

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990**

**MELTON PARISH COUNCIL  
(HEREINAFTER REFERRED TO AS “THE COUNCIL”)**

**SUBMISSIONS IN RESPONSE TO THE  
MELTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN (DECEMBER 2016)  
(HEREINAFTER REFERRED TO AS THE  
“NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN”)**

**ON BEHALF OF CHRISTCHURCH LAND & ESTATES  
LIMITED  
(HEREINAFTER REFERRED TO AS “CHRISTCHURCH”)**

**MARCH 2017**

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## 1. SUMMARY

1.1 It is submitted that the Neighbourhood Plan and its supporting documents, that in several respects the making of this Plan would not meet the basic conditions. A Neighbourhood Plan meets the basic conditions if:

- Having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State, it is appropriate to make the Neighbourhood Plan
- The making of the Neighbourhood Plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development.
- The making of the Neighbourhood Plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the Development Plan for the area
- The making of the Neighbourhood Plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, European Union (EU) obligations
- The making of the Neighbourhood Plan is not likely to have a significant effect on a European site or a European offshore marine site either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

1.2 In particular, this Plan does not have regard to national planning policy and guidance, nor does it contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, also there are elements of the Plan which are not in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Development Plan for the area and there is doubt that the Plan is compatible with EU obligations.

1.3 In several instances, clarity or credible evidence were not to be found to ensure the Plan meets the basic conditions.

1.4 It is submitted that the Neighbourhood Plan should not proceed to a referendum.

## 2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Christchurch Land & Estates Limited (hereinafter referred to as “Christchurch”) are the promoters of the land at Yarmouth Road Melton the land edged red shown on the plan attached as Annexure 1 (hereinafter referred to as “the Yarmouth Road site”).

2.2 The Adopted Core Strategy (July 2013) confirms that Melton is a Key Service Centre.

2.3 Strategic Policy SP27 – Key and Local Service Centres confirms

*“(d) Enable organic development to occur in respect of settlements where opportunities within defined physical limits are severely limited.....”.*

2.4 Policy SP2 of the Core Strategy sets out a requirement of 7,900 new homes across the district in the period 2010 to 2027. The policy then confirms an early review of the Core Strategy to identify the full, objectively assessed housing needs (FOAN) for the district. The Core Strategy confirms that in any event the FOAN for the district is 11,000 dwellings over the Plan period.

2.5 In light of this, it is considered inappropriate for the Melton Neighbourhood Plan to be planning to meet the Core Strategy target of 7,900 dwellings. This figure is clearly out of date and therefore the Neighbourhood Plan should be seeking to assist in the delivery of the identified OAN in the District. The forthcoming review of the Local Plan will reconsider the OAN, however the latest evidence available identifies that the OAN in the District remains considerably higher than the now out of date figure of 7,900 dwellings in the adopted Core Strategy. As such the Neighbourhood Plan should take this into account when planning for housing to effectively assist in meeting the District’s needs.

2.6 Christchurch consider that the Yarmouth Road site constitutes sustainable development and therefore should be an allocated site.

2.7 Christchurch have submitted a planning application relating to the Yarmouth Road site, reference number DC/16/4770/OUT, to Suffolk Coastal District Council for

*“Outline planning permission for up to 138 dwellings, a 60 bedroom nursing home with 50 assisted living apartments, car parking, open space provision with associated infrastructure and access”*

2.8 The planning application was supported by various drawings and planning and technical reports, including as listed below, which are also submitted with these representations:

- Site Location Plan – YOR.2251.010 – prepared by Pegasus Group
- Illustrative Masterplan – YOR.2251.014.G – prepared by Pegasus Group
- Design and Access Statement – prepared by Pegasus Group
- Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment – prepared by Pegasus Group

2.9 It is considered a significant omission that the Neighbourhood Plan makes no policy provision for a nursing or care home facility or assisted living accommodation, despite there being a clear local need for such facilities.

2.10 The Neighbourhood Plan has failed to deliver the required level of development required within Melton and has failed to provide creative and flexible policies which will both support sustainable growth and protect and enhance the existing character of the area.

The Plan has been prepared without due regard to the provisions of the Framework which has introduced a cost/benefit approach to policies. The Plan is written in a prescriptive format with the underlying intent to restrict new development.

### **3. FULL OBJECTIVELY ASSESSED NEED**

- 3.1 The Suffolk Coastal Core Strategy was adopted on 5th July 2013 following formal examination. Policy SP2 of the Core Strategy sets out a requirement of 7,900 new homes across the District in the period 2010 to 2027. The policy goes on to state that an early review of the Core Strategy will be undertaken, commencing with the publication of an Issues and Options Report by 2015 at the latest. The review will identify the full, objectively assessed housing needs (OAN) for the District and proposals to ensure that this is met in so far as is consistent with the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 3.2 During the course of the Core Strategy examination, the Council was required to rectify an absence of evidence as to the full, OAN for housing, and concluded that this was 11,000 dwellings over the plan period. In his Report, the Inspector who undertook the examination of the plan agreed that, at that time, the full OAN for housing in the District was 11,000 dwellings, but the Core Strategy only makes provision of 7,900 dwellings over the plan period 2010 to 2027. The Inspector concluded that the scale of the housing provision in the Core Strategy fell substantially short of the OAN at that time of 11,000 (647 per annum).
- 3.3 In his Report the Inspector concluded that it was in the interests of achieving sustainable development and boosting significantly the supply of housing for the Core Strategy to be adopted, even with a shortfall in provision against the full OAN for housing. This was done on the clear premise that an early review of the Core Strategy would take place, as reflected in Policy SP2. To date, there has been no publication of an Issues and Options Report.
- 3.4 Whilst the Council is not obliged to follow the timetable envisaged in Policy SP2 its failure to do so has inevitable consequences for this part of the development plan. The housing requirement set out in Core Strategy Policy SP2 is out of date and can no longer carry any or any substantial weight in view of the position the Council has now adopted in its Local Development Scheme.

