

6. Landscape and Visual

Introduction

- 6.1 This Chapter reports the outcome of the assessment of likely significant environmental effects arising from the Proposed Development in relation to Landscape and Visual matters.
- 6.2 The Chapter describes the technical consultation that has been undertaken during the EIA, the scope of the assessment and assessment methodology, and a summary of the baseline information that has informed the assessment.
- 6.3 In line with **Chapter 2: Approach to EIA**, the assessment reports on the likely significant environmental effects, the further mitigation measures required to prevent, reduce or offset any significant adverse effects, or further enhance beneficial effects. The conclusions are provided both in terms of the residual effects and whether these are considered significant. The assessment of effects takes into consideration both Primary and Tertiary mitigation (see **Chapter 2: Approach to EIA** for further details) and is informed by the EIA Scoping process (**Appendix 2.1 - 2.2**) and iterative scoping process where applicable.
- 6.4 This Chapter, and its associated **Appendix 6.1**, is intended to be read as part of the wider ES with particular reference to the introductory Chapters of this ES (**Chapters 1 – 5**), as well as **Chapter 7: Biodiversity**.
- 6.5 In addition, this Chapter should be read in conjunction with **Chapter 8: Assessment of Cumulative Effects**.

Summary of Consultation

- 6.6 **Table 6.1** provides an overview of the consultation that has been undertaken to inform the Proposed Development and EIA, including the consideration of likely significant effects and the methodology for assessment.

Table 6.1: Summary of Consultation

Body / Organisation	Contact	Date and Form of Consultation	Summary
Wiltshire Council	Senior Landscape Officer (Woodland GAPS Team Manager)	Email, October 2025	Agreement of 14 viewpoint locations for assessment in the EIA (referred to here as Photoviewpoints / PVPs).
Wiltshire Council	Senior Landscape Officer (Woodland Grant Application and Planting Support Team Manager)	Email, 18 December 2025	Agreement of Cumulative Projects and Cumulative Photoviewpoint Locations

Scope of the Assessment

- 6.7 An EIA Scoping Report was submitted to Wiltshire Council on 4 November 2025, as presented as **Appendix 2.1**. The EIA Scoping Opinion was received on 7 January 2026 (**Appendix 2.2**). This section provides an update on the scope of the assessment presented within this Chapter following submission of the EIA Scoping Report and receipt of the Scoping Opinion. Specific comments and actions are listed in **Table 6.2**.

Table 6.2: Scoping Opinion Comments Relating to LVIA

Points raised with the Scoping Report	How this is addressed
<i>The scope of the assessment is agreed as detailed in section 6 of the Scoping Report</i>	N/A
<i>I would strongly recommend that a separate cumulative LVIA is undertaken setting out a separate baseline to the site specific LVIA that considers the landscape impacts of the developments noted above in a 'combined' assessment in line with LTTGN 2024-01 unless the developments listed have begun to be built out during the assessment phase then an 'additional' assessment would seem most appropriate.</i>	EDP has carried out an assessment of the proposed cumulative schemes in line with the Cumulative Effects Methodology (see Appendix 6.1 (within Appendix EDP 2)). Assessments typically consider either: the 'additional' effects of the proposed development to the cumulative situation; or the 'combined' effects of all the identified cumulative schemes. EDP has undertaken an 'additional' assessment as it is considered to be the best way to understand specifically how the proposed development contributes to the overall change. This has been undertaken for Cumulative Projects in turn and a 'combined' assessment has then been included for all approved projects.
<i>It is likely that a separate cumulative LVIA methodology will need to be submitted as the current Appendix EDP1 fails to mention any cumulative assessment methodology and I would not wish it to get mixed up with the main site based LVIA, especially the baseline study and its interpretation.</i>	A Cumulative Effects Methodology has been appended to the LVIA, see Appendix 6.1 (within Appendix EDP 2).
<i>It would seem sensible to ensure the cumulative impacts of the development in combination with these other developments would form an important determining factor in understanding the true environmental impact of the development and consequently developing effective mitigating measures, I would</i>	The ES assesses the potentially significant effects at a project level and therefore assessment of policy has also been excluded in accordance with the proposed methodology in the EIA Scoping Report and detailed in Chapter 8: Assessment of Cumulative Effects .

Points raised with the Scoping Report	How this is addressed
<i>suggest in line with Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework.</i>	
<i>In accordance with the GLVIA, I would expect to be asked to confirm viewpoint locations based on a ZTV model. I would expect two models to be undertaken, one for the site based LVIA and one for the cumulative assessment in order to allow combined and sequential viewpoints to be separately highlighted for the cumulative LVIA, hence the importance of separating these assessments to avoid confusion (as per LI TGN 20-01 Step 3a).'</i>	A ZTV has been carried out for the Cumulative Projects which have been scoped into the Cumulative Visual Assessment and Cumulative Photoviewpoints have been identified. See Appendix 6.1 and Figures 8.2 to 8.3 .

Effects Not Considered to be Significant

6.8 The following effects were identified as not significant within the EIA Scoping Report and are not considered further in this Chapter:

- Effects on Landscape Character Areas (LCA) Beyond the Visual Envelope (referred to as the Zone of Theoretical Visibility / ZTV);
- Effects on National Character Area (NCA) 117;
- Effects on Visual Receptors outside of the Visual Envelope (ZTV); and
- Effects on Melksham Football Club.

6.9 Following the EIA Scoping Process the following additional effects / receptors (see Table 6.2 of the EIA Scoping Report, **Appendix 2.1**) are now not considered significant as a result of assessment of effects within the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) (**Appendix 6.1**). Details of the assessment process and the evidence to support this determination is provided in the LVIA (**Appendix 6.1**) and outlined below. The following section should be read in conjunction with Chapter 6 of the EIA Scoping Report (**Appendix 2.1**) and the LVIA (**Appendix 6.1**).

Changes to Host Landscape Type (LT) 12: Open Clay Vale (Wiltshire LCA¹) during construction and operation

6.10 Host LT 12 is a large landscape type which contains both LCA 12A and LCA 12B. The key characteristics which define the overall LT are further refined by more specific descriptions of the two LCAs. LCA 12A is not considered due to its location to the north of Swindon. The key characteristics of host LT 12 are therefore considered as far as they relate to LCA 12B, see below.

Changes to landscape character on Host LCA 12B: Avon Open Clay Vale (Wiltshire LCA 2005 LUC) during construction and operation

- 6.11 Host LCA 12B falls within host LT 12 Open Clay Vale and the key characteristics of the LT define the LCA and are refined by a more nuanced description of the LCA. The Site is largely consistent with the description of the geographically extensive LCA 12B which was concluded to have a medium sensitivity overall, as a result of being a largely undesignated landscape. The direct changes to the key characteristics of the LCA would be localised within the context of the geographically extensive LCA. The magnitude of change during construction and operation will be limited to a very small proportion of the area and in a location where the tranquillity is already diminished to some degree. Effects on host LCA 12B are therefore considered to be **Not Significant** during construction and operation.

Changes to Host LT C: Open Clay Vale (West Wiltshire District LCA 2006 CBA) during construction and operation

- 6.12 Host LT C is an extensive landscape type which contains two LCAs: C1 and C2. The key characteristics which define the LT are relatively broad brush and are refined in more detail within the list of key characteristics for the LCAs within it. Therefore, only the more nuanced host LCA C1 is considered in this assessment. It is considered that any effects on the geographically extensive LT as a whole will be **Not Significant** during construction and operation.

Changes to the Key Characteristics of the Special Landscape Area (SLA)

- 6.13 The Scoping considered the following landscape character areas and types as defining the SLA. As a result of the LVIA process the SLA has been also identified and assessed as a receptor in its own right. This is detailed below and is an addition to the receptors detailed within Table 6.2 of the Scoping Report (**Appendix 2.1**).

Non-Host LT 7: Wooded Greensand Hills (Wiltshire LCA 2005 LUC)

- 6.14 Non-host LT 7 is a large landscape type which contains both LCA 7A, 7B and 7C spread across five separate areas. The key characteristics which define the overall LT are further refined by more specific descriptions of the three LCAs. LCAs 7A and 7B are not considered further. The key characteristics of LT 7 are therefore considered only as far as they relate to and underpin LCA 7C, see below.

Non-Host LCA 7C Bowood Greensand Hills (Wiltshire LCA 2005 LUC)

- 6.15 Non-host LCA 7C Bowood Greensand Hills is defined by the Wiltshire LCA 2005 and is located approximately 150m to the east of the Site at the closest point. Views from the non-host LCA are illustrated by Photoviewpoints EDP 5 and 14, see **Appendix 6.1** (within Appendix EDP 4). There will be no change to the majority of the key characteristics of the geographically extensive LCA as a result of the Proposed Development being located outside the LCA; however, the perceptual aspects of the LCA which are described as being the ‘*wide views over the lowland to the west*’ will experience change as a result of the Proposed Development.
- 6.16 The magnitude of change during construction and operation will be limited to a very small proportion of the geographically extensive LCA and in a location where the tranquillity is already diminished to some degree. Effects on non-host LCA 7C are therefore considered to be **Not Significant** during construction and operation.

Changes to Non-Host LT F: Greensand Hills (West Wiltshire District LCA 2006 CBA) during construction and operation

- 6.17 Non-host LT F is an extensive landscape type which contains five LCAs: F1, F2, F3, F4 and F5. The key characteristics which define the LT are relatively broad brush and are refined in more detail within the list of key characteristics for the LCAs within it. Therefore, only the more detailed host LCA F2 is considered further in this assessment.

Changes to the Landscape Character and Visual Amenity of Visitors to Spye Park Registered Park and Garden (RPG) during construction and operation

- 6.18 Spye Park list entry states that it is the remains of an early C18 garden by Stephen Switzer, set in late C18 pleasure grounds and a landscape park, with further late C19 landscaping. It also notes that there are “good views from the house site, the gardens, and from the higher ground in the park, to the south-west”. There is some public access to the Woodland Trust Woods and along the PRow Footpath reference BROM57 which runs through farmland to the south-west of the former house but no formal access to visit and appreciate the landscape park and pleasure gardens, and therefore the visual amenity of visitors has not been assessed further. Intervisibility with the clay vale context of the Site extends across a small area of farmland to the south-west of the former house, parkland and gardens which is crossed by the footpath. However, no views have been identified from the parkland itself.
- 6.19 At construction, Year 1 and Year 15 it is considered that the effect of the Proposed Development is **Not Significant** as it would not change the landscape character of Spye Park, as the relevant key characteristic of views towards the south-west would not be affected by the Proposed Development.

Changes to Visual Amenity of Visual Receptors within 1km of the Site

Users of Group of Footpaths to the south within the ZTV including MELW22 and MELW30

- 6.20 There is a group of footpaths to the south of the Site including Footpath Reference MELW22, MELW30 and Footpath Reference MELW23. Footpath Reference MELW23 is the furthest from the Site and is located to the south of Clacker’s Brook. It runs from Eastern Way, 1.3km towards the hamlet of Redstocks and views are heavily filtered by layers of intervening vegetation, although there are likely to be occasional glimpsed and partial framed views towards the Proposed Development. Where there are views to the Proposed Development, the proposed properties will be set-back from the viewer by over 1km beyond areas of proposed open space and with layers of hedgerow planting creating levels of filtering. Effects on Footpath Reference MELW23 are therefore considered to be **Not Significant** during construction or operation.
- 6.21 Footpath MELW30 allows glimpsed views towards the Site which are framed by intervening vegetation. The Proposed Development would be set-back by approximately 650m and heavily filtered. Effects on Footpath Reference MELW30 are therefore considered to be **Not Significant** during construction or operation.

