Land and BA3 (in south eastern parts of the Site) through the intervening metal mesh parapet of the bridge (Viewpoint 12A & 12B). Beyond the footbridge, to the north west and south east, views towards the Site are restricted by intervening landform, vegetation and built form.
- 7.4.66 Receptors on the junction between restricted byway Bygrave 014 and public bridleway Bygrave 002 (approximately 580m to the north of the Site, located on a localised ridge line)

experience elevated views south across the rolling arable landscape, with the land falling towards the northern Site boundary before climbing again and falling to the existing settlement edge of Baldock (Viewpoint 13). Due to the elevated vantage point and undulating nature of the topography, receptors have the potential for middle to long distance views of BA1, where it borders the existing settlement edge of Baldock (Salisbury Road) and around Bygrave Road, towards the railway line. The industrial units of Ashville Trading Estate on Royston Road, and rooftops of properties within Clothall Common, are discernible in long distance views. To the left of this the elevated, unmanaged land (which forms part of the Site) is visible between Royston Road and the A505 Baldock bypass - beyond this the land rises and the undulating, wooded, scarp slopes of Wallington are visible along the horizon.

- 7.4.67 Receptors on Bridleway Bygrave 001, where it enters BA1 at its north western boundary, off North Road, currently experience direct, open near to middle distance views of the arable farmland in the northern BA1 part of the Site. The receptor's direction of view is focused and channelled along the PRoW route by hedgerow vegetation, towards Bygrave. From this location the landform rises towards a localised ridgeline running through BA1, which encloses and prevents views south east towards the settlement of Baldock or the wider areas of the Site. Built form, outbuildings and a storage yard located off North Road are visible in the near distance, to the right of view, which introduce urbanising elements to a predominantly rural view. The upper spire from the Church of St Mary (Grade I) within Baldock is discernible, punctuating above the ridgeline in distant views (Viewpoint 17).

Views from Open Space and Recreation Areas

- 7.4.68 Receptors at Ivel Springs Local Nature Reserve (LNR), located to the immediate west of BA1, separated by North Road, on public footpaths Baldock 002 and Baldock 033, currently experience filtered and glimpsed views towards the western extents of BA1 (during winter) and the small part of the Site that lies between North Road and Baldock allotments (Viewpoint 14).
- 7.4.69 Receptors at Weston Hills LNR, located to the immediate south west of BA2, within an open clearing set within then scrub and grassland area, currently experience open elevated views, down towards Baldock, which lies in a bowl in the distance and Letchworth elevated on raised landform, both flanked and filtered by scrub and tree vegetation, which runs across the foreground of the view. There are partial glimpsed and filtered, middle distance views of Walls Field, between layers of existing vegetation, visible alongside residential properties within Clothall Common. The northern elevated ridgeline of BA1 part of the Site, is discernible above built form within Clothall Common in distant views (Viewpoint 16).
- 7.4.70 Clothall Road allotments are located off Wallington Road and directly adjacent to the Urban Open Land and BA3 part of the Site. Allotment users have the potential to experience direct, open views across the Urban Open Land and BA3, in the direction of Wallington scarp slopes, visible along the horizon in the distance (Viewpoints 9A & 9B).

Views from Road Users

- 7.4.71 Vehicular receptors on Bygrave Road, running centrally through BA1, experience transient views along Bygrave Road, which changes in character along its length. From North Road in the west, views are channelled and enclosed by residential built form fronting either side of Bygrave Road. At the junction with Salisbury Road and the settlement edge of Baldock, the view becomes rural and is enclosed and channelled by hedgerow. Breaks and gaps in the hedgerow provide open, expansive oblique views across the arable, undulating farmland of BA1.
- 7.4.72 Farmsteads cottages and agricultural outbuildings feature, fronting Bygrave Road, breaking up the open rural views, particularly to the south. Where the road becomes national speed limit, vehicular receptors experience open views across the undulating, arable farmland of BA1, due to lack of hedgerow and tree vegetation (Viewpoint 18B).
- 7.4.73 When heading south west there are open views across BA1 towards the northern settlement edge of Baldock, along with industrial units within Ashville Trading Estate – flanked by vegetation, in the middle distance, urbanising the view and providing a visual connection to Baldock – alongside electricity pylons running across the view, both forming visible detractors (Viewpoint 18A). There are indirect, oblique, partial middle distance views, beyond the railway line embankment, of the elevated land east of Clothall Common, the upper limits of residential properties within Clothall Common and cottages along Royston Road, including within BA10.

Views from Scheduled Monument

- 7.4.74 Views from Walls Field scheduled monument are discussed under 'views from Public Rights of Way' for Viewpoint 8, and views from Ivel Springs under 'views from Open Space and Recreation Areas' for Viewpoint 14.

The Projected Future Baseline

- 7.4.75 Without development of the Application Site, it is anticipated that the arable farmland and pasture fields associated with B1, BA2, BA3 and the eastern part of BA10 would remain in cultivation and grazed by livestock, managed by tenant farmer. The land and existing buildings on the western part of BA10 could fall into disrepair, with the risk of becoming subject to vandalism and trespass. Without suitable management of the northern part of BA3 (the elevated scrub and grassland habitat) the landscape could become overgrown and invasive species would be likely to dominate, contributing further to a degradation of character, impacting on the immediately adjacent landscape.

