

Landscape and Visual Appraisal

STUDLEY MELKSHAM SOLAR FARM

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1. Introduction

- 1.1** This report is prepared as a Landscape and Visual Appraisal by Briarwood Landscape Architecture Limited by a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute¹, to accompany a submission for a material amendment ('the proposed development') of a consented solar development at Land at Studley Farm, Atworth, Melksham, Wiltshire ('the site') on behalf of Melksham Calne Green Limited.
- 1.2** The location of the proposed development is shown on the Site Location Plan at Appendix 1. The centre of the site is located at grid coordinate ST 86928 65285.

Appendix 1 – Site Location Plan

Background

- 1.3** A decision notice (application reference number: PL/2021/08690) was issued on 9th June 2022 granting planning permission on the site for the,
- “Installation of a solar farm and battery storage facility with associated infrastructure.”

Scope of Report

- 1.4** This report assesses the potential effects of the revised proposed development on the site on :
- Landscape elements and features such as vegetation, topography and water bodies etc.,
 - Landscape character and,
 - Visual amenity
- 1.5** The primary objectives of this preliminary LVA are as follows:
- To identify, describe and evaluate the current landscape character of the site and its surrounding area
 - To identify, describe and evaluate any notable individual landscape elements and/or features within the site
 - To determine the sensitivity of the landscape to the type of development proposed

¹ In line with TGN 01/20, the author of this report has experience in preparing, coordinating and reviewing Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments and Appraisals.

- To identify potential key visual receptors (i.e., people who would be able to view the proposed development) and to evaluate their sensitivity to the type of changes proposed
- To identify and describe any potential effects of the proposed development in so far as they affect the landscape and/or views.

1.6

Where mention is made to heritage assets such as listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments etc. then this is done only in the context of such assets being features of the landscape.

2. Methodology

Use of the term LVA

- 2.1** This report is presented as a proportionate Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) rather than as an ES related Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) as prepared for the previous scheme on the site.
- 2.2** As appropriate reference is made to the consented scheme on the site.

Guidance

- 2.3** This LVA has been undertaken with regard to the following best practice guidance:
- ‘Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (3rd Edition)’ – Landscape Institute/Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA).
 - ‘Assessing landscape value outside national designations’ – Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 02/21.

Detailed Methodology

- 2.4** A detailed methodology is given in Appendix 2. As recommended within the published guidance, landscape (elements and character) and visual effects are assessed separately.

Appendix 2 – Detailed Methodology

Nature of an Effect

- 2.5** The nature, as opposed to the scale, of a particular effect on landscape, character and visual amenity can be
- adverse (negative)
 - beneficial (positive) or
 - neutral.
- 2.6** There can also be ‘no effect’ where the proposed development would result in no change to a particular landscape and/or view so the nature of the effect would usually always be regarded as neutral.
- 2.7** The neutral nature of a particular effect is one where, on balance, the existing integrity, quality or key characteristics of a landscape or view, would be maintained. The scale/level of effect and whether it will have a positive or negative (or neutral)

consequence are independent of each other so that it is possible to report a major and neutral effect (i.e. an important change, but one which is neither better nor worse).

- 2.8** For the purposes of this assessment, unless otherwise stated, any change to the landscape and visual amenity as a result of the proposed development is considered to be long term but reversible if so desired. The proposed development is considered to be ultimately temporary in nature.

Assessment Period

- 2.9** Operational effects are assessed at years 1 and 15 so as to take into account any mitigation measures such as new planting etc. Unless expressly stated otherwise, the effect, and the nature of the effect, at year 15 is considered to be the same as year 1.

Photography and Photoviews

- 2.10** As part of this LVA, the site has been revisited and photoviews taken, as appropriate, from locations that were agreed previously for the consented scheme on the site
- 2.11** Photographs used as part of the detailed visual assessment have been taken using a Canon E05 Mark IV, full frame sensor, digital camera with a 50mm lens. The lens has a standard focal length and is considered to best represent the human eye.
- 2.12** Photography took place in sunny weather, with good visibility, in May 2025. The camera was at a height of approximately 1.6 metres. Leaf cover was present so visibility was at a minimum. Consideration has been given to the effect on views when leaf cover is absent and visibility at a maximum.

Caveat

- 2.13** It is acknowledged that by virtue of carrying out the 'visual' element of this assessment, the author has an inherent 'bias' against the proposals to which this report relates. When carrying out the site visit and taking photos from the chosen viewpoint locations (from publicly accessible areas and vantage points), the report's author is actively and deliberately 'looking' for the 'site' within the local landscape.
- 2.14** In reality, visual receptors such as users of the public rights of way network and motorists alike will not 'actively' be 'looking' for the site (or the development) whilst traversing the public rights of way and road network. Whilst each visual receptor will have a varying degree of appreciation for their surroundings, depending on what they are doing (playing sport, walking, driving), their efforts will typically not be concerned with 'actively' and 'deliberately' looking for any given 'site' or 'residential development'.
- 2.15** The photoviews were accurate at the time they were taken. Site conditions can be subject to change, for example garden and field boundary hedgerows can be

cut/trimmed by landowners/farmers, trees can be felled by landowners or blown over by adverse weather, and new trees can be planted.

- 2.16** Therefore, the extent of visibility can potentially increase or decrease since the photoviews were taken. Such eventualities are not within the control of the report's author. The assessment of visibility within photoviews is accurate at the time of writing.

Time sensitivity

- 2.17** Owing to the evolving nature of the landscape, it is considered that the assessment made in this report should not be relied on beyond 24 months of final issue without a formal review.

3. Baseline Context

Description of the Site

- 3.1** The site remains as per the consented scheme and comprises two parcels of land, one to the east and one to the west of Studley Farm. Studley Farm is located to the south of the village of Atworth. The site's larger western parcel (hereafter referred to as parcel A for ease) consists of four fields. The site's smaller eastern parcel (hereafter referred to as parcel B for ease) consists of three fields and part of a fourth.

Scale and Geographic Extent of the Proposed Development

- 3.2** The site is considered to be of a large scale relative to its host landscape.
- 3.3** The proposed development in relation to the site itself is considered to be of a large scale.
- 3.4** Site visits have confirmed and supports the author's judgement that the extent of the physical influence of the proposals upon its surroundings would remain confined to the site's redline application boundary.

The Site and Surrounding Area

- 3.5** The following section describes the individual elements, attributes and key characteristics of the existing site and local landscape that together contribute to an understanding of the local landscape character. The following physical landscape attributes will be described:
- Topography and Landform
 - Hydrology and Water Features
 - Landscape Framework - Trees and Vegetation Cover
 - Land Use
 - Public Rights of Way
 - Public Highways and Transport Corridors
 - Settlement Pattern and Built Form
 - Landscape Designations

Topography and Landform

- 3.6** The site undulates across gently rolling topography. On the south-eastern boundary of parcel A is a high point of approximately 58 metres Above Ordnance Datum (AOD). The land falls away northwards to a low of approximately 52 metres AOD.
- 3.7** Within parcel B the topography undulates between approximately 53 metres AOD in the south-west corner to approximately 61 metres AOD in the north-west corner. A low point of approximately 52 metres AOD is found close to the north-western boundary.
- 3.8** To the north of the site and the village of Atworth, the land rises steadily to reach a high point of 119 metres AOD at approximately 2.2km from the site boundary. To the south of the site, the topography undulates in a range between approximately 65 metres AOD and 50 metres AOD.

Hydrology and Water Features

- 3.9** A small watercourse is shown on the OS map as passing through the site from parcel A then southwards to Studley Farm.

Landscape Framework – Trees and Vegetation Cover

- 3.10** The site was previously subject to a comprehensive BS5837:2012 tree survey². The tree survey identified 89 arboricultural items including 53 specimen trees, 5 tree groups, and 31 hedges.
- 3.11** It is noted that as landscape features, the existing hedgerows on the site have generally filled out and have increased in height more since previous visits were made the site.

Land Use

- 3.12** The site is agricultural. However agricultural uses on the site have now ceased.

Public Rights of Way

- 3.13** The site is currently entirely private with no public access. However, several public rights of way do pass through parts of the site. These include:
- ATW013
 - ATW021
 - ATW018 and
 - ATW020.

² ARBORICULTURAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT - Barton Hyatt – July 2021

- 3.14** Source Wiltshire Council interactive map –

<https://wiltscouncil.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=43d5a86a545046b2b59fd7dd49d89d22>

Public Highways and Transportation Corridors

- 3.15** The closest public highway to the site is the A365 located approximately 460 metres north. Minor road, Bradford Road, is situated approximately 390 metres to the west.

Settlement Pattern and Built Form

- 3.16** Atworth, to the north of the site, is a relatively large and broadly linear settlement. Broughton Gifford, to the south of the site, is smaller and encloses its open common. The surrounding landscape already contains two solar farms (Norrington and Roundponds Farm) of similar size to the one proposed and located to the south-east of the site. The area is crossed by several high voltage overhead electricity transmission lines and pylons, which are visual detractors.

Designations

- 3.17** The site does not contain nor is it in any statutory or non-statutory landscape protection designation (see Appendix 3 – Designations).

Appendix 3 - Designations

Published Landscape Character Assessments

- 3.18** A hierarchy of national/regional, county and borough published landscape character assessments are available. These respective documents describe the host landscape of the site at an increasingly refined level. The published landscape assessments are intended to provide a foundation for understanding the key component elements and features that characterise the host landscape and potential the site itself.
- 3.19** It is considered that owing to the scale of the proposed development, the effect on the character of the landscape at a national/regional level would be limited. Attention is focused to the finer grain published landscape character assessments at the county and borough level.

National Landscape Character Assessment

- 3.20** At the national/regional level the site is located in two National Character Area (NCA). The western parcel (A) is located in NCA107 Cotswolds. The eastern parcel (B) is located in NCA117 Avon Vale.
- 3.21** The key characteristics of NCA 107 Cotswolds are given as:

- “Defined by its underlying geology: a dramatic limestone scarp rising above adjacent lowlands with steep combs, and outliers illustrating the slow erosion of escarpments. The limestone geology has formed the scarp and dip slope of the landscape, which in turn has influenced drainage, soils, vegetation, land use and settlement.
- Open and expansive scarp and high wold dipping gently to the southeast, dissected by river valleys.
- Arable farming dominates the high wold and dip slope while permanent pasture prevails on the steep slopes of the scarp and river valleys with pockets of internationally important limestone grassland.
- Drystone walls define the pattern of fields of the high wold and dip slope. On the deeper soils and river valleys, hedgerows form the main field boundaries.
- Ancient beech hangers line stretches of the upper slopes of the scarp, while oak/ash woodlands are characteristic of the river valleys. Regular blocks of coniferous and mixed plantations are scattered across the open high wold and dip slope.
- Large areas of common land, important for unimproved calcareous grassland, are characteristic of the scarp and high wold around the Stroud valleys and along the crest of the scarp to Cleeve Hill.
- The majority of the principal rivers flow south-eastwards forming the headwaters of the Thames with the exception of rivers in the west which flow into the River Avon and then the Severn Estuary.
- Rich history from Neolithic barrows, iron-age hill forts and Roman roads and villas to deserted medieval villages, grand country houses, cloth mills and Second World War airfields. The field patterns largely reflect both the medieval open field system, with fossilised areas of ridge and furrow, and later planned enclosures.
- Locally quarried limestone brings a harmony to the built environment of scattered villages and drystone walls, giving the area a strong sense of unity for which the Cotswolds are renowned. Bath stone is also famous and has been used for building since Roman times, both locally in the principal buildings and streets of Bath and more widely, for example for Buckingham Palace in London. Parkland, gardens and historic designed landscapes are features particularly of the dip slope and broad lowland, such as Lawrence Johnston’s garden at Hidcote, and Heather Muir’s garden at Kiftsgate, parkland at Stanway, Chastleton and Blenheim Palace.

- Prominent natural and built features in the landscape include the City of Bath WHS, Brailes Hill, Broadway Tower, Cleve Hill, the Tyndale monument, Freezing Hill, Kelston Round Hill and Blenheim Palace WHS.”

3.22 The key characteristics of NCA 117 Avon Vales are identified by Natural England as being the following:

- “An undulating clay vale with a mix of arable and pasture.
- Small- and medium-sized fields with mostly hedgerow boundaries with few hedgerow trees, varying in shape from irregular piecemeal enclosure to rectilinear planned enclosure.
- Numerous low ridges with local views over towns and villages.
- Wide River Avon corridor, with an ancient pattern of flood meadows and closely associated settlements and more recent development.
- Transport corridors along roads and watercourses, heavily influential on all development in the NCA.
- Large historic parks and mansions, often established from former monastic establishments.
- Attractive stone-built centres to market towns that reflect the former agricultural productivity and wealth of the area.
- Wide views across whole area from higher areas of surrounding chalk downs.”

District Landscape Character Assessment

3.23 In the published Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment – Final Report (December 2006), the site is in the 16 Limestone Lowland landscape character type (LCT). The key characteristics for LCT are given as:

- “Gently undulating lowland farmland over underlying geology of predominantly mudstone and limestone with some pockets of clay.
- A peaceful and rural landscape with subtle variations in character relating to the varied geology, topography and water courses.
- Mix of permanent pasture and arable farmland.
- Strong network of hedgerows with hedgerow trees.
- Dry stone walls field boundaries in some areas and around settlements.

- Field pattern predominantly large geometric field typical of eighteenth and nineteenth century enclosure with small scale irregular fields of medieval pattern close to close to settlement.
- More open areas of higher ground to the west offer panoramic views over the type, elsewhere occasional woodland blocks, copses and frequent hedgerow trees give a greater sense of enclosure, with intermittent views.
- Numerous rivers forming shallow valleys, with the watercourses sometimes lined with willows.
- Settlements in the form of historic market towns, villages and scattered farmsteads distributed throughout the type linked by network of rural roads.
- Traditional buildings of local limestone buildings an outstanding feature.
- Presence of historic parkland and estates marked by stone estate walls, grand entrances and parkland trees and avenues.”

3.24 The LCT is contiguous with the 16A Malmsbury-Corsham Limestone Lowland landscape character area (LCA) (see Appendix 4 – 16A Malmsbury-Corsham Limestone Lowland LCA). The publication does not distinguish separate key characteristics for the LCA.

Appendix 4 – 16A Malmsbury-Corsham Limestone Lowland LCA

3.25 The Inherent Landscape Sensitivities for the LCT/LCA are given as:

- “The peaceful rural nature of the area.
- Areas of ecological importance including ancient woodland and chalk grassland.
- The setting, containment and scale of the limestone villages.
- The remaining medieval field patterns and dry stone walls around and close to settlement.
- Historic parkland.”

3.26 The strategy for the LCT/LCA is:

“...to conserve those elements intrinsic to the type’s character or important in their own right, such as the distinctive stone villages, the areas of ecological importance and the historic parkland and to strengthen locally degraded elements such as the flailed hedgerows and overgrown stone walls.”

- 3.27** At the time of publication in 2006, the condition of the LCT/LCA was considered to be 'good' and the strength of character, 'moderate'. The published landscape character assessment is now 19 years old.

Author's Own Assessment of Character

- 3.28** An assessment of the existing local landscape character up to 2km from the site has been undertaken by the report's author. The author's assessment considers the site and its immediate surroundings and reviews the sensitivity and the capacity of the local landscape to accommodate the type and scale of development being proposed. The following criteria will be used:

- Landscape scale;
- Landform and enclosure;
- Landscape pattern and complexity;
- Settlement pattern and human influences;
- Skylines;
- Intervisibility; and
- Tranquillity.

Landscape scale

- 3.29** The landscape is predominantly agricultural in nature. The combination of a rolling and undulating topography and generally enclosed fields form a small to medium scale landscape.

Landscape and enclosure

- 3.30** There is a degree of enclosure in the landscape surrounding the site. Where features such as built form or hedgerows occur, then the undulating and sloping topography acts to ensure that intervisibility reduces and the sense of enclosure increases. Typically, from higher ground the feeling of enclosure reduces as more distant views are afforded.

Landscape pattern and complexity

- 3.31** The pattern and complexity of the landscape within 2km of the site is fairly simple. The general pattern in the landscape is one of mainly mixed pastoral and arable agricultural fields. Residential and existing solar farm development adds to the complexity of the landscape to the north and south-east of the site respectively.

Settlement pattern and human influences

- 3.32** Atworth, to the north of the site, is a relatively large and broadly linear settlement. Broughton Gifford, to the south of the site, is smaller and encloses its open common.
- 3.33** The surrounding landscape already contains two solar farms (Norrington and Roundponds Farm) of similar size to the one proposed and located to the south-east of the site. The site itself has a consented solar farm associated with it and one that forms part of the baseline landscape character.

Skylines

- 3.34** Skylines around the site are typically formed by higher ground and vary in their extent. Most skylines comprise vegetation rather than being open or, when looking towards Atworth owing to its situation on a shallow ridge, built form and vegetation. The site is located on lower ground and does not form part of any obvious skyline. The area is crossed by several high voltage overhead electricity transmission lines and pylons, which are prominent sky line features and notable visual detractors.

Intervisibility

- 3.35** Intervisibility within the landscape is restricted by localised changes in landform and the presence of hedgerows, trees and built form from particularly locations.

Tranquillity

- 3.36** Tranquillity is defined as being the absence of noise and activity. In this context, the area of the site and its immediate vicinity is relatively tranquil.

Baseline Visual Receptors

- 3.37** A range of visual receptors i.e. people, have been considered as part of a visual assessment. Such receptors include the occupiers of existing residential properties, users of the public highway network and users of the public right of way network.
- 3.38** It is from the public highway and public right of way networks where there is the greatest potential for there to be sight of the proposed development from publicly accessible vantage points.
- 3.39** Typically, users of the public right of way network and open access land will be most sensitive to visual changes in the landscape. For these visual receptors, the appearance of the landscape and particular views are often the primary reason for their using the public right of way or entering open access land.
- 3.40** Similarly, occupiers of residential properties are often sensitive to changes in the view from their habitable rooms. Users of the public highway are regarded as less sensitive to change in a particular view as their main focus is generally in the direction of travel.

Representative Views

- 3.41** The previous consented scheme identified 16 representative views. The viewpoints were accepted by the LPA. All the original viewpoints have been reappraised as part of this LVA but only a select number have been rephotographed and prepared as photomontages.
- 3.42** The representative viewpoints have been chosen to include different types of visual receptors in different locations and at different distances from the site boundary.
- 3.43** It should be noted that the viewpoints are not intended to be exhaustive. In reality, there would be many more locations within the local landscape from where the proposed development would not be seen as compared to those locations chosen as representative viewpoints where a view is anticipated.

Residential Properties

- 3.44** There are several residential properties in close proximity i.e. 500 metres or less, to the site boundary. The closest residential properties are located along the western and southern edges of The Common (Broughton Gifford) and Atworth respectively. Those residential properties within The Common are located between approximately 250 metres and 350 metres of the site boundary at the closest point.
- 3.45** Residential properties along the southern edge of Atworth are located at a distance of approximately 350 metres from the closest point to the site boundary. A combination of a particular property's orientation and the presence of a 'green edge' to the respective built up areas of The Common and Atworth, in the form of hedgerow and garden vegetation together with vegetation in the intervening landscape between the particular property and the site boundary, acts to restrict views of and into the site.
- 3.46** From a greater distance than 500 metres, views of the site from residential properties are limited further by a combination of the undulating topography and the layering effect of vegetation in the form of field boundary vegetation and woodland in the intervening landscape between the particular property and the site boundary.

Public Highways

- 3.47** The extent of the public highway network, outside settlement areas, in the locality of the site is limited. In most instances, highways are typically enclosed by roadside vegetation in the form of field boundary hedgerows. There is very limited direct intervisibility between the highway network and the site.

Public Rights of Way. Landscape Designations & Open Access Land

- 3.48** There are a relatively large number of public rights of way within the landscape surrounding the site. For those public rights of way passing through the surrounding landscape most potential views of the site are restricted owing to the orientation of the

public right of way away from the site or through the layering effect of vegetation associated with tree belts and vegetated field/highway boundaries or through the presence of screening from existing built form.

- 3.49** Those rights of way that pass through the site afford some of the greatest potential to view of the proposed development. Nevertheless the presence of internal field boundary hedgerows on the site and localised change in topography does restrict the ability to see the site in its entirety from one particular section of a particular route. Instead discrete parts of the site are seen even from within the site boundary,

4. Description of Proposed Development

- 4.1** A 'mitigation by design' approach has been taken as part of the project, meaning that during the course of design evolution, landscape, visual and character considerations were considered as an integral part of the design process.
- 4.2** In summary, the proposed development is for a solar farm and battery energy storage system that is to include ground-mounted photovoltaic (PV) solar modules and associated infrastructure (access roads, cabling, inverter platforms, control room, substation, storage containers, battery energy storage compound, security fencing and CCTV. The layout of the proposed development, materially altered from the consented scheme on the site is given at Appendix 5.

Appendix 5 – Overall Site Layout

- 4.3** The proposed solar panels would have a maximum height of approximately 2.5 metres above ground level. Rows of solar panels, orientated east-west so has to have each panel facing south, would occupy most of the fields within the site.
- 4.4** Each array of panels would be enclosed by a 'deer style' security fence approximately 2 metres in height. Pole mounted CCTV cameras would be erected at strategic locations around the perimeter of each solar array.
- 4.5** Both the security fence and the solar array will be contained within the existing retained field boundaries.