Users of Group of Footpaths to the north-west including MELW60

- 6.22 The footpaths to the north-west include MELW60 and MELW59 which run west from New Road. There are medium range views across the clay vale landscape towards the Site and Sandridge Hill is a prominent backdrop within the view, however as a result of a combination of intervening vegetation features around fields, intervening built form and distance, there

are no views of the Site. Effects on the footpaths are considered to be **Not Significant** during construction or operation.

Users of Eastern Way

- 6.23 Eastern Way is a new road which forms the edge of Melksham. Where it is close to the Site, it travels in a north-south direction connecting to the A3102 at the northern end. Wide raised verges which are vegetated in sections with new and existing vegetation create a sense of enclosure and heavily filtered views towards the wider landscape. Partial views open up at junctions such as the junction with the entrance to Snarlton Farm/ Bridleway MELW41 as shown in representative Photoviewpoint EDP 12 within **Appendix 6.1** (within Appendix EDP 4).
- 6.24 The magnitude of change on receptors will be limited as a result of visual separation between the road and the Site. Therefore, effects are considered to be **Not Significant** during construction or operation.

Residents within Tanhouse Farm

- 6.25 Tanhouse Farm is located approximately 650m to the south of the Site. It is orientated east-west, and its main views are not therefore, directed towards the Site. As a result of distance, property orientation and intervening vegetation including along the curtilage of the farm it is considered that there will be no or very limited views towards the Proposed Development.
- 6.26 The magnitude of change on receptors will be limited as a result of visual separation between the farm and the Site. Therefore, effects are considered to be **Not Significant** during construction or operation.

Users of/ Visitors to the Commercial Units at Snarlton Farm

- 6.27 The commercial units at Snarlton Farm sit within a grouping to the south of Bridleway MELW41. As a result of their arrangement the majority of views will be restricted by surrounding built form. Along the north of the complex filtered views will be available across low boundary hedgerows. Where there are views to the Proposed Development, housing will be set-back beyond large areas of open space with tree planting along the boundaries which combine as layers to filter the views.
- 6.28 The magnitude of change will be limited as a result of intervening built form and vegetation and is considered to be **Not Significant** during construction or operation.

Changes to Visual Amenity of Visual Receptors between 1-3km of the Site

Users of Woodrow Road/NCN Route 403 (1.25km to the north)

- 6.29 Woodrow Road leaves the edge of Melksham and runs east. The route has a line of development along the northern side and oblique views are available to the south over low hedgerows along approximately 370m of the route.
- 6.30 The magnitude of change will be limited as a result of intervening topography, built form and vegetation. Therefore, effects are considered to be **Not Significant** during construction or operation.

Users of Bridleway Reference MELW25A (1.2km to the east)

- 6.31 MELW25A climbs undulating land to the east of Sandridge Solar Farm. Views from this route are represented by Photoviewpoint EDP 6 within **Appendix 6.1** (within Appendix EDP 4).

There are limited glimpsed views from one identified location on elevated ground which takes in views of the solar farm, pylons and some rooflines along the A3102/ Sandridge Common with the majority of the route having no views.

- 6.32 The magnitude of change will be limited as a result of intervening topography, built form and vegetation. Therefore, effects are considered to be **Not Significant** during construction or operation.

Users of a Group of Footpaths to the south including Footpath Reference MELW20 and SEEN20A

- 6.33 A group of footpaths to the south, including Footpaths Reference MELW20 and SEEN20A, cross the low lying clay vale to the north and south of the Bath Road A365. MELW20 runs within 'Redstocks Lane' towards Redstocks village and there may be occasional glimpses towards the Site to the north. Footpath Reference SEEN20A runs south towards the Kennet and Avon Canal.
- 6.34 It is considered that a combination of distance and intervening vegetation within the flat vale landscape will heavily filter any potential glimpsed views towards the Proposed Development. Effects on this group of footpaths are therefore considered to be **Not Significant** during construction or operation.

Users of Footpaths to the north-west including Footpath Reference MELW67 (2.65km to north-west of Site)

- 6.35 Footpath MELW67 runs along low-lying land along the River Avon. Long distance views are available, however as a result of distance, intervening vegetation and built form there are no views of the Site, and the effects on the footpath are considered to be **Not Significant**.

Users of the PRoW network on elevated ridges within the SLA to the north-east including Footpath Reference BROM57 (within Spye Park RPG and SLA)/ MELW88 (within the SLA) (3.2km to the north-east)

- 6.36 Footpath reference BROM57 and MELW88 are located within SLA 5 and users have a very high sensitivity. Footpath reference BROM57 travels east-west through Spye Park RPG, although this is not open to the public and it traverses agricultural estate lands within the RPG. Each of these routes have panoramic views across the clay vale to the south-west allowing for a view of Melksham at over 3km distance, however views are only available for short sections of the routes and obliquely from Footpath Reference BROM57. Views are represented by Photoviewpoint EDP 14 within **Appendix 6.1** (within Appendix EDP 4).
- 6.37 The magnitude of change will be barely discernible as a result of intervening vegetation, angle of view and distance. Therefore, the effect on users of the PRoW network is considered to be **Not Significant** during construction or operation.

Users of the PRoW network on elevated ridges to the south including Bridleway/Footpath Reference SEEN6 (2.5km to the south)

- 6.38 A group of PRoWs on a ridgeline to the south, in particular Bridleway reference SEEN6 and Footpath reference SEEN6, but potentially also the elevated extents of Footpath reference SEEN24 allow for panoramic views across the clay vale to the north. Views are represented by Photoviewpoint EDP 15 within **Appendix 6.1** (within Appendix EDP 4). In these views Melksham is seen as a narrow layer in the middle distance below the distant Cotswolds. In the direction of the Site the solar farm is seen at the foot of Sandridge Hill, sporadic agricultural and residential built form is visible including the large agricultural barns at

Snarlton Farm. The Proposed Development would be seen as a standalone development which would be foreshortened in the view and softened by existing vegetation, including Eight Acre Plantation.

- 6.39 The magnitude of change will be limited as a result of intervening vegetation, angle of view and distance. Therefore, the effect on users of the PRoW network is considered to be **Not Significant** during construction or operation.

SLA 5 The Higher Land of Spye and Bowood Parklands

- 6.40 Through further assessment work since the EIA Scoping Report (**Appendix 2.1**), the following receptor identified within the EIA Scoping Report has been refined for clarity and to enable a finer grain assessment. The full assessment of effects to this receptor below is presented in **Appendix 6.1**.
- 6.41 Special Landscape Area SLA 5: The higher land of Spye and Bowood Parklands is designated within the saved Policy C3 of the West Wiltshire Local Plan. SLAs are based on the Areas of Great Landscape Value which were identified within the previous plan. The sensitivity of SLA5 The Higher Land of Spye and Bowood Parklands is considered to be high through its designation as a locally valued landscape. It contains part of the Spye Park RPG and its key characteristics are described by the following published assessments, although it is noted that these do not match the SLA boundaries exactly:
- LCA 7C: Bowood Greensand Hills (Wiltshire LCA 2005);
 - LT F: Greensand Hills (West Wiltshire District LCA 2006); and
 - Area 4: Wooded Greensand Hills ((JMNP1 2020).
- 6.42 Policy C3 states that the NCA description should be referred to for guidance as to characteristic attributes of the SLAs, however the descriptions within the Wiltshire and West Wiltshire District LCAs are considered most relevant and nuanced.
- 6.43 The level of effects on the LCA which covers a geographically similar extent (LCA 7C: Bowood Greensand Hills which mostly contains the SLA) is considered to be Not Significant. It is therefore considered therefore that changes to these key characteristics as a result of the Proposed Development will be minimal for the following reasons:
- 6.44 The majority of the SLA has a well wooded and intimate character and views across to the open clay vales to the south-west (the Site) are limited to an area within LCA F2 and Area 4 and do not affect the geographically extensive area covered by the SLA; and
- 6.45 Although there may be a minor change of the sense of tranquillity as a result of a development close to the edges of the SLA, it is noted that this characteristic is already reduced within the context of the A3102 as a result of noise and movement along the road corridor. It is further noted that the Proposed Development has responded to this sensitivity through embedded mitigation with a setback of built form from the boundary of the SLA to reduce the magnitude of change in this location, and it is not considered to affect tranquillity within the wider SLA as a whole.

Effects Considered Likely to be Significant

6.46 The following effects (**Table 6.3**) were considered likely to be significant and are reported within this Chapter:

Table 6.3: Effects Considered Likely to be Significant

Likely Significant Effect	Receptors	Applicable Stage
Changes to landscape character	Site landscape character.	Construction / Operation
	District/ Local Host LCA:	Construction / Operation
	- Host LCA C1: Melksham Open Clay Vale; and - Host Area 3: Open Clay Vale.	
Changes to visual amenity of visual receptors within 1km of the Site	- Non-Host LCA F2: Sandridge Park Greensand Hills; and - Non Host Area 4: Wooded Greensand Hills.	Construction / Operation
	Users of the following PROWs:	Construction / Operation
	Bridleway Reference MELW40/ Prater's Lane (along the eastern boundary of the Site).	
	Footpath Reference MELW26 (within the Site).	Construction / Operation
	Bridleway Reference MELW41/ Brown's Lane (along the southern boundary of the Site).	Construction / Operation
	Footpath Reference MELW27 (150m to the west of the Site).	Construction / Operation
	Footpath Reference MELW22 (280m to the south).	Construction / Operation
	Users of the following roads: A3102/ Sandridge Common Road (both within the SLA/ outside the SLA).	Construction / Operation
	Residential Group 1: 288, 289, 289A, 290, 290A, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295 Sandridge Common.	Construction / Operation

Likely Significant Effect	Receptors	Applicable Stage
	Residential Group 2: Blackmore House and Farm (House only).	Construction / Operation
	Residential Group 3: 1-12 Lopes Close.	Construction / Operation
	Residential Group 4: 254 and 256 Sandridge Common.	Construction
	Residential Group 5: Little Snarlton Farm/ Snarlton Farm.	Construction / Operation
	Manor Farm, Sandridge Common.	Construction

Assessment Methodology

Legislative Framework, Policy and Guidance

6.47 The following legislation and policy have informed the assessment of effects within this Chapter, and is detailed further in **Appendix 6.1** (within Section 2):

- Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS) (Adopted January 2015);²
- Saved Policies of the West Wiltshire District Plan (2004);³
- Wiltshire Local Plan Review (Regulation 19);⁴
- Wiltshire Local Plan submission and document library: Planning for Melksham;⁵
- Wiltshire Local Plan submission and document library: Sites Landscape Appraisals⁶; and
- Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 2 (JMNP2) (2020-2038)⁷.

6.48 The following guidance has informed the assessment of effects within this Chapter, and is detailed further in **Appendix 6.1**:

- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment - Third Edition (LI/IEMA, 2013) (GLVIA3) insofar as it is relevant to EIA developments;
- An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment (Natural England 2014);
- Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note (TNG) 06/19 Visual Representation of Development Proposals (17 September 2019); and
- Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note (TNG) TGN 02-21: Assessing landscape value outside national designations.

Defining the Study Area

6.49 To establish the baseline and potential limit of material effects, the study area has been considered at two geographical scales:

- First, a broad 5km 'study area' was adopted, based mainly on desk-based study, allowing the geographical scope of the assessment to be defined based on the likely extent of views to/from the Site, the extent of landscape effects and the Site's environmental planning context; and
- Second, following the production of a broad Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV), initial analysis and subsequent fieldwork, the 5km study area was refined down to the land that is most likely to experience landscape effects. The extent of this detailed study area is 3km from the Site boundary, although occasional reference may be made to features beyond this area where appropriate. This detailed study area is illustrated on Figure 6.1 within **Appendix 6.1**.