7.5 POTENTIAL EFFECTS

Overview

- 7.5.1 A detailed assessment of the likely impacts and effects of the Proposed Development on landscape and visual amenity is provided in the Schedule of Likely Landscape Effects at **Appendix 7.8** and Schedule of Likely Visual Effects at **Appendix 7.9**. Effects are considered for the following three stages: during construction; immediately on completion (Year 0); and, during operation after establishment of landscape mitigation (Year 15). The following narrative is a summary of the assessment set out in the schedules.
- 7.5.2 The landscape and visual effects are based on a combination of sensitivity and magnitude of change (impact). Sensitivity is a term applied to a specific receptor, combining judgement on the value related to a landscape / visual receptor with the susceptibility of this receptor to the nature of change proposed. As described in the LVIA methodology, Major and Substantial effects are considered to be material to decision making and considered significant in EIA terms, with Moderate effects potential to be material to decision making and considered potentially significant in EIA terms. Minor, Negligible and Neutral effects are considered not significant in EIA terms.
- 7.5.3 The following sections set out the impact and significance of landscape and visual effects likely as a result of the Proposed Development during both construction and operation stages.

Construction Stage

- 7.5.4 The construction phase is likely to involve initial activities such as enabling works on Site, introduction of infrastructure as well as ongoing construction activities necessary to implement the Proposed Development.
- 7.5.5 Initial activities onsite are likely to include (in no particular order):
- The installation of boundary fencing / hoarding and controlled site access measures off North Road, Clothall Road, Wallington Road, Bygrave Road and Royston Road;
 - Site clearance works;
 - The establishment of tree and hedgerow protection measures and works to the existing vegetation where required;
 - General earthworks such as soil stripping, soil storage and cut / fill activities to create development platforms;
 - The establishment of temporary site-based compounds including site offices, car parks, and plant / materials storage;
 - Utilities works (diversions, isolations, provision of new / upgrades to existing services); and
 - The creation of temporary haul roads.

7.5.6 Ongoing construction activities are likely to include the following (in no particular order):

- The construction of onsite highways infrastructure and servicing, including drainage and lighting;
- Earthworks to create development platforms / parcels;
- The construction of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) and connections to the wider drainage work;
- The construction of public and private footways, driveways and parking facilities; and
- The building of houses, schools, community infrastructure and other built form.

7.5.7 Both initial and ongoing construction activities would generate a variety of vehicle movements. Off-site movements are likely to include light and heavy haulage, commercial and personnel vehicles. On-site movements are likely to include haulage, general plant, forklifts, mobile lifting equipment and large cranes. Temporary signage, site hoarding, tree protection measures and marketing signage are likely to be erected and construction hazard warning lighting is likely to be visible.

7.5.8 Construction operation and working hours would be restricted to the following Monday – Friday 8-6; Saturday – 8-1 and Sundays / bank holidays – no working.

7.5.9 During the construction phase, there will be occasions when work extends into the hours of darkness, with the consequent need for vehicular lighting and task lighting for particular operations. In terms of lighting during construction, Chapter 15 Lighting of the ES details suitable mitigation measures, such as anti-glare barriers during the construction stages.

7.5.10 The timescale for implementation of the Proposed Development as a whole would likely be carried out over a 16 year period. The Site will be phased, with development commencing in Site BA2 (Phase 1) and thereafter progressing in BA1 from a west to easterly direction (from North Road) alongside the build out of BA10. The final phase will comprise BA3 (dependent on the decision regarding secondary school provision). Infrastructure will be delivered at appropriate triggers throughout the development, to be agreed as part of the S106 agreement. Construction is anticipated to commence in 2027 with the first completions (in BA2) in 2028. The Proposed Development completion date is envisaged to be approximately 2043 with an average annual housing completion rate of 200 dwellings per annum.

7.5.11 The landscape and visual effects during construction for most receptors would be confined to the period of the relevant phase of development, constrained to works along the leading edge facing the receptor and in the immediate background toward the centre of the Application Site. Therefore, the impacts for each receptor would be of a shorter term than the timescale of the development as a whole.

7.5.12 It is assumed that mitigation measures, including all 'soft' landscape works (such as topsoiling, planting and seeding), would be implemented during or towards the end of construction in each phase, with the potential for early establishment in select locations providing limited mitigation for the construction period. Therefore, the assessment of likely effects during construction deals with the worst-case scenario in terms of likely impacts on landscape and visual receptors prior to the establishment of any mitigation planting.

7.5.13 Details of the assessment of likely effects at the construction stage are included for landscape receptors in **Appendix 7.8** and for visual receptors in **Appendix 7.9**. A summary of construction effects considered to be significant in EIA terms (moderate and above) have been identified and are provided in **Table 7.4** below.