Changes from the previous consented scheme

- 4.6** The changes in the layout design of the proposed development in respect of the previous consented scheme are ones of detail rather than fundamental substance. In summary the most notable changes between the proposed and consented schemes are:
- The introduction of a series of swales across the site as part of the proposed scheme's drainage strategy
 - A refinement and extension of the proposed access track network across the site
 - A reconfiguration and enlargement of the proposed BESS and substation area
 - Introduction of an acoustic fence around BESS and substation

- Refinement of the proposed solar arrays layout so as to accommodate the above changes
- Refinement of the proposed landscape and ecological mitigation and enhancements.

Landscaping Works

- 4.7** As part of the proposals, a landscape plan has been prepared which illustrates the landscape mitigation and enhancements to be implemented by the proposed development (see Appendix 5- Development Proposals).

Appendix 5 – Development Proposals – revision G

- 4.8** When the visual assessment of the photo views describes any screening or filtering of any assessed views, there are assumptions made in respect of proposed planting and the anticipated heights that proposed planting can be hoped to achieve.
- 4.9** Any tree planting will be supplied at extra heavy standard size at 14-16cm with a height at year 1 of 4-4.5m. In year 10 these trees, subject to species and external factors considerations affecting tree growth rates, be expected to reach around 6-6.5m in height.
- 4.10** Any native hedge/scrub planting areas would be typically be planted at 40-60cm at year 1, and be expected to be around 3.5m in year 10 unless managed at a lesser height.

Lighting and light spill

- 4.11** No external lighting strategy has been prepared for the proposed development at this stage, on which to base a night-time visual assessment. However, no permanent lighting is anticipated. It is expected that the details of any external lighting would be conditioned as part of any planning consent. Such a condition would enable the Council to stipulate and control the extent and nature of any external lighting.

5. Planning Policy Context

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 5.1** The latest iteration of the NPPF was published in December 2024. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's economic, environmental and social planning policy and in combination these policies give the Government's vision of sustainable development. The NPPF emphasises the need for good design, promoting healthy communities and conserving and enhancing the natural environment.
- 5.2** Regarding landscape and green infrastructure, the Natural Environment section of the NPPF provides a policy context for open countryside and green infrastructure. The key objectives are to protect valued landscapes and, where possible, provide net gains in biodiversity.
- 5.3** The NPPF has been of material consideration as part of our assessment of the site and its setting. The proposed development is deemed to have taken into consideration the overall framework guidance and principles contained within the NPPF.

Local Plan Policy

- 5.4** The Wiltshire Local Plan is still in preparation. However, the adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy contains policies relevant to landscape and visual matters as they relate to the proposed development. These are as follows.
- 5.5** Core Policy 42 Standalone renewable energy installations. This policy states:
- “Proposals for standalone renewable energy schemes will be supported subject to satisfactory resolution of all site specific constraints. In particular, proposals will need to demonstrate how impacts on the following factors have been satisfactorily assessed, including any cumulative effects, and taken into account:
- i. The landscape, particularly in and around AONBs
 - ii. The Western Wiltshire Green Belt
 - iii. The New Forest National Park
 - iv. Biodiversity
 - v. The historic environment including the Stonehenge and Avebury World Heritage Site and its setting
 - vi. Use of the local transport network

vii. Residential amenity, including noise, odour, visual amenity and safety

viii. Best and most versatile agricultural land.

Applicants will not be required to justify the overall need for renewable energy development, either in a national or local context.”

5.6

Core Policy 51 Landscape. This policy states:

“Development should protect, conserve and where possible enhance landscape character and must not have a harmful impact upon landscape character, while any negative impacts must be mitigated as far as possible through sensitive design and landscape measures. Proposals should be informed by and sympathetic to the distinctive character areas identified in the relevant Landscape Character Assessment(s) and any other relevant assessments and studies. In particular, proposals will need to demonstrate that the following aspects of landscape character have been conserved and where possible enhanced through sensitive design, landscape mitigation and enhancement measures:

- i. The locally distinctive pattern and species composition of natural features such as trees, hedgerows, woodland, field boundaries, watercourses and waterbodies.
- ii. The locally distinctive character of settlements and their landscape settings.
- iii. The separate identity of settlements and the transition between man-made and natural landscapes at the urban fringe.
- iv. Visually sensitive skylines, soils, geological and topographical features.
- v. Landscape features of cultural, historic and heritage value.
- vi. Important views and visual amenity.
- vii. Tranquillity and the need to protect against intrusion from light pollution, noise, and motion.
- viii. Landscape functions including places to live, work, relax and recreate.
- ix. Special qualities of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) and the New Forest National Park, where great weight will be afforded to conserving and enhancing landscapes and scenic beauty.

Proposals for development within or affecting the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), New Forest National Park (NFNP) or Stonehenge and Avebury World Heritage Site (WHS) shall demonstrate that they have taken account of the objectives, policies and actions set out in the relevant Management Plans for these areas. Proposals for development outside of an AONB that is sufficiently prominent (in terms of its siting or scale) to have an impact on the area’s special qualities (as

set out in the relevant management plan), must also demonstrate that it would not adversely affect its setting.”

5.7 Core Policy 52 Green infrastructure states:

Development shall make provision for the retention and enhancement of Wiltshire’s green infrastructure network, and shall ensure that suitable links to the network are provided and maintained. Where development is permitted developers will be required to:

- i. retain and enhance existing on site green infrastructure
- ii. make provision for accessible open spaces in accordance with the requirements of the adopted Wiltshire Open Space Standards
- ii. put measures in place to ensure appropriate long-term management of any green infrastructure directly related to the development
- iv. provide appropriate contributions towards the delivery of the Wiltshire Green Infrastructure Strategy
- v. identify and provide opportunities to enhance and improve linkages between the natural and historic landscapes of Wiltshire.

If damage or loss of existing green infrastructure is unavoidable, the creation of new or replacement green infrastructure equal to or above its current value and quality, that maintains the integrity and functionality of the green infrastructure network, will be required. Proposals for major development should be accompanied by an audit of the existing green infrastructure within and around the site and a statement demonstrating how this will be retained and enhanced through the development process. Development will not adversely affect the integrity and value of the green infrastructure network, prejudice the delivery of the Wiltshire Green Infrastructure Strategy, or provide inadequate green infrastructure mitigation. Green infrastructure projects and initiatives that contribute to the delivery of a high quality and highly valued multi-functional green infrastructure network in accordance with the Wiltshire Green Infrastructure Strategy will be supported. Contributions (financial or other) to support such projects and initiatives will be required where appropriate from developers.

5.8 Core Policy 57 Ensuring high quality design and place shaping states:

“A high standard of design is required in all new developments, including extensions, alterations, and changes of use of existing buildings. Development is expected to create a strong sense of place through drawing on the local context and being complementary to the locality. Applications for new development must be

accompanied by appropriate information to demonstrate how the proposal will make a positive contribution to the character of Wiltshire through:

- i. enhancing local distinctiveness by responding to the value of the natural and historic environment, relating positively to its landscape setting and the existing pattern of development and responding to local topography by ensuring that important views into, within and out of the site are to be retained and enhanced
- ii. the retention and enhancement of existing important landscaping and natural features, (e.g. trees, hedges, banks and watercourses), in order to take opportunities to enhance biodiversity, create wildlife and recreational corridors, effectively integrate the development into its setting and to justify and mitigate against any losses that may occur through the development
- iii. responding positively to the existing townscape and landscape features in terms of building layouts, built form, height, mass, scale, building line, plot size, elevational design, materials, streetscape and rooflines to effectively integrate the building into its setting
- iv. being sympathetic to and conserving historic buildings and historic landscapes
- v. the maximisation of opportunities for sustainable construction techniques, use of renewable energy sources and ensuring buildings and spaces are orientated to gain maximum benefit from sunlight and passive solar energy, in accordance with Core Policy 41 (Sustainable Construction and Low Carbon Energy)
- vi. making efficient use of land whilst taking account of the characteristics of the site and the local context to deliver an appropriate development which relates effectively to the immediate setting and to the wider character of the area
- vii. having regard to the compatibility of adjoining buildings and uses, the impact on the amenities of existing occupants, and ensuring that appropriate levels of amenity are achievable within the development itself, including the consideration of privacy, overshadowing, vibration, and pollution (e.g. light intrusion, noise, smoke, fumes, effluent, waste or litter)
- viii. incorporating measures to reduce any actual or perceived opportunities for crime or antisocial behaviour on the site and in the surrounding area through the creation of visually attractive frontages that have windows and doors located to assist in the informal surveillance of public and shared areas by occupants of the site
- ix. ensuring that the public realm, including new roads and other rights of way, are designed to create places of character which are legible, safe and accessible in accordance with Core Policy 66 (Strategic Transport Network)

- x. the sensitive design of advertisements and signage, which are appropriate and sympathetic to their local setting by means of scale, design, lighting and materials
- xi. taking account of the needs of potential occupants, through planning for diversity and adaptability, and considering how buildings and space will be used in the immediate and long term future
- xii. the use of high standards of building materials, finishes and landscaping, including the provision of street furniture and the integration of art and design in the public realm
- xiii. the case of major developments, ensuring they are accompanied by a detailed design statement and masterplan, which is based on an analysis of the local context and assessment of constraints and opportunities of the site and is informed by a development concept, including clearly stated design principles, which will underpin the character of the new place meeting the requirements of Core Policy 61 (Transport and New Development)."

5.9 Saved policies not replaced by the Wiltshire Core Strategy continue to be saved until replaced by policies in a subsequent plan. There are no specific saved policies relevant to renewable energy, low carbon development or climate change in the West Wiltshire Local Plan.

5.10 The only saved policy deemed relevant to the proposed development is Policy C40 which states:

"In seeking to conserve the character and appearance of an area, trees of visual amenity value will be retained, particularly within conservation areas, and Tree Preservation Orders will be made to protect the important individual or groups of trees where appropriate."

Response to Policy

5.11 The assessment process has taken into account the above national and local planning policies.

6. Effect on Landscape Elements and Character

Key Landscape Receptors

- 6.1** The key landscape receptors that are likely to be affected by the proposed development are as follows:
- The proposed development site; and
 - The local landscape as expressed in the published character assessments.
- 6.2** The identified landscape receptors are not located within any nationally important landscape such as National Landscapes (AONB) etc as outlined in the NPPF. Within; such a designation the landscape value of key receptors would be 'high', and also in terms of tranquillity, landscape condition and scenic quality.

Landscape Susceptibility

- 6.3** At a more local level, the site and its local landscape are relatively well enclosed visually through a combination of undulating topography and the presence of a strong framework of typically substantial field boundary hedgerows.
- 6.4** On the site itself, the vegetation pattern is concentrated to the perimeter and as such readily able to be integrated into a development framework. The gently rolling topography lends itself to the proposed development, which have little effect on the prevailing landform of the site.
- 6.5** The pastoral fields on the site would be modified rather than lost entirely with the proposed development in place. However, the existing intense arable agricultural land-use within the site will change by virtue of the proposed development. There will be some perceived loss of openness to the site with the proposed development in place.
- 6.6** On balance, the site and its local landscape context is judged to be of medium susceptibility to the proposed development in landscape terms.

Landscape Value

- 6.7** As suggested in Guidelines for Landscape & Visual Impact (GLVIA 3) at Box 5.1, and in the Landscape Institute's Technical Guidance Note 02/21 'Assessing landscape value outside national designations', there are a range of factors that can help in the identification of valued landscapes. These factors include:

- Landscape quality (condition);
- Scenic quality;
- Rarity;
- Representativeness;
- Conservation Interests;
- Recreation Value;
- Perceptual aspects; and
- Associations.

6.8 Table 6.1 below seeks to assess the value of the site based on the Box 5.1 criteria GLVIA3 and the Landscape Institute's Technical Guidance Note 02/21 'Assessing landscape value outside national designations'.

Table 6.1 Assessment of Landscape Value of the Site and its Environs

Criteria	Assessment of Value
Landscape quality (condition)	Site - Low. The site itself is in a fair condition internally and but has no noteworthy landscape features. In its present form the site's primary contribution to the wider local landscape is as mixed pastoral and arable fields which is a common pattern in the area. Local Area – Medium. The wider landscape is considered to be in a good condition and appears well managed as part of its generally intensively farmed regime.
Scenic quality	Site – Low. The site itself has some intrinsic scenic quality with fields set amongst substantial hedgerows across a gently rolling topography. However, the presence of several overhead transmission lines, towers and connectors is a notable visual detractor across the whole site.

	Local Area - Medium. The landscape surrounding the site is variable in its scenic quality, especially where overhead transmission lines are conspicuous, but is more generally attractive.
Rarity	Low. The site components are not unusual or rare. Local Area – Medium. The area is predominantly intensively farmed agricultural land.
Representativeness	Site - Low. The site is representative of the scale of arable and pastoral fields identified in the published character assessments as being characteristic of the local area. Local Area - Medium. The wider local area contains many of the characteristic features identified in the published character assessment. The combination of mixed pastoral and arable land, undulating landform, dispersed and linear settlement pattern together with elements of infrastructure can be found elsewhere in the district
Conservation Interest	Site - Low. The site is not covered by any statutory or non-statutory heritage designation. Local Area – Low. The wider landscape contains several listed buildings and Scheduled Ancient Monuments none are known to have a direct association with the site.
Recreational value	Site - Medium. The site is entirely private but has some public rights of way passing through it. The site has some recreational value. Local Area – Medium. The local host landscape does have public rights of way passing through and so the wider landscape does have some recreational value.

Perceptual qualities	Site – Low - There is no real sense of remoteness. There is a static hum beneath the overhead transmission lines Local Area – Low – the wider local area contains a greater number of sources of activity. There no real sense of remoteness.
Associations	Site - Low. Local Area - Low. There is no known direct association with any historic or cultural figure and the site or the local area surrounding it.

- 6.9** Taken into consideration the above factors, including the published character assessment, it is considered that the local landscape has an overall medium sensitivity to the type of development being proposed. The site itself is considered to have a low sensitivity to the type of development being proposed, with most aspects of value being assessed as low.

Landscape Sensitivity

- 6.10** The sensitivity of a particular landscape to a particular type of development is derived through a judgement based upon a landscape's susceptibility i.e. "the ability of a defined landscape to accommodate the specific proposed development without undue negative consequences" and the landscape's 'value' i.e. "the relative value that is attached to different landscape by society. A landscape may be valued by different stakeholders for a whole variety of reasons".
- 6.11** With a medium susceptibility and a low value, the overall sensitivity of the site is assessed as medium.
- 6.12** With a medium susceptibility and a medium value, the overall sensitivity of the local area is assessed as medium.

Likely causes of Effect

- 6.13** In the context of the proposed development as outlined above, this section sets out an assessment of the likely physical effects on landscape and elements and features together with the anticipated effects on the landscape character of the site and the local area.

Causes of temporary effects during the construction phase

6.14 The temporary construction work that may give rise to effects on landscape features and character include:

- Presence and movement of construction vehicles and plant
- Presence of stored materials, plant and machinery, work compound and shelters
- Construction of the proposed solar panels, fencing, surfacing and associated infrastructure
- Construction of the BESS and substation
- Construction of new access tracks
- Implementation of soft landscape.

Causes of effects at completion

6.15 The permanent components of the proposals that may give rise to effects on landscape elements and features and on the character of the landscape include:

- Introduction of solar panels and structures onto the site
- Introduction of the BESS and substation onto the site
- Creation of new access tracks
- Erection of new boundary treatments and minor structures
- Installation of new soft landscape onto the site e.g. trees, hedgerows, shrubs and grassed areas.

6.16 Effects at completion are primarily concerned with the medium to long term change to the landscape from its current baseline context as a result of the proposed development being in place on the site.

6.17 In respect of physical changes to landscape elements and features, direct changes would be restricted to the site and its boundary. There would be no anticipated additional direct physical effects on the wider area the site.

Causes of Effects at de-commissioning

6.18 De-commissioning activities which have the potential to affect the landscape character include:

- Dismantling and removal of all installed infrastructure; and
- Reinstatement works to areas disturbed by de-commissioning activities.

Scale of effect at construction and de-commissioning

- 6.19** From the description of the construction and de-commissioning activities as outlined above, any effects on landscape character during the construction and de-commissioning phases will be only temporary in duration.
- 6.20** The short-term, reversible and temporary nature of the construction and decommissioning activities on landscape character will ensure that the overall effects will be, at worst, moderate adverse.

Effects upon Landscape Elements and Features

- 6.21** An assessment is made on the effect of the proposed development on the landscape elements and features that currently characterise the site. Effects are assessed at:
- Year 1 of the operational phase (short-term), when built form has been completed and any soft landscape treatment has been implemented but has yet to establish and grow; and
 - Year 15 of the operational phase (medium term), when soft landscape including any grass, trees, hedgerows and shrubs etc have fully established and are starting to fill out.

Topography

- 6.22** The topography of the site is not considered to be rare or unusual in the context of the wider landscape and is assessed as having a low value.
- 6.23** No major cut or fill exercise is anticipated. However, change will occur where the proposed swales are to be created. The swales will be deep enough to retain water for short periods but would be perceived as a grassy depression for much of the time.
- 6.24** Further changes to the generally level profile of the site are likely to be localised and comparatively minor - associated with the construction of access tracks and the BESS/substation compound and minor structures. Erection of the proposed solar panels would not necessitate any noticeable alterations to the site's profile.
- 6.25** The susceptibility of the site topography to the type of development being proposed is low. With a low value and a low susceptibility, the site's topography is assessed as being of low sensitivity to change.
- 6.26** With the proposals in place, it is judged that there would be a low magnitude of change to the topography of the site.
- 6.27** With a low magnitude of change and a low sensitivity, the scale of effect on the site's topography at year 1 of the operational phase is assessed as negligible adverse. It is assessed that the scale of effect at year 15 of the operational phase would remain

negligible adverse. Changes to the site's topography remaining during the operational phase of the proposed development would be permanent ones. However, the overall sloping and undulating profile of the site would continue to prevail.

Trees and hedgerows

- 6.28** The majority of the site's existing tree and hedgerow resource will be retained as part of the proposed development. The tree and hedgerow resource on the site is judged to be of medium value.
- 6.29** Trees and hedgerows have an inherently high susceptibility to most forms of development. Overall, the sensitivity of the site's tree and hedgerow resource is high.
- 6.30** Within the layout design of the proposed development, the solar panels, associated structures and access tracks have been set back from hedgerows and outside the root protection areas (RPA) of trees. Wherever possible the proposed development would utilise existing field entrances/gates to provide for the proposed new access tracks.
- 6.31** Some small sections of hedgerow (approximately 12 metres) would be removed to allow for the proposed new access tracks. However, the proposed development includes for the implementation of approximately 1.96km of new mixed native species hedgerow together with 30 hedgerow trees.
- 6.32** At year 1 it is assessed that there would be a low change to the tree and hedgerow resource on the site. The proposed new trees and hedgerows would be immature.
- 6.33** The scale of effect at year 1 of the operational is judged to be moderate neutral. At year 15, the planting implemented as part of the proposals would have fully established and would have filled out at sufficient height to be managed as a screen to the proposals. The scale of effect at year 15 on the site's existing tree and hedgerow resource would have altered to moderate beneficial.

Land use

- 6.34** There would be a cessation of agricultural uses on the site with the introduction of the proposed development. Nevertheless the pastoral and will remain as grassland during the operational phase of the proposed development.
- 6.35** The effect of the proposed development would inevitably necessitate the loss of arable land on the site. However, grassland will replace this beneath and around the solar panels and arrays.
- 6.36** The susceptibility of the arable agricultural use to the type of development proposed is high, arable production is inherently incompatible with PV solar energy production through the use of solar panels. Overall, the sensitivity of the existing land use and cover is high.

- 6.37** At year 1 of the operational phase all arable production would have ceased on the site. The land cover would become predominantly solar panels and grassland. The grassland would occupy the space between panel rows and the space beneath the panels. The magnitude of change to the land use and cover of the site would be high.
- 6.38** With a high sensitivity and a high magnitude of change, the scale of effect on the site's existing land use and cover at year 1 would be major adverse.
- 6.39** At year 15, the proposed land use and cover would have become established. No arable production would be taking place so the effect on the existing base line would remain major adverse. Notwithstanding this, the grassland within the site would have the potential to be managed for increased biodiversity and wildlife interest. This would, it is considered, be a positive aspect of the proposals.
- 6.40** The change in the present land use and cover of the site would be long term over the duration of the operational phase of the proposed development. However, the change would be a reversible one and as such would ultimately be temporary.

Public Rights of Way

- 6.41** The public rights of way through the site would be maintained on their current alignment through the proposed development.
- 6.42** Any direct effects on the public right of way network as a whole with the proposed development in place would be experiential/perceptual – primarily visual – rather than physical. Section 7 assesses the effects on general visual amenity.

Water Features

- 6.43** There are several streams/drainage ditches passing through or adjacent to the site. All the watercourses are being retained on their current alignment with the proposed development in place.

Effects Upon Landscape Character

- 6.44** The key characteristics of the site, which comprises several arable fields, are well represented in the surrounding area. The wider site context is characterised by an undulating topography, comprising a generally medium to large scale predominantly mixed arable and pastoral agricultural landscape divided by minor roads, streams, hedgerows, and areas of settlement. It is considered that changes to the character of the site will have only a limited impact upon these characteristics identified for the wider local landscape in the published or author's landscape character assessments.
- 6.45** The proposed solar panels would have a relatively low profile - being approximately 2.5metres at their highest above ground and the panels would have a generally uniform

appearance. However, given the orientation of the panels to face south, there would be some variation in how it is perceived throughout the landscape.

