The Holme and The Homestal

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

December 2025

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One Horton Heath, The Holme and The Homestal

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

On behalf of **Eastleigh Borough Council (One Horton Heath Team)**

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1 Introduction

1.1 Scope

1.1.1 Stantec's specialist Landscape Planning and Design group (Stantec) was commissioned by Eastleigh Borough Council in April 2025 to provide Landscape and Visual advice to inform the potential for residential development ('the Proposed Development') at One Horton Heath, RM2, The Holme and The Homestal (the 'Site'), and to provide a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) of the Proposed Development.

1.1.2 The principal elements of the LVIA baseline study are an analysis of the landscape context of the Site, including landform, vegetation, transport features and settlement pattern; identification of relevant landscape planning policy; analysis of published landscape character assessments encompassing the Site; an appraisal of the character of the Site itself; and a description of the visual characteristics of the Site in its context in the surrounding landscape.

1.1.3 The Site forms part of a wider major mixed-used development, known as One Horton Heath (OHH), which was granted Outline Planning Permission in October 2025 for up to 2,500 homes, a local centre, primary school and commercial floorspace (LPA reference number O/20/89498). This LVIA is to accompany a Reserved Matters Application for this parcel, The Holme and Homestal, pursuant to Condition 4 of the Outline Planning Permission. The OHH planning application was supported by an LVIA as part of the outline Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process. The Folds parcel is adjacent to the Site to the east and is coming forward as a separate RMA.

1.1.4 Full Planning Permission was granted in December 2022 for the residential parcel 'Lower Acre' located in the south of the OHH development (LPA reference number F/2089500). This application was submitted as a standalone full planning application but complies with the Outline Planning Permission. The construction of this parcel is underway and will comprise a mix of houses and apartments, totalling 381 dwellings. This is considered as 'future baseline' within the assessment.

1.1.5 The process has been used to develop a series of landscape development principles based on a robust analysis of the landscape and visual characteristics of the Site and its context, with the aim of avoiding or reducing adverse effects on landscape character and visual amenity and optimising beneficial change in the landscape and in views.

1.1.6 Finally, an assessment of the landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development has been set out, taking account of the proposed mitigation measures and the anticipated residual effects over time.

1.1.7 The Holme and Homestal application complies with the parameters set out and granted in the Outline Planning Application for OHH. The effects of the Proposed Development have also been reviewed in relation to the effects within the approved Outline LVIA, where relevant to the Holme and Homestal.

1.2 Methodology

1.2.1 The methodology used for the LVIA is drawn from principles of good practice in Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition (Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, 2013) and is set out in Appendix A.

2 Site Context

2.1 Location

2.1.1 As shown in **Figure 1**, the Site is located on the western edge of Horton Heath adjacent to existing residential development and to the south of Fair Oak, in the north-western corner of the One Horton Heath Proposed Development.

2.2 Topography and Hydrology

2.2.1 As shown in **Figure 2**, the Site is situated within a low-lying, gently undulating plain between the Rivers Itchen and Hamble, lying within the Itchen catchment area. Horton Heath, immediately east of the Site, is a low ridge that forms the watershed between the two river catchment areas. The local area is drained by a series of minor streams which feed into the River Itchen to the west of the Site. Field ditches and minor swales drain locally towards these tributaries, and modern attenuation ponds occur within nearby development parcels.

2.2.2 To the north-east of Fair Oak and Horton Heath, the land rises steeply to a series of ridges reaching approximately 80 metres Above Ordnance Datum (AOD), forming part of the rolling chalk uplands of the South Downs National Park located around 3.5 kilometres to the north-east. The land also rises towards Southampton to the south-west, providing further enclosure to the low-lying watershed.

2.3 Settlement and Transport

2.3.1 Settlement distribution generally follows the gently elevated ground between the River Itchen and River Hamble catchments, with built-up areas concentrated above the river valleys on higher valley slopes, encompassing both shallow valleys and the more noticeable local ridgelines.

2.3.2 There is extensive 20th-century development within the area, notably, between the rising land to the north-east and the valley floors to the west. This includes the village of Horton Heath, clustered around the B3354 and Burnett's Lane, immediately to the east; Fair Oak to the north, which nucleates around the crossings of the B3037 and B3354 extends up to approximately 65m AOD; and Eastleigh and Chandler's Ford further to the north-west. Urbanising influences are particularly apparent to the south and west of the Site. Approximately 2km to the south-west is West End, a suburb of the wider urban area of Southampton, flanked by the M27, which runs on a north-west to south-east alignment. Under 2km to the south of the Sites lies the Eastleigh–Fareham railway line, beyond which lies the northern edge of Hedge End, a rural urban fringe settlement of mid-late 20th-century expansion. A further area of recent housing lies to the north-east of Hedge End at Boorley Green. Beyond Horton Heath, to the east and north-east, the landscape becomes more rural in character, with scattered farmsteads and some linear development along small roads and lanes, and small historic nucleated settlements, such as Durley, Durley Street and Lower Upham. Further to the east is the medieval market town of Bishop's Waltham.

2.3.3 The Site is part of a wider planning application that comprises up to 2,500 residential dwellings, local employment, local retail, leisure, employment and community facilities, a primary school, formal and informal publicly accessible open space, including formal sports facilities, landscaping, green infrastructure and sustainable drainage systems, which has outline planning permission. This will considerably change the local context of the Proposed Development.

2.3.4 Allington Lane, a busy road between Fair Oak and the edge of Southampton, with ribbon development of garden centres and light industrial uses, exerts an urbanising influence to the west of the Site. The Ave, a new link road serving One Horton Heath, connects Allington Lane

and Burnett's Lane, has been constructed and opened. Fir Tree Lane is a single-track lane running east-west between the Sites, linking Alington Lane and Horton Heath.

2.4 Land Use and Vegetation

2.4.1 The Sites are located in the north-eastern corner of a bowl of open land within the valley of the River Itchen, which extends between Southampton airport, the railway depot and Barton Park Industrial Estate in the west; Bishopstoke and Fair Oak in the north; Horton Heath and Hedge End in the east; and the M27 and edge of Southampton in the south. Approximately 1.6km to the west of the Sites, adjacent to the airport, is a large area of water meadows, associated with the River Itchen that is designated as a Site of Scientific Interest and a Special Protection Area and adjacent to this is Itchen Valley Country Park. Further to the east and north the land use is distinctly agricultural with fields in predominantly pastoral agricultural use and some scattered farmsteads. Fields are generally medium to large in scale, enclosed by hedgerows which include occasional mature trees.

2.4.2 It is a generally well-wooded landscape including notable woodlands at Heart's Copse, an ancient woodland immediately to the south-west of the wider OHH development area; woodland within the Itchen Valley Country Park; Stoke Park Wood and Park Hills Wood on hills to the north of Bishopstoke and Fair Oak, to the north of the Site; Durley Copse and Greenwood to the east; and Quobleigh Woods immediately to the north. A wooded corridor is associated with the railway to the south.

2.4.3 This area is heavily influenced by urbanising features such as the edges of development, several glimpsed taller buildings, the railway, and the scattered light industrial, horticultural, residential and equestrian development along Allington Lane, reflecting its close proximity to urban areas. Despite these influences, the intervening vegetation and woodland belts maintain a degree of enclosure and visual separation between the settlement edges and surrounding farmland, giving the landscape a semi-rural transitional character.

2.5 Public Rights of Way and Access

2.5.1 As shown in **Figure 1,** there is an extensive network of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) within the local area connecting the surrounding villages and extending into the wider countryside. These include PRoW 262/780/5 and 262/744/1 to the north-east, leading towards Bishopstoke; PRoW 085/11/1 and 085/15/1 to the north, providing access towards Fair Oak; and PRoW 085/9/1 and 085/7/2 to the east, linking towards Horton Heath.