Table 7.4 Summary of likely significant construction effects on landscape and visual receptors

Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude of impact	Effect significance
Viewpoint 1 – PRoW users on public footpath Bygrave 015	Medium	Medium – Large Adverse	Moderate – Major Adverse
Viewpoint 1 – Residents fronting onto Ashwell Road in Lower Bygrave	Medium	Medium Adverse	Moderate Adverse
Viewpoint 2 – ProW users on public bridleway Bygrave 001	High	Small – Medium Adverse	Moderate Adverse
Viewpoint 4 – Prow users of public footpath Bygrave 005 / 006	High	Small Adverse	Moderate Adverse
Viewpoint 6 – PRoW users on public bridleway Clothall 028	High	Medium Adverse	Moderate Adverse
Viewpoint 9A - Clothall Road Allotment Users, PRoW Users & Residents backing onto Clothall Road in Laxton Gardens	Low	Medium – Large Adverse	Moderate Adverse
Viewpoint 9B - Residents in properties directly backing and siding onto BA2	Medium	Medium – Large Adverse	Moderate – Major Adverse
Viewpoint 10 - Residents at Clothall Common and users of permissive path off Wallington Road	Medium	Medium – Large Adverse	Moderate – Major Adverse
Viewpoint 13 – PRoW users on public	High	Medium Adverse	Moderate Adverse

bridleway Bygrave 002 and restricted byway Bygrave 014			
Viewpoint 15 – Residents on Salisbury Road, on the outer edge of Baldock	Medium	Medium – Large Adverse	Moderate – Major Adverse
Viewpoint 17 – PRow users on public bridleway Bygrave 001	Medium	Medium – Large Adverse	Moderate Adverse
Viewpoints 18A & 18B - Farmstead residents on Bygrave Road	Medium	Medium – Large Adverse	Moderate – Major Adverse

Post-Completion Stage (Year 0)

7.5.14 The main elements of the development with the potential to bear an impact on the landscape and visual receptors at completion (Year 0) comprise the following:

- Up to 3,200 dwellings to be located within BA1, BA2 and BA3 – with proposed residential development up to 3 storeys (12.5m);
- Proposed employment development within B10 up to 3 storeys (14m);
- Proposed flexible land use in BA3 – either as residential development or education both up to 3 storeys (12.5m);
- Proposed built form in and adjacent to the Local Centre, the Active Travel Spine (to the south of the Local Centre) and adjacent to the northern station entrance where building heights of up to 4 storeys (16m) may be appropriate;
- No built development or above ground infrastructure works including access routes, compounds and storage areas, (with the exception of interpretation boards) will take place within:
 - Walls Field Scheduled Monument; and
 - Bygrave Road Local Wildlife Site.
- No built development or above ground infrastructure works (with the exception of the provision of footways / cycleways, roads, interpretation boards, litter bins and benches) within:
 - Retained habitat on land to the east of Clothall Common; and
 - 12m buffer around the boundary of the Local Wildlife Site.
- No built development (with the exception of the provision of sports pitches and ancillary facilities, footways / cycleways, sports pavilion and local road access) within the Urban Open Land;
- Proposed vehicular access points from North Road into BA1; Royston Road into BA10; Wallington Road to BA3 and Clothall Road to B2;
- Proposed associated infrastructure including internal road routes; and
- An interconnected network of green infrastructure (detailed within the Green Infrastructure Strategy) will be provided, comprising of Strategic green

infrastructure: the retention and enhancement of green areas to be used as informal and formal open spaces which may include provision for outdoor sport and recreation; parks; informal and formal play provision; retained and additional ecological natural / semi-natural areas; allotments, community gardens, community orchards and foraging trails; structural planting, sustainable drainage and new planting / landscaping. To comprise:

- Bygrave Common – a new community public parkland and natural landscape on the northern edge of BA1, to include areas of habitat and ecological enhancement, formal open space and space for recreational activities;
 - Green Space east of Clothall Common – triangular area of enhanced ecological habitat at northern end of BA3;
 - Walls Field (Scheduled Monument) – area north west of the Urban Open Land to be taken out of agricultural use and provided as informal open space with ecological enhancements;
 - Urban Open Land – land between BA2 and BA3 to provide formal and informal open space (including outdoor sport), either independently, or as part of a secondary school campus, depending on land use mix on the flexible land use parcel;
 - Eastern Park – land to the east of BA1 to include formal and informal open space, including formal outdoor sports facilities;
 - Children and Youth Play Areas – areas for informal and formal play will be included within the areas of strategic green infrastructure and within development areas;
 - Baldock Greenway leisure route to provide a continuous green active travel connection around the development areas;
 - Active Travel Link and Bygrave Road – green corridors through the development areas, providing footways / cycleways, connecting wider green spaces and incorporating space for biodiversity, incidental areas of recreation, improved access, retained rights of way and sustainable drainage as appropriate;
 - Green Link – green corridor incorporating retained PROW;
 - Sustainable Drainage Corridor - a green corridor incorporating a network of strategic SuDS features will be provided in the south-western part of BA1; and
 - Retention of existing trees / hedgerows and other vegetation of value where possible.
- Structural planting / green infrastructure will be used within the northern part of Bygrave Common, the eastern edge of the Eastern Park and along the eastern edge of BA2 and BA3 adjacent to the A505 - to integrate the site into its surrounding landscape and to reinforce a long-term, defensible Green Belt boundary to the north and east of the development area.