- 6.46** Transformers and CCTV columns would be located throughout the site and, while protruding slightly above the solar array, they would be broadly contained by the larger solar array as an influence on the underlying landscape character of the local area. Access tracks would be surfaced with a bound material and would be similar to existing farm tracks, and therefore would not be uncharacteristic of the existing landscape.
- 6.47** The BESS and substation have been carefully sited so as to minimise any adverse effects. The structures are to be located close to the site boundary in the northern part of the site in an area visually well contained by existing hedgerow vegetation. The BESS and substation would be at a low point in the landscape so as to reduce their appearance in the landscape.
- 6.48** The greatest change to the character of the landscape would occur on the site. The proposed development would introduce new elements of built form within the site as a whole. Nevertheless, the proposed solar farm development would be contained within the existing field boundaries.
- 6.49** The nature of the fields on the site, with the proposals in place, would alter, especially with the change in those fields that are presently arable. The site would become mainly grassland. Such a change would diminish the seasonal transformations associated with an arable crop from ploughing to harvest etc. Notwithstanding such a change of nature, the fields on the site would still be recognisable as a feature in the landscape and would still contribute to the field pattern found in the wider landscape.
- 6.50** The proposed development would also retain the site's existing landscape features of trees and hedges. The solar array would follow the contours and would not alter the underlying topography. The retained landscape features will continue to contribute to both the character of the site and the wider landscape during the operational phase of the proposed development.
- 6.51** Once mature, over the course of the operational phase of the proposals, it is considered that any new tree and hedgerow planting on the site would have the ability to make a positive contribution as a functional, and aesthetic feature, to the local landscape. The proposed new planting on the site will, once established and beginning to fill out, help to mitigate the visual effects of the proposals and to limit intervisibility of views of the proposed development further from publicly accessible locations.
- 6.52** The landscape elements and features in the surrounding landscape outside the site would be physically unaltered with the proposals in place. The proposals would have no physical or perceived influence on the settlement pattern in the local landscape.

- 6.53** The proposed solar farm and BESS development would not move and would be substantially silent from publicly accessible areas. The level of tranquillity in the local landscape would not change noticeably with the proposals in place.
- 6.54** With respect to noted views, features, and landmarks, their perception would not be compromised or materially harmed. The generally low profile of both the solar panels and the BESS would mean that they would not intrude onto the skyline and, owing to the strong structure of existing hedgerows the local area, the proposals would not be experienced in their entirety but only as discrete elements. The dominant vertical elements in the landscape would remain the existing overhead transmission lines and their associated towers.
- 6.55** In the context of other development already present, the proposals would introduce a degree of additional complexity to the area's landscape. Importantly though, the baseline landscape context of the site is one of a consented 'solar farm and battery storage facility with associated infrastructure'. The proposed development, although with some material amendments to the consented scheme, would not, it is judged, fundamentally alter this baseline situation.
- 6.56** Both the consented and proposed development would introduce solar energy infrastructure on the site that would alter the site character as a whole. Nevertheless the proposed development would also enable the existing landscape features of topography and vegetation, together with the existing field pattern, to continue to prevail. Careful management of the site and proposed ecological enhancements would provide some beneficial change.
- 6.57** Given that the site is already accepting of a consented solar farm development, it is assessed that the material change to the character of the site brought about by the proposed development would be negligible. Similarly, given that the primary change to the landscape would take place on the site, the magnitude of change to the local landscape would also be negligible.
- 6.58** With a negligible magnitude of change and a medium sensitivity, the scale of effect on the landscape character of the site would be negligible adverse at year 1 and year 15 of the operational phase.
- 6.59** With a negligible magnitude of change and a medium sensitivity, the scale of effect on the landscape character of the local area would be negligible adverse at year 1 and year 15 of the operational phase

Summary

- 6.60** The baseline context for the landscape character of the site is as a consented development comprising 'solar farm and battery storage facility with associated

infrastructure'. The proposed material amendment would not profoundly alter this baseline situation.

- 6.61** As with the consented development, the proposed solar farm would include strings of solar panels, inverters, battery storage containers and other associated infrastructure. It is accepted that this may be viewed by some to be 'utilitarian and industrial in appearance'. The local landscape is not truly undeveloped countryside but instead already accommodates a variety of infrastructure and development. The proposed development, where visible, would not be perceived as a completely incongruous feature.
- 6.62** The proposed development would not appear in the landscape as a single observable entity. The relatively low-profile solar panels, existing strong hedgerow structure and trees, together with the introduction of new tree and hedgerow planting and the typically undulating topography would help prevent the proposed development appearing overtly prominent or dominant a feature in the landscape.
- 6.63** In appearance terms, the proposed solar farm would add some limited complexity to the character of the local landscape. However, the siting, scale and massing of the solar panels, transformers, inverters, battery energy storage system area and security fencing would, following the first 15 years of the operational phase and the establishment and growth of the proposed new tree planting, generally only appear as a discrete elements in the landscape.
- 6.64** The proposed solar farm development would retain the site's existing structure and individual field pattern and would not substantially affect the pattern of the wider landscape. The proposed development would maintain the overall pattern of the existing landscape expressed in the lanes, hedgerows, and predominantly mixed agricultural land.
- 6.65** In respect of notable views, features, and landmarks, their perception would not be unduly compromised or harmed with the proposals in place. The landscape elements and features in the surrounding landscape beyond the site boundary would be physically unaltered with the proposals in place. Any perceived changes in the character and appearance of the local landscape would be limited.
- 6.66** It is considered that the solar farm as now proposed would not completely redefine the character of the local landscape; the prevailing settled, and agricultural character of the local landscape would remain. The key characteristics of the local landscape, which differentiate the local landscape from other areas, would not be fundamentally changed and would continue to prevail. On balance, it is considered that the proposed solar farm would result in an acceptable level of effect on the character of the local landscape.

7. Effect on Visual Amenity

Representative Viewpoints

- 7.1** The visual assessment for the previously consented scheme identified 16 agreed representative viewpoints. These are shown at Appendix 7.

Appendix 7 – Original Representative Views

- 7.2** These viewpoints are regarded as being representative of the range of potential views and visual receptors e.g. people using the public highway, open spaces etc., from various distances and directions around the site. However, the views are not intended to be exhaustive.

Assessment of Visual Effects

- 7.3** A further visual assessment has been undertaken, in May 2025, in respect of the proposed material amendment (and new layout). The previously agreed viewpoints have been reappraised.
- 7.4** In certain instances, new photography has been undertaken. In particular the photomontages prepared for the previous consented scheme have been re-done based upon new photography and to reflect the proposed new scheme layout. The new photomontages are given at Appendix 8.

Appendix 8 - Photomontages

Summary of visual assessment

- 7.5** A summary of the effects on visual amenity of the 16 representative viewpoints is given in Table 7.1 below.

Table 7.1 – Summary of the effects on representative viewpoints

Viewpoint	Sensitivity	Magnitude of change	Scale of Effect at years 1	Scale of Effect at year 15	Commentary
Viewpoint 1 - View from PROW	Medium	Negligible	Negligible neutral	Negligible neutral	The proposed development would be screened by existing

Viewpoint	Sensitivity	Magnitude of change	Scale of Effect at years 1	Scale of Effect at year 15	Commentary
MELW015 looking west					vegetation in the intervening space between the observer and the site
Viewpoint 2- View from PROW ATW013 on the southern edge of Atworth looking south- east	High	Low	Moderate adverse	Minor neutral	By year 15 the proposed mitigation planting on the site would have filled out sufficiently to provide additional screening to the proposed development
Viewpoint 3 - View from PROW ATW013 looking south (can be seen as a photomontage at Appendix 8)	Medium	Low	Minor adverse	Negligible neutral	By year 15 the proposed mitigation planting on the site would have filled out sufficiently to provide additional screening to the proposed development
Viewpoint 4 – View from PROW	Medium	Negligible	Negligible adverse	Negligible adverse	The hedgerow in the view has grown considerably since the original photo

Viewpoint	Sensitivity	Magnitude of change	Scale of Effect at years 1	Scale of Effect at year 15	Commentary
ATW021 looking north					was taken. Views are no more restricted
View 5 – View from PROW ATW021 within field 4 looking north-west (can be seen as a photomontage at Appendix 8)	High	High	Major adverse	Minor adverse	
View 6 – View from PROW ATW022 looking north-west	High	Negligible	Minor adverse	Minor adverse	The proposed development would be largely screened from view through a combination of rolling topography and existing vegetation in the intervening landscape between the observer and the site
Viewpoint 7 – View from PROW BGIF2 looking north-west (can be seen as a	High	Low	Minor adverse	Negligible adverse	By year 15 the proposed mitigation planting on the site would have filled out sufficiently to provide

Viewpoint	Sensitivity	Magnitude of change	Scale of Effect at years 1	Scale of Effect at year 15	Commentary
photomontage at Appendix 8)					additional screening to the proposed development
Viewpoint 8 – View from PROW ATW018 looking east (can be seen as a photomontage at Appendix 8)	Medium	High	Major adverse	Minor adverse	As part of the proposed development a new hedgerow would be planted along the side of the proposed security fence. By year 15 the new hedgerow would screen much of the proposed development from view
Viewpoint 9 – View from PROW ATW018 looking east	Medium	Negligible	Negligible adverse	Negligible adverse	Retained vegetation and rising ground together with the set back of the proposed development within the site would restrict views of the proposed development
Viewpoint 10 – View from PROW ATW018 looking west	High	Low	Moderate adverse	Moderate adverse	Retained vegetation and the low profile of the proposed solar infrastructure would restrict views of the proposed development

Viewpoint	Sensitivity	Magnitude of change	Scale of Effect at years 1	Scale of Effect at year 15	Commentary
Viewpoint 11 – View from PROW ATW020 looking south	Medium	Negligible	Negligible adverse	Negligible adverse	Retained vegetation with the set back of the proposed development within the site would restrict views of the proposed development
Viewpoint 12 – View from Bradford Road looking south-east (can be seen as a photomontage at Appendix 8)	Medium	Negligible	Negligible adverse	Negligible adverse	The proposed development would be indistinct in the middle distance with existing vegetation restricting views. Mitigation planting would be sufficiently filled out at year 15 to further screen the proposed development
Viewpoint 13 – View from lane leading to South Wraxall looking east	Medium	No change	No effect	No effect	The proposed development would be screened from view
Viewpoint 14 – View from lane close to Newhouse	Medium	No change	No effect	No effect	The proposed development would be screened from view

Viewpoint	Sensitivity	Magnitude of change	Scale of Effect at years 1	Scale of Effect at year 15	Commentary
Farm looking north-east					
View 15 – View from PROW CORM92 looking south	High	No change	No effect	No effect	The proposed development would be screened from view
Viewpoint 16 – View from PROW ATW020 looking south-east	Medium	High	Major adverse	Minor adverse	As part of the proposed development a new hedgerow would be planted along the side of the proposed security fence. By year 15 the new hedgerow would screen much of the proposed development from view

7.6 Three major effects are identified at year 1 of the operational phase. All three would be adverse in nature.

7.7 In all three instances it is assessed that the proposed mitigation measures would reduce the major adverse scale of effect by year 15 of the operational phase. Residual effects for the representative views would range from moderate adverse to no effect.

Summary

7.8 The opportunities to view the proposed development would be confined to an area of landscape close or very close to the site boundary. Where potential views were to occur, the proposed development would typically be seen only as discrete parts rather than in its entirety.

- 7.9** The landscape comprises a strong framework of trees and field boundary hedgerows that provides a degree of containment to the local landscape and of the site, and which, together with rolling and undulating topography, foreshortens and interrupts many views. This aspect of the local landscape would avoid the proposed development, materially changed from the consented scheme on the site, with its comparatively low profile from being unduly prominent.
- 7.10** Where the site boundary is more open, there is the opportunity to introduce new hedgerow planting. Such planting, would have fully established and filled out by year 15 of the operational phase of the proposed development. By such a time the new hedges would be of a managed height where they would screen the proposals and help to ensure any adverse visual effects are mitigated.
- 7.11** Overall it is considered that the proposed development would have a limited effect and harm on the visual amenity of the wider landscape both within and beyond the site boundary. With the proposals in place on the site, the local landscape would still have the ability to provide, in the context of other influences already present, a visually pleasant and attractive setting for those people living, working or passing through the area.

8. Summary and Conclusions

- 8.1** This report has been prepared as a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) by Briarwood Landscape Architecture Limited by a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute. The LVA report is to accompany a submission for a material amendment ('the proposed development') of a consented solar development at Land at Studley Farm, Atworth, Melksham, Wiltshire.
- 8.2** A decision notice (application reference number: PL/2021/08690) was issued on 9th June 2022 granting planning permission on the site for the,
- “Installation of a solar farm and battery storage facility with associated infrastructure.”
- 8.3** The redline application boundary has not altered in the proposed development. The site remains as per the consented scheme and comprises two parcels of land, one to the east and one to the west of Studley Farm. Studley Farm is located to the south of the village of Atworth. The site's larger western parcel consists of four fields. The site's smaller eastern parcel consists of three fields and part of a fourth.
- 8.4** The site is currently entirely private with no public access. However, several public rights of way do pass through parts of the site. Those rights of way that pass through the site afford some of the greatest potential to view of the proposed development. Nevertheless the presence of internal field boundary hedgerows on the site and localised change in topography does restrict the ability to see the site in its entirety from one particular section of a particular route. Instead discrete parts of the site are seen even from within the site boundary.
- 8.5** The changes in the layout design of the proposed development in respect of the previous consented scheme are ones of detail rather than fundamental substance. In summary the most notable changes between the proposed and consented schemes are:
- The introduction of a series of swales across the site as part of the proposed scheme's drainage strategy
 - A refinement and extension of the proposed access track network across the site
 - A reconfiguration and enlargement of the proposed BESS and substation area
 - Introduction of an acoustic fence around BESS and substation
 - Refinement of the proposed solar arrays layout so as to accommodate the above changes

- Refinement of the proposed landscape and ecological mitigation and enhancements.

- 8.6** The baseline context for the landscape character of the site is as a consented development. The proposed material amendment would not profoundly alter this baseline situation.
- 8.7** As with the consented development, the proposed solar farm would include strings of solar panels, inverters, battery storage containers and other associated infrastructure. It is accepted that this may be viewed by some to be 'utilitarian and industrial in appearance'. The local landscape is not truly undeveloped countryside but instead already accommodates a variety of infrastructure and development. The proposed development, where visible, would not be perceived as a completely incongruous feature.
- 8.8** The proposed development would not appear in the landscape as a single observable entity. The relatively low-profile solar panels, existing strong hedgerow structure and trees, together with the introduction of new tree and hedgerow planting and the typically undulating topography would help prevent the proposed development appearing overtly prominent or dominant a feature in the landscape.
- 8.9** In appearance terms, the proposed solar farm would add some limited complexity to the character of the local landscape. However, the siting, scale and massing of the solar panels, transformers, inverters, battery energy storage system area and security fencing would, following the first 15 years of the operational phase and the establishment and growth of the proposed new tree planting, generally only appear as a discrete elements in the landscape.
- 8.10** The proposed solar farm development would retain the site's existing structure and individual field pattern and would not substantially affect the pattern of the wider landscape. The proposed development would maintain the overall pattern of the existing landscape expressed in the lanes, hedgerows, and predominantly mixed agricultural land.
- 8.11** In respect of notable views, features, and landmarks, their perception would not be unduly compromised or harmed with the proposals in place. The landscape elements and features in the surrounding landscape beyond the site boundary would be physically unaltered with the proposals in place. Any perceived changes in the character and appearance of the local landscape would be limited.
- 8.12** It is considered that the solar farm as now proposed would not completely redefine the character of the local landscape; the prevailing settled, and agricultural character of the local landscape would remain. The key characteristics of the local landscape, which differentiate the local landscape from other areas, would not be fundamentally changed

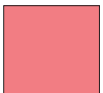
and would continue to prevail. On balance, it is considered that the proposed solar farm would result in an acceptable level of effect on the character of the local landscape.

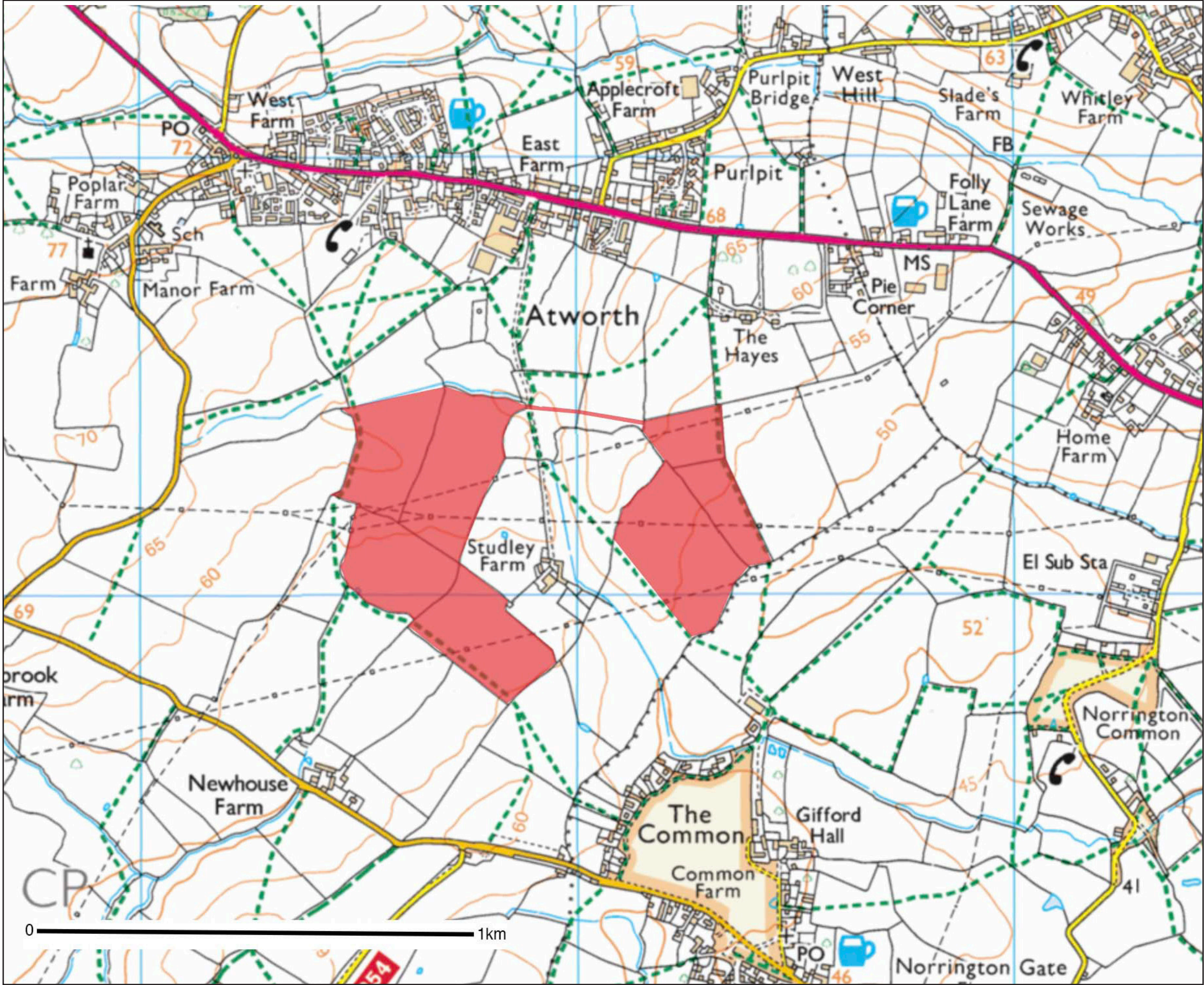
- 8.13** The opportunities to view the proposed development would be confined to an area of landscape close or very close to the site boundary. Where potential views were to occur, the proposed development would typically be seen only as discrete parts rather than in its entirety.
- 8.14** The landscape comprises a strong framework of trees and field boundary hedgerows that provides a degree of containment to the local landscape and of the site, and which, together with rolling and undulating topography, foreshortens and interrupts many views. This aspect of the local landscape would avoid the proposed development, materially changed from the consented scheme on the site, with its comparatively low profile from being unduly prominent.
- 8.15** Where the site boundary is more open, there is the opportunity to introduce new hedgerow planting. Such planting, would have fully established and filled out by year 15 of the operational phase of the proposed development. By such a time the new hedges would be of a managed height where they would screen the proposals and help to ensure any adverse visual effects are mitigated.
- 8.16** Overall it is considered that the proposed development would have a limited effect and harm on the visual amenity of the wider landscape both within and beyond the site boundary. With the proposals in place on the site, the local landscape would still have the ability to provide, in the context of other influences already present, a visually pleasant and attractive setting for those people living, working or passing through the area.

9. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Site Location Plan



 The site



Briarwood
Landscape Architecture

DRAWING Site Location Plan			
PROJECT Studley Melksham Solar Farm			
CLIENT Melksham Calne Green Limited			
SCALE As shown	DATE June 2025	DRAWN SW	
DRAWING NUMBER BLA437-02		REVISION -	

Appendix 2 – Detailed Methodology

DETAILED METHODOLOGY

Introduction

1. This Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) has been undertaken with reference to best practice, as outlined in the following published guidance:
 - Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (3rd edition) - Landscape Institute/ Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013)
 - Notes and Clarifications on Aspects of Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition (GLIVA3) – LITGN- 2024-01 (August 2025) - The Landscape Institute
 - An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment – Natural England (2014)
 - Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 02/21 – Assessing landscape value outside national designations – The Landscape Institute
2. The proposed scheme is assessed for the purposes of the landscape and visual analysis. Landscape and visual effects are assessed through professional judgements on the sensitivity of landscape elements, landscape character, visual receptors and representative viewpoints combined with the predicted magnitude of change arising from the proposed development.
3. The landscape and visual effects of the proposals have been assessed in the following sections:
 - Effects on landscape elements;
 - Effects on landscape character; and
 - Effects on visual amenity.
4. As outlined in paragraph 1.11 of GLVIA3, though the processes used to undertake them are very similar, the term Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) has been used to distinguish this standalone report from a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) which often constitutes part of a larger, formal, EIA document.

5. Whilst the processes and principles are fundamentally the same for an 'appraisal' as an LVIA, Technical Guidance Note LITGN-2004-01 explains:
6. *"In carrying out an LVA, the same principles and process as set out in GLVIA3 may be applied to report on effects (identifying the relative importance/ levels of the effects on a scale with reference to sensitivity and magnitude of effect), but it is not required to establish whether the effects arising are or are not significant."*

Study Area

7. The initial study area for the LVA is taken to be a 5km radius from the site. Unless otherwise stated, the main focus of the assessment is taken as a radius of 2km from the site as it is considered that beyond this distance, even with good visibility, the proposed development would not be perceptible in the composite landscape.
8. The effects on settings of heritage assets or ecological/environmental assets are not considered within this LVA.

Nature of Effects

9. An impact is an action e.g. building a wall. An effect is the consequence of a particular action on the integrity of the landscape, feature or view.
10. The nature of any effect will be adverse, beneficial or neutral and are summarised as:
 - Adverse - where on balance there is a negative effect on the quality, integrity or key characteristics of the landscape or visual receptor
 - Beneficial - where on balance there is a positive effect on the quality, integrity or key characteristics of the landscape or visual receptor
 - Neutral – where on balance the effect would maintain the quality, integrity or key characteristics of the landscape or visual receptor or where the change is different but represents neither a deterioration nor enhancement
11. Unless expressly noted, effects are deemed to be adverse in nature. NB 'Significance' is not determined.

Landscape Elements and Character Assessment Methodology

12. A baseline landscape assessment is carried out to determine the current elements and character of the landscape within and surrounding the site. This involved an initial desktop study of but not necessarily limited to:

- Ordnance survey maps at 1:50,000, 1:25,000 scales
- Aerial photographs of the site and surrounding area
- Datasets for rural designations from the MAGIC website (Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside)
- Relevant planning policy
- National and local scale landscape character assessments

Visual Assessment Methodology

13. The assessment of visual effects is undertaken on the basis of viewpoint analysis as recommended in best practice guidelines. The viewpoints which are in different directions from the site and are at varying distances and locations were selected to represent a range of views and visual receptor types.

14. The viewpoints are representational and not exhaustive. They are taken from publicly accessible land and not from any third party, private, land.

15. The viewpoints were used as the basis for determining the effects of visual receptors within the entire study area. The viewpoints were photographed at 1.6 metres above ground level.

Sensitivity of Landscape Elements and Features

16. The sensitivity attributed to a landscape element or feature is determined by a combination of the value that is attached to a particular landscape element feature and the susceptibility of the landscape element/feature to changes that would arise as a result of the Proposed Development as outlined in pages 88-90 of GLVIA3.

Susceptibility

17. Within GLVIA3, Susceptibility is defined as: 'The ability of a defined landscape or visual receptor to accommodate the specific proposed development without

undue negative consequences’ (p158). Susceptibility is further defined in accordance with Technical Guidance Note LITGN-2024-01 and the Oxford English Dictionary as being:

‘The quality or condition of being susceptible; capability of receiving, being affected by, or undergoing something’.

“This definition would imply that a higher susceptibility would mean more liable to be harmed by a particular thing...”

18. Both value and susceptibility are assessed as high, medium or low.

Table 1: Value of Landscape Elements and Features

Low	Ones that: • have no or little rarity and/or, • make no and/or make only a limited contribution to the character and local visual and amenity value and/or • are of such poor condition that the element/feature has lost its ability to contribute effectively to the character of the landscape
Medium	Ones that: • are notable in the landscape, with some visual and/or amenity interest but, • do not make a particularly strong or important contribution to the character of the landscape and/or, • ones that are an intrinsic element of landscape but in poor condition
High	Ones that: • make an important contribution to the character of the landscape and/or • have particular historical or cultural reference and/or • are distinctive or rare and typically of good condition

Table 2: Susceptibility of Landscape Elements and Features

Susceptibility to change	Criteria
High	A very limited ability of the landscape element of feature to accommodate the type of development being proposed – a particular susceptibility. Few opportunities for mitigation and enhancement.
Medium	A moderate ability of the landscape element of feature to accommodate the type of development being proposed – some susceptibility. Some opportunities for mitigation and enhancement .
Low	A well-defined ability of the landscape element of feature to accommodate the type of development being proposed – little susceptibility. Good opportunities for mitigation and enhancement .

Susceptibility of Landscape Elements and Features

19. The susceptibility criteria of landscape elements and features is given in Table 2 but a judgement has been made by linking back to the evidence gathered at the baseline stage.

Table 3: Sensitivity of Landscape Elements and Features

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

Magnitude of Change on Landscape Elements and Features

20. Professional judgement, using the criteria given in Table 4 , and also considering geographic extent and the duration and reversibility of the effect, has been used to determine the magnitude of direct physical impacts on individual existing landscape elements and features. NB Alterations may include the addition of new elements and features.

Table 4: Criteria for magnitude of change for landscape elements and features

Negligible	No loss or very minor alteration to part of an existing landscape element and/or feature
Low	Minor loss or alteration to part of an existing landscape element and or feature
Medium	Some loss or alteration to part of an existing landscape element and/or feature
High	Total/major loss or alteration of an existing landscape element and/or feature

Sensitivity of Landscape Character

21. Sensitivity is determined by a combination of the value that is attached to a landscape and the susceptibility of the landscape to changes that would arise as a result of the Proposed Development as outlined in pages 88-90 of GLVIA3. Both value and susceptibility are assessed as high, medium or low.

22. Table 5 below provides the potential levels of ‘value’ attributable to a particular landscape. In assessing the relative value of a particular landscape a range of factors are considered based upon Box 5.1 on page 84 of GLVIA3 and Technical Guidance Note 02/21.

Table 5: Value of Landscape Character

Low	An area that is in a recognisably poor condition/quality and/or with a weak strength of character that typically has a clear indication of being damaged and/or contains a high number of detractors, and/or is of limited visual cohesion; rare or distinctive elements and features are not a notable component that contribute to the character of the area. No known associations with cultural/historic people.
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Medium	An area is recognisable as being in reasonable condition/quality and/or with a strength of character but likely to exhibit some damage or deterioration and/or some visual cohesion and interest; rare or distinctive elements and features make some contribution to the character of the area. Possible or limited associations with cultural/historic people.
High	Areas with international or national landscape designations, i.e. National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty or occasionally landscapes non-designated landscape in particularly good condition/quality and/or strong strength of character or of particular local value and/or with few visual detractors; rare or distinctive elements and features are likely to be a key component that contribute to the character of the area. Recorded associations with cultural/historic people may be present.

Table 6: Susceptibility of Landscape Character

Susceptibility to change	Criteria
High	A very limited ability of the landscape to accommodate the type of development being proposed – a particular susceptibility. Few opportunities for mitigation and enhancement.
Medium	A moderate ability of the landscape to accommodate the type of development being proposed – some susceptibility. Some opportunities for mitigation and enhancement .
Low	A well-defined ability of the landscape to accommodate the type of development being proposed – little susceptibility. Good opportunities for mitigation and enhancement .

Susceptibility of Landscape Elements and Features

23. The susceptibility criteria of landscape elements and features is given in Table 6 but a judgement has been made by linking back to the evidence gathered at the baseline stage.

Table 7: Sensitivity of Landscape Character

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

Magnitude of Change on Landscape Character

24. Professional judgement using Table 8, and also considering geographic extent and the duration and reversibility of the effect, has been used to determine the magnitude change on landscape character

Table 8: Criteria for magnitude of change for landscape character

Negligible	No notable introduction of new elements into the landscape or change to the scale, landform, land cover or pattern of landscape
Low	Introduction of minor new elements into the landscape or some minor change to the scale, landform, land cover or pattern of landscape
Medium	Introduction of some notable elements into the landscape or some notable change to the scale, landform, land cover or pattern of landscape
High	Introduction of major elements into the landscape or some major change to the scale, landform, land cover or pattern of landscape

Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

25. Sensitivity is determined by a combination of the value that is attached to a view and the susceptibility of the receptor to changes in that view that would arise as a result of the Proposed Development as outlined in pages 113-114 of GLVIA3. Both value and susceptibility are assessed as high, medium or low.

26. GLVIA3 says a judgement should be made as to the value of a particular view being experienced. In making a professional judgement as to the value attached to a view, the following criteria have helped guide the process. Not all the criteria have to apply to a particular view and the criteria are not in a hierarchy.

Table 9: Criteria for judging levels of visual value

Low	• Views from within, across or towards undesignated landscapes and/or features of either importance to the site only or of no wider importance • View has little aesthetic merit e.g. has numerous visual detractors, is badly degraded etc. • View makes a limited contribution to the understanding of the function or wider pattern of the landscape • Views with no known social, cultural or historic associations • Views from locations that are not necessarily destination points or that are infrequently visited
Medium	• Views from within, across or towards undesignated landscapes and/or features of local importance • View with some limited aesthetic appeal • View makes a reasonable contribution to the understanding of the function or wider pattern of the landscape • Views with some known local social, cultural or historic associations • Views from locations that are locally popular destination points or that are frequently visited by locals but not necessarily by visitors from further afield

High	• Views from within, across or towards designated landscapes and/or features of importance at district level and above • View with great aesthetic appeal • View makes an important contribution to the understanding of the function or wider pattern of the landscape • Views with some known national or international social, cultural or historic associations especially to art and literature • Views from locations that are popular regional, national or international destination points or that are frequently visited by large numbers of visitors from further afield
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Susceptibility of Visual Receptors

27. GLIVA3 advises (on page 113) that susceptibility of a particular visual receptor (observer) to change in a view is mainly a function of the nature of the activity or occupation of the person or people experiencing a view at a particular location and the extent to which their interest or attention is drawn to the view.

28. In general, it is considered that occupiers of residential properties and people using public rights of way (where enjoyment is primarily drawn from the view) have a high susceptibility to change. Users of roads, railways and open space or engaged in an activity where an appreciation of the view forms a part of the experience are considered to be of medium susceptibility. People engaged in formal sport or occupiers of commercial premises or in areas of employment, where the view has limited importance to the activity being undertaken, are considered to be of low susceptibility to change.

Table 10: Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

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

Magnitude of Change on Visual Amenity

29. Professional judgement has been used to determine the magnitude change on landscape character based upon the criteria outline in Table 11 but also considering the size and scale of change (including the loss or addition of features, changes in visual composition etc.) , the geographic influence of the change (orientation and angle of view in relation to the visual receptor, distance of the viewpoint from the main development, extent of area over which change would occur etc.) and, the duration and potential reversibility of any change (short term 0-5 years, medium term 5-15 years, long term 20 years +, temporary, permanent, intermittent, continuous and whether the views will be full, partial or glimpsed).

30. It is possible for the proposed development to bring about 'no change' to a particular view. There would correspondingly be 'no effect'.

Table 11: Criteria for magnitude of change for visual receptors

Negligible	No notable change in the view
Low	Some change in the view that is not prominent / few visual receptors affected
Medium	Some change in the view that is clearly visible and forms an important but not defining element in the view

High	Major change in the view that has a defining influence on the overall view / many visual receptors affected
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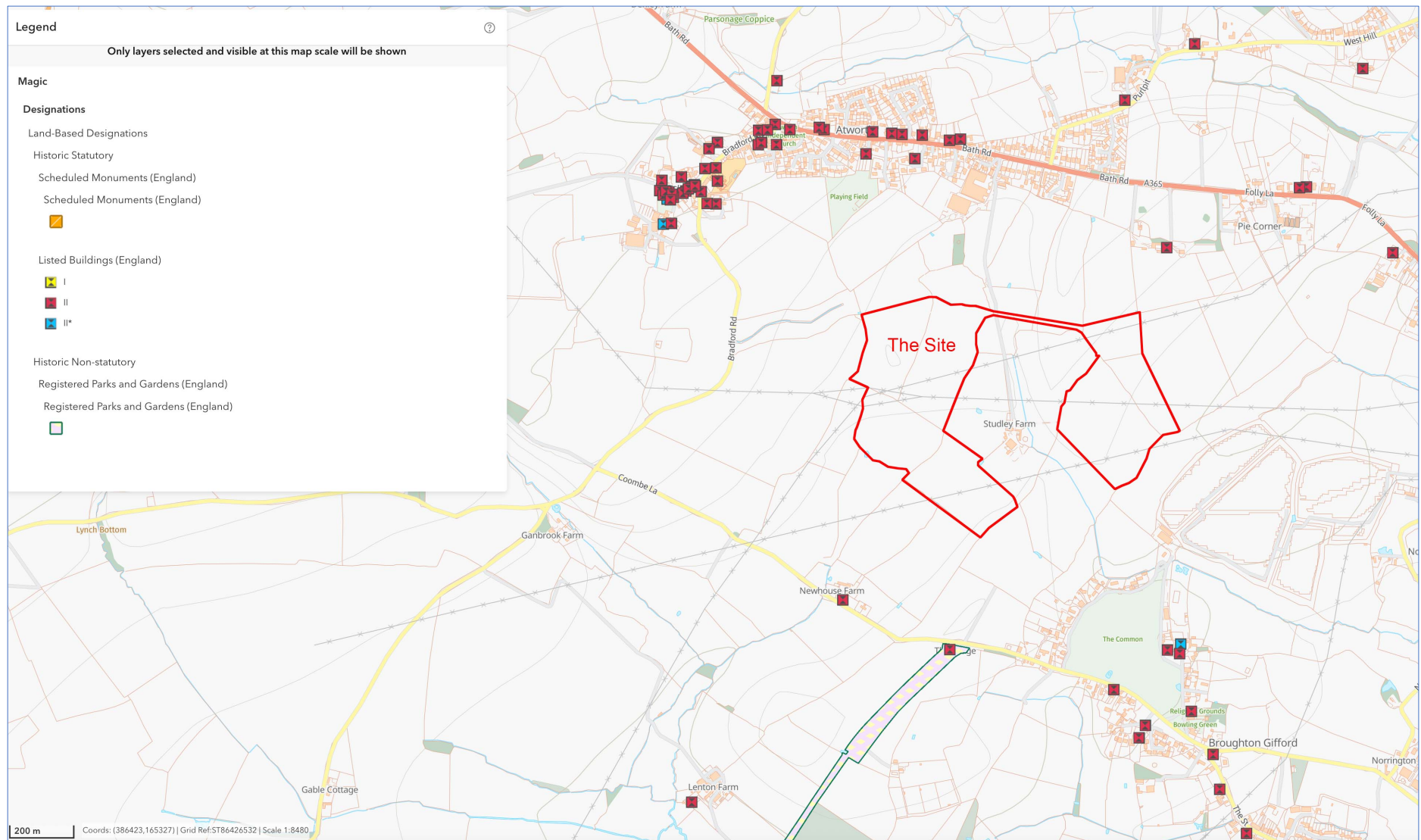
Scale of Effects

31. The scale of the landscape and visual effects is determined by cross referencing the sensitivity of the landscape feature, landscape character or view with the magnitude of change. The scale of effects is described as major, moderate, minor or negligible.

Table 12: Scale of effect thresholds for landscape character, landscape elements/features and visual receptors

		Magnitude of Change			
Sensitivity		High	Medium	Low	Negligible
	High	Major	Major	Moderate	Minor
	Medium	Major	Moderate	Minor	Negligible
	Low	Moderate	Minor	Negligible	Negligible

Appendix 3 – Designations



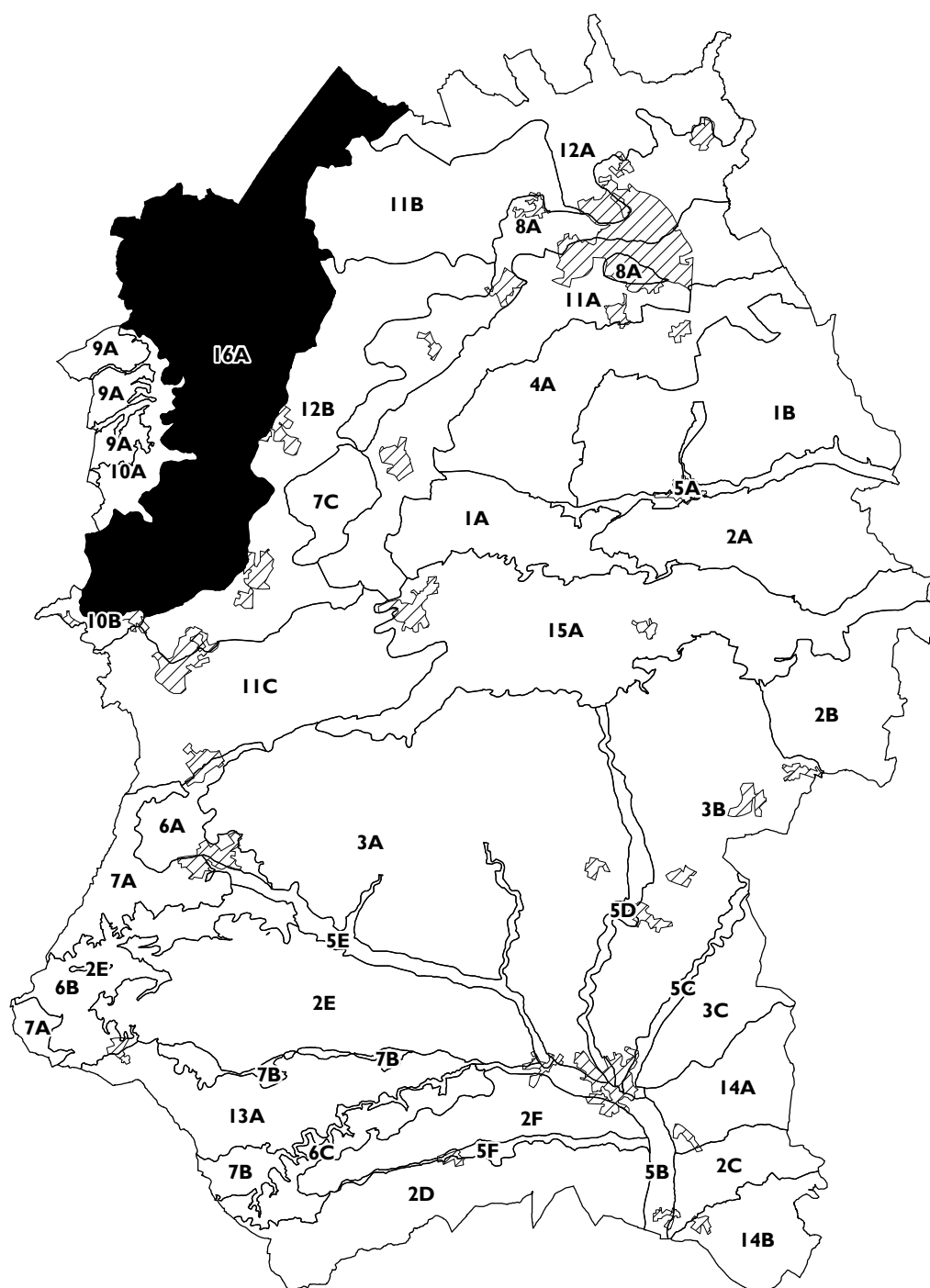
Designations – Extract from Natural England MAGIC website with site boundary added

Appendix 4 – 16A Malmsbury – Corsham Limestone Lowland LCA

LANDSCAPE TYPE 16: LIMESTONE LOWLAND



I6: LIMESTONE LOWLAND



LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

I6A Malmesbury-Corsham Limestone Lowland



Urban Area

TYPE 16: LIMESTONE LOWLAND

DESCRIPTION

Location and Boundaries

The *Limestone Lowland* Landscape Type covers a large swathe of northwest Wiltshire. The area extends from Bradford-on-Avon in the south to the Kemble Airfield in the far north. The county border constrains the area to the north and west. The boundary to the east is a less distinct transition, occurring with the change in underlying geology from limestone to clay. There is only one character area within the *Limestone Lowland* Landscape Type, 16A: *Malmesbury-Corsham Limestone Lowlands*.

The western edge of the *Limestone Lowlands* Landscape Type forms part of the Cotswolds AONB.

Key Characteristics

- Gently undulating lowland farmland over underlying geology of predominantly mudstone and limestone with some pockets of clay.
- A peaceful and rural landscape with subtle variations in character relating to the varied geology, topography and water courses.
- Mix of permanent pasture and arable farmland.
- Strong network of hedgerows with hedgerow trees.
- Dry stone walls field boundaries in some areas and around settlements.
- Field pattern predominantly large geometric field typical of eighteenth and nineteenth century enclosure with small scale irregular fields of medieval pattern close to close to settlement.
- More open areas of higher ground to the west offer panoramic views over the type, elsewhere occasional woodland blocks, copses and frequent hedgerow trees give a greater sense of enclosure, with intermittent views.
- Numerous rivers forming shallow valleys, with the watercourses sometimes lined with willows.
- Settlements in the form of historic market towns, villages and scattered farmsteads distributed throughout the type linked by network of rural roads.
- Traditional buildings of local limestone buildings an outstanding feature.
- Presence of historic parkland and estates marked by stone estate walls, grand entrances and parkland trees and avenues.