2.5.2 Approximately 2.5km to the west of the Site, The Itchen Way long-distance trail, follows the route of the River Itchen and connects Itchen Valley Country Park, Bishopstoke and Eastleigh in the west of the area.

2.6 Designations

2.6.1 The Site itself is not subject to any statutory national landscape designations; and does not fall within a Green Belt. However, the edge of the South Downs National Park lies approximately 3.5 km to the north-east, where rising chalk uplands form the backdrop to the wider landscape.

2.6.2 Several ecological designations occur within the surrounding landscape. The River Itchen is designated as both a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), located approximately 1.3 km to the west. In addition, there are numerous Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) within the local area, including within Quobleigh Woods.

2.6.3 Heritage assets within the vicinity include a number of Grade II Listed Buildings within Horton Heath, Fair Oak and Bishopstoke. The Grade II listed Fir Tree Farmhouse, located immediately to the west of The Homestal, represents the closest heritage receptor to the Site. No

Conservation Areas or Scheduled Monuments are present within or immediately adjacent to the Site.

3 Landscape Character

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 Landscape Character Assessment is a descriptive approach which seeks to identify and define the distinct character of landscapes that make up the country. This approach ensures that account is taken of the different roles and characters of different areas, following principles set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and (PPG).

3.1.2 The Site is covered by published character studies at the national and local level. The extent of Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) in the vicinity of the Site, as featured in published assessments, is illustrated in **Figure 3.**

3.2 National

NCA 128: South Hampshire Lowlands

3.2.1 The Site and surrounding landscape are situated within National Character Area (NCA) 128: South Hampshire Lowlands. The key characteristics of the South Hampshire Lowlands NCA of relevance to the Site and Study Area comprise the following:

- *'Low-lying, undulating plain abutting the chalk downs to the north and the coastal plain and Southampton Water to the south. An underlying geology of open marine, estuarine and freshwater Tertiary gravels. Soils over much of the area are heavy and clayey with localised pockets of more freely draining soils on higher land.*

- *Fast-flowing chalk rivers in wide, open valleys with watermeadows and riparian vegetation that provide valuable wildlife habitats for species such as breeding and overwintering birds, otter, water vole, Atlantic salmon, brown trout and the endangered, native whiteclawed crayfish.*

- *Well-wooded farmed landscape (particularly to the east of Southampton), characterised by ancient woodland such as Botley Wood and West Walk, the remnants of the Royal Hunting Forest of Bere.*

- *Mixed agricultural landscape dominated by pasture with small pockets of horticulture and arable.*

- *An intimate and enclosed field pattern with many small and irregular fields generally bounded by mixed-species hedgerows or woodland.*

- *In parts, a very urban NCA dominated by the city and port of Southampton and other large towns such as Waterlooville and Havant. The more rural hinterland is characterised by small, loosely clustered or dispersed settlements, intermixed with isolated farmsteads.*

- *Fragmented by major transport links, including the M3 to London and the M27 to Portsmouth which cross the NCA.'*

3.2.2 Within the Statements of Environmental Opportunity section of the NCA profile, a number of landscape management guidelines are identified including the following of relevance to the Site and Proposed Development:

- *'SEO 1: Promote creative and effective sustainable development – including a well-connected network of high-quality greenspace in and around Southampton, Romsey, Eastleigh and Havant – which benefits local businesses and communities, protects local distinctiveness, encourages public understanding and enjoyment of the natural environment, and helps to mitigate the impacts of climate change.*

- *SEO 2: Conserve, manage and enhance the semi-natural habitats of the river valleys, their estuaries and intertidal areas along the coast, to maintain water availability and flow, reduce flooding downstream, improve water quality, and enhance their biodiversity and landscape benefits.*

- *SEO 3: Protect, manage and enhance the area's historic well-wooded character – including its ancient semi-natural woodlands, wood pasture and hedgerows – to increase biomass provision, link and strengthen habitats for wildlife, and improve recreational opportunities.*

- *SEO 4: Conserve, manage, link and enhance the traditional mosaic of seminatural grassland habitats – including chalk grassland, watermeadows and unimproved grassland – for the benefits they provide in protecting and regulating soils and water, climate change adaptation as well as recreational opportunities and improved biodiversity.'*

3.3 County level

Hampshire County Landscape Character Assessment (2010)

3.3.1 As shown in **Figure 3**, the Site lies within the north-west of Landscape Character Area (LCA) 2E: Forest of Bere West. This area is further divided into Landscape Character Types (LCT). The north of the Site lies within LCT Lowland Mosaic Small Scale, and the south of the Site falls within the northern extent of LCT Lowland Mosaic Open.

3.3.2 Key characteristics of the Forest of Bere West (2e) LCA of relevance to the Site and the Proposed Development include:

- *'A low lying landscape with shallow undulations, predominantly south sloping.*

- *Varied geology with permanently saturated heavy clays in the central and southern parts and locally higher sandy outcrops which are more undulating resulting in agriculturally poor soils – conversely rich alluvial especially around tributaries of the Hamble are very high grade.*

- *Locally popular accessible woodland areas.*

- *Permanent pasture, plantations woodland and small holdings with secluded, heavily wooded, often ancient origin but replanted, away from the major towns.*

- *This area is strongly associated with the Royal Forest of Bere, a hunting reserve that retains wooded and to a lesser extent, open commons, assart field and woodland patterns.*

- *Hedgerows often low but with individual spreading mature oaks, sometimes of ancient origin or lines of oak with no 'understory' hedge and occasionally isolated field specimens.*

- *Extensive C.20th development, including urban expansion and infilling of common-edge settlements.*

- *Historically, mixed settlement pattern of very low density, tending towards nucleation along streams and around heath scattered throughout the area.*

- *Rich biodiversity, including woodland, heathland, grassland and wetland sites.'*

3.3.3 Further parts of the Forest of Bere West (2E) LCA relevant to the Site and its vicinity are set out below:

'Physical Characteristics and Land use…

Land use is very mixed, with a relatively high proportion of pasture and rough grassland. Farm holdings are predominantly small in size. The area is rich in semi natural ancient woodland, and irregular edge, blocky shaped woodland is a particularly defining characteristic – especially in the core Forest area – defined by the Lowland Mosaic Medium Scale Wooded landscape. Field edges (especially on opposite sides from tracks and lanes) are frequently formed from these woodland blocks. Magnificent spreading and sometimes ancient oak trees are a feature of hedgerows, which often have low clipped interconnecting hedges. These hedgerows are most typical in the Lowland Mosaic Small Scale Wooded landscape which contains relatively small fields. There are occasional market gardening and nurseries. Urban fringe uses are more pervasive than in the Forest of Bere East, and typically include golf courses, small retail and commercial areas, horse paddocks, high voltage power lines and scattered housing in medium sized plots…

The great majority of the character area falls within the upper and mid parts of the Hamble catchment. Land in the far east drains to the Meon and west of Horton Heath and Fair oak is part of the Itchen catchment. There is a dense network of chalk springs and small streams which flow south into the Hamble. Field boundary ditches are frequent features. The main tributary flows from Bishops Waltham to Botley. The landscape is less low lying and generally better drained than the Forest of Bere East. There are a few areas of standing water and ponds, especially along the spring line where land falls away from the chalk to the north and meets the lower lying clayey soils of this landscape…

Experiential/ Perceptual Characteristics

Views are predominantly short and often with a wooded backdrop. Outside the Lowland Mosaic Medium Scale landscape housing and development is frequently in the field of view…

There is a dense rights of way network (particularly outside the Lowland Mosaic Medium Scale Wooded landscape) supplemented by commons and countryside service sites, particularly in the Lowland Mosaic Heath Associated

landscape. This brings accessible land close to settlements. Despite this the Countryside Access plan highlights that town-countryside links are poor. There are few multi user routes and they are in poor condition in relation to other landscapes in Hampshire. The Pilgrim's Trail is the only long distance trail in the character area. The landscape is a popular local destination but does not have a particular draw to those from further afield.