7.5.15 Structural landscaping would unlikely be sufficiently established on completion of the built form to substantially contribute to mitigation of impacts on landscape and visual receptors. Therefore, the assessment of likely effects at completion Year 0 assume the worst-case scenario in terms of likely impacts on landscape and visual receptors (i.e. construction works are complete, landscape measures are in place but not yet established).

7.5.16 Details of the assessment of likely effects at operation Year 0 are included for landscape receptors in **Appendix 7.8** and for visual receptors in **Appendix 7.9**. In accordance with the requirements of the EIA process a summary of operation Year 0 effects considered to be significant (Moderate - Major and above) have been identified and are provided in **Table 7.5** below. These are all visual effects, as all landscape effects at completion Year 0 are considered to be Minor Adverse or less and not considered significant.

Table 7.5 Summary of likely significant post completion stage (year 0) effects on landscape and visual receptors

Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude of impact	Effect significance
Viewpoint 1 – PRoW users on public footpath Bygrave 015	Medium	Medium – Large Adverse	Moderate – Major Adverse
Viewpoint 1 – Residents fronting onto Ashwell Road in Lower Bygrave	Medium	Medium Adverse	Moderate Adverse
Viewpoint 2 – PRoW users of public bridleway Bygrave 001	High	Small Adverse	Moderate Adverse
Viewpoint 4 – PRoW users of public footpath Bygrave 005/006	High	Small Adverse	Moderate Adverse
Viewpoint 6 – PRoW users on public bridleway Clothall 028	High	Medium Adverse	Moderate Adverse
Viewpoint 9A - Clothall Road Allotment Users, PRoW Users & Residents backing onto Clothall Road in Laxton Gardens	Low	Medium – Large Adverse	Moderate Adverse
Viewpoint 9B - Residents in properties directly backing and siding onto BA2	Medium	Medium – Large Adverse	Moderate – Major Adverse
Viewpoint 10 - Residents at Clothall Common and users of permissive path off Wallington Road	Medium	Medium – Large Adverse	Moderate – Major Adverse

Viewpoint 13 – PRow users on public bridleway Bygrave 002 and restricted byway Bygrave 014	High	Medium Adverse	Moderate Adverse
Viewpoint 15 – Residents on Salisbury Road, on the outer edge of Baldock	Medium	Medium – Large Adverse	Moderate – Major Adverse
Viewpoint 17 – PRow users on public bridleway Bygrave 001	Medium	Medium – Large Adverse	Moderate Adverse
Viewpoints 18A & 18B - Farmstead residents on Bygrave Road	Medium	Medium – Large Adverse	Moderate – Major Adverse

7.6 MITIGATION MEASURES

Construction Stage

7.6.1 The main construction stage mitigation measures of relevance to this LVIA include the following measures which will be secured by the Outline Construction and Environmental Management Plan (OCEMP) and subsequent detailed CEMPs:

- All access to the Application Site for construction traffic would be obtained off North Road for BA1, off Royston Road for BA10, off Clothall Road for BA2 and BA3, to minimise any landscape and visual impacts as a result of these activities.
- Existing tree and scrub / shrub vegetation currently serving as a screen to adjacent landscape and visual receptors, but to be removed as part of the Proposed Development, would be retained within the construction site for as long as possible to minimise the impacts from the works.
- Existing tree and scrub / shrub vegetation to be retained as part of the Proposed Development (as indicated within the Arboricultural Impact Assessment) would be protected in accordance with BS5837:2012.
- All other existing vegetation to be retained (e.g. grasslands and scrub – green space east of Clothall Common) as part of the Proposed Development would be protected in accordance with measures defined in Chapter 11 Ecology.

Post-Completion Stage

7.6.2 To inform the Proposed Development, the existing landscape features on the Application Site were mapped and their value assessed as part of the various baseline environmental studies including landscape, arboriculture, ecology and heritage. Features of value have been used to inform the development of an extensive green infrastructure strategy for the Proposed Development, which was then used as the basis of an underlying green infrastructure framework. This embedded mitigation incorporates the following:

- Walls Field Scheduled Monument – Taken out of intensive agricultural management forming part of the Proposed Development strategic green infrastructure. Ecological enhancement that respects the archaeological sensitivity of the Scheduled Monument, whilst increasing the amenity value of Walls Field, through species-rich wildflower meadow creation, light recreational access, and non-invasive native shrub and hedgerow planting.
- The northern elevated part of BA3 – Existing grassland and scrub habitat mosaic retained and enhanced as part of a strategic green infrastructure public open space.
- Bygrave Road – the main east / west active travel route through BA1, repurposing the existing carriageway through the heart of the development area and closing road off to private cars (apart from local access).
- Bygrave Road Local Wildlife Site (LWS) – Integration and ecological enhancements as part of the new active travel corridor along Bygrave Road.