6.50 The ZTV (produced at the outset to inform study areas) was refined by walking and driving local roads, rights of way and other publicly accessible viewpoints to arrive at a more accurate, 'field-tested' zone of primary visibility (ZPV). The ZPV is where views of the Proposed Development would normally be close-ranging and open, whether in the public or private domain, on foot, cycling or in a vehicle. This is shown in Figure 6.6 within **Appendix 6.1**.

Background Studies to Inform the ES / Establishing the Baseline

6.51 **Table 6.4** summarises all studies/surveys/analysis/evaluations undertaken to inform the assessment presented within this Chapter.

Table 6.4: Background Studies / Surveys / Evaluations / Analysis

Study / Survey / Analysis / Evaluation	Overview	Date of Completion
Field assessment of the Site circumstances: landscape character and visual amenity and photoviewpoints photography	A comprehensive field assessment of the Site circumstances, including a photographic survey of the character and fabric of the Site and its surroundings, using photography from a number of representative viewpoints which were agreed with Wiltshire Council. Two field assessments were undertaken. A summer assessment was carried out on 14 May 2025, in sunny and clear weather conditions. A subsequent winter assessment took place on 19 December 2025, in similarly clear and bright conditions, during which the PVPs were captured.	May-December 2025
Desk top study to establish baseline conditions	A desktop study was completed to establish the baseline conditions i.e. relevant planning policy/ designations and potential landscape and visual receptors and cumulative sites to inform the design iteration.	April– July 2025

Study / Survey / Analysis / Evaluation	Overview	Date of Completion
Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) (Appendix 6.1)	A LVIA was completed for the Proposed Development.	September- December 2025

Assessment Process

- 6.52 Predicted effects on the landscape resource and visual amenity arising from the Proposed Development have been determined in accordance with the principles embedded within published best practice guidance including GLVIA3, using a structured methodology for defining sensitivity, magnitude and nature of effect using criteria developed by EDP as set out in detail in Appendix EDP 2 of **Appendix 6.1**, and summarised below.
- 6.53 The aim of the GLVIA3 guidelines is to set high standards for the scope and content of LVIAs and to establish certain principles that will help to achieve consistency, credibility, transparency and effectiveness throughout the assessment.
- 6.54 The assessment of landscape and visual effects includes a combination of objective and subjective (professional) judgements, and it is therefore important that a structured and consistent approach is adopted to ensure that the assessment undertaken is as objective as possible.
- 6.55 The assessment of effects to landscape character has systematically described and analysed the features within the landscape, such as landform; vegetation cover; settlement pattern and morphology; transport patterns; land use; materiality; and scale/form of built elements; which together create a particular sense of place.
- 6.56 The assessment of effects to visual amenity has considered visual receptors, which are the viewers of, and within the landscape. Representative viewpoints have been selected in consultation with the local planning authority and informed by professional judgement.
- 6.57 The assessment has considered the baseline of the landscape and visual resource (as existing in 2025), the temporary construction stage (with all temporary effects considered to be medium-term) (no specific year is identified as this considers the effects during the construction stage as a whole and hence the worst case), and the permanent operational stage effects at Year 1 and Year 15 (considered to be permanent effects). The use of Year 1 and Year 15 for the operational stage assessment will be to ensure that the worst-case pre-maturation of landscape mitigation and enhancement effects (i.e. at Year 1) and residual effects, taking account of the maturing landscaping within the Proposed Development (i.e. at Year 15), are identified.
- 6.58 The assessment of likely significant environmental effects as a result of the Proposed Development has taken into account the construction and operational stages.

Reporting of the Environmental Effect and Significance Criteria

- 6.59 The assessment of likely significant environmental effects as a result of the Proposed Development has taken into account the construction and operational stage. The following sections define the approach adopted within the assessment for the determination of sensitivity (a product of value and susceptibility to change), magnitude of change (or impact), the level of effect and significance. The scales for sensitivity and magnitude of change for landscape and visual effects deviates from the scales identified in **Chapter 2: Approach to the EIA** to comply with the requirements of guidance as detailed below.

Determining Sensitivity of Receptor

- 6.60 The sensitivity of affected receptors has been considered on a scale of **very high, high, medium, low or very low**.
- 6.61 Each receptor's sensitivity, based on value and susceptibility to change, has been identified.
- 6.62 Landscape value is the inherent value of the landscape resource irrespective of the type of development proposed and, as such, is determined within the baseline.
- 6.63 The assessment of landscape value is based on a combination of the landscape-related designations and consideration of factors as set out in GLVIA3 and the 2021 LI Technical Note TGN 02-21. TGN 02-21 provides nine criteria for decisions about landscape value including: natural heritage, cultural heritage and associations, landscape condition and distinctiveness, recreational value, and perception relating to scenic appeal and tranquillity. The overall value for each landscape receptor will be categorised as **very high, high, medium, low or very low**.
- 6.64 Landscape susceptibility has been categorised as **very high, high, medium, low or very low** accounting for the following criteria: landform, pattern/complexity, composition, land-cover and relationship to existing settlements or developments. However, not all criteria are equally applicable or important within a given landscape/type of development proposed and professional judgement will be applied.
- 6.65 The assessment of visual value is based upon the importance of the location of the view, its designations, cultural associations and the amount to which the view forms part of the experience in the location. The overall value for each visual receptor has been categorised as **very high, high, medium, low or very low** and has been informed by professional judgement supported by reasoned argument.
- 6.66 Visual susceptibility to the type of change proposed is based upon the activity or expectation of the viewer. It has been categorised as **very high, high, medium, low or very low**. Where people are in their homes or engaged in outdoor recreation focussed on the landscape, visual receptors may have a high susceptibility, whilst it may be low for those engaged in work or travelling on major roads. Professional judgement will be applied.
- 6.67 The sensitivity of a receptor is a combination of the value and the susceptibility of the receptor to the type of change proposed, indicating the capacity for the receptor to accommodate the type of development proposed, and has been categorised as **very high, high, medium, low or very low** and informed by professional judgement.

Determining the Magnitude of Change

- 6.68 The magnitude of change has been considered as the change experienced from the current baseline conditions at the sensitive receptor and has been considered on a scale of **very high, high, medium, low (small) or very low (very small)**.
- 6.69 The landscape magnitude of change has been informed by judgements about the precise nature of the change brought about by the Proposed Development both in terms of the existing landscape character, in relation to its visual and perceptual dimension and landscape elements/features, and the addition of new landscape elements/features, and its duration and reversibility and is categorised as **very high, high, medium, low (small) or very low (very small)**.
- 6.70 In the evaluation of the effects on views and the visual amenity of the identified receptors, the magnitude of visual change is typically described with reference to:
- The scale of change in the view, with respect to the loss or addition of features in the view and changes in its composition, and the geographical extent of the change in the view. Factors contributing to this include:
 - The angle of view in relation to the main activity of the receptor;
 - The distance of the viewer from the Proposed Development;
 - The proportion of the view affected; and
 - The extent of the area over which the changes would be visible.
 - Whether or not the view is experienced in fixed or transient views and, in the latter, whether it is intermittent / glimpsed or continuous; and
 - The duration of the change, whether temporary or permanent.
- 6.71 Visual magnitude will be categorised as very high, high, medium, low (small) or very low (very small).

Determining the Level of Effect

- 6.72 The level of effect has been informed by the magnitude of change due to the Proposed Development and the evaluation of the sensitivity of the affected receptor. The level of effect has been determined using professional judgement and **Table 6.4** has been a tool which has assisted with this process.
- 6.73 Whilst **Table 6.5** provides ranges, the level of effect is confirmed as a single level and not a range, informed by professional judgement. For each effect, it has been concluded whether the effect is '*beneficial*' or '*adverse*' or '*neutral*'.

Table 6.5: Matrix to Support Determining the Level of Effect

		Sensitivity (or value / importance)				
		Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low
Magnitude of Change	Very High	Major (Very Substantial) ¹	Major (Substantial) ₁	Major	Major/ Moderate	Moderate
	High	Major (Substantial) ₁	Major	Major/ Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/ Minor
	Medium	Major	Major/ Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/ Minor	Minor
	Low (Small)	Major/ Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/ Minor	Minor	Minor/ Negligible
	Very Low (Very Small)	Moderate	Moderate/ Minor	Minor	Minor/ Negligible	Negligible

6.74 The terms presented in **Table 6.6** have been used to define the levels of the effect identified and these can be 'beneficial', 'adverse' or 'neutral':

Table 6.6: Definition of levels of effect

Category	Definition of Adverse Effects	Definition of Beneficial Effects
Major (Very Substantial)²	Typically, the landscape or visual receptor is very highly sensitive with the proposals representing a very high adverse magnitude of change. The changes would be at complete variance with the landscape character and would permanently diminish the integrity of a valued landscape or view.	The removal of substantial existing incongruous landscape or visual elements and the introduction or restoration of highly valued landscape elements or built form which would reinforce local landscape character and substantially improve landscape condition and visual amenity.
Major (Substantial)²	Typically, the landscape or visual receptor has a very high to high sensitivity with the proposals representing a very high to high	The removal of existing incongruous landscape/visual elements and the introduction or restoration of some valued landscape or visual elements

¹ In order to ensure consistency in reporting significance of effects throughout the ES, effects of substantial or very substantial will be reported as major. Where this occurs, further detail will be set out within the LVIA.

² In order to ensure consistency in reporting significance of effects throughout the ES, effects of substantial or very substantial will be reported as major. Where this occurs, further detail will be set out within the LVIA.

Category	Definition of Adverse Effects	Definition of Beneficial Effects
	adverse magnitude of change to the view or landscape resource. Changes would result in a fundamental change to the landscape resource or visual amenity.	would complement landscape character and improve landscape condition and improve the local visual amenity.
Major	Typically, the landscape or visual receptor has a high to medium sensitivity with the proposals representing a high to medium magnitude of change. The proposals would represent a material but non-fundamental change to the landscape resource or visual amenity.	The removal of some existing incongruous landscape elements and/or the introduction or restoration of some potentially valued landscape elements which reflect landscape character and result in some improvements to landscape condition and/or visual amenity.
Moderate	Typically, the landscape or visual receptor has a medium sensitivity with the proposals representing a medium magnitude of change. The proposals would result in a slight but non-material change to the landscape resource or visual amenity.	Some potential removal of incongruous landscape features or visual amenity, although more likely the existing landscape and/or resource is complemented by new landscape features or built features compliant with the local landscape and published landscape character assessments.
Minor	Typically, the landscape or visual receptor has a low sensitivity with the proposals representing a low magnitude of change. There would be a detectable but non-material change to the landscape resource or visual amenity.	The proposals would result in minimal positive change to the landscape or visual resource, either through perceptual or physical change, and any change would not be readily apparent but would be coherent with ongoing change and process, and coherent with published landscape character assessments.
Negligible	Typically, the landscape receptor has a very low sensitivity with the proposals resulting in very limited loss or alteration to the landscape resource or change to the view. There would be a barely perceptible change to the landscape resource or visual amenity.	There would be a barely perceptible positive or negative change to the landscape resource or visual amenity.

- 6.75 The duration of the effect has been assessed as either ‘short-term’, ‘medium-term’ or ‘long-term’. Short-term is considered to be up to 1 year, medium-term is considered to be between 1 and 10 years and long-term is considered to be greater than 10 years.

Determining Significance

- 6.76 Based on the above methodology, set out in detail in Appendix EDP 2 of **Appendix 6.1**, levels of effect of moderate or greater are generally judged to be **Significant**. However, in certain cases, where additional factors arise, a further degree of professional judgement may be applied when determining whether the overall effect will be **Significant** or not. For example, in cases where a moderate effect is experienced by a high or very high sensitivity receptor, this may be considered **Significant**. Similarly, where a moderate effect is experienced by a very low sensitivity receptor, this may not be considered **Significant**. Where this occurs, further explanation is given within the assessment.
- 6.77 For each effect, a statement has been made as to whether the level of effect is ‘**Significant**’ or ‘**Not Significant**’. This determination has been based on professional judgement and/or relevant guidance/legislation where applicable.
- 6.78 Significance has only been concluded for residual effects (i.e. following the identification of secondary mitigation).