Physical Influences

The underlying geology of the *Limestone Lowland Landscape Type* is from the Great Oolite Groups, formed in the Mid Jurassic Period. A parallel band of Forest Marble mudstone and Cornbrash limestone underlie most of the area. The boundary between these formations is irregular and intermittent occurrences of Forest Marble limestone and Kellaways clay are also apparent, to the west and east respectively. This fragmentation in underlying geology gives rise to the subtle variations in land cover and character over the type in a gradual transition from the west which is dominated by limestone to the eastern borders of Kellaways clay.

There are two SSSIs designated for their geological interest. Corsham Railway Cutting exposes an area of Forest Marble Mudstone revealing important coral 'reef knolls' of palaeontological interest and inter-reef oolitic sediment. Stanton St Quintin Quarry SSSI provides one of the country's few complete exposures of cornbrash, yielded ammonites of biostratigraphic importance.

The landform undulates, rising from around 60m to 130m AOD with an overall slope from higher ground in the west to the lower clay land to the east. Some flatter areas occur on higher ground and localised valleys associated with the numerous rivers are also evident throughout.

Biodiversity

The landscape as a whole is a valuable habitat for bats, in particular Box Hill Mine (SSSI and part of the Bradford on Avon SAC). There are several areas of ecological interest in the *Limestone Lowland Landscape Type* including three nationally important SSSIs (one of which is also a SAC) and numerous Country Wildlife Sites, often where ancient woodland or pockets of chalk grassland are present. There is also a strong network of hedgerows and frequent hedgerow and standard trees including veteran oaks, ash and willow along water courses.

Inwood SSSI is an area calcareous ash-wych elm and dry maple woodland with an extremely rich ground flora including species of plant that are nationally rare. The area also includes an area of unimproved neutral hay meadow. Harries Ground SSSI at Rodbourne is also an area of species rich neutral lowland hay meadow on an area of clay in the Avon vale.

Box Hill Mine is designated as a SSSI and as a SAC. It comprises a network of man-made tunnels which is used by bats for hibernation, mating and as a staging post prior to dispersal. Box mine seasonally supports up to 10% of the total British population of greater horseshoe bats.

County Wildlife Sites include: Stanton Park, an ancient woodland on the site of a Roman villa with a very rich ground flora including wood millet, wood spurge and woodruff in the semi-natural areas; Hazelton Wood, a small ancient semi-natural woodland site which, although is now mixed plantation, retains much of the understorey and ground flora of interest including bath asparagus; and Hebden Leaze House Meadows, species-rich meadows of limestone grassland adjacent to Luckington Brook - upright brome is abundant and also present are burnet saxifrage, cowslip and dwarf thistle.

Historic environment

Prehistoric sites include two chambered long mounds near Luckington plus a Neolithic chambered long barrow at Lanhill and a Bronze Age bowl barrow at Barrow Farm. The area became more heavily settled in the Roman period with Easton Grey, to the north of the area, dating from the first century A.D. There are also a number of Roman roads in the area.

The Domesday Book shows that a large part of the *Limestone Lowlands* Landscape Type was at one time owned by the Bishop of Glastonbury. The boundaries of royal forests lying to the west of Chippenham were declared in 1228, although these were largely felled and enclosed in the 17th century. Evidence of small and irregular medieval field patterns are still apparent, particularly close to settlement, although most of the fields are larger and more regular indicating more recent enclosure.

There are a number of imposing houses set in historic parkland, such as Luckington Court, notable for its tree collection, and Corsham Court where Lancelot 'Capability' Brown and Humphrey Repton worked on the grounds.

Settlement and built character

Settlement in the *Limestone Lowland* Landscape Type is in the form of scattered villages and farmsteads, connected by a network of rural roads, and constructed almost universally of limestone to the west of the area with occasional use of brick on the eastern edges of the type. Villages are peaceful and rural, often centred around a village green, pond or area of common land. Buildings are traditional in style, with many dating from the 17th and 18th centuries. Large stately homes and manor houses also occur throughout the landscape, often with large parkland estates. Dry stone walls occur more frequently around and close to villages in western areas but are less common as field boundaries elsewhere. This distinctive pattern and style of settlement within the *Limestone Lowland* Landscape Type is a key element of its character.

Larger stone settlements are Corsham and the ancient market town of Malmesbury. Chippenham however, is the largest settlement in the area, expanding considerably since the 1950s. More recent housing development is visible from the A350, which defines the western edge of the town and acts as a main north/south route through the area.

Other developments that have an impact on the landscape include two air fields, on areas of higher and flatter ground Kemble and Hullavington. Most of the roads in the type are modest rural roads however the M4 motorway passes through from east to west with an increased sense of movement and localised noise.

CHARACTER AREAS

16A: Malmesbury-Corsham Limestone Lowlands

Malmesbury-Corsham Limestone Lowlands is the only area within of the *Limestone Lowlands* Landscape Type. It covers a large area of northwest Wiltshire occurring between areas of limestone valleys and higher limestone wold to the west (outside the county) and clay to the east.

The area is predominantly rolling mixed pastoral and arable farmland, in a pattern of large fields bounded by hedgerows with hedgerow trees. The hedgerows vary in condition with some gappy and low flailed hedges in evidence for example around Grittleton.

Changes in the underlying geology and land use cause subtle localised variations throughout the area within an overall graduation from higher ground founded on limestone to the west to lower ground on clay to the east. On the higher and steeper ground of the Forest Marble Limestone to the west, and particularly to the south of Corsham, hedgerows are less prominent with dry stone walls dividing the fields. With less visual obstruction, there are panoramic and distant views the farmland as it falls away gently to the east. There are also some more open areas around Biddestone and to the north of the area. Here a comparative scarcity of tree cover creates a greater sense of exposure. Shallow valleys along the numerous springs and brooks in the area have a more intimate and enclosed feeling. The most prominent of these is along the River Avon where the locally steep valley sides give a sense of containment, and the rich vegetation including willows line the river bank. There are also areas of estate and historic parkland, often associated with large houses. Areas of open pastoral land with numerous standard trees can be found throughout the area, some contain more designed element such as the large avenue near Monkton Farleigh.

A key element in the area is the distinctive limestone villages and towns, connected by a network of winding rural lanes and straight Roman roads. Some brick built dwellings and farmhouses appear to the east of the area reflecting the changing geology. Traditional buildings are frequently centred around village greens and ponds or form a more linear settlement forming a main street along one of the rural roads.

EVALUATION

Positive landscape features of significance

- Peaceful rural landscape.
- Panoramic views from higher ground.
- Strong network of hedgerows, hedgerow trees and occasional woodland copses.
- Dry stone walls.
- Remaining areas with medieval field pattern.
- Historic parklands.
- Remaining areas of ancient woodland, chalk grassland and other areas of ecological diversity.
- Distinctive traditional limestone villages.
- Network of rural road.

Forces for change

- Continued amalgamation and enlargement of fields.
- Some hedgerow field boundaries have been intensively flailed.
- Some dry stone wall field boundaries are becoming overgrown.
- Increasing traffic on narrow rural lane network leading to urbanisation through kerbing, additional lighting and signage.
- Pressure for new development along rural lanes and around existing settlements.

Condition

The condition of the *Limestone Lowland* Landscape type is generally **good** with intact hedgerows, traditional villages of vernacular stone dwellings, village greens and stone walls. In some sections of the areas there are elements in poorer condition such as gappy and flailed hedgerows, overgrown stone walls and encroaching horse pasture close to some of the larger settlement.

Strength of character

The *Limestone Lowland* Landscape Type is united by the strong character of its traditional stone built settlements however, other elements such as land use, topography and field boundaries vary subtly across the type making it less distinctive and cohesive and therefore the strength of character overall is judged as **moderate**.

Inherent landscape sensitivities

- The peaceful rural nature of the area.
- Areas of ecological importance including ancient woodland and chalk grassland.
- The setting, containment and scale of the limestone villages.
- The remaining medieval field patterns and dry stone walls around and close to settlement.
- Historic parkland.

Strategy

The strategy for the *Limestone Lowland* Landscape Type is to **conserve** those elements intrinsic to the type's character or important in their own right, such as the distinctive stone villages, the areas of ecological importance and the historic parkland and to **strengthen** locally degraded elements such as the flailed hedgerows and overgrown stone walls.

Broad Management Objectives

- Conserve the network of hedgerows, hedgerow trees and woodland copses and take opportunities for new planting where this will strengthen local character (for instance

avoiding planting that will affect the open views in the high ground at the west of the area).

- Encourage conservation and rebuilding of dry stone wall field boundaries, particularly close to settlement.
- Conserve the remaining areas of ecological interest such as those with statutory designations, areas of ancient woodland, veteran hedgerow trees and chalk grassland.
- Maintain the subtle variations that occur throughout the landscape, encouraging local distinctiveness for instance in the variation in field boundaries from hedgerows to stone walls.
- Encourage management and restoration of the historic parkland landscapes that are characteristic of the area.
- Retain the distinctive character of the villages; ensuring any change respects the traditional stone built character and vernacular form.
- Resist urbanisation of the country lanes through addition of road markings and concrete kerbs or lamp posts or excessive signage that detracts from the rural character of the area.

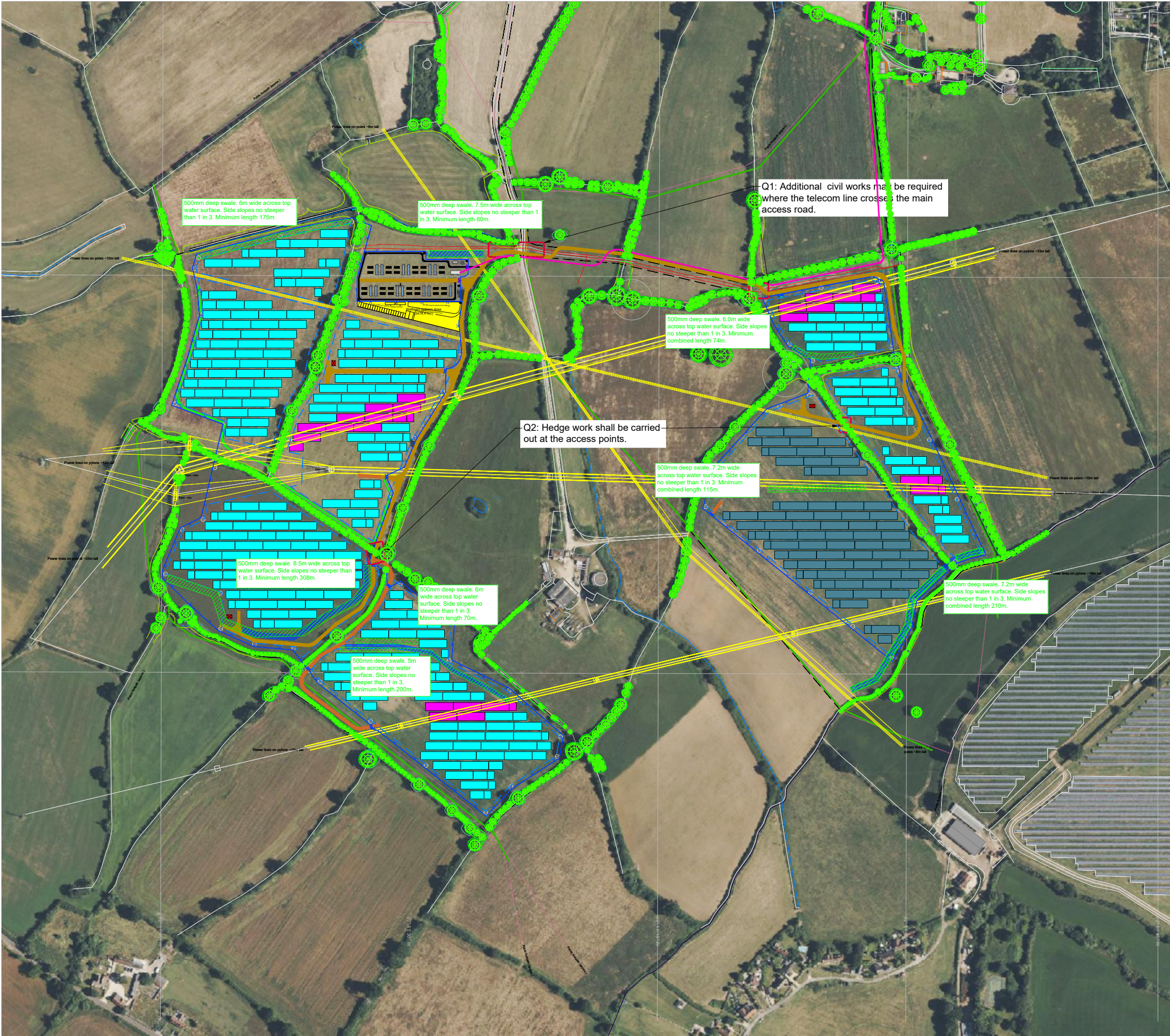
LANDSCAPE CHARACTER CONTEXT

The character of the Wiltshire landscape has already been investigated in a number of studies as detailed above in Appendices 1 and 2.

The *Limestone Lowland* landscape type is largely within the area covered by the North Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment (2004). The type broadly covers the same area as the Limestone Lowland Farmland Landscape Type from the North Wiltshire study, and includes areas of the following North Wiltshire character areas: Sherston Dipslope Lowland, Minety and Malmesbury Rolling Lowland, Hullavington Rolling Lowland, Corsham Rolling Lowland and Upper Avon Valley.

The western part of the type is also covered in the Landscape Character Assessment and Guidelines for Cotswolds AONB (2004). Areas of the Dip Slope Lowland and Cornbrash Lowlands Landscape Types are encompassed in the *Limestone Lowland*.

Appendix 5 – Overall Site Layout



MELKSHAM

OVERALL SITE LAYOUT

FIXED TILT 10°

COORDINATES 51.383583° N -02.189528° E

COUNTRY - UK
REGION / PROVINCE - ATWORTH
COUNTY - WILTSHIRE

KEY

- MV STATION
- PLANT BOUNDARY
- FENCE / GATE
- LAYDOWN AREA
- PEDESTRIAN GATE
- CCTV
- ACCESS ROAD
- MAINTENANCE ACCESS
- MODULE STRUCTURE(615Wp)
- MODULE STRUCTURE(620Wp)
- OVER HEAD LINE
- 33KV UNDERGROUND UTILITY
- HEDGES
- SWALE
- FOOT PATH
- PEDESTRIAN ACCESS
- VEHICLE ACCESS TO PYLON
- USED AREA
- BALLAST STRICTURE
- EXPORT CABLE

PROJECT DATA

PLOT AREA - 31.59 ha
USED AREA - 18.74 ha
FENCED AREA - 23.89 ha
FENCE LENGTH / GATES - 3661 m / 11

PV PARAMETERS

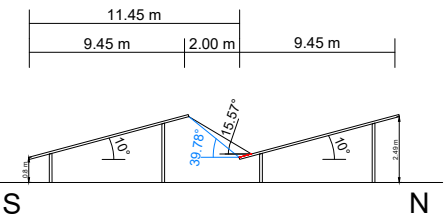
NUMBER OF STRUCTURES (4 X 7) - 58
NUMBER OF STRUCTURES (4 X 14) - 62
NUMBER OF STRUCTURES (4 X 28) - 290
NUMBER/ TYPE/ POWER MODULES- 7504/ JAM66D45LB/ 620Wp
NUMBER/ TYPE/ POWER MODULES- 30072/ JAM66D45LB/ 615Wp
INVERTER / STANDS - 52 x SUNGROW SG350HX
MV STATION - 3 x SPS-7040

PLANT SYSTEM RATING- 23.146760 MWp-DC

CONSTRUCTION AND PARAMETER

CONSTRUCTION SERIES - FIXED TILT 10°, 4 MODULES PORTRAIT
CONNECTION - 28 / STRING
SYSTEM ROTATION - NONE
SHADING - 25.76 %
SUN ANGLE / SHADOW ANGLE - 15.57° / 39.78°

SKETCH
CONSTRUCTION
SERIES



☒ PRELIMINARY ☐ EXECUTION ☐ AS BUILT

REV	CHANGES IN THE DESIGN	NAME	DATE	CHECKED	DATE
R07	UPDATED LAYOUT(ADD 33KV UTILITY LINE)	RV	02.12.24	MV	02.12.24
R06	UPDATED LAYOUT(ROAD & EXPORT CABLE)	RV	26.11.24	MV	26.11.24
R05	UPDATED LAYOUT	RV	14.11.24	MV	14.11.24
R04	UPDATED MODULE BIN CLASS	RV	07.11.24	MV	07.11.24

SITE LAYOUT
SCALE 1:4500 A 3

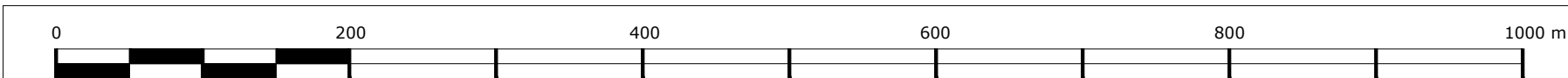


GB-MEL01&CLD104_R07_OVERALL SITE LAYOUT

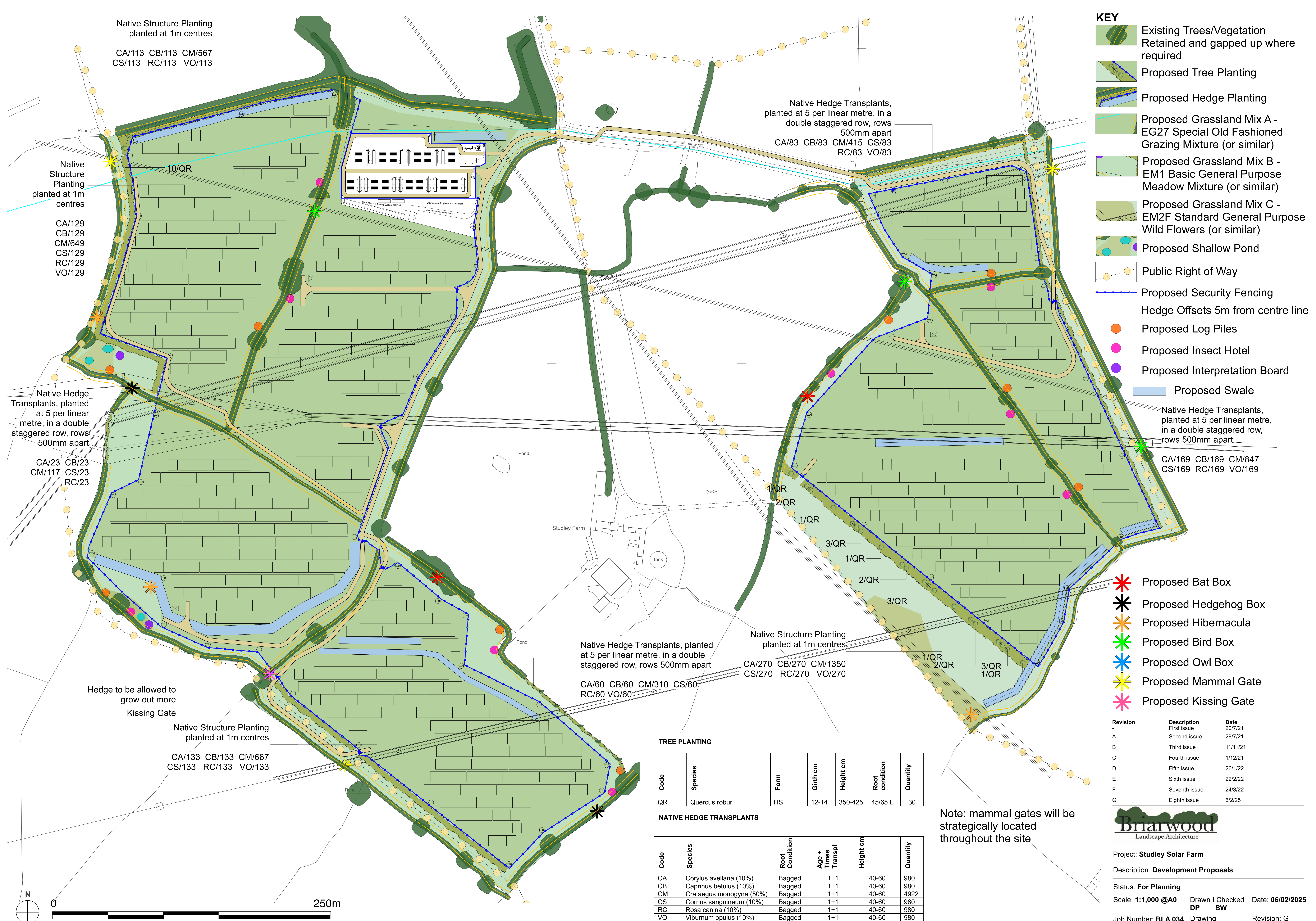
DATE, SIGNATURE
Frederick Sterling
BELECTRIC