- Existing public rights of way – alignments retained where possible, with diversions proposed as part of the Proposed Development to accommodate a new all modes bridge crossing over the rail line and sports facilities in the Urban Open Land.
- Millers Way – retained alignment and grassland surfacing as part of the historic route and public right of way.
- Protecting and Enhancing Strategic Views – Strategic views from the development to Baldock, particularly to St Mary’s church, to be reinforced by planting, alignment of streets and routes and parcel and block layout along view corridors – as set out in the Design and Access Statement (DAS) site wide principles.
- Strategic views from within the development (BA1) north to Bygrave Common to be established through landscaping, street design and parcel and block layout that creates view corridors and glimpses to the green space and countryside to the north.
- Winterbourne Channel – water and SuDS to be integrated into (and are a core component of) strategic green infrastructure - including the sustainable drainage corridor - to deliver drainage, placemaking and ecology function, as well as restoring the alignment of the historic winterbourne channel.
- Bygrave Common – retained and referenced in new strategic green infrastructure open space as part of the Proposed Development.
- Trees and Hedgerows – existing trees and hedgerows would be retained where their condition and location makes a positive contribution to the public realm. New trees would be planted to ensure that there is no overall loss in canopy cover on the Site (the target is to achieve a net gain).

7.6.3 As described in the Development Specification and the Design & Access Statement (DAS) submitted alongside this ES, the Proposed Development would be designed to a high quality, sensitive to the varying context along and beyond the boundaries of the Application Site. High level design guidance has been provided as part of the DAS to support the Outline Planning Application, which would be developed further through future design codes and reserved matters applications to control the quality of design.

7.6.4 The Green Infrastructure Strategy submitted alongside this ES was also developed alongside the Parameter Plan, Development Specification and DAS to define suitable locations for Strategic Green Infrastructure and open space, setting the development back from the edge of the Application Site and any sensitive landscape and visual receptors.

7.6.5 SP10 of the Development Specification outlines structural planting will be used within the northern edge of Bygrave Common and eastern edge of the Eastern Park to integrate the Site into its surrounding landscape and to reinforce a long-term, defensible Green Belt boundary to the north and east of the development area.

7.6.6 Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) has been considered at the early stage of the landscape proposal. Key high value features such as existing hedgerow, grasslands, scrub and trees have been preserved to form part of the green infrastructure framework, creating corridors

and stepping stones to support wildlife movement. As stated in Chapter 11 Ecology, areas allocated for biodiversity enhancement include a variety of habitats, forming a mosaic of species rich grassland, dense scrub and wetland areas. The planting species will be selected to consider local climate conditions and biodiversity enhancement goals, ensuring that the chosen species are climate resilient and can provide critical habitat improvements for local wildlife.

7.7 RESIDUAL EFFECTS

- 7.7.1 Residual effects are typically defined as those that remain following the implementation of mitigation measures.
- 7.7.2 The initial stages of the LVIA have considered landscape and visual effects at construction and post-completion (Year 0). The mitigation related to landscape and visual matters have been incorporated into the Proposed Development, used to shape and influence the layout, scale, pattern, massing and height of the proposals.
- 7.7.3 However, at such an early stage, at Year 0 many of the proposed landscape mitigation measures associated with green infrastructure would not be sufficiently established to perform their intended landscape function or would deliver only a part of their intended function.
- 7.7.4 Therefore, the residual effects pertaining to landscape and visual matters are considered to be those that remain, once the proposed landscape mitigation measures have established and are contributing to their intended function - for example providing a strong structural green framework, shaping places, screening / softening / assimilating built form. This stage is defined as 'Post Mitigation Establishment (Year 15)'.

Post Mitigation Establishment Stage (Year 15)

- 7.7.5 At this stage of the Proposed Development, the green infrastructure as part of the Green Infrastructure Framework would have established and will be maturing well, substantially increasing the landscape resource, strengthening the vegetated skyline, creating a range of public open spaces, with enhancements to ecological resources. This green infrastructure would combine with those key elements retained, to enhance the character of the landscape throughout the Proposed Development and its immediate context.
- 7.7.6 Trees planted as part of the Proposed Development (including stands of individual trees, street trees, avenues and native woodland) would have reached between 8m - 12m in height and would provide a meaningful contribution to both visual containment and green infrastructure across the Site.
- 7.7.7 Details of the assessment of likely effects at completion Year 15 are included for landscape receptors in **Appendix 7.8** and for visual receptors in **Appendix 7.9**. In accordance with the requirements of the EIA process, a summary of completion Year 15 effects considered to be significant (Moderate – Major and above) are to be identified – however, as shown in **Appendices 7.8** and **7.9**, the LVIA does not consider that there would be any significant effects in the long term.

Summary of Effects

7.7.8 In accordance with the requirements of the EIA process, a summary of residual effects considered to be significant (Moderate – Major and above) have been identified and are provided in **Table 7.6** below.