This landscape is full of contrasts. The well wooded core Forest of Bere area is intimate, remote and secluded, but its peripheral landscapes have more development and urbanising influences. These are greatest in the western and southern parts of the character area, e.g the M27 and feeder road network, edge of town development, high voltage power lines and horse paddocks.'

3.3.4 Under the 'Forces for Change' section of LCA 2E, the assessment identifies '*New large scale urban extensions'.* The section goes on to list the following 'Key Qualities and Effects of Forces', of relevance to the Site and the Proposed Development:

Key Quality 7.1:
'…assarts fringed with 19th century enclosures resulting in a well wooded landscape with thick hedges and mature oaks, particularly in the north'

Threats:
'Further loss of farmland and in particular hedge and hedgerow oaks. Development within or adjoining former remaining open forest landscapes.'

Opportunities:
'Support and influence objectives in existing and new Forest Design plans such as Whiteley pastures which look to recreate, conserve and enhance mosaic of Forest landscapes…'

Key Quality 7.2
'Mixed traditional settlement pattern of nucleated spring line settlements, common heath edge and dispersed 19th century farmsteads.'

Threats:
'Change from rural to suburban character extending further into the character area and in particular adjoining ancient woodland and heathy sites…'

Opportunities:
'Influence LDF policy related to this quality (Winchester, Eastleigh, Fareham councils) – in particular MDAs/SDAs (Hedge End and Whiteley) and SHLAA sites that are considered for housing allocation /reserve sites.'

Key Quality 7.4
'Very local countryside to large centres of population, including commons and Forestry Commission managed sites.'

Threats:
'Over formalisation of semi-natural areas to provide recreation facilities. Increasing access opportunities can introduce greater likelihood of conflict through misuse (e.g. fly tipping trespassing) on local farmland.'

Opportunities:
'Support CAP objectives; including off road links between countryside sites and improve connections north/south in relation to severance by M27. Influence green infrastructure policy for this part of the PUSH area.'

3.3.5 Key characteristics of the Lowland Mosaic Small Scale LCT of relevance to the Site and the Proposed Development are set out below:

- *'Low lying silty clay, but not sandy soils, that are seasonally wet and waterlogged in parts but also with better drained areas.*
- *The soils support predominantly permanent pasture land use.*
- *Less marginal farmed areas than the lowland mosaic medium scale and lowland mosaic heath associated types.*
- *Often small enclosures, small areas of woodland and undulating topography which produces the sense of a small scale landscape.*
- *Associated mostly with small chalk fed streams apart from where they border the New Forest perambulation where they are more acidic.*
- *Generally, high to very high density of dispersed small farmsteads and hamlets and associated with nucleated spring line settlements in the south and north Hampshire lowlands.*
- *Small semi natural and ancient woodland copses and hedges of varying character.*
- *Frequently a high density of public rights of way and winding lanes.*
- *Varying periods and types of enclosure but generally small scale but has some of the earliest enclosures out of all the lowland mosaic types – perhaps indicating less marginal and richer soils.*
- *Particular association with hamlets and villages of medieval and Saxon origin often associated with wood and wood clearance.'*

3.3.6 Key characteristics of the Lowland Mosaic Open LCT of relevance to the Site and the Proposed Development are set out below:

- *'Low lying, relatively flat on clay and alluvial soils and perhaps lighter and richer soils than medium scale and heath associated lowland mosaic landscapes.*
- *Close proximity to streams.*
- *Nearly all farmed land - no remnant open land / common.*
- *Little intensive exploitation pre Saxon period.*
- *Intensively farmed landscapes post disafforestation resulting in high density dispersed settlement of hamlets and farmsteads particularly in the Loddon valley and lower part of the Test.*

- *Often found close to settlement – particularly market towns like Romsey and Petersfield.*

- *Their open nature is attributable to relatively large fields and boundary loss and very low woodland cover and few undulations.*

- *Relatively little biodiversity interest apart from neutral grassland, remaining woodland and hedges.*

- *Mid 19th century - medium density dispersed settlement pattern.'*

3.4 Local Level

Landscape Character Assessment for Eastleigh Borough Council (2011)

3.4.1 Eastleigh Borough Council updated their 1997 Landscape Character Assessment in December 2011. Within this assessment, the Site and surrounding area are situated within Area 9: Horton Heath Undulating Farmland.

3.4.2 The key characteristics of this LCA of relevance to the Site are as follows:

- *'Undulating landform with frequent low ridges*

- *Medium size fields usually with good hedges and hedgerow trees rather than woodlands*

- *Intrusive urban edges in some areas*

- *Unmanaged or inappropriately managed agricultural land'*

3.4.3 Potential Landscape and Visual Sensitivities include the following of relevance to the Site and Proposed Development:

- *'The area is predominantly undulating farmland with strong hedgerows and small blocks of scattered woodland. It is relatively large, complex and rural in character…*

- *Trees belts and hedgerow trees are notable features; however the area is largely open, with rural views normally ending at wooded horizons'*

3.4.4 Serval key issues are outlined on the following of particular relevance to the Site and Proposed Development:

- *'The visual intrusion of existing settlement edges at Bishopstoke, Fair Oak and Horton Heath and Hedge End…*

- *The erosion of the rural character of Allington Lane through poor quality land management and poor screening of development.*

- *Future development and land management changes within the area increasing intervisibility between settlements…'*

Summary of Character Assessments

3.4.5 The key characteristics and Statements of Environmental Opportunity for NCA 128: South Hampshire Lowlands, as well as the findings of the Hampshire County Landscape Character Assessment, have been used in shaping the design of the proposals. However, due to the large scale of the NCA and the Hampshire County Landscape Character Assessment LCAs, the landscape character effects of the proposed development on these receptors have not been assessed.

3.4.6 The published landscape character assessments are broadly representative of the character of the study area and the Site. The study area contains many of the features identified as valued in local landscape character assessments, which can be summarised as: a largely rural area containing gentle undulations of the landform, medium-sized fields bounded by good hedges with mature trees; dispersed small blocks of woodland and copses; water courses scattered through the area; the network of narrow lanes and small farms and the prevalence of SINCs. Elements that detract from local character are also identified, such as, prominent built edges of settlements, ribbon development, industrial sites and the railway.

3.4.7 LCA 9: Horton Heath Undulating Farmland is considered to be of medium-low value as it comprises common components that make some positive contribution to landscape character, but are not designated and have no wider recognition. LCA 9: Horton Heath Undulating Farmland is considered to have medium susceptibility to the type of development proposed, as it has some scope to accommodate the type of development proposed without undue consequence to its integrity. Overall, it is considered that the character of LCA 9: Horton Heath Undulating Farmland is of medium-low sensitivity to the type of development proposed.

4 Policy

4.1 National

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

4.1.1 Paragraphs 131-141 focus on achieving well-designed places and promoting good design of the built environment. Paragraph 135 states:

'Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

a. Will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;

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

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

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

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

f. Create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.'

4.1.2 Paragraph 136 relates to trees and states:

'Trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments, and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that new streets are tree-lined, that opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments (such as parks and community orchards), that appropriate measures are in place to secure the long-term maintenance of newly-planted trees, and that existing trees are retained wherever possible. Applicants and local planning authorities should work with highways officers and tree officers to ensure that the right trees are planted in the right places, and solutions are found that are compatible with highways standards and the needs of different users.'