The housing requirement, which fell substantially short of the OAN at the time, was adopted as an interim measure and the Council has now chosen to depart from the timetable for early review, in particular with regard to establishing evidence as to the full OAN for housing in the District, contained in Policy SP2 of the Core Strategy. As such, the Council cannot properly continue to assess its performance in delivering housing against the out of date figure of 7,900 dwellings over the period 2010-2027.

- 3.5 In light of this, it is considered inappropriate for the Melton Neighbourhood Plan to be planning to meet the Core Strategy target of 7,900 dwellings. This figure is clearly out of date and therefore the Neighbourhood Plan should be seeking to assist in the delivery of the identified OAN in the District. The forthcoming review of the Local Plan will reconsider the OAN, however the latest evidence available identifies that the OAN in the District remains considerably higher than the now out of date figure of 7,900 dwellings in the adopted Core Strategy. As such the Neighbourhood Plan should take this into account when planning for housing to effectively assist in meeting the District's needs.

#### 4. SETTLEMENT BOUNDARIES

4.1 In principle, no objection is raised to the proposed inclusion of settlement boundaries within the Neighbourhood Plan, subject to any boundaries being drawn to include land allocations to facilitate the required level of growth to accommodate the assessed need for housing, community facilities and infrastructure and employment growth.

4.2 The identification of settlement boundaries should not be used as an arbitrary or artificial means to restrict or limit growth.

4.3 Objection is however raised about the scope of the document whereby the Local Planning Authority consider that where the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan is progressing, the Local Planning Authority will be led by the Neighbourhood Plan. Such an approach presupposes that the Local Plan (and any Review) and Neighbourhood Plans proceed in parallel. There are no guarantees that this will be the case.

4.4 The concerns about this situation relate to the fact that the 2013 Local Plan does not meet the full and objectively assessed need for housing in the District. As such little weight can be afforded to the Local Plan policies on this matter. Consequently, the Neighbourhood Plan process does not have a proper context from which to make allocations i.e. if prepared in the context of the 2013 Local Plan, the Neighbourhood Plan will significantly underprovide for housing. Also, in such circumstances, the Neighbourhood Plan process is constrained. As stated in paragraph 184 of the Framework,

*"neighbourhood plans and orders should not promote less development than set out in the Local Plan or undermine its strategic policies".*

4.5 At present therefore, the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to restrict development notwithstanding the required strategic policies of the Local Plan. Options to provide for future housing needs should be considered and this should include the consideration of land outside the settlement boundary.



## **5. COMPLIANCE WITH THE BASIC CONDITIONS – THE PLAN AS A WHOLE**

### **About the Neighbourhood Plan Area**

- 5.1 Suffolk Coastal District Council, as the Local Planning Authority, designated a Neighbourhood Area for the whole of the Melton parish area in December 2013 to enable Melton Parish Council (the relevant authority) to prepare the Neighbourhood Plan. The Plan has been prepared by the community through the Melton Neighbourhood Plan Group (MNPG).
- 5.2 Melton village falls within the Suffolk Coastal Local Planning Authority. The centre of the village is located approximately 1.5km northeast of the centre of the market town of Woodbridge, which is in turn located approximately 12km to the northeast of the county town of Ipswich. Melton is approximately 17.5km inland from the coast at Orfordness.

### **Overview of the Neighbourhood Plan**

- 5.3 The Plan contains a vision for Melton which is underpinned by a series of objectives which all relate to the development and use of land in some way. The Plan contains 21 policies covering a wide range of issues from landscape character, community facilities to design and allocates **one** site for residential development.
- 5.4 A Neighbourhood Plan must meet the basic conditions if it is to be made and these are discussed in more detail below.

### **Regard to national policy and advice**

- 5.5 The main document that sets out national planning policy is the National Planning Policy Framework (the “Framework”) published in 2012.

In particular it explains that the application of the presumption in favour of sustainable development will mean that Neighbourhood Plans should support the strategic development needs set out in Local Plans, plan positively to support local development, shaping and directing development that is outside the strategic elements of the Local Plan.

5.6 The Framework also makes it clear that Neighbourhood Plans should be aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area. In other words Neighbourhood Plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local plan. They cannot promote less development than that set out in the Local Plan or undermine its strategic policies which this Plan clearly does.

5.7 Policy SP19 – Settlement Policy confirms that Key Service Centres are

*“settlements which provide an extensive range of specified facilities”*

[therefore a sustainable settlement].

5.8 Policy SP27 – Key Service Centres significantly confirms that the “strategy” identified for Key Service Centres in the Core Strategy is to

*“promote the combination of open market and affordable housing in order to encourage and enable young and old the opportunity to remain within their local communities”*

[the Neighbourhood Plan is not compliant] and

*“enable organic development to occur in respect of settlements where opportunities within defined physical limits are severely limited”*

[again, the Neighbourhood Plan is not compliant].