Table 7.6 Summary of effects

Potential Effect	Significance (pre-mitigation)	Mitigation Measure	Significance of residual effect
Construction Stage			
Viewpoint 1: View from Ashwell Road and public footpath Bygrave 004/015 Views of construction activities	PRoW users: Temporary Major Adverse Residents in Lower Bygrave: Temporary Major Adverse	No construction traffic along Ashwell Road at Lower Bygrave. Retain existing vegetation to be removed for as long as possible. Protect vegetation to be retained in accord with BS5837:2012. Site Hoarding to reduce intervisibility of construction works. Manage lighting. All of which will be controlled by the OCEMP and subsequent detailed CEMPs.	PRoW users: Temporary Moderate / Major Adverse Residents in Lower Bygrave: Temporary Moderate Adverse
Viewpoint 2: View from Ashwell Road & Public Bridleway Bygrave 001 Views of construction activities	PRoW users: Temporary Moderate / Major Adverse	No construction traffic along Ashwell Road at Lower Bygrave. Retain existing vegetation to be removed for as long as possible. Protect vegetation to be retained in accord with BS5837:2012. Use Site Hoarding to reduce intervisibility of construction works. Manage lighting. All of which will be controlled by the OCEMP and subsequent detailed CEMPs.	PRoW users: Temporary Moderate Adverse
Viewpoint 4:	PRoW users: Temporary	Retain existing vegetation to be	PRoW users: Temporary Moderate Adverse

View from public footpath Bygrave 005/006 Views of construction activities	Moderate / Major Adverse	removed for as long as possible. Protect vegetation to be retained in accord with BS5837:2012. Use Site Hoarding to reduce intervisibility of construction works. Manage lighting. All of which will be controlled by the OCEMP and subsequent detailed CEMPs.	
Viewpoint 6: View from public bridleway Clothall 028 Views of construction activities	PRoW users: Temporary Moderate / Major Adverse	Retain existing vegetation to be removed for as long as possible. Protect vegetation to be retained in accord with BS5837:2012. Use Site Hoarding to reduce intervisibility of construction works. Manage lighting. All of which will be controlled by the OCEMP and subsequent detailed CEMPs.	PRoW users: Temporary Moderate Adverse
Viewpoint 9A & 9B: View from Clothall Road Views of construction activities	Clothall Road Allotment Users, PRoW Users & Residents backing onto Clothall Road in Laxton Gardens: Temporary Moderate / Major Adverse Residents in properties directly backing and siding onto BA2: Temporary Major Adverse	Retain existing vegetation to be removed for as long as possible. Protect vegetation to be retained in accord with BS5837:2012. Use Site Hoarding to reduce intervisibility of construction works. Manage lighting. All of which will be controlled by the OCEMP and subsequent detailed CEMPs.	Clothall Road Allotment Users, PRoW Users & Residents backing onto Clothall Road in Laxton Gardens: Temporary Moderate Adverse Residents in properties directly backing and siding onto BA2: Temporary Moderate to Major Adverse
Viewpoint 10: View from undesignated path on edge of Clothall Common and off Wallington Road	All receptors Temporary Major Adverse	Retain existing vegetation to be removed for as long as possible. Protect vegetation to be retained in accord with BS5837:2012.	All receptors Temporary Moderate to Major Adverse

Views of construction activities		Use Site Hoarding to reduce intervisibility of construction works. Manage lighting. All of which will be controlled by the OCEMP and subsequent detailed CEMPs.	
Viewpoint 13: View from restricted Byway Bygrave 014 and Bridleway Bygrave 002 Views of construction activities	PRoW users: Temporary Moderate / Major Adverse	Retain existing vegetation to be removed for as long as possible. Protect vegetation to be retained in accord with BS5837:2012. Use Site Hoarding to reduce intervisibility of construction works. Manage lighting. All of which will be controlled by the OCEMP and subsequent detailed CEMPs.	PRoW users: Temporary Moderate Adverse
Viewpoint 15: View from Salisbury Road, Baldock Views of construction activities	Residents: Major Adverse	Retain existing vegetation to be removed for as long as possible. Protect vegetation to be retained in accord with BS5837:2012. Use Site Hoarding to reduce intervisibility of construction works. Manage lighting. All of which will be controlled by the OCEMP and subsequent detailed CEMPs.	Residents: Temporary Moderate to Major Adverse
Viewpoint 17: View from Bridleway Bygrave 001 Views of construction activities	PRoW users: Temporary Moderate / Major Adverse	Retain existing vegetation to be removed for as long as possible. Protect vegetation to be retained in accord with BS5837:2012. Use Site Hoarding to reduce intervisibility of construction works. Manage lighting. All of which will be controlled by the OCEMP and	PRoW users: Temporary Moderate Adverse