4.1.3 Paragraph 139 is concerned with the quality of design and states:

'Development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning

documents such as design guides and codes. Conversely, significant weight should be given to:

a. development which reflects local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes; and/or

b. outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings…'

4.1.4 Section 15 relates to the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment. Paragraph 187 sets out that:

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

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

Recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland…'

4.1.5 Paragraph 188 states:

'Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework[58]; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.'

Planning Practice Guidance

4.1.6 To support the policies of the NPPF, the Government has produced Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).

4.1.7 Under the heading of Natural Environment, sub-headings 'Landscape' and 'Green Infrastructure' sections of the PPG were updated in July 2019.

4.1.8 Paragraph 5 of 'Green infrastructure', focuses on the way in which natural capital green infrastructure can add to communities including, *"…enhanced wellbeing, outdoor recreation and access, enhanced biodiversity and landscapes…".* Paragraph 6 states:

'Green *infrastructure* can help *in:*

- *Achieving well-designed places;*
- *Promoting healthy and safe communities;*
- *Mitigating climate change, flooding and coastal change; and*
- *Conserving and enhancing the natural environment.'*

4.1.9 Under the sub-heading 'Landscape', paragraph 37, PPG supports the use of landscape character assessment as a tool for understanding the character and local distinctiveness of the landscape and identifying the features that give it a sense of place, as a means to informing, planning and managing change. PPG makes reference to Natural England guidance on landscape character assessment.

National Design Guide

4.1.10 The National Design Guide focuses on the following 10 characteristics:

- Context (enhances the surroundings);
- Identity (attractive and distinctive);
- Built form (a coherent pattern of development);
- Movement (accessible and easy to move around);
- Nature (enhanced and optimised);
- Public Spaces (safe, social and inclusive);
- Uses (mixed and integrated);
- Homes and Buildings (Functional, healthy and sustainable);
- Resources (Efficient and resilient); and
- Lifespan (made to last).

4.2 Local Planning Policy

Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016-2036 (Adopted April 2022)

4.2.1 Local policies in the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016-2036 of relevance the Site and Proposed Development are set out below:

4.2.2 Strategic Policy S1, Delivering sustainable development: development that can meet community needs without compromising the identity of the Borough or its individual settlements, or the ability of future generations to meet their own needs and to maintain, enhance, extend and connect the natural habitats within and landscape value of the Borough, extending natural habitats into new and existing development to achieve an environmental net gain.

4.2.3 Strategic Policy S9, Green Infrastructure: through new development and other initiatives, the Borough Council will seek to achieve the provision, retention and/ or enhancement of the multi-functional green infrastructure including provision of landscape scale strategic links, interlinked publicly accessible open space through new and existing development including, for example, formal sports facilities and informal amenity spaces and cemeteries; green infrastructure incorporated into all new development with multifunctional spaces connected by primary, secondary and tertiary green links; interconnected urban green infrastructure within the fine grain of existing and new development; green stepping stones such as street trees, green roofs and green walls, pocket parks and urban copses; connected habitats; incorporation of historic buildings and landscapes; opportunities for food growing.

4.2.4 Policy DM1, General criteria for new development: all new development should not have an unacceptable impact on, and where possible should enhance residential amenities, the character and appearance of urban areas, the countryside and the coast, biodiversity and significance of heritage assets; make efficient use of the site; take full and proper account of the context of the site including the character, appearance and land uses of the locality or neighbourhood; not involve loss or damage to trees, woodlands and hedgerows; include a landscape scheme; protect and enhance public rights of way and provide fully connected GI;

provide satisfactory management arrangements for all landscape enhancement; incorporate provision for people with disabilities; design out crime and anti-social behaviour; include provision for public art.

4.2.5 Policy DM3, Adaptation to climate change: all development should be designed to adapt to the predicted climate change impacts for the Borough, including green infrastructure and trees for cooling, integrated SuDS and drought resistant landscape design and planting.

4.2.6 Policy DM6, Sustainable surface water management and watercourse management: New development will only be permitted if it incorporates Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS).

4.2.7 Policy HH1, Land west of Horton Heath outlines the council's requirements for the whole of the One Horton Heath development. Policy HH1 States the following of relevance to the Site and the Proposed Development within the Holme and Homestal:

'An area of approximately 125 hectares of land to the west of Horton Heath, east of Allington Lane and north of the railway line as defined on the policies map is allocated as a strategic location for development to include approximately 1,500 dwellings, 6ha of employment land, open space, retail and community facilities including a primary school and a new link road to Bubb Lane. Development will be subject to the approval by the Borough Council of a set design principles and a high-level design code including a masterplan which addresses the following requirements:

- *'…the provision of approximately 1,500 dwellings of a variety of sizes and tenures…*
- *a layout of residential development designed to maximise opportunities to create links to, and to integrate with the existing settlement of Horton Heath…*
- *the provision of footpath, cycle and bridle routes through the site and that link the new developments with the wider existing and proposed footpath and cycleway networks…*
- *the provision of public open space, sports pitch provision and green infrastructure on site to provide a setting for the development and to meet the needs of the new and existing communities…*
- *the provision of a comprehensive landscape framework for the site that includes measures to ensure that there is no damage to, and enhancement of the Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation, and that retains as many as possible of the existing mature trees and hedgerows within the site, enhances biodiversity interest including that of the watercourses running through the site and provides a linked network of open spaces and green routes…'*

5 Site Appraisal

5.1 Site Appraisal

5.1.1 The Site, comprising approximately 11.5 ha and the surrounding environment, were visited in June 2025. **Figure 4** and **Site Appraisal Photographs A – I** illustrate the existing features and character of the Site. The locations from which the Site Appraisal Photographs were taken are shown on **Figure 4**.

5.2 Site Features

5.2.1 The Site lies to the west of Horton Heath. Fir Tree Lane passes through the Site **(Site Appraisal Photograph B & D)**, divides the land into and extends westwards. The southern boundary is defined by a linear woodland belt following the course of Foxhole stream, a tributary of the River Itchen.

5.2.2 The landform is gently undulating, ranging between approximately 20m and 29m AOD. The northern parcel rises gradually towards the east **(Site Appraisal Photograph F & G)**, while the southern parcel falls gently south-westwards towards Foxhole Stream **(Site Appraisal Photograph A & C)**.

5.2.3 The Site predominantly comprises open arable fields, enclosed by a network of native hedgerows containing mature hedgerow trees, defining both external and internal boundaries **(Site Appraisal Photograph E)**. The field pattern is regular and remains largely undeveloped, which contributes to the sense of openness and exposure to the sky. The rural character is reinforced by the absence of built form apart from adjoining farmsteads and the visual enclosure provided by dense hedgerow boundaries, which minimise intervisibility with nearby settlements.

5.2.4 Approximate 270m length of Fir Tree Lane passes through the Site on an east–west alignment **(Site Appraisal Photograph B)**. It is a 7m width surfaced lane, with both verges lined by tall hedgerows and mature trees **(Site Appraisal Photograph D)**. The hedgerow contributes to visual containment between the northern and southern parcels of the Site and enhances the rural approach to Horton Heath from the west.