- 5.9 On 6 March 2014, the Government published a suite of planning guidance referred to as Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). This is an online resource available at [planningguidance.communities.gov.uk](http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk). The planning guidance contains a wealth of information relating to neighbourhood planning.
- 5.10 The Framework indicates that plans should provide a practical framework within which decisions on planning applications can be made with a high degree of predictability and efficiency.
- 5.11 The guidance indicates that a policy should be clear and unambiguous to enable a decision maker to apply it consistently and with confidence when determining planning applications. The guidance advises that policies should be concise, precise and supported by appropriate evidence, reflecting and responding to both the context and the characteristics of the area.
- 5.12 Where Neighbourhood Plans contain policies relevant to housing supply these policies should take account of the latest and up-to-date evidence of housing need.
- 5.13 In allocating sites for development, an appraisal of options and an assessment of individual sites against clearly identified criteria should be carried out.
- 5.14 National policy and guidance is therefore clear that there has to be evidence to support a particular policy notwithstanding that it may represent a well-intentioned aspiration of the local community.
- 5.15 The guidance further states that whilst there are prescribed documents that must be submitted with a Neighbourhood Plan, there is no ‘tick box’ list of evidence required. However, it continues that proportionate, robust evidence should support the choices made and the approach taken. It continues that the evidence should be drawn upon to explain succinctly the intention and rationale of the policies.

- 5.16 The Plan as a whole does not provide a practical framework for decision-making. Many of the policies and proposals are not clear and unambiguous. Many are not concise or precise or supported by appropriate evidence. The Plan makes no provision for any nursing or care homes nor any extra care or assisted living accommodation.
- 5.17 Critically for this Plan area, bearing in mind its context and the characteristics of the Plan area, and in particular the conservation and character areas and other heritage assets it contains, the Plan is not supported by appropriate evidence nor does it reflect and respond to its context and characteristics.
- 5.18 Individual policies and the cumulative effect of the policies and the issues raised by them mean that the Plan as a whole does not match the expectation in the Framework that *“neighbourhoods should...plan positively to support local development, shaping and directing development that is outside the strategic elements of the Local Plan...”*.

### **European Union Obligations**

- 5.19 A Neighbourhood Plan must be compatible with European Union (EU) obligations, as incorporated into United Kingdom law, in order to be legally compliant. A number of EU obligations may be of relevance including Directives 2001/42/EC (Strategic Environmental Assessment), 2011/92/EU (Environmental Impact Assessment), 92/43/EEC (Habitats), 2009/147/EC (Wild Birds), 2008/98/EC (Waste), 2008/50/EC (Air Quality) and 2000/60/EC (Water).
- 5.20 The guidance indicates that it is the responsibility of Local Planning Authorities to ensure that the Plan is compatible with EU obligations (including obligations under the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive) when it takes the decision on
- a) whether the Plan should proceed to referendum, and
  - b) whether or not to make the Plan.

## **Strategic Environmental Assessment**

- 5.21 Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment is relevant. Its purpose is to provide a high level of protection of the environment by incorporating environmental considerations into the process of preparing plans and programmes. This Directive is commonly referred to as the Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) Directive. The Directive is transposed into UK law through the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.
- 5.22 It is clear that the SEA Directive must consider reasonable alternatives which are different but realistic options considered whilst developing the policies in the Plan. There is a lack of transparency about the site options considered. The reasons for selecting the preferred approach in the light of these alternatives are not clear. The methodology does not meet the required standard.

## **Contribute to the achievement of sustainable development**

- 5.23 A qualifying body must demonstrate how the making of a Neighbourhood Plan would contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The Framework as a whole constitutes the Government's view of what sustainable development means in practice for planning. The Framework explains that there are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental.
- 5.24 The Plan taken as a whole will not contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. It is submitted that some of its policies and proposals, all be it inadvertently, have the potential to not only not contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, but actively prevent it from occurring.

5.25 The Framework contains, at its core, the presumption in favour of sustainable development and a requirement to significantly boost housing. Paragraphs 16 and 184 of the Framework make clear that the application of the presumption in favour of development has implications for how communities engage in neighbourhood planning. Critically, it means that neighbourhoods should:

- (i) develop plans that support the strategic development needs set out in the Core Strategy including policies for housing and economic development, and
- (ii) plan positively to support local development, shaping and directing development in their area that is outside the strategic elements of the Core Strategy.

[again, the Neighbourhood Plan is not compliant].

## **6. COMPLIANCE WITH THE BASIC CONDITIONS**

### **Policy MEL1: Physical Limits Boundaries**

Representation: Object

It is submitted that the identification of settlement boundaries should not be used as an arbitrary or artificial means to restrict or limit growth, that the boundaries should be drawn to include land allocations to facilitate the required level of growth.

### **Policy MEL6: Parking Standards**

Representation: Object

The proposed parking standards appear to be an over provision of car parking spaces, therefore, being contrary to the principles of sustainable development.

### **Policy MEL8: Community Facilities**

Representation: Object

It is noted that the Policy confirms no support for much needed nursing home or care facilities, also that any proposed residential housing schemes, that these should include housing for older residents. The need to provide housing for older people is critical given the projected increase in the number of households aged 65 and over.

Should this Policy include provision for nursing or care facilities and housing for the elderly, it is submitted that this Policy would then be an example of positive planning and in line with national policy and advice and would, therefore, help to achieve sustainable development.

Therefore, as the Plan does not identify any sites for a nursing home or care facilities or extra care or assisted living accommodation, it is submitted that Policy MEL8 does not meet the basic conditions.

The proposals to develop the Yarmouth Road site include a nursing home and assisted living accommodation, the site should be an allocated site in the emerging Plan therefore.

**Policy MEL10: Provision of Allotments, Community Orchard and a Community Farm/Educational Facilities**

Whilst the provision of further allotments and a community orchard is supported, and such provision is made in the Yarmouth Road site proposals, this Policy wording will require significant rewording, also for compliance with developer contributions.

**Policy MEL16: Melton Conservation Area**

Representation:        Object

This is a long Policy with five design principles which clearly do not provide the clarity or precision that national planning policy seeks, in particular that policy is not compliant with paragraphs 128 and 132 of the Framework.