		subsequent detailed CEMPs.	
Viewpoints 18a and 18b View from Bygrave Road (north & south) Views of construction activities	Farmstead Residents Temporary Major Adverse	Retain existing vegetation to be removed for as long as possible. Protect vegetation to be retained in accord with BS5837:2012. Use Site Hoarding to reduce intervisibility of construction works. Manage lighting. All of which will be controlled by the OCEMP and subsequent detailed CEMPs.	Farmstead Residents Temporary Moderate to Major Adverse
Post-Completion Stage			
Landscape Character of Site - Walls Field Change in landscape character, only affecting landscape in vicinity of the Site.	Minor Beneficial	Retention of existing boundary vegetation, establishment of meadow grassland planting across the area of Strategic Green Infrastructure, benefiting the amenity, heritage and amenity value.	Moderate Beneficial
Landscape Character of Site – Urban Open Land Change in landscape character, only affecting landscape in vicinity of the Site.	Minor Beneficial	Retention of existing boundary vegetation, establish parkland planting within Strategic Green Infrastructure and structural planting along eastern edge with A505 and northern edge with the Proposed Development in BA3.	Moderate Beneficial
Landscape Character of Site – BA3 (the northern elevated area) Enhancement of the landscape character, only affecting landscape in vicinity of the Site.	Minor Beneficial	Existing habitat mosaic retained and enhanced through species-rich wildflower grasslands, scrub and tree planting as part of Strategic Green Infrastructure area called Green Space East of Clothall Common.	Moderate Beneficial

		Informal recreational routes indicated with mown paths located on existing desire lines to control movement, ensuring the preservation as an ecologically rich area. The line of the public bridleway Clothall 003 and 027 will be retained to become part of the proposed Baldock Greenway.	
Viewpoint 1: View from Ashwell Road and public footpath Bygrave 004/015 Views of Proposed Development	PRoW users: Moderate / Major Residents in Lower Bygrave: Moderate Adverse	Residential development set behind Strategic Green Infrastructure along north eastern boundaries, structural planting along boundaries and appropriate design and green infrastructure within development.	PRoW users: Minor / Moderate Adverse Residents in Lower Bygrave: Minor / Moderate Adverse
Viewpoint 2: View from Ashwell Road & Public Bridleway Bygrave 001 Views of Proposed Development	PRoW users: Moderate Adverse	Residential development set behind Strategic Green Infrastructure along northern and north eastern boundary, structural planting along boundaries and appropriate design and green infrastructure within development.	PRoW users: Negligible Adverse
Viewpoint 4: View from public footpath Bygrave 005/006 Views of Proposed Development	PRoW users: Moderate Adverse	Broad areas of Strategic Green Infrastructure and structural planting along northern and eastern boundaries, appropriate design and green	PRoW users: Negligible Adverse

		infrastructure within development	
Viewpoint 6: View from public bridleway Clothall 028 Views of Proposed Development	PRoW users: Moderate Adverse	Broad areas of Strategic Green Infrastructure and structural planting along northern and eastern boundaries, appropriate design and green infrastructure within development.	PRoW users: Minor - Moderate Adverse
Viewpoint 9A & 9B: View from Clothall Road Views of Proposed Development	Clothall Road Allotment Users, PRoW Users & Residents backing onto Clothall Road in Laxton Gardens: Moderate Adverse Residents in properties directly backing and siding onto BA2: Moderate to Major Adverse	Broad areas of Strategic Green Infrastructure and structural planting along eastern boundary with A505, appropriate design and green infrastructure within development.	Clothall Road Allotment Users, PRoW Users & Residents backing onto Clothall Road in Laxton Gardens: Minor - Moderate Adverse Residents in properties directly backing and siding onto BA2: Minor - Moderate Adverse
Viewpoint 10: View from undesignated path on edge of Clothall Common and off Wallington Road Views of Proposed Development	All receptors Moderate to Major Adverse	Broad areas of Strategic Green Infrastructure and appropriate design and green infrastructure within development.	All receptors Minor - Moderate Adverse
Viewpoint 13: View from restricted Byway Bygrave 014 and Bridleway Bygrave 002 Views of Proposed Development	PRoW users: Moderate Adverse	Broad areas of Strategic Green Infrastructure and structural planting along northern ridgeline, appropriate design and green infrastructure within development.	PRoW users: Minor - Moderate Adverse
Viewpoint 15: View from Salisbury Road, Baldock Views of Proposed Development	Residents: Moderate to Major Adverse	Appropriate design and green infrastructure within development.	Residents: Minor - Moderate Adverse

Viewpoint 17: View from Bridleway Bygrave 001 Views of Proposed Development	PRoW users: Moderate Adverse	Broad areas of Strategic Green Infrastructure and structural planting along northern ridgeline, appropriate design and green infrastructure within development.	PRoW users: Minor - Moderate Adverse
Viewpoints 18a and 18b View from Bygrave Road (north & south) Views of Proposed Development	Farmstead Residents: Moderate to Major Adverse	Appropriate design to achieve improvements to street scene along Bygrave Road and appropriate design and green infrastructure within development.	Farmstead Residents: Minor - Moderate Adverse

7.8 CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

7.8.1 This LVIA has considered the following sites, with regard to potential for cumulative impacts in combination with the Site and Proposed Development, as illustrated on the Cumulative Sites Plan at **Appendix 2.3**.