Baseline Conditions

Landscape Character

- 6.79 An appraisal of the baseline conditions in respect of the character of the Site and its landscape context is set out at **Appendix 6.1**, Section 3 which summarises relevant published landscape assessments that contribute to a better understanding of the landscape context and an appraisal of the Site itself based on field survey. Each relevant landscape receptor has been reviewed with judgements made on inherent value. These are described below and summarised in **Table 6.7**.
- 6.80 The desk-based assessment identified that there are no potentially sensitive national landscape designations within 3km of the Site as shown on the Relevant Planning Designations and Considerations Plan (Figure 6.2 in **Appendix 6.1**). The Site does not lie within a locally designated landscape, however, the northern part of the Site abuts a Special Landscape Area (SLA) named ‘SLA 5: The higher land of Spye and Bowood Parklands’, as designated under the adopted Wiltshire Local Plan (West Wiltshire District Plan 2004 - Saved Policy C3: Special Landscape Areas).
- 6.81 At a national level, the Site falls wholly within the central part of National Character Area (NCA) 117: ‘Avon Vales’, an undulating, low-lying landscape of mixed, predominantly pastoral agriculture and small limestone-built towns, cut by the (Bristol) River Avon and its tributaries, and surrounded to the west, south and east by higher land.
- 6.82 There are no published Special Qualities to describe the SLA and Policy C3: Special Landscape Areas states that the NCA provides guidance as to the characteristic attributes of the SLA. The key characteristics of the local county and district level published landscape character assessments is also considered to provide guidance to the key characteristics.

- 6.83 At a local level the Site is covered by both the Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment (LUC 2005) and the West Wiltshire District Landscape Character Assessment (CBA 2007). Further updates to these areas are provided with the Local Landscape Character Report (2020) within the Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 1 (JMNP1) Evidence Base.
- 6.84 Within the Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment (2005) the Site is located within the host Landscape Type (LT) 12: Open Clay Vale and Landscape Character Area (LCA) 12B: Avon Open Clay Vale as shown on Figure 6.4 in **Appendix 6.1**. Within the West Wiltshire District Landscape Character Assessment (2007) the Site is located within LTC: Open Clay Vale and LCA C1: Melksham Clay Vale as shown on Figure 6.5 in **Appendix 6.1**. The JMNP1 Local Landscape Character Report places the EIA Study Area within Landscape Character Type 3: Open Clay Vale.
- 6.85 Overall, the Site characteristics are fairly consistent with the published host LCA descriptions. At a site level the key landscape characteristics can be summarised as follows:
- The Site comprises nine mixed agricultural field parcels and is adjacent to a deciduous woodland plantation located within a gently rolling clay vale landscape, which subtly slopes within the Site from higher points along the northern and north-eastern boundaries. The field parcels are geometric in shape and delineated by hedgerows and established hedgerow trees, many of which are oak. A watercourse runs from the south-western boundary through the southern part of the Site on the south-eastern boundary. Several interconnected ditches run along field boundaries and connect to the watercourse;
 - The landscape setting to the south and west is on similar rolling clay vale landform ranging between 40m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) to 55m aOD. Clacker's Brook winds across the landscape c.300m to the south at the closest point and riparian vegetation along the brook contributes to visual containment and filtering from the south. Within the SLA to the north-east the landscape rises in a series of upstanding hills allowing for occasional publicly accessible framed views over the Site and its context;
 - The landscape fabric of the Site and surrounding field parcels demonstrate only limited field amalgamation when compared to late 19th century mapping, resulting in a relatively intact landscape structure with a degree of time depth. The historic aspects of the Site and its context are also represented by the comprehensive PRoW network, which is evident on historic mapping. Two of these routes are named green lanes: 'Prater's Lane' running along the eastern boundary and 'Brown's Lane' running adjacent to the southern boundary;
 - To the north of the Site a number of features impinge on the visual and sensory character of the Site including noise from the A3102, a line of 132kV pylons and overhead power lines which cross the Site, some audible noise from the solar farm to the immediate east, the abrupt urban edge of new housing associated with Lopes Close and views of the settlement edge of Melksham to the west. To the south of the Site the context becomes more rural in character with distance from these influences, however, views towards large agricultural buildings at Snarlton Farm and recreational land uses at Melksham Town Football Club are evident in some locations; and

- Overall, the Site and its context have a rural character although the edge of settlement and associated land uses are evident. Long distance views are available from within the Site towards the ridges to the north-east and south.

6.86 Landscape character receptors considered within this Chapter (see **Table 6.2**) are listed in **Table 6.7** below together with their assessed sensitivity.

Table 6.7: Landscape Character Receptor Sensitivity

Receptor	Published Assessment Findings	Receptor Sensitivity
The Site Landscape Character	As host landscape character assessments below.	Medium
Host LCA C1 Melksham Open Clay Vales (West Wiltshire District LCA 2006 CBA)	A small LCA which comprises low-lying landscape, a regular, medium scale field pattern, a sense of openness, a comprehensive footpath network, dominant pylons and brooks. It is noted that since the landscape assessment was carried out that Melksham has expanded to the east introducing new housing and roads into the LCA.	Medium
Host Area 3: Open Clay Vales (JMNP1 2020)	A small Area which reflects the description for LCA C1 Melksham Open Clay Vales, with some additional descriptions relating to rural routeways.	Medium
Non-Host LCA F2 Sandridge Park Greensand Hills (West Wiltshire District LCA 2006 CBA)	LCA F2 is a small LCA. It is characterised as a rounded hill, with dramatic views over the adjacent open clay vales. Irregular woodland provides enclosure and frames views, a sparse settlement pattern, with wooded parkland around Sandridge Park, a mature landscape structure with a strong sense of tranquillity. Inherent sensitivities include: <i>“Open, panoramic views across adjacent open clay vale landscape character areas.”</i>	High
Non-Host Area 4: Wooded Greensand Hills (JMNP1 2020)	Area 4 is a small LCA and descriptions closely reflect the characteristics of LCA F2. It is characterised as having ridges and steep slopes, with dramatic views over the adjacent open clay vales. Irregular woodland provides enclosure and frames views, a sparse settlement pattern, with wooded parkland around Sandridge Park, a mature landscape structure with a strong sense of tranquillity.	High

Visual Amenity

- 6.87 An appraisal of the baseline conditions in respect of visual amenity is set out at **Appendix 6.1**, Section 4. It undertakes an analysis of existing views and the people ('receptors') likely to experience visual change is conducted using desk and field-based appraisal. Judgements have been made on the inherent value of each relevant visual receptor.
- 6.88 Visual amenity receptors considered in this Chapter are listed in **Table 6.8** below together with their assessed value.

Table 6.8: Visual Amenity Receptor Sensitivity

Receptor	EDP Sensitivity
Visual receptors within 1km:	
Bridleway Reference MELW40/ Prater's Lane (10m east of Site Boundary)	High
Footpath Reference MELW26 (within the Site)	High
Bridleway Reference MELW41/ Browns Lane (15m to south-west of the Site)	High
Footpath Reference MELW27 (150m to west of the Site)	High
Group of footpaths to the south including Footpath Reference MELW22 (280m to the south of the Site)	High
The following roads:	
Road Users on the A3102/Sandridge Common Road	Within SLA: Medium Outside SLA: Low
The following residential groups:	
Residential Group 1: 288, 289, 289A, 290, 290A, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, Sandridge Common Road	High
Residential Group 2: Blackmore Farm and Blackmore House	High
Residential Group 3: 1-12 Lopes Close	High
Residential Group 4: 254 and 256 Sandridge Common	High
Residential Group 5: Little Snarlton Farm/ Snarlton Farm	High
Manor Farm	High

Future Baseline

- 6.89 A number of assumptions are made to define the 'no development' scenario, or future baseline, of the Site. The future landscape and visual baseline in this location would largely depend on natural processes, climate change and land management practices, as well as future farming practices.
- 6.90 The Site's existing topography would remain unchanged without development. However, the visual perception of the Site could change due to vegetation growth, removal or potential losses as a result of diseases such as ash dieback. The land is currently used for pastoral farming however it is possible that the land could be used for arable farming at some point in the future. If so, it is noted that conventional tillage practices can lead to the loss of topsoil, which is the most fertile layer, reducing the land's long-term agricultural productivity. Intensive farming tends to deplete soil nutrients, especially if monoculture practices are used and could impact on future vegetation growth and potential perceptions of agricultural landscape.
- 6.91 In the Site's context Planning Application 'Land at Blackmore Farm' (reference: PL/2023/11188) was granted planning permission in May 2025. The existing baseline views from the PRoW network and edge of Melksham to the east of the Site across rural landscape (see Photoviewpoints EDP 7, 8, 10 and 11 within Appendix EDP 4 of **Appendix 6.1**) will be replaced with views of a new mixed-use development including up to 500 dwellings and public open space. Although there may be glimpsed views through to the Site, these will largely be interrupted by built form and new planting seen at close-range. Users of PRoW Bridleway reference: MELW41 will experience a change at the western end, with the introduction of residential development, and for those travelling west the new settlement edge will be visible in middle and close-range views.

Primary and Tertiary Mitigation

Construction Stage

- 6.92 The following primary and tertiary mitigation which has been evaluated as part of the construction stage assessment is outlined below.
- Construction activities will be carefully controlled by a conditioned Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) including a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP). Recommendations for protection of retained trees and hedgerows, in accordance with relevant British Standards such as BS 5837:2012 Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction, will ensure that the rooting areas of trees and hedgerows are not adversely affected by the construction process.

Operational Stage

- 6.93 The following primary mitigation is shown on the Composite Parameters Plan (**Figure 4.1**) and has been evaluated as part of the operational stage assessment (Year 1). No tertiary mitigation relevant to landscape and visual has been provided or evaluated as part of the operational stage assessment.
- 6.94 Primary mitigation includes 'existing trees and hedgerows and associated ditches (retained)', 'structural landscape planting', 'structural landscaping areas (15m-20m and 10m depth)', 'Green Infrastructure and linking highway land' and 'existing deciduous woodland (offsite –

dashed line denotes 10m offset)' (**Figure 4.1**). Within these areas the following retention and enhancement of existing vegetation will be delivered:

- The existing landscape structure of hedgerows and trees will largely be retained, with minor hedgerow losses for access and existing gaps in hedgerows used wherever possible as shown on **Figure 4.1**. Vegetation to be retained for its integral value and its contribution to landscape character, visual amenity and biodiversity;
- Buffer zones around the three veteran trees and a 10m offset from the woodland off-site to the south east will remain undeveloped to ensure that these irreplaceable habitats are safeguarded. Root Protection Zones around trees will similarly be respected throughout the Proposed Development;
- Provision of structural landscape planting within green infrastructure land will extend along parts of the eastern boundary, southern boundary and parts of the western boundary as well as within the southern areas of open space and around areas of proposed residential development land and along some internal hedgerow boundaries (as shown on **Figure 4.1**). Some of these will incorporate existing vegetation on-site and their assumed widths and composition are detailed further under secondary mitigation;
- Structural landscaping areas include a varied 15-20m woodland belt (approximately 300m in length) which is proposed along the southern half of the Site's boundary where Bridleway MELW40 becomes more visually contained and rural in character. This will heavily filter close-range views from the bridleway as well as breaking up identified medium range elevated views from the A3102 within the SLA. Planting in this area will have a minimum width including retained planting where present, and have a naturalistic alignment and form to make a positive contribution to surrounding open space, and to biodiversity, as illustrated on the Parameters Plan; and
- Structural landscaping areas include a woodland/ tree belt which is proposed to bolster the boundaries around the northern field parcel to heavily filter the proposals to the immediate south of Lopes Close, in views from Bridleway MELW40 and SLA providing betterment over the existing stark urban edge. Planting in this area will have a minimum width of 10m and have a naturalistic alignment and form to make a positive contribution to the adjacent proposed open space and to biodiversity;
- Maximum building heights of 12.9m to 10.0m as shown on **Figure 4.2**.