Point (v) refers to *“the traffic implications arising from the proposed development”* where no technical evidence appears to have been produced to support this criteria and, therefore, it leaves room for interpretation.

A number of the principles in the policy, therefore, do not meet the basic conditions.

**Policy MEL21: Land off Wilford Bridge Road**

Representation:        Object

The preferred allocation Policy MEL21: Land off Wilford Bridge Road, the process for selecting Land off Wilford bridge Road, the site allocation “process” is unclear. It should be made clear in the emerging Plan the reasons why the site at Wilford Bridge Road was selected (as opposed, for example, to the site at Yarmouth Road Melton).



## 7. THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE YARMOUTH ROAD MELTON “SITE”

7.1 Christchurch commissioned Turley Sustainability to carry out a Sustainability Appraisal of the land at Yarmouth Road Melton (February 2015). The Sustainability Appraisal clearly confirms that this location is a sustainable location for residential/mixed use development.

The Yarmouth Road site is not located within the Green Belt areas of restraint or the conservation area and is not affected by any landscape designations. The site has no technical constraints such as flood plain, archaeology or ground conditions and is available for development.

7.2 Table 3.2 from the WYG Transport Assessment is reproduced below and highlights the accessibility of the site to local services and facilities.

**Table 3.2 Accessible Public Services and Facilities**

Service / Facility	Within 800m of the Site	Within 2km of the Site	Accessible by Public Transport
<b>Community Buildings</b> (e.g. Woodbridge Police Station)	No	Yes	Yes
<b>Education and Library Services</b>			
Primary School (Woodbridge Primary)	No	Yes	Yes
Secondary School (Farlingaye High School)	No	No	Yes
Library Services (Woodbridge Library)	No	No	Yes
<b>Leisure and Sports Facilities</b> (Ufford Park Golf Club)	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Health and Social Care Services</b>			
GP Services (Dr Taylor and Partners)	No	Yes	Yes
Pharmacy (Boots)	No	Yes	Yes
Dentist (ADP Woodbridge)	No	Yes	Yes
<b>Food and Fresh Groceries</b> (Country Fayre)	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Nursery / Crèche Facilities</b> (Melton Day Nursery )	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Communication Services</b> (Woodbridge Post Office)	No	No	Yes
<b>Bank and Cash Machines</b> (ATM, The Street, Melton)	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Public House</b> (The Coach and Horses)	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Places of Worship</b> (Saint Andrews, Melton)	Yes	Yes	Yes

## 8. CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 Many of the Plan's policies and proposals, including the single site allocation, lack robust and proportionate evidence to support them. As a result the process lacks transparency. The Plan does not include proportionate, robust evidence to support the approach taken and the choices made.
- 8.2 Many of the policies lack precision and clarity in their wording. Their intent is often unclear or ambiguous and it would be difficult for the development industry to know how to accord with their requirements.
- 8.3 The Plan does not provide the practical framework sought by national policy and guidance.
- 8.4 Many of the policies are not underpinned by appropriate evidence. Given the insufficient evidence base to support many of the policies, it is impossible to be certain that the Plan will help to achieve sustainable development. In fact some policies may, however inadvertently, result in development that is not appropriate bearing in mind the context and characteristics of the Plan area nor is supported by national policy or by District level policy.
- 8.5 Whilst some individual policies do meet the basic conditions and some could have been modified to accommodate minor wording changes, in several cases credible evidence is not to be found in the Plan or its supporting documents.
- 8.6 The Plan area contains a variety of heritage assets. There is considerable doubt as to whether the Plan would conserve or enhance those heritage assets.
- 8.7 It is considered by Christchurch for the reasons outlined in this submission that the land at Yarmouth Road Melton should be allocated as it constitutes sustainable development in accordance with paragraph 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 8.8 By omitting the site, it is considered that the emerging Plan fails to significantly boost housing supply and fails to meet the objectively assessed housing needs of the District (paragraphs 14 and 47 of the National Planning Policy Framework).
- 8.9 It is submitted, therefore, that the site should be a preferred option for housing being a sustainable and appropriate option for the village of Melton, which is significantly constrained by Conservation Area designations character areas and so on.

**Richard Brown MSc**

**8<sup>th</sup> March 2017**

## **Annexures**

1. Site plan
2. Illustrative masterplan
3. Design and Access Statement, prepared by Pegasus Group
4. Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, prepared by Pegasus Group

REF. | YOR.2251.001.E

DATE | OCTOBER 2016



## **LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

IN RELATION TO A PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT ON LAND AT

**YARMOUTH ROAD, MELTON, WOODBRIDGE, IP12 1QH**

ON BEHALF OF CHRISTCHURCH LAND & ESTATES (MELTON) LIMITED



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### APPENDIX B

#### LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT EXTRACTS

## **WARRANTY CLAUSE**

Pegasus Planning Group Ltd. ("Pegasus") has prepared this report for land at Yarmouth Road, Melton ("the Site") in accordance with the instructions of Richard Brown Planning Consultant acting on behalf of Christchurch Land & Estates (Melton) Limited ("the Client") by email dated 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014 and under the terms of appointment for Pegasus.