5.2.5 Vegetation within the Site primarily comprises tree belts and mixed native hedgerows that delineate field boundaries. These vegetated boundaries vary in height and condition but generally provide a sense of enclosure. Species composition is typical of the surrounding area, including ash, hawthorn, blackthorn, hazel, field maple, and elder and oak. The western boundary of The Homestal is formed by an unmanaged native hedgerow and tree belt. Immediately beyond the Site boundary to the north visual containment is provided by Quobleigh Woods (seen to the right of the view on **Site Appraisal Photograph H**). A. The eastern Site boundary varies in condition. The northern part of the boundary comprises a mature hedgerow and dense tree belt that includes a veteran oak tree. The southern part of the boundary is sparse, formed by a hedgerow in poor condition with groups of ash trees with dieback. The southern edge of the Homestal is formed by an outgrown native hedgerow with hedgerow trees, forming a boundary along Fir Tree Lane which crosses the Site. The northern boundary of the Holme, along Fir Tree Lane is formed by a clipped native hedgerow with occasional hedgerow trees, including a veteran oak. The southern and eastern boundaries of the Holme is within the open field but beyond this to the south is a wooded boundary formed by vegetation flanking Foxhole Stream corridor that provides visual containment to the wider landscape (**Site Appraisal Photograph C**). The western boundary of the Holme is an unmanaged hedgerow and tree belt. The Site's vegetation structure and field enclosure provide separation from the settlement edge, resulting in limited urbanising influence, particularly from Horton Heath to the East. This maintains a strong rural character and reinforces the perception of the Site as part of the countryside fringe rather than the developed area.

5.2.6 There are no PRoW that directly cross the Site, however, the nearest footpath (085/11/1) runs beyond, but parallel to the northern boundary, linking with the wider local access network connecting Fair Oak and Horton Heath.

5.2.7 In summary, the Site forms a transitional landscape between the built edge of Horton Heath and the open countryside to the west. While nearby farmsteads introduce some elements of rural settlement, the predominantly agricultural land use, established vegetation, and subtle landform combine to maintain a rural, undeveloped character.

5.3 Sensitivity of Site Features

5.3.1 The open agricultural fields of the Site are considered to be of medium value. Despite the fields not being part of a designated landscape and comprising common components of the local area, they make some positive contribution to landscape character. Given the open state of the fields, they are of high susceptibility to any type of built development. Overall, the agricultural fields are considered to be of **medium sensitivity** to the type of development proposed.

5.3.2 Structural vegetation within the Site is comprises hedgerow boundaries, several of which include mature trees. These boundaries are in mixed condition with the arboricultural assessment (Tyler Grange, 2025), identifying the majority of hedgerow trees to be Category B and C (albeit Category A trees exist notably along Fir Tree Lane and the western boundary of the Site). Part of the eastern boundary of the Site north of Fir Tree Lane, is largely made up of Category U trees. There are eight veteran trees within the Site.

5.3.3 The boundary structural vegetation makes a positive contribution to landscape character and is therefore considered to be of medium-high value. It is considered to be of medium susceptibility to the type of development proposed, owing to the potential for residential development to be largely accommodated within this framework. Overall, it is considered that this vegetation is of **medium sensitivity** to the type of development proposed.

5.3.4 The landform of the Site is considered to be of **medium value** as it is a common, although notable, characteristic of the area. The landform is considered to be of **medium susceptibility** to the type of development proposed, as there is some scope to accommodate the Proposed Development without undue consequences for the legibility of the topography of the Site. Overall, the landform of the Site is considered to be of **medium sensitivity** to the type of development proposed.

5.4 Character of the Site Vicinity

5.4.1 The Site Vicinity is broadly the extent shown in **Figure 4**, broadly comprising land between and including Quobleigh Woods to the north of the Site, the suburban edge of One Horton Heath to the east of the Site, Foxhole Stream to the south of the Site and land west as far as Firtree Farmhouse. The character of the Site vicinity can be summarised as follows.

Landform and Hydrology

5.4.2 The landform of the Site vicinity is low-lying and gently undulating but broadly rises in the north and east toward part of a localised ridgeline.

5.4.3 There are several small streams in close proximity to the Sites. Foxhole Stream flows through a wooded corridor south of The Holme, while the Quobleigh Stream runs through Quobleigh Woods to the north of The Homestal. Ground levels gradually fall towards the Foxhole and Quobleigh Streams. Some large ponds also exist in Quobleigh Woods.

Land Use and Vegetation

5.4.4 The Site vicinity maintains a relatively undeveloped character, dominated by agricultural land use. Albeit the suburban edge of Horton Heath extends toward the eastern edge of the Site. Consequently, there are some urbanising land uses including the allotments to the east of the Site and the cricket pitch to the north-east of the Site. The solar farm to the south of the Site also has an urbanising influence on the character of the Site vicinity.

5.4.5 The Site vicinity is well-wooded, including small woodlands and wooded corridors and boundaries, which in many cases are associated with streams. For example, Quobleigh Stream extends through Quobleigh Woods, which enclose the Sites to the north. To the south of The Holme, riparian woodland flanks the Foxhole Stream corridor and encloses the Site. Hedgerow boundaries to the eastern and western edges of the Sites, between the parcels and along Fir Tree Lane include many trees, some of which are veteran specimens.

Settlement Pattern

5.4.6 Settlement extending into the Site vicinity (on the western settlement edge of Horton Heath) is distinctly suburban in its character, comprising relatively dispersed, two-storey detached and semi-detached properties. Properties tend to have front and back gardens, albeit some have notably smaller front gardens and therefore a minimal set-back of built form from the street scene.

5.4.7 To the south-east of the Site, the Site vicinity will be occupied by the proposed local centre as part of the wider planning application. The land to the south (the Holme) and west (the Homestal) of the Site has outline planning permission for residential development.

5.4.8 Aside from Horton Heath, there are sporadic, isolated clusters of properties, including at Foxholes and Firtree House along Fir Tree Lane.

Transport and Connectivity

5.4.9 The single-carriage Fir Tree Lane is the only road crossing the Site vicinity in a broadly east–west direction, connecting Horton Heath with Allington Lane to the west. The street pattern within Horton Heath comprises irregular curving streets and cul-de-sacs.

5.4.10 An extensive network of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) connect to the surrounding villages and extend into the wider countryside.

Pattern, Texture and Line

5.4.11 Field patterns broadly comprise former assart fields that have been since amalgamated into larger field parcels but often still retain irregular boundaries bounded by mature tree hedgerows. The presence of retained mature hedgerow trees and tree belts in combination with lower hedgerow boundaries creates localised texture.

Scale and Enclosure

5.4.12 The overall vegetation structure in combination with the gently undulating landform contributes to a sense of enclosure and visual screening, which forms a key component of the local character.

5.5 Sensitivity of the Character of the Site Vicinity

5.5.1 The character of the Site vicinity can be considered to be of **low-medium value** as it has little wider recognition or value, but contains local ecological designations and common features

which may be of value to the local community. The Site vicinity has a **medium-high susceptibility** to the type of development proposed, as it has some scope to accommodate the development, but it may partially compromise the integrity of its features. The overall sensitivity of the Site Vicinity is considered to be **medium**.

6 Visual Appraisal

6.1.1 A visual appraisal has been undertaken to determine the relationship of the Site with its surroundings and its approximate extent of visibility within the landscape when viewed from publicly accessible locations. Representative views were chosen and are illustrated in **Site Context Photographs 1-11**, the locations of which are shown in **Figure 5**. Site Context Photographs were taken in September 2025 in summer conditions.

6.1.2 The visibility of the Site is predominantly influenced by landform and the extent and type of vegetation cover and built elements within the site and the surrounding landscape. To inform the visual appraisal fieldwork a Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) Plan was prepared, indicating those areas from where the site, including the proposed development (assumed to be domestic residential), may be visible, subject to verification on the ground. The ZTV was prepared using Lidar data and works on the basis of 12m target points. These confirm the extent of fieldwork and representative viewpoints.

6.1.3 In very near views from local PRoW and permissive paths immediately beyond the Site boundary to the north, there are open views into the northern field of the Site due to the lack of intervening boundary features, as shown in **Site Context Photographs 1 and 2**.