- 1) Land east of Rhee Spring and Orwell View, Royston Road, Baldock (Planning Ref: NHLP Local Housing Allocation BA4 and 21/01882/FP)
- 2) Land to the east of Talbot Way and Kristiansand Way and Flint Road, Letchworth Garden City, SG6 1TY (Planning Ref: NHLP Local Housing Allocation LG3 and 21/00504/OP)
- 3) Land to the north of Letchworth (NHLP Strategic Housing Site LG1)
- 4) Land west of Ashwell Road, Bygrave, SG7 5EB (Planning Ref: 22/00741/FP)

Cumulative Effects on Landscape Character

7.8.2 Cumulative sites 1 and 4 are located within the same District landscape character area as the Site, LCA 224: North Baldock Chalk Uplands. Site 1 proposes a small area of residential in the form of 42 dwellings directly adjacent to BA3 and existing residential development in Clothall Common and site 4 proposes a c.53 ha solar farm, approximately 1.2km to the north east of BA1 Site. In combination with sites 1 and 4 the north eastern part of LCA 224: North Baldock Chalk Uplands would become more urbanised as a result of the solar farm, and the settlement edge of Clothall Common by proposed residential development, however the wider parts of the LCA (north, north east and south east) beyond the Site would remain unchanged, therefore the cumulative effect would be Minor Adverse at most, and not significant.

7.8.3 Due to the close proximity of site 1, directly adjacent to the northern part of BA3 and the existing settlement edge of Clothall Common, there is potential for adverse cumulative effects on the Site level landscape character (BA3) within which both schemes are located. The changed in land use across both sites (from arable farmland and scrub grassland habitat to residential development) has the potential to change to the landscape character - albeit the extent of change is expected to be limited to the immediate surroundings and will be strongly mitigated on both schemes, which propose to deliver their own respective Green Infrastructure framework. Therefore, the cumulative effects on landscape are considered to be Negligible Adverse, and not significant.

7.8.4 For all other District or Site Landscape Character Areas, given the extent of green infrastructure included as part of the Proposed Development and limited potential for combined interaction between the landscape and each of the cumulative sites with the Proposed Development, it is considered there would be no further cumulative effects on landscape character.

Cumulative Effects on Visual Amenity

- 7.8.5 There is potential for visual receptors at Viewpoints 6 (public bridleway Clothall 028 / 027) and 11 (Royston Road and public bridleway Clothall 003) to experience views of Site 1 in combination with the Proposed Development, due to the close proximity adjacent to the northern part of BA3. There is the potential for receptors to experience sequential views of the residential built form of both developments in the context of the existing settlement edge of Clothall Common. Both schemes incorporate a strong degree of structural buffer planting and are set back behind a large area of strategic green infrastructure in the form of Green Space East of Clothall Common, reducing the visual impact. Therefore, visual cumulative effects are assessed as Negligible Adverse.
- 7.8.6 Site 2 is approximately 1km to the south west and Site 3 is approximately 1.5km to the west of BA1 Site, both physically segregated from the Site by Ivel Springs LNR and the A1(M) motorway and associated with the settlement urban edge of Letchworth, with no potential for any visual receptors to experience views of either of these sites in combination with the Proposed Development. Therefore, it is considered there would be no cumulative visual impacts.
- 7.8.7 Site 4, Land west of Ashwell Road, Bygrave is located approximately 1.2km to the north east of BA1 Site, with no potential for any visual receptors to experience views of either of these sites in combination with the Proposed Development, due to the appreciable distance and intervening vegetation and topography. Therefore, it is considered there would be no cumulative visual impacts.

7.9 REFERENCE LIST

- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition (2013), (GLVIA3), Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment;
- GLVIA3 Statements of Clarification (2013 - 2015), Landscape Institute;
- An Approach to Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (Natural England, 2019)
- Natural England's 'An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment' (2014); and
- Landscape Institute (2019), Technical Guidance Note 06/19, Visual Representation of Development Proposals.
- Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 02/21: Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations (LI, 2021)
- The National Planning Policy Framework (February 2025)
- Natural England, The Character of England : Landscape, Wildlife and Natural Features (2014)
- North Hertfordshire District Council Local Plan 2011-2031 (2022)
- Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall Neighbourhood Plan, June 2021
- Natural England National Character Areas No 87: East Anglian Chalk
- North Hertfordshire and Stevenage Landscape Character Assessment (2011)
- Ordnance Survey Mapping at 1:25,000 scale
- Aerial photography of the site and wider area (Google Earth, www.maps.google.co.uk and www.bing.com/maps)
- Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) interactive mapping (www.magic.gov.uk)
- Natural England Green Infrastructure Mapping (<https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/GreenInfrastructure/Map.aspx>)
- Rights of Way Mapping (www.rowmaps.com)
- UK Government Flood Risk Mapping (<https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/>)
- National Heritage List for England Map Search, English Heritage (<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/>)
- National Cycle Network mapping (www.sustrans.org.uk)
- British Geological Survey, Geology of Britain Viewer (<https://www.bgs.ac.uk/>)
- Ancient Tree Inventory. Woodland Trust (<https://ati.woodlandtrust.org.uk/>)