This report has been prepared for the Client, and Pegasus shall not be responsible for any use of the report or its contents for any purpose other than that for which it was prepared and provided. Should the Client require to pass copies of the report to other parties for information, the whole of the report should be copied, but no professional liability or warranty shall be extended to other parties by Pegasus in this connection without the explicit written agreement thereto by Pegasus. The report may be assigned by the Client by way of absolute legal assignment to a purchaser (or purchasers) of all or part of the Site to which the report refers, without the consent of Pegasus being required and such assignment shall be effective upon written notice thereof being given by the Client to Pegasus. No further assignments shall be permitted unless expressly agreed by Pegasus. In the event of the Client entering into a legal joint venture to develop the Site, the report can be regarded as having been issued by Pegasus jointly in favour of the Client and the joint venture partner(s), and in respect of the report Pegasus would owe the joint venture partner(s) the same duty of care that Pegasus owed to the Client when Pegasus was instructed to prepare the report subject to all the matters contained or referred to in the report.



## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 Pegasus Group has prepared this Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) in relation to the proposed residential development at Yarmouth Road, Melton, Suffolk on behalf of Christchurch Land & Estates (Melton) Limited. The LVIA has been undertaken by Chartered Members of the Landscape Institute.
- 1.2 The purpose of this LVIA, produced outside of the context of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), is to review the site and its surrounding context in order to describe and identify the level of effects arising as a result of the proposed development, in relation to:
- the features and character of the local landscape; and
  - the visual amenity of people who view the site.
- 1.3 The judgements provided in the LVIA may then inform the planning balance to be carried out by the determining authority.

### **LIMITATIONS OF THE ASSESSMENT**

- 1.4 The assessment is based on the indicative masterplan drawing YOR.2251.014.rev G, which is included at Figure 2. Any subsequent alteration to the layout of the development may result in different effects to those assessed in this report and this may require the assessed effects to be reviewed in the light of any significant changes.
- 1.5 It is understood that a request for a screening opinion from the Local Planning Authority (LPA) will be submitted at the same time as the submission of the outline planning application. At the time of writing therefore, this LVIA assumes that the project will not require Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and the process that has been followed in the assessment is in line with current best practice guidance for an LVIA for development which does not require EIA i.e. that the LVIA should avoid concluding whether or not the effects are significant. Should the LPA determine that EIA is required, the LVIA would be amended to accord with best practice guidance for EIA projects.

- 1.6 The baseline landscape resource and visual receptors were identified in part through a desk-based study of published landscape character studies, relevant planning policy guidance, aerial photography, Ordnance Survey mapping, and also through photographs taken and observations made during site visits conducted during between April 2014 and October 2015.
  
- 1.7 Access during the site visit was restricted to publically accessible locations and within the land ownership of the client. No access was possible to private properties, which were assessed from the nearest available publically accessible vantage point. Therefore assumptions have been made regarding views from private properties. These assumptions have been based on professional experience and interpretation of available desktop data as well as land use and vegetation present at the time of the site visits.
  
- 1.8 Due to the outline nature of the application, because the site does not lie in a Dark Sky area and because lighting was not raised as an issue during pre-application discussions with Council planning officers, this LVIA does not include a detailed assessment of lighting. Notwithstanding this, the visibility of lighting has been considered and incorporated within the general consideration of visibility of the proposed development. For this purpose it has been assumed that lighting would consist of residential and street lighting typical of the surrounding residential context.

## **2. METHODOLOGY AND ASSESSMENT CRITERIA**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Published Guidance**

2.1 The primary source of best practice for LVIA in the UK is *The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*, 3rd Edition (GLVIA3) (Landscape Institute and the Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment, 2013). The assessment criteria adopted to inform the appraisal of effects have been developed in accordance with the principles established in this best practice document. It should however be acknowledged that GLVIA3 establishes guidelines not a specific methodology. The preface to GLVIA3 states:

*"This edition concentrates on principles and processes. It does not provide a detailed or formulaic 'recipe' that can be followed in every situation – it remains the responsibility of the professional to ensure that the approach and methodology adopted are appropriate to the task in hand."*

2.2 The criteria set out below have therefore been specifically tailored for this appraisal to ensure that the methodology is appropriate and fit for purpose.

2.3 The purpose of an LVIA when undertaken outside the context of EIA is to identify and describe the relative level of any landscape and visual effects arising as a result of the proposals. As confirmed in GLVIA3 Statement of Clarification 1/13 (Landscape Institute, 10<sup>th</sup> June 2013) an LVIA for development which has been screened as not requiring EIA should avoid concluding whether the effects are significant or not and this is the approach adopted in this LVIA.

#### **Distinction between Landscape and Visual Impacts**

2.4 An LVIA must consider both:

- effects on the landscape as a resource in its own right (the landscape effects); and
- effects on specific views and visual amenity more generally (the visual effects).

#### **Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Process**

2.5 The assessment of landscape effects follows a recognised process set out below:

- Identify the baseline landscape resource (i.e. individual landscape elements and landscape character) and its value;
- Describe any mitigation measures proposed to avoid, reduce and ameliorate adverse impacts and to maximise the beneficial impacts of the development;
- Evaluate the sensitivity of the landscape resource to the type of development proposed;
- Identify predicted landscape impacts of the development;
- Evaluate the magnitude of change to the baseline landscape resource; and
- Assess the level of residual effect of the development on the landscape.

2.6 The assessment of visual effects follows a similar process set out below:

- Identify the Zone of Visual Influence (ZVI) for the development using digital terrain data (i.e. the geographical area where views of the development are theoretically possible with a bare earth scenario) and manually adjust the results to exclude the main areas of woodland and settlement;
- Identify potential visual receptors for the development (i.e. groups of people who would have views of the development);
- Describe any mitigation measures proposed to avoid, reduce and ameliorate potential adverse impacts and to maximise the beneficial impacts of the development;
- Evaluate the sensitivity of the visual receptor groups to the type of development proposed;
- Describe the nature of the baseline views (usually illustrated by a photograph) and the predicted visual impacts of the development on the views of each receptor group;
- Evaluate the magnitude of change in the view of the receptor groups;
- Assess the level of residual effects on the views from representative receptor groups and on overall visual amenity.