Assessment of Effects, Secondary Mitigation and Residual Effects

Construction Stage

Changes to Landscape Character

- 6.95 Construction activities, movement of Site traffic, lighting, noise and sounds will be present during the construction process. This is not unusual and, it is anticipated that it would be carefully controlled by a conditioned CEMP including a Construction Logistics Plan and CTMP. Protection measures will be implemented for the retained trees and hedgerows, in accordance with relevant British Standards such as BS 5837, will ensure that the rooting areas of trees and hedgerows are not adversely affected by the construction process.

Site Landscape Character

- 6.96 The magnitude of change will be very high (on both the Site itself and immediate context). The effect will, however, be temporary and extend only for the medium term duration of the construction process.
- 6.97 The sensitivity of the Site itself is considered to be medium overall. At Construction, the magnitude of change is considered to be very high. Therefore, there is likely to be a direct, temporary, medium-term, adverse effect which is considered to be major.

Secondary Mitigation or Enhancement

- 6.98 No secondary mitigation or enhancement has been identified.

Residual Effect

- 6.99 In the absence of secondary mitigation, the residual effects for all receptors are the same as those reported in the pre-mitigation scenario.

Significance

- 6.100 The effects are considered to be **Significant**.

Host LCA C1 Melksham Open Clay Vales (West Wiltshire District LCA 2006 CBA), and Area 3: Open Clay Vales (JMNP1 2020)

- 6.101 The sensitivity of Host LCA C1 Melksham Open Clay Vales (West Wiltshire District LCA 2006 CBA), and Area 3: Open Clay Vales (JMNP1 2020) is assessed as medium. The magnitude of change is considered to be medium. Therefore, there is likely to be a direct, temporary, medium-term, adverse effect which is considered to be moderate.

Secondary Mitigation or Enhancement

- 6.102 No secondary mitigation or enhancement has been identified.

Residual Effect

- 6.103 In the absence of secondary mitigation, the residual effects for all receptors are the same as those reported in the pre-mitigation scenario.

Significance

- 6.104 The effects are considered to be **Significant**.

Non-Host LCA F2 Sandridge Park (West Wiltshire District LCA 2006 CBA), Non-Host Area 4: Wooded Greensand Hills (JMNP1 2020)

- 6.105 The sensitivity of Non-host LCA F2 Sandridge Park (West Wiltshire District LCA 2006 CBA), and Non-host Area 4: Wooded Greensand Hills (JMNP1 2020) is assessed as high. The magnitude of change is considered to be low. Therefore, there is likely to be a direct, temporary, medium-term, adverse effect which is considered to be moderate.

Secondary Mitigation or Enhancement

- 6.106 No secondary mitigation or enhancement has been identified.

Residual Effect

- 6.107 In the absence of secondary mitigation, the residual effects for all receptors are the same as those reported in the pre-mitigation scenario.

Significance

6.108 The effects are considered to be **Significant**.

Changes to Visual Amenity of Visual Receptors within 1km of the Site

- 6.109 Construction activities, the movement of traffic, lighting and noise generated by the Proposed Development will be present during the construction stage. This is not unusual, and these works will be carefully controlled by a conditioned CEMP, including a CTMP that will aim to minimise negative visual and perceptual effects on visual receptors.
- 6.110 The magnitude of change will, however, be very high where receptors are adjacent to the Site and across the immediate context, including for residential receptors and users of roads and PRoWs across the ZPV, as listed in **Table 6.8** below. This elevated magnitude of change results from construction activities associated with the Proposed Development which will form a new and close-range defining focus across both horizontal and vertical extents. This magnitude of change will extend across the ZPV but diminish with distance.
- 6.111 As with the predicted effects on landscape character, the levels of effect at construction are not uncommon on a greenfield (previously undeveloped) site, and are not an indication of bad design, but an outcome based on the conversion of an edge of settlement greenfield site to a residential development.
- 6.112 Where adverse effects are experienced (at a localised level), these will be medium term and temporary (spanning approximately six years). The levels of effect will also reduce throughout the construction stage, as more of the Proposed Development is built out and less construction activity is required. The construction stage effects presented in **Table 6.9** below represent the worst-case scenario in this regard. Effects are considered to be direct and indirect.

Table 6.9: Visual Receptors Predicted to Experience and Effect at Construction

Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Duration	Adverse / Beneficial	Level of Effect
Users of Bridleway Reference MELW40 (10m east of Site Boundary)	High	High	Temporary, medium-term	Adverse	Major
Users of Footpath Reference MELW26 (within the Site)	High	High	Temporary, medium-term	Adverse	Major
Users of Bridleway Reference MELW41 (15m to south-west of the Site)	High	Medium	Temporary, medium-term	Adverse	Major/ Moderate
Users of Footpath Reference MELW27 (150m to west of the Site)	High	Medium	Temporary, medium-term	Adverse	Major/ Moderate

Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Duration	Adverse / Beneficial	Level of Effect
Users of Footpath Reference MELW22 (280m to the south of the Site)	High	Low	Temporary, medium-term	Adverse	Moderate
Users of A3102/Sandridge Common Road	Medium within SLA	Medium	Temporary, medium-term	Adverse	Moderate
Users of A3102/Sandridge Common Road	Low outside of SLA	Very High	Temporary, medium-term	Adverse	Major/ Moderate
Residential Group 1: 288, 289, 289A, 290, 290A, 291, 292, 293, 295, 295 Sandridge Common	High	High	Temporary, medium-term	Adverse	Major
Residential Group 2: Blackmore Farm and Blackmore House	High	Very High	Temporary, medium-term	Adverse	On Blackmore House only: Major ³
Residential Group 3: 1-12 Lopes Close	High	Very High	Temporary, medium-term	Adverse	Major ⁶
Residential Group 4: Property numbers 254 and 256	High	High	Temporary, medium-term	Adverse	Major
Manor Farm, Snarlton Farm and Little Snarlton Farm	High	Medium	Temporary, medium-term	Adverse	Major/ Moderate

Residual Effect

6.113 In the absence of secondary mitigation, the residual effects for all receptors are the same as those reported in the pre-mitigation scenario.

³ Reported as Major but assessed as Substantial under EDP's LVIA methodology and reported as such in **Appendix 6.1**.

Significance

6.114 The effects considered above are considered to be **Significant**.

Operational Stage

Changes to Landscape Character

Site Landscape Character

6.115 The changes predicted to occur on the dimensions that contribute to the character of the Site are described below and evaluated overall.

- The Physical Landscape: The Proposed Development will result in some limited changes to the Site's topographic, geological and hydrological character to allow for construction and provision of SuDS features across the Site. The parts of the Site which are remaining open will experience less change, particularly along the SLA to the north-east and within the field parcels to the south-west. The Proposed Development responds to the topography of the Site with properties of 2 storeys on higher parts of the Site and properties of 3 storeys limited to the lower slopes of the Site.
- Landscape Fabric and Habitats: The Site currently comprises an area of pastoral land with hedgerows and mature trees along the field boundaries. Whilst the land use would change to residential development, infrastructure and open space, the Proposed Development is considered to be compatible with the retention of the landscape framework. The vegetation along the Site's boundaries will be retained and enhanced where possible with minor losses along some hedgerows for access and internal circulation (as shown on **Figure 4.1**);
- The Site's Visual and Sensory Character: The introduction of a residential development will result in changes to the visual and sensory character of the Site. Hedgerows and trees along field boundaries will be retained and enhanced and new structural landscaping areas will be introduced along the south-eastern boundary to contribute to screening along this section of MELW40/ Prater's Lane;
- Historic Landscape Character: the Proposed Development will result in the loss of historic agricultural land uses, although the retention of the setting to Blackmore Farm has formed a key consideration in the Parameter Plans (**Figure 4.1** and **4.2**). Mature deciduous trees along Site boundaries including three veteran trees will be retained with their buffer zones remaining undeveloped. Footpath MELW26 which runs through the southern part of the Site will be retained within a green infrastructure setting; and
- Cultural connections: the existing footpath MELW26 which crosses through the Site will be retained and integrated into the wider recreational provision on-site which includes structural landscape planting. Development will be set- back from the boundary with PRow MELW40/ Prater's Lane in order to retain the character of this route.

6.116 The magnitude of change will be very high at Year 1, particularly within the northern parts of the Site. At Year 15, proposed structural planting across the Site, including woodland, trees, and hedgerows at the Site boundaries will have matured, making a notable contribution to

the visual and physical integration of the Site within the landscape. This planting will also provide increased tree canopy cover and improve on-site biodiversity, as well as contribute to amenity value. The magnitude of change will therefore reduce to high.

- 6.117 The sensitivity of the Site itself is considered to be medium overall. At Year 1, the magnitude of change is considered to be very high. Therefore, there is likely to be a direct, permanent, medium to long-term, adverse effect which is considered to be major.

Secondary Mitigation or Enhancement

- 6.118 The proposed secondary mitigation and enhancement planting, detailed below, have been taken into account in this assessment. A detailed planting plan and schedule, and a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) will be prepared in support of reserved matters applications, both secured by a planning condition. These will ensure that the proposed planting (including woodland and hedgerows) will be appropriately suited to the Site (in terms of species, locations and numbers) and help to ensure that they will successfully establish and mature, so as to contribute to the effective mitigation of the Proposed Development.
- 6.119 The Structural landscape planting and green infrastructure land will incorporate the following proposed strategy, which is illustrated on the Illustrative Landscape Strategy Plan, see Figure 6.7 in **Appendix 6.1** and has been taken into account within the assessment of residual effects (Year 15).

Proposed Planting

- Dark corridors will be created through linear woodland planting along Eight Acre Plantation and along the western boundary to contribute to ecological mitigation and connectivity. These will also create 'green fingers' between the Proposed Development and the consented site (Cumulative Project 1) to the west to break up large scale urban massing in line with recommendations within the Site Landscape Appraisals for Me1(CBA 2023);
- Where hedgerows fall outside of the Site boundary new hedgerows will be planted within the Site boundary to strengthen the landscape framework across the Proposed Development and ensure that visual mitigation can be provided. Where hedgerows are weak or gappy these will be enhanced with new hedgerow planting
- Planting within the area of open space to the north-east of the Site will include native scrub and tree planting, including some specimen tree planting and will contribute to softening and filtering views of the Proposed Development from the east; and
- A large multifunctional area of public open space will be created to the south which will contribute to a sensitive transition to the wider countryside, retain rural features and multi-functional links through the countryside in line with recommendations within the Wiltshire Local Plan Review: 'Sites Landscape Appraisals' for Local Plan Review Site Me1 as shown on Figure 1.13 (Chris Blandford Associates 2023)⁸ and retain a rural setting for Footpath MELW26. Woodland planting around the boundaries and along the existing watercourse will contribute to recommended landscape guidance of screening views to new urban edges and creating a sensitive transition to the southern countryside. This will also create woodland habitats in line with the aims of the

Western Forest programme as well as connecting fragmented areas of offsite woodland and enhancing the existing woodland edges along Eight Acres Plantation.