BELECTRIC GMBH
WADENBRUNNER STR. 10
97509 KOLITZHEIM
TEL. +49 (0)9385 5489 000
FAX. +49 (0)9385 5489 040

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Appendix 6 – Development Proposals – Revision G



Appendix 7 – Original Representative Views



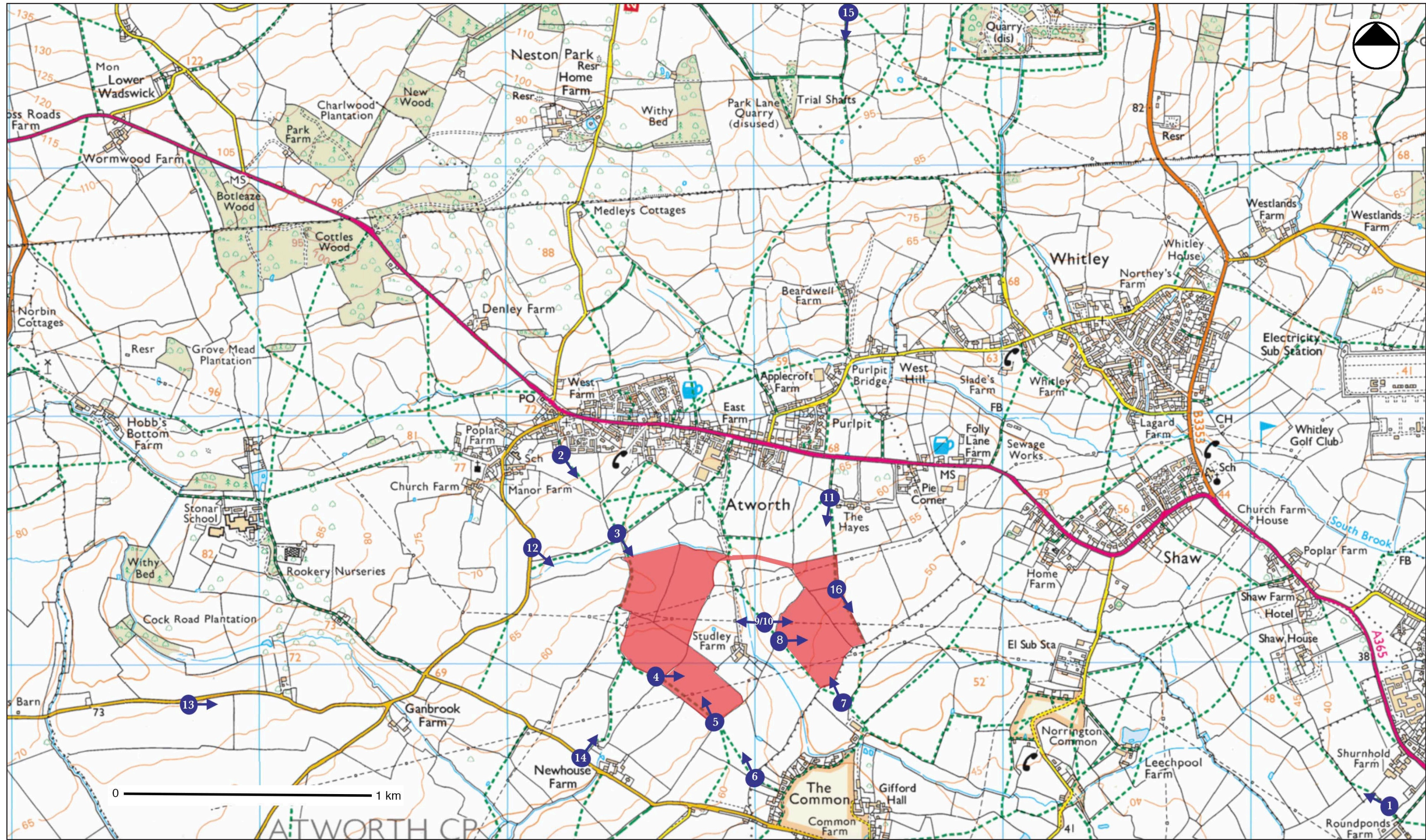
Viewpoint 1 - View from PROW MELW105 looking west

Panoramic Image - 820mm width x 250mm height when printed at A1

Approximate distance to site boundary: 2.3 km

Location: 51 deg.22'42.04"N - 2 deg.09'04.22"W

Date of photography - 27th March 2021





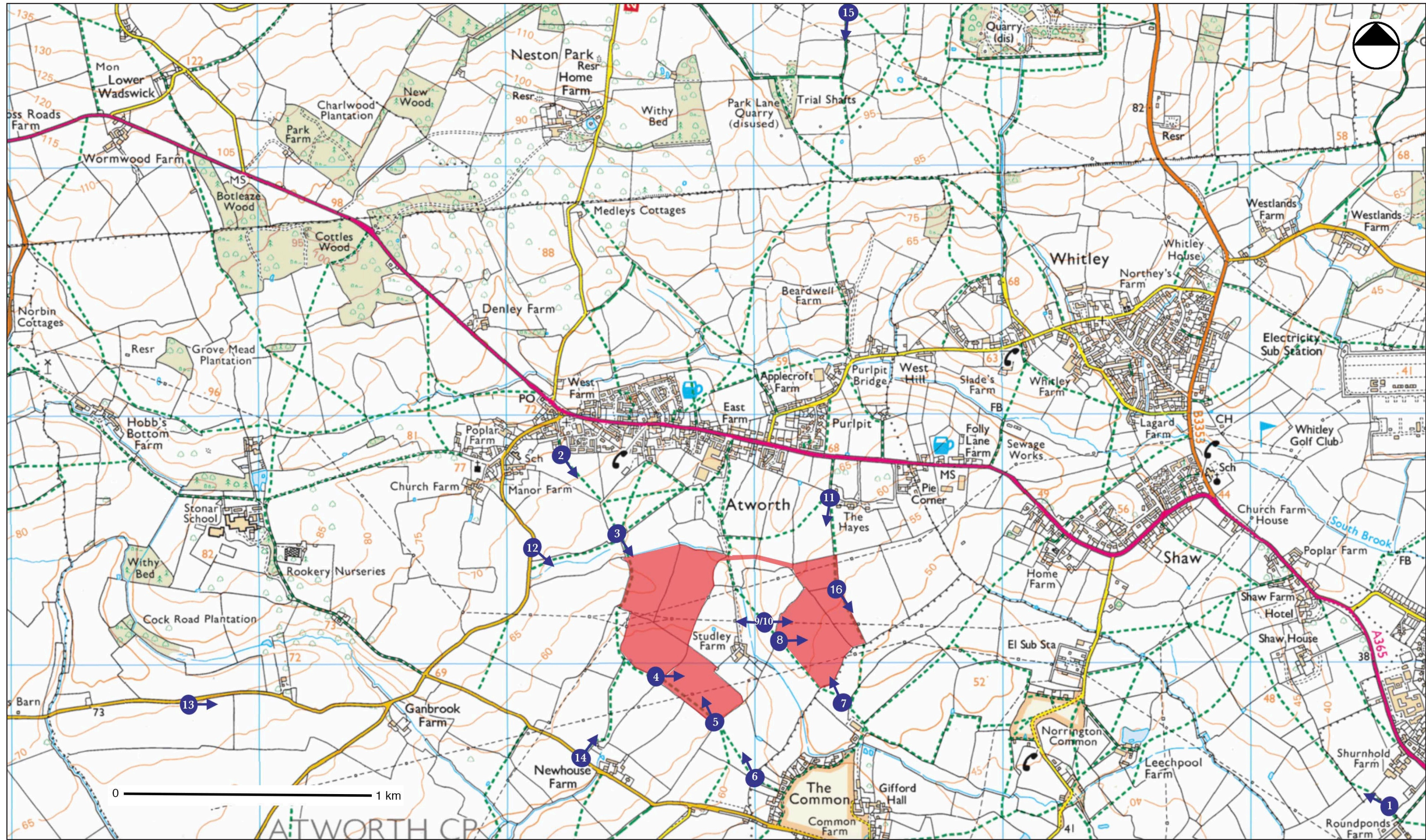
Viewpoint 2 - View from PROW ATW013 on the southern edge of Atworth looking south-east

Panoramic Image - 820mm width x 250mm height when printed at A1

Approximate distance to site boundary: 0.5 km

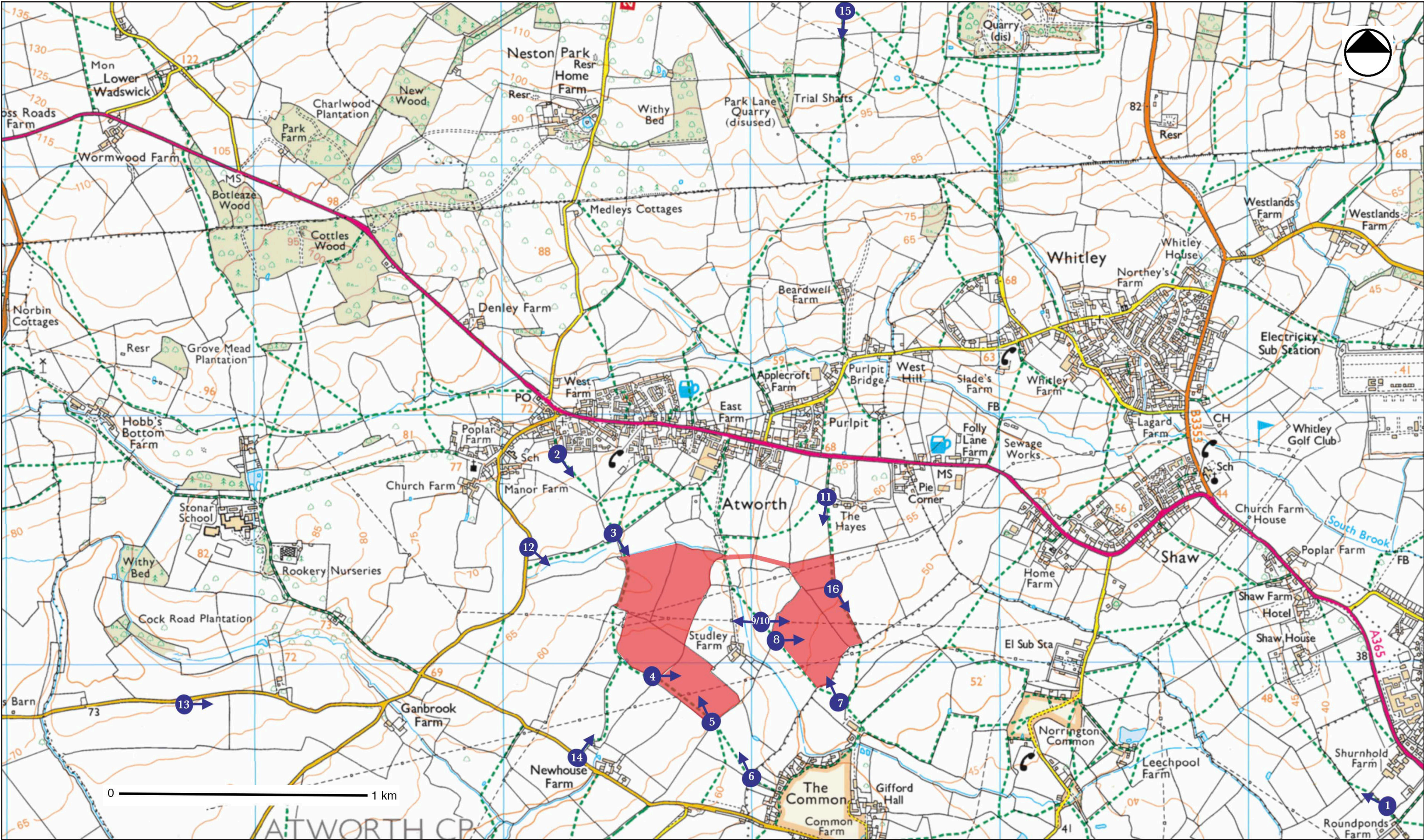
Location: 51 deg.23'27.46"N - 2 deg. 11'58.33"W

Date of photography - 27th March 2021





Viewpoint 3 - View from PROW ATW013 looking south



Panoramic Image - 820mm width x 250mm height when printed at A1

Approximate distance to site boundary: 0.3 km

Location: 51 deg.23'21.61"N - 2 deg. 11'49.44"W

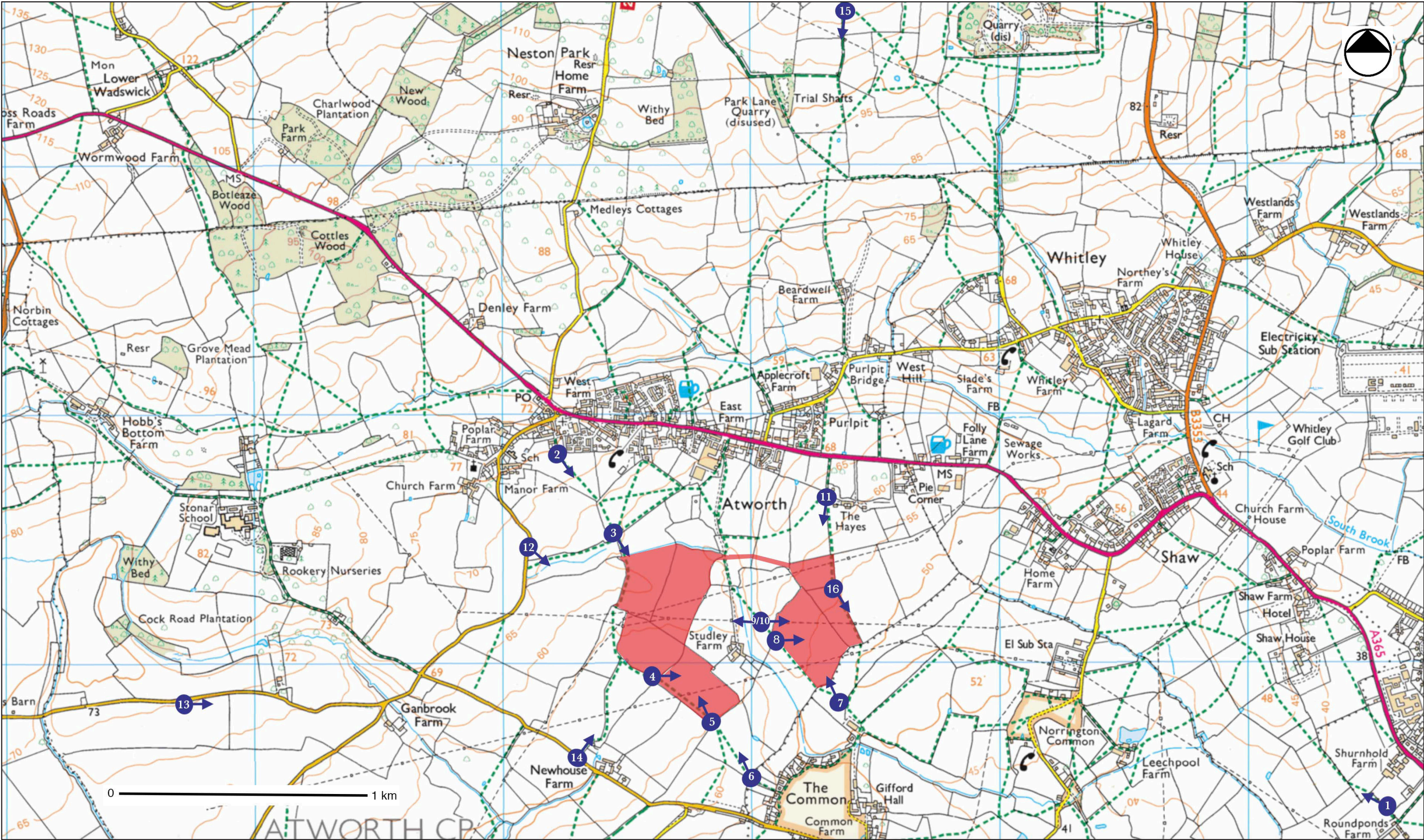
Date of photography - 27th March 2021





Viewpoint 4 - View from PROW ATW021 looking north

Panoramic Image - 820mm width x 250mm height when printed at A1



Approximate distance to site boundary: next to site

Location: 51 deg.22'58.82"N - 2 deg. 11'37.00"W

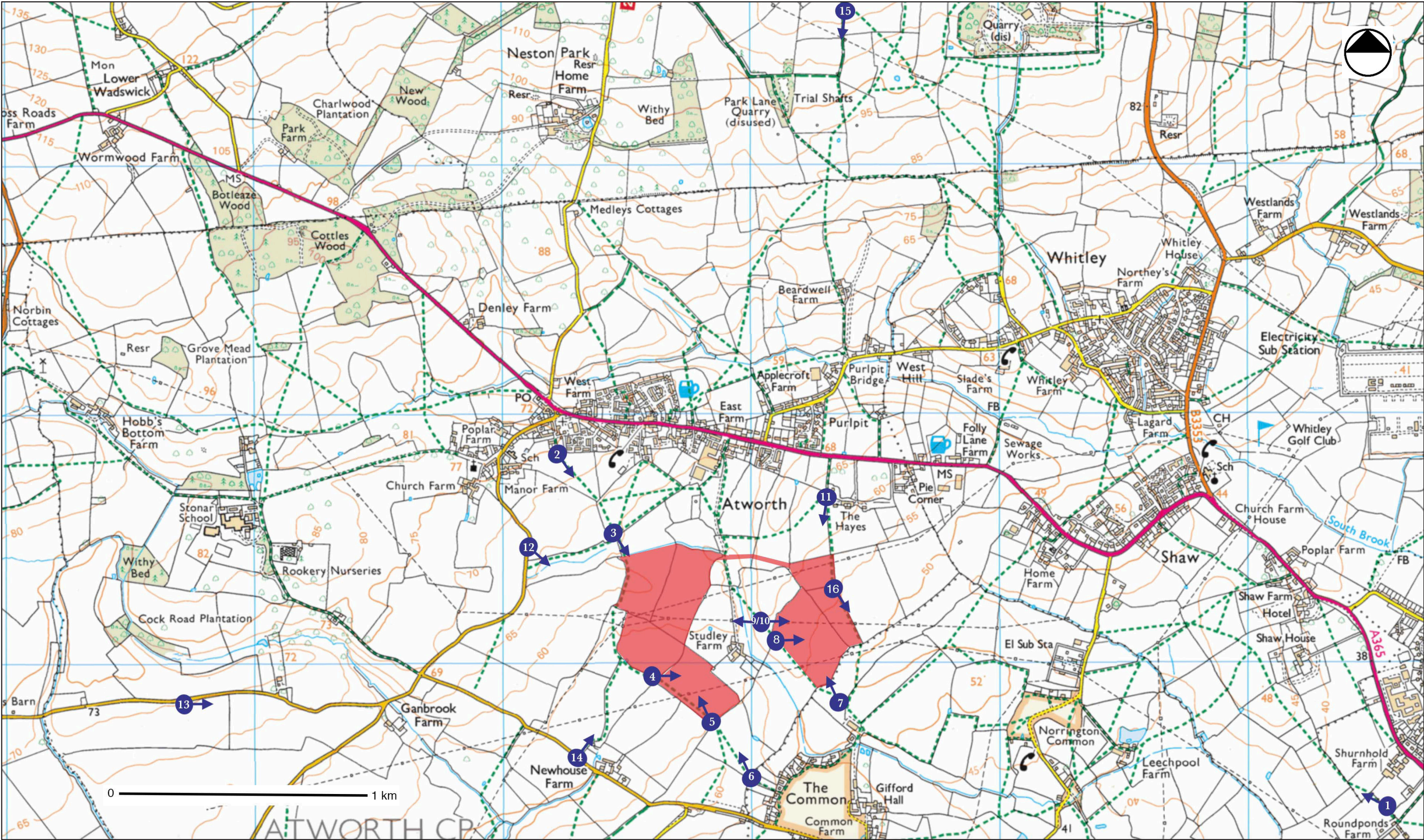
Date of photography - 27th March 2021





Viewpoint 5 - View from PROW ATW021 within field 4 looking north-west

Panoramic Image - 820mm width x 250mm height when printed at A1



Approximate distance to site boundary: On site
Location: 51 deg.22'52.35"N - 2 deg. 11'25.53"W
Date of photography - 27th March 2021