### **Study Area and Consultation**

2.7 Following a preliminary desktop assessment of topography, landscape designations, landscape character areas and aerial photography, the extent of the primary study area for the LVIA has been taken to be a 2km radius from the centre of the site in all directions. More detailed baseline studies and fieldwork established that effects on landscape character and visual amenity beyond 1km were unlikely due to the scale of the proposed development and the degree of

visibility. The focus for the assessment work in this LVIA has therefore been made within approximately 1km of the site.

- 2.8 Consultation took place with Nicholas Newton, Arboriculture and Landscape Manager at Suffolk Coastal & Waveney Planning Partnership in May 2014 in order to discuss and agree the location of photographic viewpoints. The twelve locations indicated in Figure 7 were proposed, as they were deemed to represent a range of visual receptors, distances and directions of views towards the site. The furthest location was approximately 380m northwest of the site boundary. The Arboriculture and Landscape Manager confirmed his agreement to this approach on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2014.

### **ASSESSMENT CRITERIA**

- 2.9 The assessment of effects is made by means of professional judgement using the criteria set out below as guidance.

### **NATURE (SENSITIVITY) OF RECEPTORS**

#### **Nature (Sensitivity) of Landscape Features**

- 2.10 The nature or sensitivity of an individual landscape feature or element reflects its susceptibility to change and any values associated with it. It is therefore a function of factors such as its quality, rarity, contribution to landscape character, degree to which the particular element can be replaced and cultural associations or designations that apply. A particular landscape feature may be more 'sensitive' in one location than in another often as a result of local values associated with the feature or in relation to its function as a key or distinctive characteristic of that local landscape. Therefore it is not possible to simply place different types of landscape features into sensitivity bands. Where individual landscape features are affected, professional judgement is used as far as possible to give an objective evaluation of its sensitivity. Justification is given for this evaluation where necessary.
- 2.11 The nature or sensitivity of individual landscape features has been described as **very high, high, medium, low** or **very low**.

### **Nature (Sensitivity) of Landscape Character**

2.12 The nature or sensitivity of landscape character reflects its susceptibility to change and any values associated with it. It is essentially an expression of a landscape's ability to accommodate a particular type of change, in this case a housing development. Sensitivity varies depending on the physical and perceptual attributes of the landscape, including but not necessarily limited to:

- Scale;
- Degree of openness;
- Landform;
- Existing land cover;
- Landscape pattern and complexity;
- The extent of human influence in the landscape;
- The degree of remoteness/wildness;
- Perception of change in the landscape;
- The importance of landmarks or skylines in the landscape;
- Inter-visibility with and influence on surrounding areas;
- Condition;
- Rarity and scenic quality of the landscape; and
- Values placed on the landscape including any designations that may apply.

2.13 In this appraisal the nature or sensitivity of landscape character is considered with reference to published landscape character types/areas and where relevant local landscape units as defined in this LVIA for the purposes of this study. Information regarding the key characteristics of these local character areas/units has been extrapolated from relevant published studies where possible. Together with on-site appraisal an assessment of landscape sensitivity to housing development has been undertaken employing professional judgement for relevant local landscape character areas/types/units.

2.14 The nature or sensitivity of landscape character has been described as **very high, high, medium, low** or **very low**.

### **Nature (Sensitivity) of Visual Receptors**

2.15 The nature or sensitivity of a visual receptor group reflects their susceptibility to change and any values associated with the specific view in question. Susceptibility to change varies depending on a number of factors such as the occupation of the viewer, their viewing expectations, duration of view and the angle or direction in

which they would see the site. Whilst most views are valued by someone, certain viewpoints are particularly highly valued for their cultural or historical associations and this can increase the sensitivity of the view. The following criteria are provided for guidance only and are not exclusive:

- **Very Low Sensitivity** – People engaged in industrial and commercial activities or military activities.
- **Low Sensitivity** - People at their place of work (e.g. offices); short-medium stay patients at hospital, shoppers; users of trunk/major roads and passengers on commercial railway lines (except where these form part of a recognised and promoted scenic route).
- **Medium Sensitivity** - Users of public rights of way and minor roads which do not appear to be used primarily for recreational activities or the specific enjoyment of the landscape; recreational activities not specifically focused on the landscape (e.g. football); motel users.
- **High Sensitivity** – Residents at home; users of long distance or recreational trails and other sign posted walks; users of public rights of way and minor roads which appear to be used for recreational activities or the specific enjoyment of the landscape; users of caravan parks, campsites and 'destination' hotels; tourist attractions with opportunities for views of the landscape (but not specifically focused on a particular vista); slow paced recreational activities which derive part of their pleasure from an appreciation of setting (e.g. bowling, golf); allotments.
- **Very High Sensitivity** - People at recognised vantage points (often with interpretation boards), people at tourist attractions with a focus on a specific view, visitors to historic features/estates where the setting is important to an appreciation and understanding of cultural value.

2.16 It is important to appreciate that it is the visual receptor (i.e. the person) that has a sensitivity and not a property, public right of way or road. Therefore, a large number of people may use a motorway for example, but this does not increase the sensitivity of the receptors using it. Conversely, a residential property may only have one person living in it but this does not reduce the sensitivity of that receptor. The number of receptors affected at any given location may be a planning consideration, but it does not alter the sensitivity of the receptor group.