Planting Principles

- Enhancements will be made to improve the health and longevity of existing features through initial work and securing their long-term management. Improvements are assumed to include, but are not limited to, gapping up and augmentation with additional planting to ensure species and age diversity. This to be delivered through a LEMP and secured through condition;
- New woodland and hedge enhancement planting will comprise native locally prevalent trees and shrubs, ideally of local provenance, planted in accordance with best practice measures (set out below) to maximise contribution to integration with the wider landscape and to biodiversity and ensure long term sustainability. The woodland planting mix to create a woodland and woodland edge structure and to include sufficient evergreen trees and shrubs that soften the Proposed Development in views towards the Site in winter.
- Best practice guidelines for the implementation of planting are set out below to indicate the level of workmanship which could be specified through condition, though do not constitute a detailed specification at this outline design stage:
 - All plants shall conform to BS 3936 Nursery stock - Specification for trees and shrubs and be in accordance with the Horticultural Trades Association (HTA) National Plant Specification;
 - Supplying nurseries shall be registered under the HTA Nursery Certification Scheme;
 - All plants shall be packed and transported in accordance with the Code of Practice for Plant Handling as produced by (Committee for Plant Supply and Establishment) CPSE;
 - All plants shall be of the species and sizes shown in the plant schedule;
 - Planting shall not be carried out when the ground is waterlogged, frost bound or during periods of cold drying winds;
 - All stock to be of native provenance;
 - All bare root stock shall be root dipped in an approved water-retained polymer;
 - All new tree planting is to be in accordance with BS8545 Trees: from nursery to independence in the landscape. Recommendations;
 - Recommended topsoil depth is 450mm for shrubs. All topsoil, including existing stored for re-use on site and imported topsoil to be tested to ensure in line with BS3882 Specification for Topsoil; and

- Existing trees to be retained are to be protected in accordance with BS 5837:2012 - Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction. Protective fencing is to be installed as per the detail on the drawing therein.

Residual Effect

6.120 The sensitivity of the Site itself is considered to be medium overall. At Year 15, the magnitude of change is considered to be high. Therefore, there is likely to be a direct, permanent, long-term, adverse effect which is considered to be major/moderate.

Significance

6.121 This effect is considered to be **Significant** at Year 15.

Host LCA C1 Melksham Open Clay Vales (West Wiltshire District LCA 2006 CBA)

6.122 The Site falls within host LCA C1 Open Clay Vales as defined within the West Wiltshire District LCA 2006. Although there would be direct changes to the Site at an elevated level, changes to the character of the host LCA would be more limited. This is as a result of the relatively limited ZPV which has been achieved through the sensitive design of the Proposed Development which retains key characteristics of the LCA such as field pattern, hedgerows and the stream corridors, as well as the set-back of built form from more visually exposed parts of the Site and footpath network.

6.123 The magnitude of change would be medium at Year 1, as a result of the relatively small size of the LCA.

6.124 The sensitivity of the Host LCA C1 Melksham Open Clay Vales (as defined by West Wiltshire District LCA 2006) is considered to be medium overall. At Year 1, the magnitude of change is considered to be medium. Therefore, there is likely to be a direct, permanent, medium to long-term, adverse effect which is considered to be moderate.

Secondary Mitigation or Enhancement

6.125 The proposed secondary mitigation and enhancement planting, detailed above for Site Landscape Character, have been taken into account in this assessment.

Residual Effect

6.126 The sensitivity of the Host LCA C1 Melksham Open Clay Vales (as defined by West Wiltshire District LCA 2006) is considered to be medium overall. At Year 15, proposed structural planting across the Site, including woodland, trees, and hedgerows at the Site boundaries will have matured, making a notable contribution to the visual and physical integration of the Site within the landscape. The magnitude of change will therefore reduce to low (small). Therefore, there is likely to be a direct, permanent, long-term, adverse effect which is considered to be moderate/minor.

Significance

6.127 This effect is considered to be **Not Significant** at Year 15.

Host Area 3: Open Clay Vales (JMNP1 2020)

6.128 The Site is largely consistent with the description of Area 3: Open Clay Vales. Although there would be direct changes to the Site at an elevated level, changes to the character of the host Area 3: Open Clay Vales would be more limited. This is as a result of the relatively limited ZPV which has been achieved through the sensitive design of the Proposed Development which retains key characteristics of the LCA such as field pattern, hedgerows and the stream

corridors, as well as the set-back of built form from more visually exposed parts of the Site and the characteristic narrow routeways.

- 6.129 The magnitude of change would be medium at Year 1, particularly within the northern parts of the Site.
- 6.130 The sensitivity of the Host Area 3: Open Clay Vales (as defined by JMNP1 2020) is considered to be medium overall. At Year 1, the magnitude of change is considered to be medium. Therefore, there is likely to be a direct, temporary, medium to long-term, adverse effect which is considered to be moderate.

Secondary Mitigation or Enhancement

- 6.131 The proposed secondary mitigation and enhancement planting, detailed above for Site Landscape Character, have been taken into account in this assessment.

Residual Effect

- 6.132 The sensitivity of the Host Area 3: Open Clay Vales (as defined by JMNP1 2020) is considered to be medium overall. At Year 15, proposed structural planting across the Site, including woodland, trees, and hedgerows at the Site boundaries will have matured, making a notable contribution to the visual and physical integration of the Site within the landscape. The magnitude of change will therefore reduce to low (small). Therefore, there is likely to be a direct, permanent, long-term, adverse effect which is considered to be moderate/minor.

Significance

- 6.133 This effect is considered to be **Not Significant** at Year 15.

Non-Host LCA F2 Sandridge Park Greensand Hills (West Wiltshire District LCA 2006 CBA)

- 6.134 Non-host LCA F2 Sandridge Park Greensand Hills is a small area defined by the West Wiltshire District LCA 2006 and is located approximately 50m to the east of the Site at the closest point. Views from this LCA are illustrated by Photoviewpoint EDP 5, see Appendix EDP 4 within **Appendix 6.1**. There will be no change to the majority of the key characteristics as a result of the Proposed Development being outside the LCA; however, the perceptual aspects of the LCA which are described as being the “*overall strong sense of tranquillity throughout the character area*” and “*dramatic views across adjacent open clay vales to the north and south*” will experience change as a result of the Proposed Development within the ZPV.
- 6.135 The magnitude of change would be low (small) at Year 1, with effects on the perceptual characteristics of the LCA extending across a small area, principally to the south of the A3102 where the tranquillity is already disrupted.
- 6.136 The sensitivity of non-host LCA F2 Sandridge Park Greensand Hills (West Wiltshire District LCA 2006 CBA) is considered to be high. At Year 1, the magnitude of change is considered to be low (small). Therefore, there is likely to be a direct, permanent, medium to long-term, adverse effect which is considered to be moderate.

Secondary Mitigation or Enhancement

- 6.137 The proposed secondary mitigation and enhancement planting, detailed above for Site Landscape Character, have been taken into account in this assessment.

Residual Effect

6.138 The sensitivity of LCA F2 Sandridge Park Greensand Hills (West Wiltshire District LCA 2006 CBA) is considered to be High overall. At Year 15, proposed structural planting across the Site, including woodland, trees, and hedgerows at the Site boundaries will have matured, making a notable contribution to the visual and physical integration of the Site within the landscape, reducing the intervisibility from the LCA. The magnitude of change will therefore reduce to very low (very small). Therefore there is likely to be a direct, permanent, long-term, adverse effect which is considered to be moderate/minor.

Significance

6.139 This effect is considered to be **Not Significant** at Year 15.

Non-Host Area 4: Wooded Greensand Hills (JMNP1 2020)

6.140 Non-host Area 4: Wooded Greensand Hills is a small area defined by the JMNP1 2020 and is located approximately 150m to the east of the Site at the closest point. Views from this LCA are illustrated by Photoviewpoint EDP 5, see Appendix EDP 4 within **Appendix 6.1**. There will be no change to the majority of the key characteristics as a result of the Proposed Development being outside the LCA; however, the perceptual aspects of the LCA which are described as being the “overall strong sense of tranquillity throughout the character area” and “dramatic views across the Melksham open clay vale” will experience change as a result of the Proposed Development within the ZPV.

6.141 The magnitude of change would be low at Year 1, with effects on the perceptual characteristics of the LCA extending across a small area, principally to the south of the A3102 where the tranquillity is already disrupted.

6.142 The sensitivity of non-host Area 4: Wooded Greensand Hills (JMNP1 2020) is considered to be high. At Year 1, the magnitude of change is considered to be low (small). Therefore, there is likely to be a direct, permanent, medium to long-term, adverse effect which is considered to be moderate.

Secondary Mitigation or Enhancement

6.143 The proposed secondary mitigation and enhancement planting, detailed above for Site Landscape Character, have been taken into account in this assessment.

Residual Effect

6.144 The sensitivity of non-host Area 4: Wooded Greensand Hills (JMNP1 2020) is considered to be High overall. At Year 15, proposed structural planting across the Site, including woodland, trees, and hedgerows at the Site boundaries will have matured, making a notable contribution to the visual and physical integration of the Site within the landscape, reducing the intervisibility from the LCA. The magnitude of change will therefore reduce to very low (very small). Therefore, there is likely to be a direct, permanent, long-term, adverse effect which is considered to be moderate/minor.

Significance

6.145 This effect is considered to be **Not Significant** at Year 15.

Changes to Visual Amenity of Visual Receptors *within 1km of the Site*

Users of Bridleway Reference MELW40/ Prater's Lane (10m east of Site Boundary)

- 6.146 This PRoW is located within a wide green lane named 'Prater's Lane' which abuts the eastern Site boundary. Views from this part of the route are illustrated by Photoviewpoints EDP 2, 3 and 4, see Appendix EDP 4 within **Appendix 6.1**. The visual experience is varied along the route with close-range open views, filtered in places, across the Site towards Melksham being available where the lane crests the lower slopes of Sandridge Hill, with views becoming more enclosed to the south as a result of falling topography and woodland at Eight Acres Plantation.
- 6.147 At Year 1 the magnitude of change to users of this PRoW would be high where the route passes along the Site's boundary (approximately 680m) with new built form set-back but seen at close-range across a notable horizontal and vertical scale, and before landscape mitigation has established. Views towards Blackmore House (listed building) will be retained within a green undeveloped setting.
- 6.148 The sensitivity of users of Bridleway Reference MELW40/ Prater's Lane is considered to be high. At Year 1, the magnitude of change is considered to be high. Therefore, there is likely to be a direct, permanent, medium to long-term, adverse effect which is considered to be major.

Secondary Mitigation or Enhancement

- 6.149 The proposed secondary mitigation and enhancement planting, detailed above for Site Landscape Character, have been taken into account in this assessment.

Residual Effect

- 6.150 Northern 450m section of MELW40 adjacent to the Site: The sensitivity of Bridleway Reference MELW40 is considered to be high. At Year 15 there would be a varied magnitude of change as mitigation planting establishes with users along the northern 450m experiencing a medium magnitude of change. Therefore, there is likely to be a direct, permanent, long-term, adverse effect which is considered to be major/moderate.
- 6.151 Southern 230m section of MELW40 adjacent to the Site: The sensitivity of Bridleway Reference MELW40 is considered to be high. At Year 15 there would be a varied magnitude of change as mitigation planting establishes with users along the southern 230m experiencing a low magnitude of change. Therefore, there is likely to be a direct, permanent, long-term, adverse effect which is considered to be moderate.

Significance

- 6.152 This effect is considered to be **Significant** at Year 1 and at Year 15 on a short section of the route but **Not Significant** along the route as a whole.

Users of Footpath Reference MELW26 (within the Site)

- 6.153 MELW26 runs south-east from A3102/Sandridge Common and connects to Bridleway MELW41. It runs parallel with the western Site boundary for approximately 700m and then crosses into the southern part of the Site and then across a field to the south of the Site. Views from this part of the route are illustrated by Photoviewpoints EDP 10 and 11, see Appendix EDP 4 within **Appendix 6.1**. The visual experience is varied along the route with

views eastwards being largely rural in nature and views to the north characterised by distant glimpses of settlement at Lopes Close and Melksham settlement edge.