6.1.4 In near views from PRoW 085/10/4 to the east of the Site, the intervening hedgerows and the rising landform prevent views into the Site (as shown in **Site Context Photograph 3).**

6.1.5 From Fir Tree Lane to the west and east of the Site, views are screened by the boundary hedgerows of the Site. However, in winter conditions, when the hedgerow is trimmed, there may be a greater degree of visibility of the Site from this roadway (**Site Context Photographs 4 and 7**).

6.1.6 In local views from PRoW 085/701/1 to the south-east of the Site, woodland vegetation following Foxhole stream heavily filters views toward the Site, as shown in **Site Context Photographs 5**. In winter conditions, the degree of visibility from this footpath may be greater. This is also true of near-distance views to the south-west of the Site from PRoW 241/1/1, as shown in **Site Context Photographs 6.**

6.1.7 In near-distance views from PRoW 085/11/1 to the west of the Site, there are some filtered views over the western boundary hedgerow of the Site, between mature trees, as shown in **Site Context Photograph 8.**

6.1.8 In views from Allington Lane to the north-west of the Site, mature woodland to the north of the Site and the intervening landform filter views (**Site Context Photograph 9**). This is also true of public rights of way crossing land to the north west of the Site beyond Allington Lane (north of Lake Farm), including PRoW 262/780/5 (as shown in **Site Context Photograph 10**).

6.1.9 Due to the enclosure of the Site through the dense hedgerow vegetation, intervening landform and built form, views of the Site from the wider landscape are extremely constrained.

6.1.10 There are no views from the rising landform to the south of the railway line to the south of the Site, or from within Brookfield Park to the north-west of the Site.

6.1.11 Longer range views of the Site from the Itchen Way (PRoW 0/2/49/1 Eastleigh) to the west are restricted by dense vegetation along the edge of the footpath and within the water meadows beyond.

6.1.12 In long-distance views from more elevated land to the east of the Site, PRoW 069/16/1 Durley, within East Horton Golf Course, views of the Site are obscured by dense intervening vegetation. This includes some taller poplars, standing above the surrounding vegetation and forming

landmarks. There are several built and urbanising elements within the view. Farmsteads along Durley Road and Knowle Lane, adjacent to the eastern edge of Horton Heath are visible. Further to the north-west, beyond the Sites, are distant glimpsed views of the roofs of Southampton Airport buildings. The Church of the Holy Cross, Durley, can be glimpsed through the gaps in a belt of trees on the golf course to the left of the view (Site Context Photograph 11).

6.1.13 Overall, local views of the Site are heavily constrained by dense boundary and intervening vegetation. Albeit there are some views into the Site from the north, where PRoW cross fields that are included within the Site. View of the site from the wider landscape is similarly constrained and limited to glimpsed long-distance views from higher elevations to the east.

7 Development Proposals

7.1 Proposed Development

7.1.1 A review of the RMA information, together with the approved Outline Application information, has determined that the RMA proposals are compliant with the Outline parameters plans (including building height, green infrastructure and land use) and indicative proposed mitigation, including the Landscape Strategy Plan (produced by Tyler Grange, 2020).

7.1.2 The Proposed Development is explained and illustrated in the submitted Design and Access statement. A summary of the main components of the design are as follows.

7.1.3 The Proposed Development is part of the One Horton Heath major mixed-use development which was granted Outline Planning Permission (LPA reference number O/20/89498) in October 2025 for up to 2,500 homes, a local centre, primary school and commercial floorspace. The Holme and Homestal development parcel is being put forward as a Reserved Matters Application, submitted pursuant to Condition 4 of the Outline Planning Permission, and in accordance with the approved details.

7.1.4 The layout of the proposed built form is set out in the architect's general arrangement plan. Building heights are predominantly 2-storey, comprising some 3-storey and 4-storey elements and are in compliance with the Building Heights Parameters Plan.

7.1.5 Landscape proposals as set out in the Landscape Masterplan and DAS include green corridors of open space at the periphery of the Site, adjacent to retained hedgerows and tree-belts; and other green spaces within the Proposed Development. There is a hierarchy of street types, of which the central drives form the principal vehicular routes and therefore have a more urban character, featuring plaza-style open spaces that include street tree planting, seating, and soft landscaping. The mews streets and Greenways are narrower, more intimate streets, which are tree-lined and have limited vehicular access. The Central Green forms a key open space within the Site, containing extensive tree planting, structured planting beds, seating and paths.

8 Consideration of Landscape and Visual Effects

8.1 Introduction

8.1.1 This section summarises the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development in terms of landscape features, visual receptors and landscape character. The assessment considers the effects at year 1 based on the development proposals outlined in **Chapter 7** of this report. The residual effects at year 15 are also considered, accounting for how the growth of vegetation by year 15 would accentuate beneficial effects and further reduce any adverse effects.

8.1.2 A transparent and balanced approach has been taken to establish the significance of effects. As explained in the LVIA methodology in **Appendix A** and in accordance with paragraph 3.22 of GLVIA3, a judgement has been made about whether effects are positive (beneficial) or negative (adverse). The magnitudes of beneficial and adverse change as a result of the Proposed Development have therefore been considered. The balance of these considerations has been used to inform judgments as to whether an effect is adverse or beneficial and, in combination with the sensitivity of the receptor in question, the significance of that effect. These findings are set out in **Appendices C and D**.

8.1.3 The Proposed Development is being brought forward as part of the larger OHH residential scheme, which has outline planning permission. Therefore, by year 15 of this development, future phases of the wider scheme are likely to be in the ground, which will change the context of the Proposed Development. However, due to the phasing of the development, to account for worst case scenario, this cannot be considered the future baseline for the proposed development and is not assessed as part of this LVIA.

8.2 Likely Adverse Changes and Mitigating Factors

8.2.1 Adverse changes resulting from the Proposed Development include:

- The Proposed Development will inevitably result in the extension of built form into currently undeveloped land and the loss of parts of the existing agricultural field and some trees. This additional built form will be visible, particularly in near-distance views. The adverse changes resulting from the Proposed Development will be mitigated through:
    - The proposed built form will be seen in the context of existing built development to the south-east in Horton Heath, as well as earlier phases of the residential scheme, including the adjacent parcel of The Folds to the north-east once they have received full planning permission and are constructed. The context of the Proposed Development is already subject to considerable urban/suburban influences. However, due to the enclosed character of the local landscape, in many views, the proposed built form will be seen in the context of views which contain no existing built form.
    - Layout of the proposed built form responds sensitively to its context as follows:
        - The Proposed Development will require level changes to accommodate the proposed built form and basins. The layout of the Proposed Development, including built form, greenspaces, basins and structural planting, will assist in maintaining and reinforcing the legibility of the existing distinctive landform, the identity of which will be reinforced as the associated planting matures.
        - The south of the Site, with a closer association to existing built form in Horton Heath and the proposed local centre at One Horton Heath, has a

greater density of built form, with more formal, urban character. Whereas in the north, there will be a reduced density of development adjacent to the undeveloped northern edge and Quobleigh Woods.

- Built form is set back from the vegetated Site boundaries allowing space for green corridors and open spaces in these locations. A generous set back is allowed from Quobleigh Woods to the north of the Site, providing a sensitive interface between the built form and the woods.

- The positioning of vehicular access to the rear of properties to maintain a more tranquil built frontage to the vegetated Site boundaries allowing the northern edge to maintain a sensitive interface to this more naturalistic area of the Site. The absence of roads and parking in this area provides uninterrupted views of the soft landscaping and will create a more tranquil environment.

- The proposed built form will range in height from two storeys to four storeys. The introduction of taller built forms will result in the upper extent appearing on the skyline of views, replacing views of the sky with the proposed built form. The taller built form is, however, carefully distributed to ensure the following mitigation measures:

  - Taller (four-storey) built form is concentrated in the southern half of the Site, notably on lower lying areas within the Foxwood Road character area of the proposed development where there is extensive dense structural vegetation which will visually enclose the majority of the proposed built form.