## **NATURE (MAGNITUDE) OF EFFECT**

### **General Note**

- 2.17 The following discussion sets out the approach adopted in this LVIA in relation to a specific issue arising in GLVIA3 which requires a brief explanation.
- 2.18 Prior to the publication of GLVIA3, LVIA practice had evolved over time in tandem with most other environmental disciplines to consider significance principally as a function of two factors, namely: sensitivity of the receptor and magnitude of the effect (the term 'magnitude' being a word most commonly used in LVIA and most other environmental disciplines to describe the size or scale of an effect).
- 2.19 Box 3.1 on page 37 of GLVIA3 references a 2011 publication by IEMA entitled '*The State of EIA Practice in the UK*' which reiterates the importance of considering not just the scale or size of effect but other factors which combine to define the 'nature of the effect' including factors such as the probability of an effect occurring and the duration, reversibility and spatial extent of the effect.
- 2.20 The flow diagram on page 39 of GLVIA3 suggests that the magnitude of effect is a function of three factors (the size/scale of the effect, the duration of the effect and the reversibility of the effect). For clarification, the approach taken in this LVIA has been to consider magnitude of effect solely as the scale or size of the effect in the traditional sense of the term 'magnitude'.
- 2.21 Having identified the magnitude of effect as defined above the LVIA also describes the duration and reversibility of the identified effect before drawing a conclusion on the overall level of effect taking all of these factors into account.
- 2.22 In the context of the above discussion the following criteria have been adopted to describe the magnitude of effects.

### **Nature (Magnitude) of Effects on Landscape Features**

- 2.23 Professional judgement has been used as appropriate to determine the magnitude of direct physical effects on individual existing landscape features using the following criteria as guidance only:



- **Very Low Magnitude of Change** - No notable loss or alteration to existing landscape features;
- **Low Magnitude of Change** - Minor loss or alteration to part of an existing landscape feature;
- **Medium Magnitude of Change** - Some loss or alteration to part of an existing landscape feature;
- **High Magnitude of Change** - Major loss or major alteration to an existing landscape feature;
- **Very High Magnitude of Change** - Total loss or alteration to an existing landscape feature.

### **Nature (Magnitude) of Effects on Landscape Character**

2.24 The magnitude of effect on landscape character is influenced by a number of factors including: the extent to which existing landscape features are lost or altered, the introduction of new features and the resulting alteration to the physical and perceptual characteristics of the landscape. It is recognised that usually the landscape components in the immediate surroundings have a much stronger influence on the sense of landscape character than distant features whilst acknowledging the fact that more distant features can have an influence on landscape character as well.

2.25 Professional judgement has been used as appropriate to determine the magnitude of effect using the following criteria as guidance only:

- **Very Low Magnitude of Change** - No notable loss or alteration to existing landscape features; no notable introduction of new features into the landscape; or negligible change to the key physical and/or perceptual attributes of the landscape.
- **Low Magnitude of Change** - Minor loss or alteration to existing landscape features; introduction of minor new features into the landscape; or minor alteration to the key physical and/or perceptual attributes of the landscape.
- **Medium Magnitude of Change** - Some notable loss or alteration to existing landscape features; introduction of some notable new features into the landscape; or some notable change to the key physical and/or perceptual attributes of the landscape.
- **High Magnitude of Change** - A major loss or alteration to existing landscape features; introduction of major new features into the landscape;

or a major change to the key physical and/or perceptual attributes of the landscape.

- **Very High Magnitude of Change** - Total loss or alteration to existing landscape features; introduction of dominant new features into the landscape; or a very major change to the key physical and/or perceptual attributes of the landscape.

### **Nature (Magnitude) of Effects on Views and Visual Amenity**

2.26 Visual effects are caused by the introduction of new elements into the views of a landscape or the removal of elements from the existing view.

2.27 Professional judgement, has been used to determine the magnitude of impacts using the following criteria as guidance only:

- **Very Low Magnitude of Change** - No change or negligible change in views;
- **Low Magnitude of Change** - Some change in the view that is not prominent but visible to some visual receptors;
- **Medium Magnitude of Change** - Some change in the view that is clearly notable in the view and forms an easily identifiable component in the view;
- **High Magnitude of Change** - A major change in the view that is highly prominent and has a strong influence on the overall view;
- **Very High Magnitude of Change** - A change in the view that has a dominating or overbearing influence on the overall view.

2.28 Using this set of criteria, determining levels of magnitude is primarily dependant on how prominent the development would be in the landscape, and what may be judged to flow from that prominence or otherwise.

2.29 For clarification, the use of the term 'prominent' relates to how noticeable the features of the development would be. This is affected by how close the receptor is to the development but not entirely dependent on this factor. Other modifying factors include: the focus of the view, visual screening and the nature and scale of other landscape features within the view. Rather than specifying bands of distance at which the proposed development would be dominant, prominent or incidental to the view etc. the prominence of the proposed development in views

is described for each receptor group taking all the relevant variables into consideration.

### **TYPE OF EFFECT**

- 2.30 The assessment identifies effects which may be '**beneficial**', '**adverse**' or '**neutral**'. Where effects are described as 'neutral' this is where the beneficial effects are deemed to balance the adverse effects.

### **DURATION OF EFFECT**

- 2.31 The LVIA assesses both the long term effects of the completed development and temporary effects associated with its construction. Consideration has been given to seasonal variations in the visibility of the development and these are described where necessary.

- 2.32 For the purposes of this appraisal, the temporal nature of each effect is described as follows:

- **Long Term** – over 5 years
- **Medium Term** – between 1 and 5 years
- **Short Term** – under 1 year

### **REVERSIBILITY OF EFFECT**

- 2.33 The LVIA also describes the reversibility of each identified effect using the following terms:

- **Permanent** – effect is non reversible
- **Non permanent** – effect is reversible

### **LEVEL OF EFFECT**

- 2.34 The purpose of an LVIA when produced outside the context of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is to identify the relative level of effects on landscape and visual amenity arising from the proposed development. The judgements provided in the LVIA may then inform the planning balance to be carried out by the determining authority.