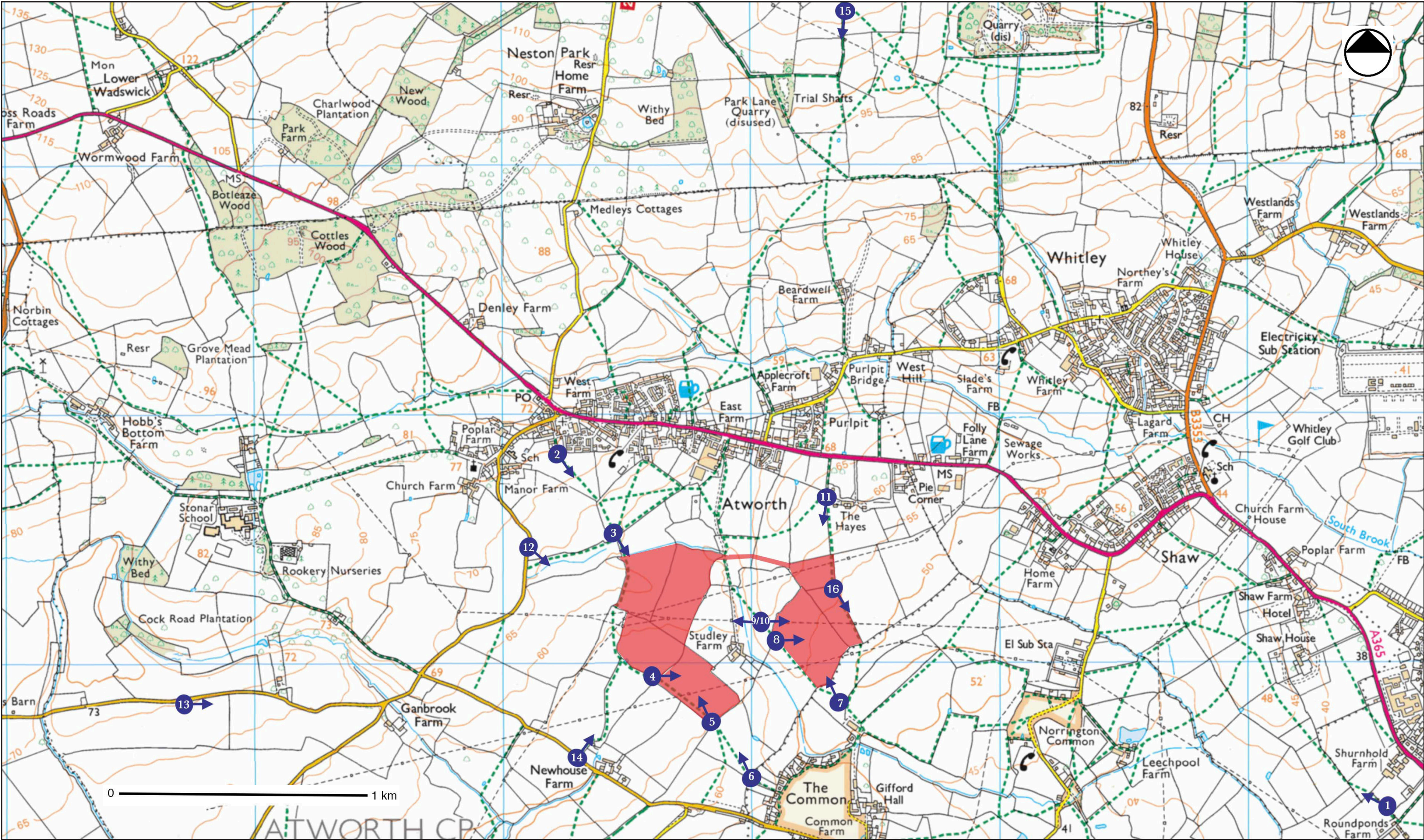
Viewpoint 6 - View from PROW ATW022 looking north-west