  - The distribution of taller built form will be used to enhance placemaking and wayfinding, such as that fronting onto the Greenway. Taller built form here will also provide natural surveillance of the adjacent open space.

  - There will also be localised increases in the height of the built form with three-storey, built form situated at the street corners to enhance placemaking and legibility of the streetscape within Foxwood Road character area.

  - Variation of building heights within the street scene will break up and provide variety and visual interest in the roofscape.

- Variation in building articulation and materiality will soften the visual appearance of the collection of built forms, avoiding monotonous regularity and easing the recession of the built form into the surrounding local landscape. This will include:

  - The articulation of the roofscape, in particular the integration of both flat and pitched roofs, dormers and variation in ridge direction, will all help to break up and soften the roofscape and assist in breaking up the vertical scale and the horizontal massing of the Proposed Development.

  - The varied building materials include local red multi-brick, brick detailing and black timber-effect cladding.

- The retention and reinforcement of the mature hedgerows and tree belts enclosing the Site, in combination with additional tree planting, will soften and progressively screen the Proposed Development.

  - The dense mature vegetation surrounding the Site and within the local landscape, creates a sense of enclosure and therefore will visually enclose

much of the Proposed Development, particularly in mid to long-distance views.

- Areas of parking will be visually softened by the use of soft landscaping, including tree and hedgerow planting.

- The proposed planting, softening of the edge of the proposed built form, will help to minimise the new edge from becoming an intrusive urban edge, which is identified as a detracting feature of the local Eastleigh LCA.

  - The reinforcement of existing hedgerow boundaries in combination with proposed street trees will (once mature) strengthen local wooded horizons, which form a locally characteristic terminating point of views.

  - In summer months, existing and proposed vegetation will provide stronger softening and integration of built forms in views. Conversely, in winter views, when there are no leaves on the trees, there may be a greater degree of intervisibility.

- Although much of the open agricultural fields and some structural vegetation will be replaced with built form, where open spaces are retained, they will be populated with locally characteristic and visually interesting features which will draw the eye from the proposed built form and create a more distinctive sense of place. This includes the following:

  - Most streets within the Proposed Development will be tree-lined. Street trees will provide structure and seasonal interest to the streetscape.

  - The interesting foreground of the wildflower grasslands, with occasional trees and marginal aquatic planting in the over-deepened areas of standing water in the Foxwood Roads in the Quobleigh Villas character areas, will populate near-distance views, introducing diversity in structure, colour, and texture to views across this area, replacing the former agricultural land use with wildflower grasslands.

  - Tree planting, mixed beds, shrubs, rain gardens, in the Green Spine character area and Greenway character areas, will provide structural and visual diversity and interest as well as seasonal variation.

  - The varied scale, building styles and combinations of the proposed built form and landscaping will provide a series of distinct character areas throughout the proposed development, which will help to instil a sense of identity and local character; thereby avoiding the perception of monotonous built form.

- The Proposed Development will inevitably result in the loss of some hedgerows/ hedgerow trees for access and to accommodate the proposed development parcels. However, this will be compensated for by the following:

  - Extensive street tree and canopy tree planting in open spaces, which will help to reinforce the vegetated structure of the landscape.
  - The linear character of streets will allow for views along them, terminating at boundary hedgerows containing mature trees or Quobleigh Woods (to the north). Thereby retaining the local characteristic of views which are populated by wooded skylines (Eastleigh Landscaper Character Assessment).
- The Proposed Development will require level changes to accommodate the proposed built form and basins.

- The layout of the Proposed Development, including built form, greenspaces, basins and structural planting, will assist in maintaining and reinforcing the legibility of the existing distinctive landform, the identity of which will be reinforced as the associated planting matures.

8.3 Likely Beneficial Changes

8.3.1 Beneficial changes resulting from the Proposed Development include:

- Introduction of accessible public open spaces with recreational opportunities will replace formerly private land.
- The introduction of wildflower meadows, informal paths and mature trees in the north of the Site (within the Quobleigh Villas character area) and the south of the Site (within the Foxwood Road character area) will provide a visually interesting and naturalistic foreground to views that draw the eye. These wildflower grasslands will introduce diversity in structure, colour and texture to views across this area, replacing the former agricultural land use with locally appropriate wildflower grasslands.
- The reinforcement of the fragmented existing hedgerow boundaries will also have a positive character and visual influence.
- The Proposed Development will provide greater access and connectivity to the existing public rights of way network, as well as providing greater cycle connectivity.

8.4 Effects on Landscape Features

8.4.1 The extent of landscape features directly affected is limited to the Site. **Appendix C** details the changes that will occur to landscape features, and the resultant effects. A summary of these effects is noted below.

8.4.2 The Proposed Development will result in the majority of the agricultural fields being replaced with built form and associated hard landscaping. The remainder of the land will be retained and enhanced in character through the introduction of wildflower meadows, basins with marginal planting and structural planting. The inevitable loss of open land will overall have an adverse effect of major significance at year 1. However, as the proposed planting establishes, by year 15, this adverse effect will reduce to moderate-major significance.

8.4.3 Despite the removal of some sections of hedgerow to accommodate the proposed development parcels and proposed access points; there will be an overall net increase of structural vegetation including trees and hedgerows. Overall, at year 1, there will be an adverse effect of moderate-minor significance, and by year 15, once the proposed planting has established, this adverse effect will reduce to one of minor significance.

8.4.4 The Proposed Development has been informed by the existing topography, including the use of the lower lying areas for drainage basins. The Proposed Development is likely to require some cut and fill to accommodate the proposed built form, access routes and attenuation basins. Where cut and fill is necessary to accommodate built form, level changes should vary as little as possible from existing contours and be contained within the interior of the development parcels where it is not easily perceived from the adjacent open spaces or local landscape. Changes in topography should be minimal and graded to appear as natural as possible.. There will therefore be limited variation in landform to accommodate the proposed residential units. Structural planting once established, will enhance the legibility of the landform. Overall, there will be **adverse effects of no more than minor-moderate significance** at year 15.

8.5 Effects on Visual Receptors

8.5.1 **Appendix D** details the visual effects that will occur with respect to the identified representative visual receptor viewpoint locations (as shown in **Site Context Photographs 1-11**). The assessment is informed by the summer views illustrated in the baseline. However, in the maximum visibility scenario of winter conditions, when there are no leaves on the trees, there may be a greater degree of intervisibility. This has been considered and accounted for in this assessment and noted where relevant in the visual impact assessment. The assessment accounts for effects at year 1 and at year 15 (residual effects), the latter allowing for the establishment of planting within the structural landscape proposals.

8.5.2 Where different types of receptors are represented by these views, the higher levels of sensitivity of these receptors to the type of development proposed have been used. For example, where motorists and pedestrians are potential receptors, the effect on pedestrians has been assessed. Motorists will typically experience less significant effects due to the more fleeting nature of views and the fact that their attention is not typically focused on appreciating the landscape. A summary of the key visual effects is outlined below.

8.5.3 The greatest degree of visual change will be for receptors that are closer to the Site, including users of PRoW 085/11/1 to the north and north-east of the Site (**Site Context Photographs 1 and 2**), in which there will be immediate views to the proposed built form, resulting in adverse changes of moderate-major significance, at years 1 and 15

8.5.4 From PRoW 085/10/4 to the east of the Site (**Site Context Photograph 3**) there may be some heavily filtered views to the upper extent of the proposed built form, seen above and between the eastern Site boundary. However, due to the amount of built development that will be visible and the distance between the viewpoint location and the Proposed Development there will be adverse changes of only minor significance at year 15.