- 6.154 At Year 1 the magnitude of change to users of this PRoW would be high where the route passes parallel to the Site boundary as a result of proposed properties being seen at close-range but would reduce to medium within the Site.
- 6.155 The sensitivity of Footpath Reference MELW26 is considered to be high. At Year 1, the magnitude of change is considered to be high upon a short section of the route. Therefore, there is likely to be a direct, permanent, medium to long-term, adverse effect which is considered to be major.

Secondary Mitigation or Enhancement

- 6.156 The proposed secondary mitigation and enhancement planting, detailed above for Site Landscape Character, have been taken into account in this assessment.

Residual Effect

- 6.157 The sensitivity of Footpath Reference MELW26 is considered to be high. At Year 15 the magnitude of change would reduce to medium as proposed mitigation planting establishes. This magnitude of change would reduce with distance, and the nature of change would be neutral within the Site where the baseline of an open agricultural field is replaced with a more enclosed woodland setting. Therefore, there is likely to be a direct, permanent, long-term, adverse effect which is considered to be major/moderate.

Significance

- 6.158 This effect is considered to be **Significant** at Year 15.⁴

Users of Bridleway Reference MELW41 (15m to south-west of the Site)

- 6.159 Bridleway Reference MELW41 extends from the hamlet of Redstocks, north across Clacker's Brook and then north-west towards Melksham. It follows 'Brown's Lane' where it passes along the southern boundary of the Site. Views from this part of the route are illustrated by Photoviewpoints EDP 8 and 12, see Appendix EDP 4 within **Appendix 6.1**. Views from the PRoW, where it passes close to the Site within 'Browns Lane' are varied in nature being heavily filtered by tree cover in places and more open in others. Where there are views to the Proposed Development, the proposed built form will be set-back from the viewer by 400m beyond areas of proposed open space and with layers of hedgerow planting creating levels of filtering.
- 6.160 At Year 1 the magnitude of change to users of this PRoW would be medium where the route passes closest to the Site.
- 6.161 The sensitivity of Bridleway Reference MELW41 is considered to be high. At Year 1, the magnitude of change is considered to be medium. Therefore, there is likely to be a direct, permanent, medium to long-term, adverse effect which is considered to be major/moderate.

⁴ It is noted that the baseline rural setting for this footpath is due to change once Planning Application 'Land at Blackmore Farm' (reference: PL/2023/11188) is constructed.

Secondary Mitigation or Enhancement

6.162 The proposed secondary mitigation and enhancement planting, detailed above for Site Landscape Character, have been taken into account in this assessment.

Residual Effect

6.163 The sensitivity of Bridleway Reference MELW41 is considered to be high. At Year 15 the magnitude of change would reduce to low as proposed planting within the areas of public open space establishes. Therefore, there is likely to be a direct, permanent, long-term, adverse effect which is considered to be moderate.

Significance

6.164 This effect is considered to be **Significant** at Year 15.

Users of Footpath Reference MELW27 (150m to west of the Site)

6.165 Footpath Reference MELW27 connects Eastern Way to MELW26. Users travelling east currently have filtered views across the Site and wider rural countryside, including towards Sandridge Hill within SLA 5. Views from the junction of Footpath Reference MELW27 and MELW26 are illustrated by Photoviewpoint EDP 11, see Appendix EDP 4 within **Appendix 6.1**. The route crosses field parcels to the west of the Site and intervening hedgerows provide filtering. Properties to the south of the A3102 and built form at Blackmore Farm are evident in the view. For receptors travelling east the Proposed Development would be apparent above the intervening vegetation and may break the skyline.

6.166 At Year 1 the magnitude of change to users of this PRoW would be medium becoming higher at the eastern end.

6.167 The sensitivity of Footpath Reference MELW27 is considered to be high. At Year 1, the magnitude of change is considered to be medium. Therefore, there is likely to be a direct, permanent, medium to long-term, adverse effect which is considered to be major/moderate.

Secondary Mitigation or Enhancement

6.168 The proposed secondary mitigation and enhancement planting, detailed above for Site Landscape Character, have been taken into account in this assessment.

Residual Effect

6.169 The sensitivity of Footpath Reference MELW27 is considered to be high. At Year 15 the magnitude of change would reduce to low as proposed planting along the boundaries of the Proposed Development establish and provide softening. Therefore, there is likely to be a direct, permanent, long-term, adverse effect which is considered to be moderate.

Significance

6.170 This effect is considered to be **Significant** at Year 15⁵.

Users of Footpath Reference MELW22 (280m to the south of the Site)

6.171 Footpath MELW22 runs along Clacker's Brook to the south of the Site and provides connection between Eastern Way and MELW26. Views illustrated by Photoviewpoint EDP 9, see Appendix EDP 4 within **Appendix 6.1**. Views from the PRoW take in housing, pylons and large agricultural buildings with the SLA forming a wooded backdrop. The Proposed

⁵ It is noted that the baseline rural setting for this footpath is due to change once Planning Application 'Land at Blackmore Farm' (reference: PL/2023/11188) is constructed.

Development would extend below Sandridge Hill and would be heavily filtered by intervening vegetation and seen obliquely.

- 6.172 At Year 1 the magnitude of change to users of this PRoW would be low (small).
- 6.173 The sensitivity of Footpath Reference MELW22 is considered to be high. At Year 1, the magnitude of change is considered to be low (small). Therefore, there is likely to be a direct, permanent, medium to long-term, adverse effect which is considered to be moderate.

Secondary Mitigation or Enhancement

- 6.174 The proposed secondary mitigation and enhancement planting, detailed above for Site Landscape Character, have been taken into account in this assessment.

Residual Effect

- 6.175 The sensitivity of Footpath Reference MELW22 is considered to be high. At Year 15 the magnitude of change would reduce to very low (very small) as proposed planting along the boundaries of the Proposed Development establish and provide additional filtering. Therefore, there is likely to be a direct, permanent, long-term, adverse effect which is considered to be moderate/minor.

Significance

- 6.176 This effect is considered to be **Not Significant** at Year 15.

Users of A3102/Sandridge Common Road

- 6.177 A3102/Sandridge Common Road runs east-west providing connection between Melksham and the A342 to the east. It runs along the Site's northern boundary and through the SLA to the east and views are available from approximately 1.5km, although frequently filtered and restricted. Views illustrated by Photoviewpoints EDP 1 and 5, see Appendix EDP 4 within **Appendix 6.1**. The sensitivity of receptors using A roads is low generally, although where the route passes through the SLA this is considered to be medium as a result of the elevated framed views which are available across the clay vale lowlands.
- 6.178 Within the SLA: Motorists travelling towards Melksham will experience a number of sequential views across the clay vale landscape and towards different parts of the Proposed Development, with short time lapses, creating an awareness of the new settlement edge extending along a moderate horizontal extent, although partially hidden by topography and vegetation.
- 6.179 Adjacent to the Site, where the road passes the northern boundary of the Site it is considered that the Proposed Development will form a new and recognisable element in localised views which does not conflict with elements in the streetscene including the new development at Lopes Close.
- 6.180 At Year 1 the magnitude of change to users of the A3102/ Sandridge Common would be medium within the SLA rising to high adjacent to the Proposed Development.
- 6.181 Within the SLA: The sensitivity of A3102/ Sandridge Common Road is considered to be medium within the SLA. At Year 1, the magnitude of change is considered to be medium. Therefore, there is likely to be a direct, permanent, medium to long-term, adverse effect which is considered to be moderate.

- 6.182 Adjacent to the Site: The sensitivity of A3102/ Sandridge Common Road is considered to be low where it passes the Site. At Year 1, the magnitude of change is considered to be high. Therefore, there is likely to be a direct, permanent, medium to long-term, adverse effect which is considered to be moderate.

Secondary Mitigation or Enhancement

- 6.183 The proposed secondary mitigation and enhancement planting, detailed above for Site Landscape Character, have been taken into account in this assessment.

Residual Effect

- 6.184 Within the SLA: The sensitivity of A3102/ Sandridge Common Road is considered to be medium within the SLA. At Year 15 the magnitude of change would reduce low (small) within the SLA as proposed planting along the boundaries of the Proposed Development establish and provide additional filtering. Therefore, there is likely to be a direct, permanent, long-term, adverse effect which is considered to be moderate/minor.
- 6.185 Adjacent to the Site: The sensitivity of A3102/ Sandridge Common Road is considered to be low. At Year 15 the magnitude of change would reduce to medium adjacent to the Site as proposed planting along the boundaries establish and provide additional filtering. Therefore, there is likely to be a direct, permanent, long-term, adverse effect which is considered to be moderate/minor.

Significance

- 6.186 This effect is considered to be **Not Significant** at Year 15.

Residential Group 1: 288-295 Sandridge Common

- 6.187 Property Numbers 288, 289, 289A, 290, 290A, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295 Sandridge Common are located to the west of Blackmore Farm. Rear gardens and elevations face south and are between 150m and 340m from the Site's boundary. These properties have an oblique view of the agricultural barns to the south of Blackmore Farm which will restrict views towards the northern part of the Proposed Development. Views will be filtered by vegetation along garden curtilages, along intervening field boundaries and the Site's western boundary, however the Proposed Development will form a new element in the view over a moderate horizontal extent for both ground and upper floors.
- 6.188 The magnitude of change to the visual amenity of residents at Year 1 is considered to be medium.
- 6.189 The sensitivity of residents within Residential Group 1 is considered to be high. At Year 1, the magnitude of change is considered to be medium. Therefore, there is likely to be a direct, permanent, medium to long-term, adverse effect which is considered to be major/moderate.

Secondary Mitigation or Enhancement

- 6.190 The proposed secondary mitigation and enhancement planting, detailed above for Site Landscape Character, have been taken into account in this assessment.

Residual Effect

- 6.191 The sensitivity of Residential Group 1 is considered to be high. By Year 15, planting along the boundaries of the Proposed Development will have matured to filter the Proposed Development, so reducing the magnitude of change to low (small). Therefore, there is likely to be a direct, permanent, long-term, adverse effect which is considered to be moderate.

Significance

6.192 This effect is considered to be **Significant** at Year 15.

Residential Group 2: Blackmore House and Farm

6.193 Blackmore Farm and Blackmore House are located to the immediate west of the Site. Blackmore Farm is a single storey building surrounded by agricultural outbuildings and views are likely to be screened although narrow glimpsed views may be possible. The rear elevation of Blackmore House faces south and has views south-east towards the Site. Views will be within the context of surrounding barns and outbuildings and filtered by varied garden curtilage vegetation. The proposals are set-back from Blackmore House by over 100m, and orchard planting is proposed within its setting which will contribute to visual filtering.

6.194 The magnitude of change to the visual amenity of receptors at Blackmore House at Year 1 is considered to be high.

6.195 The sensitivity of Blackmore House is considered to be high. At Year 1, the magnitude of change is considered to be high. Therefore, there is likely to be a direct, permanent, medium to long-term, adverse effect which is considered to be major.

Secondary Mitigation or Enhancement

6.196 The proposed secondary mitigation and enhancement planting, detailed above for Site Landscape Character, have been taken into account in this assessment.

Residual Effect

6.197 The sensitivity of Blackmore Farm is considered to be high. By Year 15, the boundary enhancements and tree planting will have matured to filter views reducing the magnitude of change to medium. Therefore, there is likely to be a direct, permanent, long-term, adverse effect which is considered to be major/moderate.