Panoramic Image - 820mm width x 250mm height when printed at A1

Approximate distance to site boundary: 0.3 km

Location: 51 deg.22'46.11"N - 2 deg. 11'18.25"W

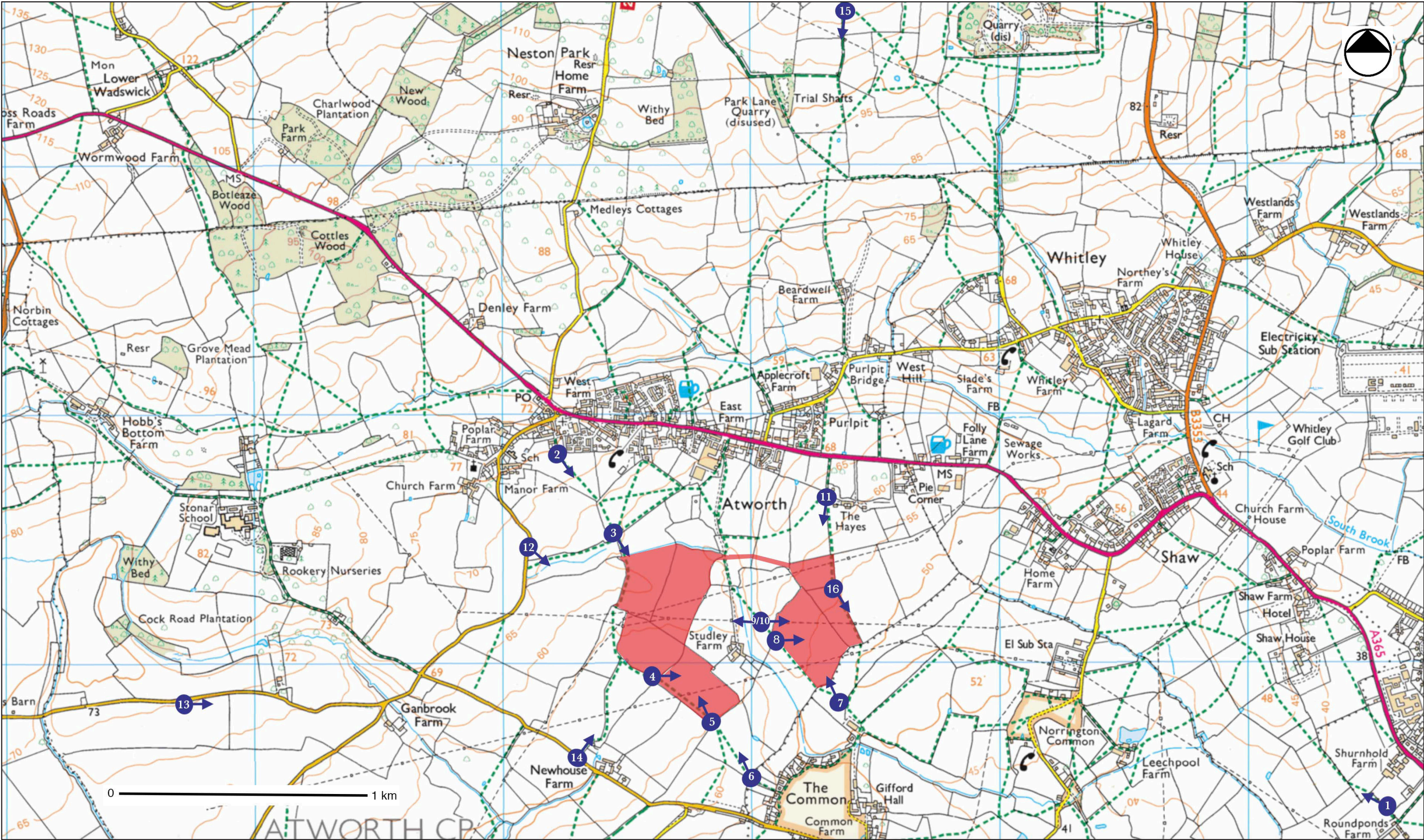
Date of photography - 27th March 2021





Viewpoint 7 - View from PROW BGIF2 looking north-west

Panoramic Image - 820mm width x 250mm height when printed at A1



Approximate distance to site boundary: 0.1 km

Location: 51 deg.22'56.96"N - 2 deg. 10'57.47"W

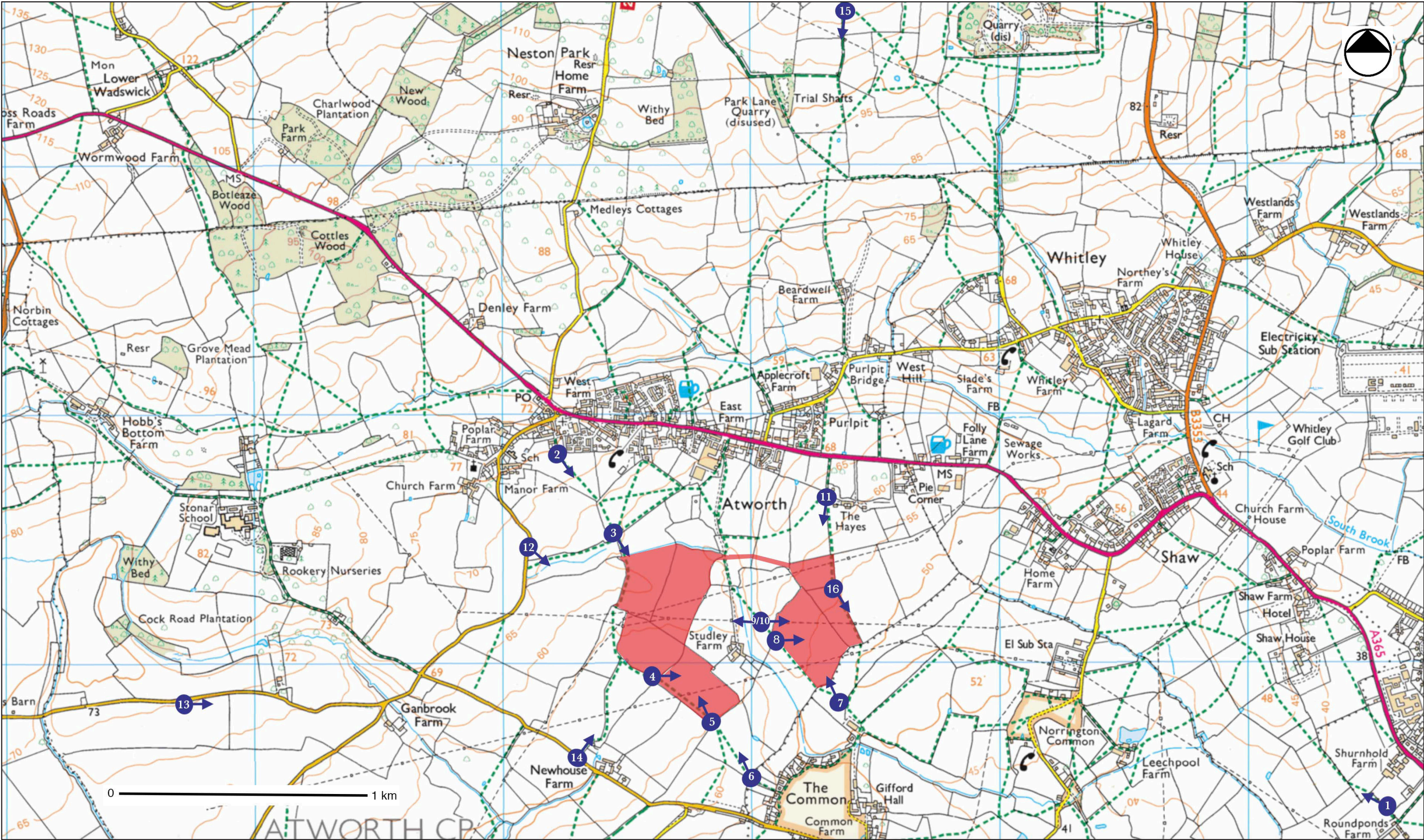
Date of photography - 27th March 2021





Viewpoint 8 - View from PROW ATW018 looking east

Panoramic Image - 820mm width x 250mm height when printed at A1



Approximate distance to site boundary: On site

Location: 51 deg.23'05.35"N - 2 deg. 11'13.02"W

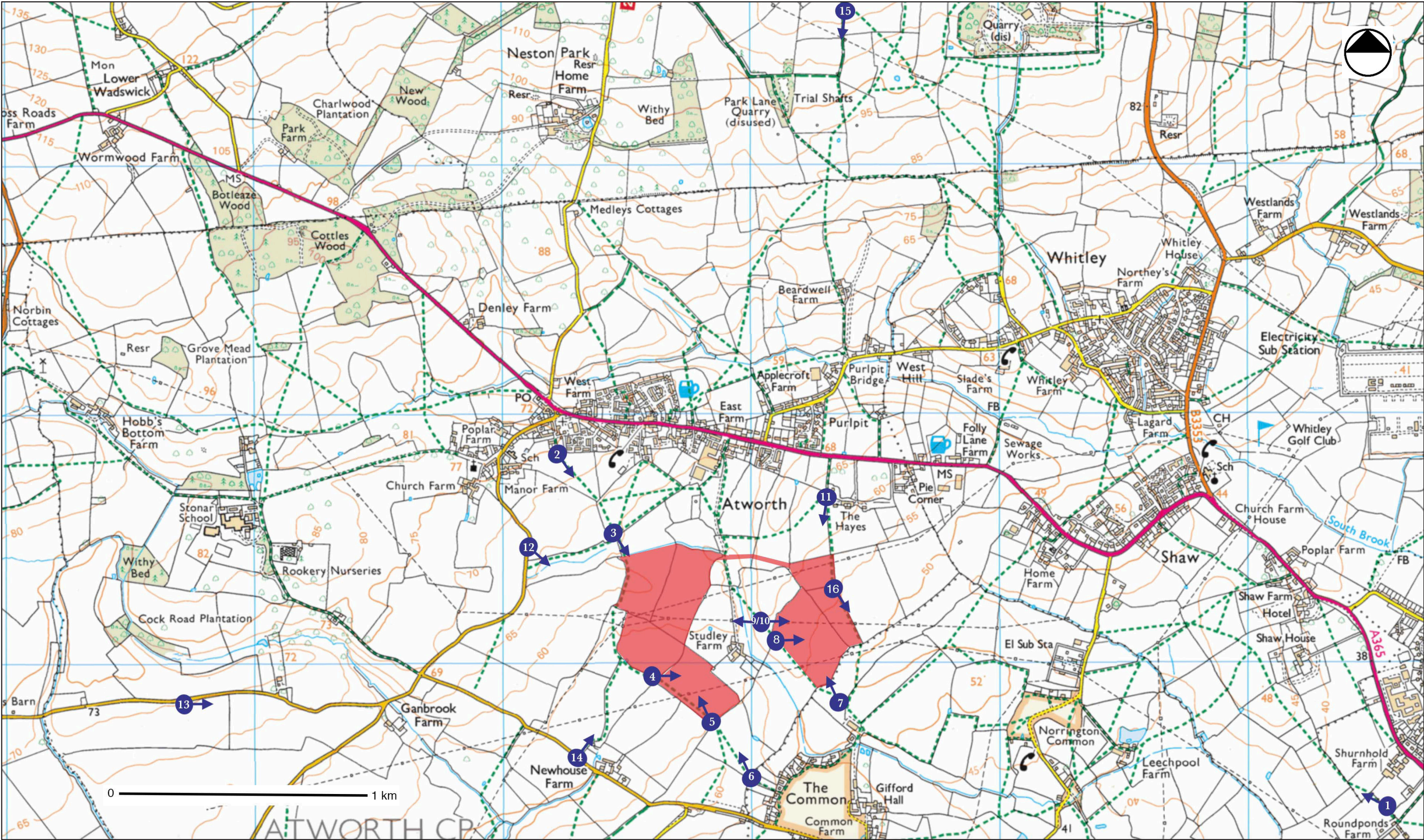
Date of photography - 27th March 2021





Viewpoint 9 - View from PROW ATW018 looking east

Panoramic Image - 820mm width x 250mm height when printed at A1



Approximate distance to site boundary: 0.1 km

Location: 51 deg.23'06.20"N - 2 deg. 11'15.60"W

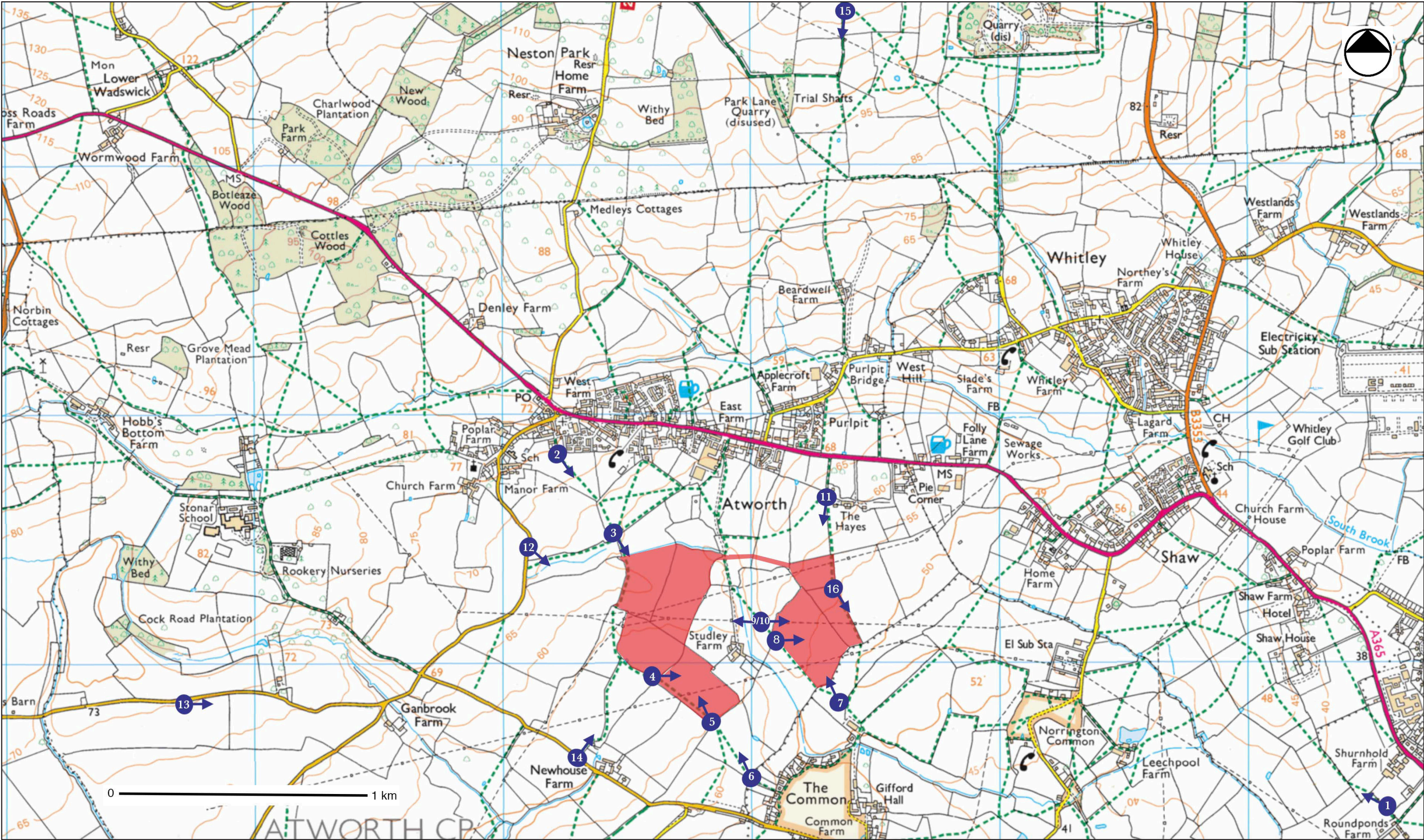
Date of photography - 27th March 2021





Viewpoint 10 - View from PROW ATW018 looking west

Panoramic Image - 820mm width x 250mm height when printed at A1



Approximate distance to site boundary: 0.1 km

Location: 51 deg.23'06.20"N - 2 deg. 11'15.60"W

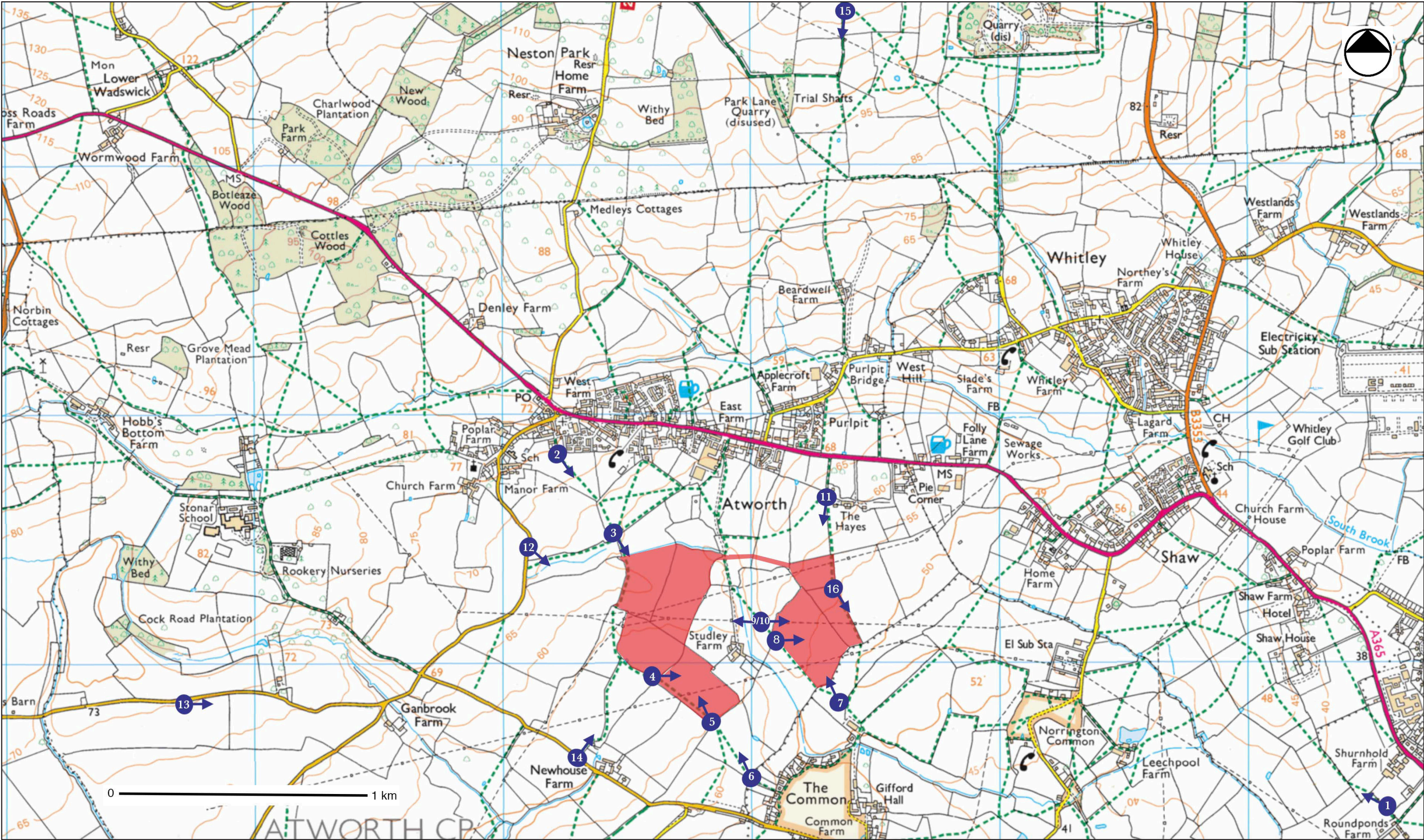
Date of photography - 27th March 2021





Viewpoint 11 - View from PROW ATW020 looking south

Panoramic Image - 820mm width x 250mm height when printed at A1



Approximate distance to site boundary: 0.2 km

Location: 51 deg.23'23.00"N - 2 deg. 11'01.79"W

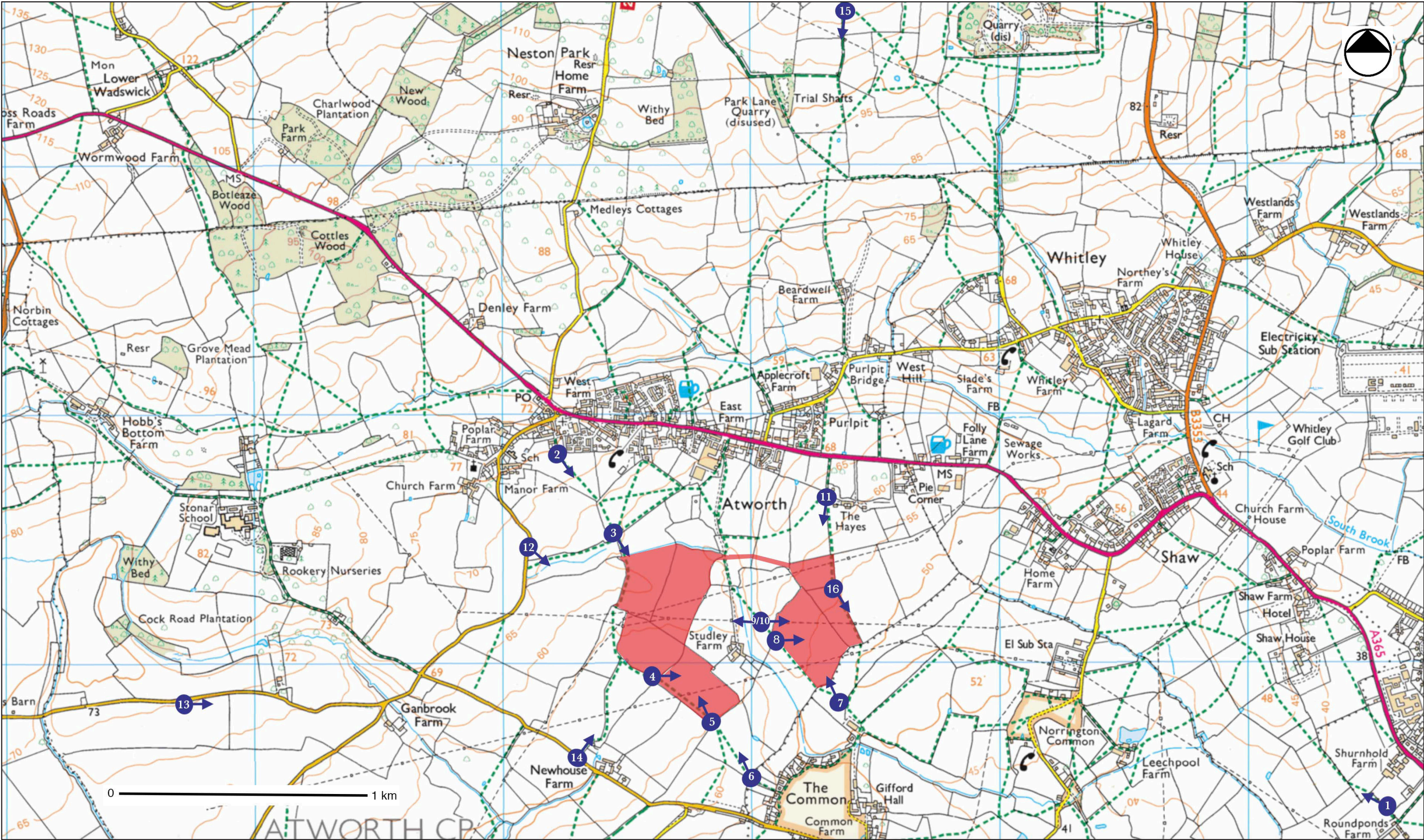
Date of photography - 27th March 2021





Viewpoint 12 - View from Bradford Road looking south-east

Panoramic Image - 820mm width x 250mm height when printed at A1



Approximate distance to site boundary: 0.4 km

Location: 51 deg.23'17.47"N - 2 deg. 12'03.62"W

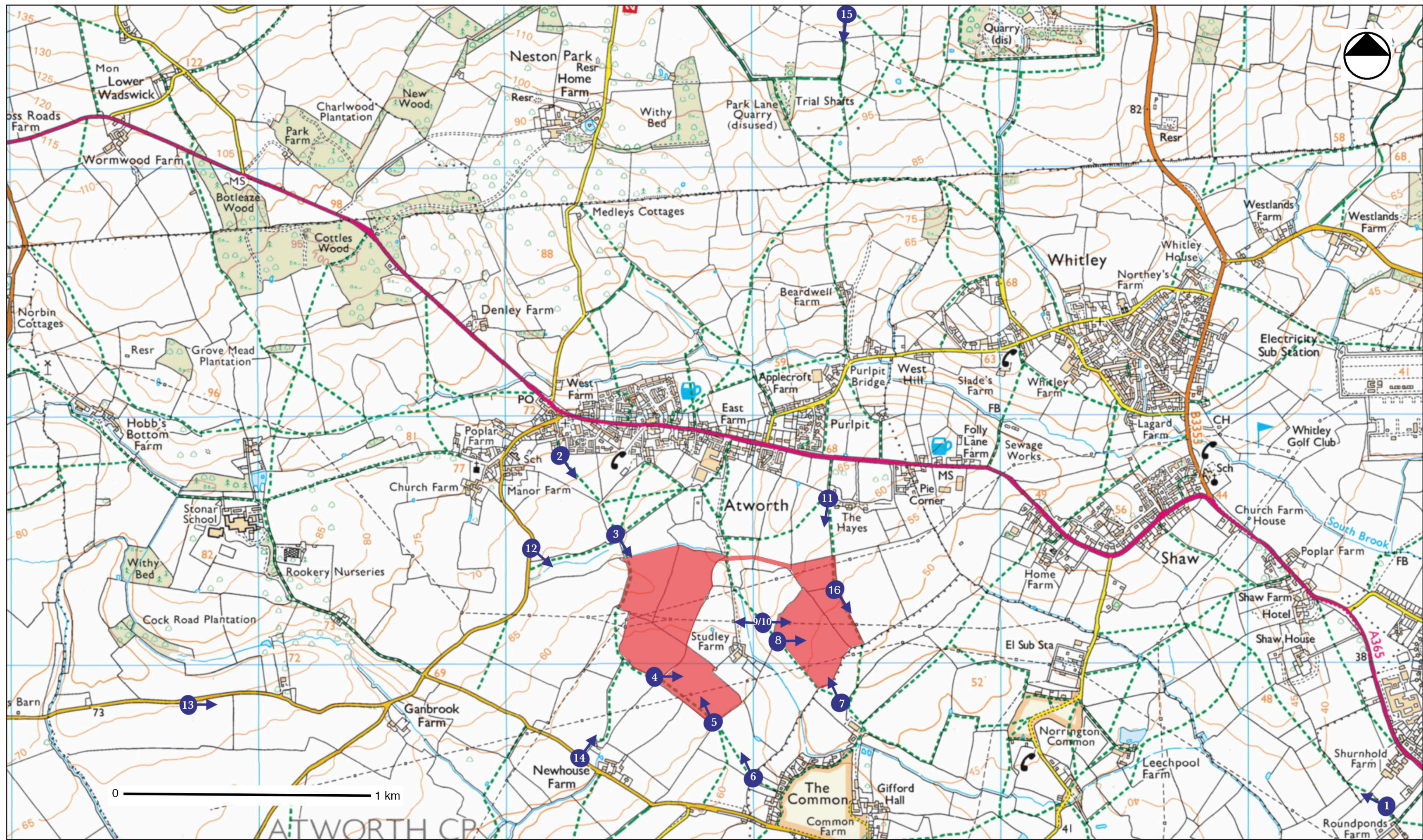
Date of photography - 27th March 2021





Viewpoint 13 - View from lane leading to South Wraxall looking east

Panoramic Image - 820mm width x 250mm height when printed at A1



Approximate distance to site boundary: 1.7 km

Location: 51 deg.22'56.39"N - 2 deg. 13'12.17"W

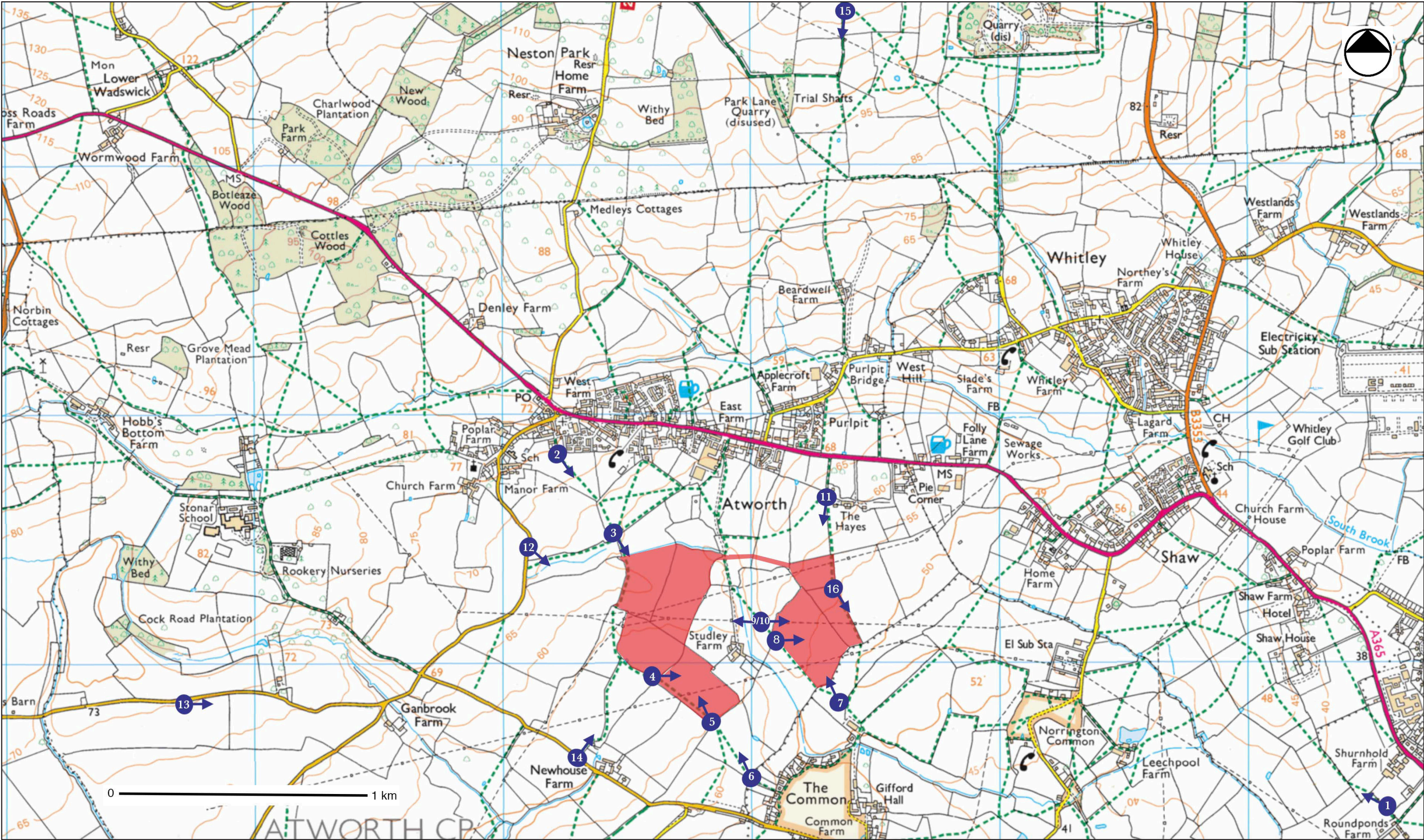
Date of photography - 27th March 2021





Viewpoint 14 - View from lane close to Newhouse Farm looking north-east

Panoramic Image - 820mm width x 250mm height when printed at A1



Approximate distance to site boundary: 0.5 km

Location: 51 deg.22'48.75"N - 2 deg. 11'54.64"W

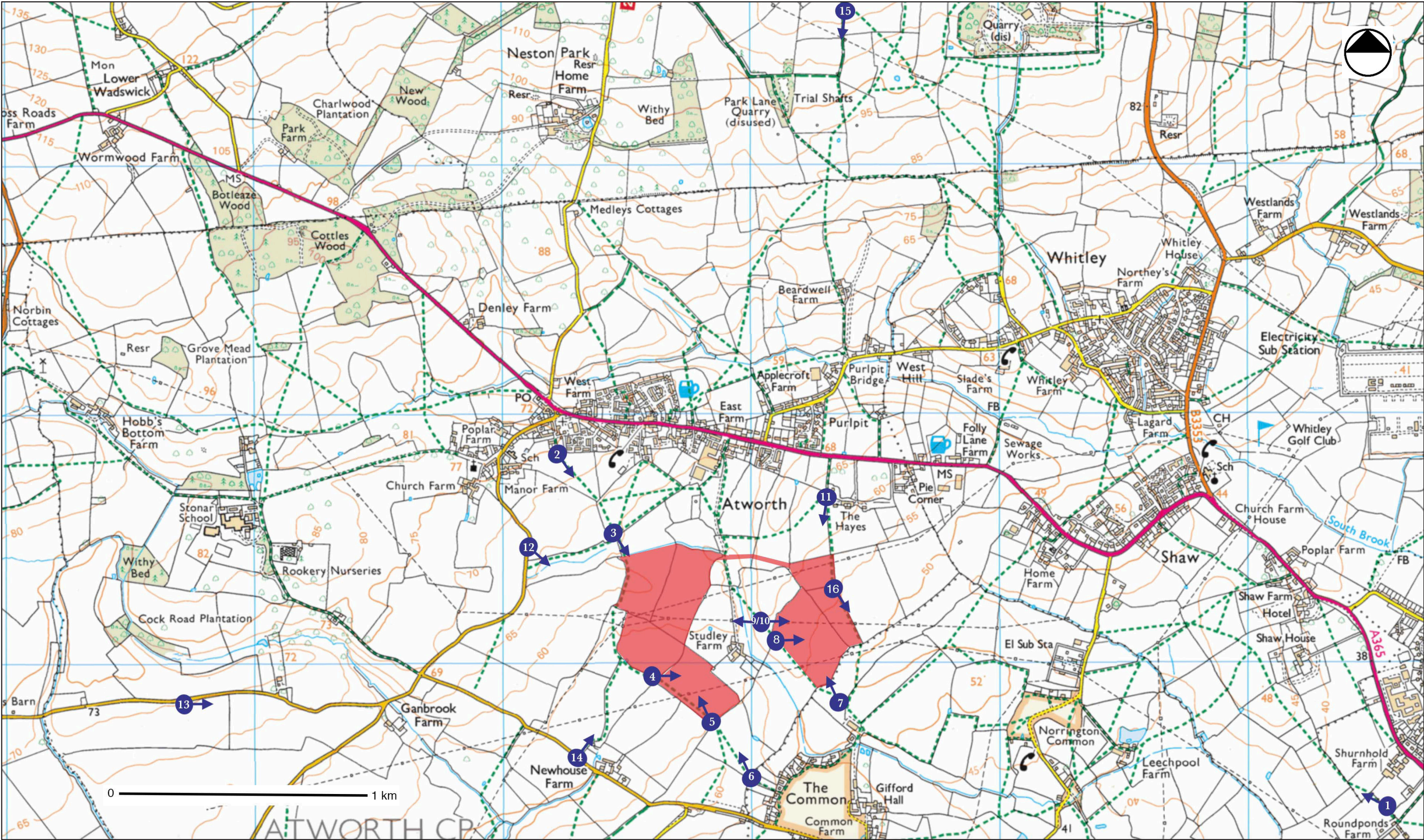
Date of photography - 27th March 2021





Viewpoint 15 - View from PROW CORM92 looking south

Panoramic Image - 820mm width x 250mm height when printed at A1



Approximate distance to site boundary: 2.4 km

Location: 51 deg.24'32.13"N - 2 deg. 10'57.77"W

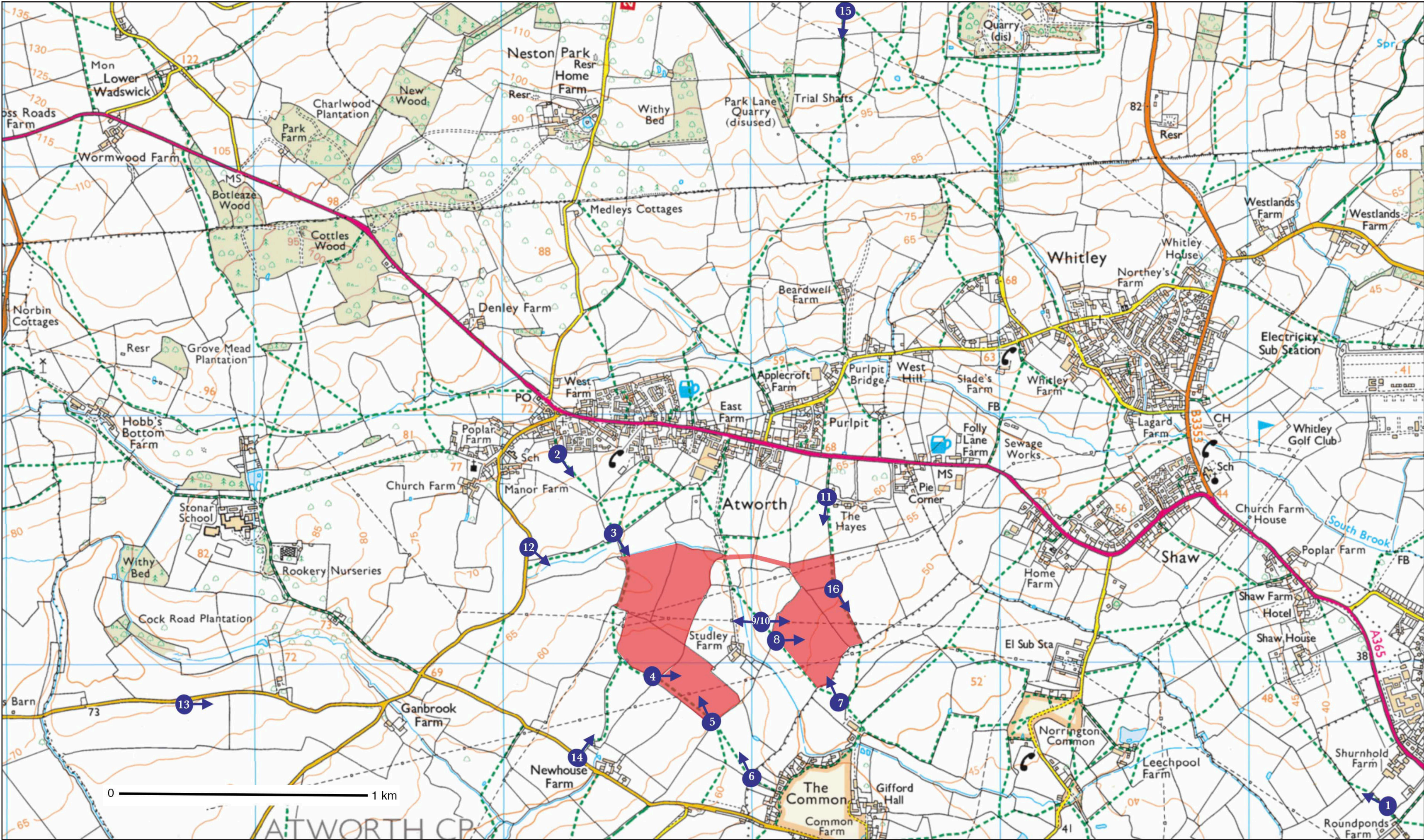
Date of photography - 27th March 2021





Viewpoint 16 - View from PROW ATW020 looking south-east

Panoramic Image - 820mm width x 250mm height when printed at A1



Approximate distance to site boundary: On site
Location: 51 deg.23'11'81"N - 2 deg. 11'00.19"W
Date of photography - 27th March 2021