8.5.5 Similarly, for views from Fir Tree Lane immediately to the east of the Site (as shown in **Site Context Photographs 4 and 7**), due to the close proximity of the Proposed Development, including taller built form and partial removals of boundary hedgerows, there will be adverse changes of moderate-major significance at year 1, reducing to moderate at year 15.

8.5.6 In views from local footpaths, including from PRoW 085/701/1 to the south (**Site Context Photograph 5**), PRoW 241/1/1 to the south-west of the Site (**Site Context Photograph 6**) and PRoW 262/780/5 to the north-west of the Site (**Site Context Photograph 10**), there is a minimal degree of adverse visual change due to intervening mature vegetation which limits intervisibility, resulting in only the upper parts of taller built form being likely to be visible. This means that in the case of these views, there are adverse changes of no more than negligible adverse significance at both years 1 and 15.

8.5.7 From PRoW 085/11/1 to the north-west of the Site (**Site Context Photograph 8**), there will be adverse changes of moderate significance at year 1. At year 15, the maturation of the proposed planting, reinforcing the boundary hedgerow, will reduce intervisibility and consequently lead to an adverse change of minor-moderate significance.

8.5.8 From Allington Road to the north-west of the Site (**Site Context Photograph 9**), there may be some views to the upper parts of the proposed built form seen over intervening vegetation; overall, this would result in adverse effects of negligible-minor significance at both years 1 and 15.

8.5.9 Due to the distance from the Site, intervening built form and vegetation, in views from PRoW 069/16/1 within the golf course to the east (**Site Context Photograph 11**), there will be adverse changes of negligible significance at both years 1 and 15.

8.6 Effects on Landscape Character

8.6.1 As detailed in **Appendix C**, there will be localised effects on landscape character.

8.6.2 The Proposed Development will inevitably result in adverse effects on landscape character through the extension of built form into previously undeveloped land. However, mitigating factors will minimise the influence this addition will have on the local landscape character. The Proposed Development also presents opportunities to improve the provision and quality of locally characteristic features in line with recommendations as set out in published Landscape Character Assessments, thereby introducing some elements of beneficial change to landscape character by year 15. On balance, at year 1, the Proposed Development would result in an adverse change of moderate-major significance to the character of the Site vicinity. By year 15 as the proposed planting establishes, the adverse impacts of the Proposed Development will on balance, reduce to adverse effects of moderate significance.

8.6.3 As the Site occupies a much smaller extent of the borough-scale LCA **9: Horton Heath Undulating Farmland,** the influence of the Proposed Development on landscape character, although adverse, is limited to the extent that adverse effects would not be of more than moderate significance at year 1, and on balance will reduce to minor adverse by year 15.

8.7 Summary of Effects

8.7.1 There will inevitably be some adverse visual effects from the introduction of built form into currently undeveloped land. However, a range of mitigating factors reduce the significance of these effects, notably: the context of the proposed development on the existing settlement edge of Horton Heath; the integration of the Proposed Development into the existing structural vegetation framework enclosing the Site (the majority of which is to be retained); the distribution of building heights and the articulation of rooflines, variations in building articulation and materiality; the introduction of locally characteristic and visually interesting features within proposed open spaces; the introduction of street trees; and the positioning of features such as basins. There will also be some beneficial effects on the structural vegetation within the Site, owing to the extent and range of planting being introduced, including tree planting, and large areas of wildflower meadow. As a result, it is considered that the Proposed Development would be readily integrated into the landscape context.

8.7.2 Whilst there would be some adverse effects on landscape features, views and character, these would be localised and limited, and a number of beneficial effects would arise for trees and hedgerows within the Site. Significant adverse effects will remain for the open fields and the landscape character of the Site Vicinity.

8.7.3 Where significant residual visual effects remain, these are from viewpoints in close proximity to the Site from PRoW immediately to the north and Fir Tree Lane, immediately to the east and west of the Site.

8.7.4 A review of the LVIA prepared as part of the Outline Planning Permission Application (Tyler Grange, 2020) and now approved, alongside this assessment for the Reserved Matters Application, has determined that the assessed landscape and visual effects, compared to the approved outline scheme, are broadly aligned and are not considered to result in new or different significant landscape and visual effects.

9 Summary and Conclusion

9.1.1 The Site is set within a distinctive pattern of topography, hydrology and vegetation, which is relatively enclosed, situated on low-lying, undulating plain, with stream corridors and well-wooded boundaries, near to existing residential development in Horton Heath. The Site is not nationally or locally designated for landscape quality or character. It does, however, lie approximately 3.5km to the south-west of the nearest extent of the South Downs National Park.

9.1.2 The published landscape character assessments are broadly representative of the character of the study area and the Site. The study area contains many of the features identified as valued in local landscape character assessments, which can be summarised as: a largely rural area containing gentle undulations of the landform; medium-sized fields bounded by good hedges with mature trees; dispersed small blocks of woodland and copses; water courses scattered through the area; the network of narrow lanes and small farms and the prevalence of SINCs, including within Quobleigh Woods. Elements that detract from local character are also identified such as prominent built edges of settlements, ribbon development, industrial sites and the railway.

9.1.3 Relevant local planning policy focuses on: sustainable development; the provision, retention and/or enhancement of multi-functional green infrastructure; the safeguarding and enhancement of local character; and climate change resilience and the provision of SuDS. As part of an allocated strategic development site, the Eastleigh Local Plan sets out specific design requirements for the proposed development.

9.1.4 The Site comprises agricultural fields, which form part of the transitional landscape between the built edge of Horton Heath and the surrounding open countryside. While the nearby residential areas exert some urban influence, the strong vegetative framework and intact field pattern maintain a predominantly rural character.

9.1.5 The Site vicinity comprises agricultural fields bounded by mature tree hedgerows and areas of woodland. There are, however, urbanising and man-made influences apparent in the local area, such as busy roads, the railway, commercial and light industrial development and extensive residential development.

9.1.6 Overall, local views of the Site are heavily constrained by dense hedgerow boundaries and intervening vegetation. Albeit there are some views into the Site from the north, where PRoW cross fields that are included within the Site. There are also near-distance views into the Site from Firtree Lane immediately to the east and west of the Site. Views of the Site from the wider landscape are similarly constrained, with limited long-distance glimpsed views available from higher elevations to the east.

9.1.7 There will inevitably be some adverse visual effects from the introduction of built form into currently undeveloped land. However, a range of mitigating factors reduce the significance of these effects, notably: the context of the proposed development near to the existing settlement edge of Horton Heath; the integration of the Proposed Development into the existing structural vegetation framework enclosing the Site (the majority of which is to be retained); the distribution of building heights and the articulation of rooflines, variations in building articulation and materiality; the introduction of locally characteristic and visually interesting features within proposed open spaces; the introduction of street trees; and the positioning of features such as basins. There will also be some beneficial effects on the structural vegetation within the Site, owing to the extent and range of planting being introduced, including hedgerows, tree planting, and large areas of wildflower meadow. The introduction of play facilities will also provide beneficial effects to landscape character. As a result, it is considered that the Proposed Development would be readily integrated into the landscape context.

9.1.8 Whilst there would be some adverse effects on landscape features, views and character, these would be localised and limited, and a number of beneficial effects would arise for trees and hedgerows within the Site. Significant adverse effects (those of moderate or greater significance) will remain for the open fields and the landscape character of the Site Vicinity.

9.1.9 Where significant residual visual effects remain, these are from viewpoints in close proximity to the Site from PRoW immediately to the north and Fir Tree Lane, immediately to the east and west of the Site.

9.1.10 A review of the LVIA prepared as part of the Outline Application (Tyler Grange, 2020) and now approved, alongside this assessment for the Reserved Matters Application, has determined that the assessed landscape and visual effects, compared to the approved outline scheme are broadly aligned and are not considered to result in new or different significant landscape and visual effects.