Significance

6.198 This effect is considered to be **Significant** at Year 15.

Residential Group 3: 1-12 Lopes Close

6.199 Lopes Close numbers 1-12 are located along the northern boundary of the Site. They have been built in the past five years, and rear garden vegetation is not yet mature. A number of properties have open, unfiltered views across the Site from rear ground floor and upper floor windows. The proposals will introduce new dwellings behind numbers 1-12 Lopes Close and will be visible at close-range from both ground and upper floor windows. The sensitivity of residents is high.

6.200 The magnitude of change to the visual amenity of receptors at Year 1 is considered to be very high.

6.201 The sensitivity of Residential Group 3 is considered to be high. At Year 1, the magnitude of change is considered to be very high. Therefore, there is likely to be a direct, permanent, medium to long-term, adverse effect which is considered to be major.⁶

⁶ This is reported as substantial within **Appendix 6.1**.

Secondary Mitigation or Enhancement

6.202 The proposed secondary mitigation and enhancement planting, detailed above for Site Landscape Character, have been taken into account in this assessment.

Residual Effect

6.203 The sensitivity of Residential Group 3 is considered to remain high. By Year 15, the boundary enhancements and tree planting will have matured to filter views reducing the magnitude of change to high. Therefore, there is likely to be a direct, permanent, long-term, adverse effect which is considered to be major.

Significance

6.204 This effect is considered to be **Significant** at Year 15.

Residential Group 4: 254 and 256 Sandridge Common

6.205 Property numbers 254 and 256 are two dwellings located to the immediate north of Blackmore Farm and House. They are located approximately 80m to the west of the Site boundary. Their façades face south however they may have oblique views towards the new access point along northern boundary of the Site and glimpsed views towards the roofs within the Proposed Development beyond. This would affect residents at 256 in particular from both ground and upper floor windows. The sensitivity of residents is considered to be high.

6.206 The magnitude of change to the visual amenity of receptors at Year 1 and 15 is considered to be very low (very small).

6.207 The sensitivity of Residential Group 4 is considered to be high. At Year 1, the magnitude of change is considered to be very low (very small). Therefore, there is likely to be a direct, permanent, medium to long-term, adverse effect which is considered to be moderate/minor.

Secondary Mitigation or Enhancement

6.208 The proposed secondary mitigation and enhancement planting, detailed above for Site Landscape Character, have been taken into account in this assessment.

Residual Effect

6.209 The sensitivity of Residential Group 4 is considered to be high. At Year 15, the magnitude of change is considered to be very low (very small). Therefore, there is likely to be a direct, permanent, long-term, adverse effect which is considered to reduce to minor (using professional judgement).

Significance

6.210 This effect is considered to be **Not Significant** at Year 15.

Residential Group 5: Little Snarlton Farm/ Snarlton Farm

6.211 Residents at Snarlton Farm are unlikely to gain views as a result of intervening built form. Residents at Little Snarlton Farm may gain oblique views from upper floor windows, although the property is enclosed by a tree belt along the driveway. The Proposed Development will be heavily filtered by intervening vegetation. Where there are views to the proposals housing will be set-back beyond large areas of open space with tree planting along the boundaries which combine as layers to filter the views.

6.212 The magnitude of change to the visual amenity of receptors at Year 1 is considered to be low (small).

6.213 The sensitivity of Residential Group 5 is considered to be high. At Year 1, the magnitude of change is considered to be low (small). Therefore, there is likely to be a direct, permanent, medium to long-term, adverse effect which is considered to be moderate.

Secondary Mitigation or Enhancement

6.214 The proposed secondary mitigation and enhancement planting, detailed above for Site Landscape Character, have been taken into account in this assessment.

Residual Effect

6.215 The sensitivity of Residential Group 5 is considered to be high. By Year 15, the boundary enhancements and tree planting will have matured to limit views to the Proposed Development further, reducing the magnitude of change to very low (very small). Therefore, there is likely to be a direct, permanent, long-term, adverse effect which is considered to be moderate/minor.

Significance

6.216 This effect is considered to be **Not Significant** at Year 15.

Manor Farm

6.217 Manor Farm is located 66m to the north of the north-eastern corner of the Site. It faces south and residents may gain glimpsed views which will be interrupted by built form at Lopes Close. The property is set-back from the A3102 and is enclosed by garden planting along the curtilage. The Proposed Development will be heavily filtered by intervening vegetation and built form. Where there are glimpsed views to the proposals they will be seen in the context of existing residential built form.

6.218 The magnitude of change to the visual amenity of receptors at Year 1 is considered to be very low (very small).

6.219 The sensitivity of residents at Manor Farm is considered to be high. At Year 1, the magnitude of change is considered to be very low (very small). Therefore, there is likely to be a direct, permanent, medium to long-term, adverse effect which is considered to be moderate/minor.

Secondary Mitigation or Enhancement

6.220 The proposed secondary mitigation and enhancement planting, detailed above for Site Landscape Character, have been taken into account in this assessment.

Residual Effect

6.221 The sensitivity of Manor Farm is considered to be high. By Year 15, the boundary enhancements and tree planting will have matured, and the magnitude is expected to remain very low (very small). Therefore, there is likely to be a direct, permanent, long-term, adverse effect which is considered to be moderate/minor.

Significance

6.222 This effect is considered to be **Not Significant** at Year 15.

Limitations and Assumptions

6.223 To ensure transparency within the EIA process, the following limitations and assumptions have been identified.

- Baseline conditions have been established using published documents and field assessment; it is important to note that this information may change before, or during, the construction and operation of the Proposed Development.
- Access to private properties has not been obtained and the visual assessment has been conducted in line with best practice set out within GLVIA3.

Summary

6.224 **Table 6.10** provides a summary of the effects, receptors, residual effects and conclusions of significance considered within the Chapter.

6.225 The table only provides a summary of the residual effects identified within the assessment and details of all primary, secondary and tertiary mitigation that has been taken into account is set out in detail within the Chapter and summarised within **ES Volume 3: Environmental Management Plan (EMP)**.

Table 6.10: Summary of Residual and Significant Effects

Effect	Receptor	Residual Effect	Is the Effect Significant?
Construction Stage			
Changes to landscape character	Site landscape character	Major Adverse	YES
	Host LCA C1 Melksham Open Clay Vales (West Wiltshire District LCA 2006 CBA),	Moderate Adverse	YES
	Area 3: Open Clay Vales (JMNP1 2020)	Moderate Adverse	YES
	Non-Host LCA F2 Sandridge Park (West Wiltshire District LCA 2006 CBA),	Moderate Adverse	YES
	Non-Host Area 4: Wooded Greensand Hills (JMNP1 2020)	Moderate Adverse	YES
Changes to Visual Amenity of Visual Receptors	Users of Bridleway Reference MELW40 (10m east of Site Boundary)	Major Adverse	YES
	Users of Footpath Reference MELW26 (within the Site)	Major Adverse (along a short section)	YES

Effect	Receptor	Residual Effect	Is the Effect Significant?
within 1km of the Site	Users of Bridleway Reference MELW41 (15m to south-west of the Site)	Major/Moderate Adverse	YES
	Users of Footpath Reference MELW27 (150m to west of the Site)	Major/Moderate Adverse	YES
	Users of Footpath Reference MELW22 (280m to the south of the Site)	Moderate Adverse	YES
	Users of A3102/Sandridge Common Road within SLA	Moderate Adverse	YES
	Users of A3102/Sandridge Common Road outside SLA	Major/Moderate Adverse	YES
	Residential Group 1: Property Numbers 295, 294, 293, 290a, 290, 269a, 289, 288 Sandridge Common	Major Adverse	YES
	Residential Group 2: Blackmore Farm and Blackmore House	Blackmore House only: Major Adverse ⁷	YES
	Residential Group 3: 1-12 Lopes Close	Major Adverse ⁸	YES
	Residential Group 4: Property numbers 254 and 256	Major Adverse	YES
Operational Stage			
Changes to landscape character	Site landscape character	Year 15: Major/Moderate Adverse	YES
	Host LCA C1: Melksham Open Clay Vale	Year 15: Moderate/	NO

⁷ This is reported as substantial within **Appendix 6.1**.

⁸ This is reported as substantial within **Appendix 6.1**.

Effect	Receptor	Residual Effect	Is the Effect Significant?
		Minor Adverse	
	Host Area 3: Open Clay Vales (JMNP1 2020)	Year 15: Moderate/Minor Adverse	NO
	Non-Host LCA F2 Sandridge Park (West Wiltshire District LCA 2006 CBA)	Year 15: Moderate/Minor Adverse	NO
	Non-Host Area 4: Wooded Greensand Hills (JMNP1 2020)	Year 15: Moderate/Minor adverse	NO
Changes to visual amenity of visual receptors within 1km of the Site	PRoW Bridleway reference MELW40/ Prater's Lane adjacent to the Site's boundary	Year 15 (northern section 450m): Major/Moderate Adverse	YES
		Year 15 (southern section 230m): Moderate Adverse	YES
		Route as a whole	NO
	Footpath reference MELW26 (within the Site/ parallel to site)	Year 15: Major/Moderate Adverse (along a short section)	YES
	Bridleway reference MELW41/ Brown's Lane (Localised section)	Year 15: Moderate Adverse	YES

Effect	Receptor	Residual Effect	Is the Effect Significant?
	Footpath reference MELW27 (150m west of the Site)	Year 15: Moderate Adverse	YES
	Footpath Reference MELW22 (280m to the south)	Year 15: Moderate/Minor Adverse	NO
	Users of A3102/Sandridge Common Road	Year 15: Moderate/Minor Adverse (within SLA and adjacent to the Site)	NO
	Residential Group 1: 288-295 Sandridge Common	Year 15: Moderate Adverse	YES
	Residential Group 2: Blackmore Farm and Blackmore House	Year 15: Major/Moderate Adverse	YES
	Residential Group 3: 1-12 Lopes Close	Year 15: Major Adverse	YES
	Residential Group 4: 254 and 256 Sandridge Common	Year 15: Minor Adverse (using professional judgement)	NO
	Manor Farm	Year 15: Moderate/Minor Adverse	NO
	Residential Group 5: Little Snarlton Farm/Snarlton Farm	Year 15: Moderate/Minor Adverse	NO

References

-
- ¹ Land Use Consultants (LUC) (December 2005) *Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment*. Available at: <https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planning-landscape-conservation>
- ² Wiltshire Council (Adopted January 2015) *Wiltshire Core Strategy* Available at: <https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planning-policy-core-strategy>
- ³ West Wiltshire District Council (2004) *West Wiltshire District Plan First Alteration* and Government Office of the South West (2007) *Saved Policies Schedule*. Available at: <https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/article/5922/West-Wiltshire-District-Plan>
- ⁴ Wiltshire Council (September 2023) *Wiltshire Local Plan Pre-Submission Draft 2020-2038 (Regulation 19)*. Available at: <https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/local-plan-document-library>
- ⁵ Wiltshire Council (September 2023) *Wiltshire Local Plan: Planning for Melksham*. Available at: https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/media/11967/Planning-for-Melksham-September2023/pdf/Planning_for_Melksham_September2023.pdf?m=1695727857577
- ⁶ Chris Blandford Associates (CBA) (September 2023) *Wiltshire Local Plan Review: Sites Landscape Appraisals*. Available at: <https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/local-plan-document-library>
- ⁷ Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan (JMNP) Steering Group (2025) *JMNP 2 (2020-2038)* Available at: https://www.melkshamneighbourhoodplan.org/files/ugd/fcc864_8e0805bb7449447eb5991b01a4b5fa74.pdf
- ⁸ Chris Blandford Associates (CBA) (September 2023) *Wiltshire Local Plan Review: Sites Landscape Appraisals*. Available at: https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/media/11986/wlpr19-site-landscape-appraisals-2023-reduced/pdf/wlpr19_site_landscape_appraisals_2023_reduced.pdf?m=1695734045730