- 2.35 In this LVIA, the relative level of the identified landscape and visual effects has been determined by combining judgements regarding the sensitivity of the landscape or view, magnitude of change, duration of effect and the reversibility of the effect. The level of effect is described as **Major, Major/Moderate, Moderate, Moderate/Minor or Minor. No Effect** may also be recorded as appropriate where the effect is so negligible it is not even noteworthy. In determining the level of residual effects, all mitigation measures are taken into account.
- 2.36 It is recognised that such judgements represent subjective opinion, hence why judgements which may affect the outcome of a planning application should be expressed by a competent, experienced and appropriately qualified professional assessor. This LVIA has been undertaken by Chartered Members of the Landscape Institute.
- 2.37 As recommended by the Landscape Institute, this non-EIA LVIA does not conclude whether any of the identified landscape or visual effects are 'significant' or not. However in order for the LVIA to have a meaningful output the determining authority will need to understand which effects are deemed by the authors to be the most material considerations in the planning balance.
- 2.38 In this regard, effects described as **Major, Major/Moderate** and in some cases **Moderate** should, in the opinion of the authors, be regarded as carrying the most weight in the decision making process.

### **3. THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

#### **SITE AND LOCATION**

3.1 The proposed development site comprises an arable field of approximately 9.8 hectares (24 acres). This is located approximately 500m north of the village of Melton, northeast of Woodbridge in Suffolk as illustrated in Figure 1. The grid reference for the centre of the site is 628526, 251328. The site lies within the administrative boundaries of Suffolk Coastal District Council and Suffolk County Council.

#### **DESCRIPTION OF THE DEVELOPMENT**

3.2 Christchurch Land & Estates (Melton) Limited is promoting a development of up to 138 new homes and a 60 bedroom nursing home with 50 assisted living apartments. This would include open space and would be accessed off Yarmouth Road (B1438), Melton, Woodbridge.

3.3 The proposed scheme comprises the following elements:

- 6.5 ha approx. – housing and extra care facilities;
- 3.2 ha approx. – public open space including parkland and wildlife areas;
- 0.17 ha approx. – allotments / community orchard.

3.4 For the purposes of this LVIA, it is assumed that the buildings within the development would be predominantly 2 storeys. A few 2.5 storey buildings and occasional 3 storey buildings may be included at the site entrance and at key locations within the centre of the development. The height of the buildings would be as follows:

- 2 storey: maximum height to ridge 7.2m
- 2.5 storey: maximum height to ridge 8.3m
- 3 storey: maximum height to ridge 10.5m

3.5 It is assumed for the purposes of the outline planning application that the new development would be constructed approximately at grade with current ground levels with only a topsoil strip and minimal re-grading taking place.

## **DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED SITE LAYOUT**

- 3.6 The layout comprises a nursing home, assisted living units and two distinct areas of residential development arranged around a green corridor creating a central hub of open/play space.
- 3.7 The main vehicular access (with provision for a bus stop within a new layby) is off Yarmouth Road.
- 3.8 The site benefits from the surrounding footpaths and country lanes and the layout includes several links to these, and creates additional pedestrian permeability through the site and its surroundings. A safe crossing point is provided to bus stops on Yarmouth Road and for easy access to Melton and surrounding recreational facilities.
- 3.9 Within the development, houses face onto the street scene, with nodal spaces and a central open space. This creates a legible, safe and secure living environment.
- 3.10 The site is almost fully surrounded by mature trees and high hedgerows which would be retained as wildlife corridors. Together with the proposed sustainable drainage basins and plentiful tree and shrub planting, the proposal would enhance biodiversity and create a green buffer integrating the development into the wider landscape setting.
- 3.11 Landscape mitigation and enhancement proposals are described in Chapter 7 of this LVIA and illustrated in Figure 15, where it is shown that a considerable amount of new hedgerow and tree planting would be introduced to the site. Newly planted vegetation takes a number of years to mature. The effectiveness of the vegetation both in terms of integrating the development into the surrounding landscape and in providing visual screening would improve over time. Average growth rates have therefore been taken into consideration in this assessment.

## **4. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT (LANDSCAPE & VISUAL)**

- 4.1 This section outlines national and local planning policy and guidance of relevance to landscape and visual issues in relation to the proposed residential development.
- 4.2 At a national level The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the priorities for planning in England and places significant emphasis on the presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 4.3 At a local level, the current development plan consists of the adopted Core Strategy and Development Management Policies of the Suffolk Coastal District Local Plan (SCDLP) (adopted July 2013), alongside those policies saved in 2013 from the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan (adopted 2001).
- 4.4 The NPPF states at Paragraph 196 that:  
*“Planning Law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This Framework is a material consideration in planning decisions.”*
- 4.5 The Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Document and the Saved Policies are therefore the guiding documents for planning decisions within Suffolk Coastal District, unless the NPPF (being a material consideration) indicates otherwise. In accordance with Paragraph 215 of The NPPF, due weight should be afforded to development plan policies depending on their degree of consistency with the NPPF. This is particularly relevant where parts of the development plan were adopted prior to the publication of the NPPF.
- 4.6 In addition, advice provided in Supplementary Planning Documents/Guidance (SPDs/SPGs) is capable of being a 'material consideration' in planning decisions, but this is afforded less weight than development plan documents.

## NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

### National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012)

- 4.7 The NPPF sets out the Government's national policies on land use planning in England. The primary principle of The NPPF is the presumption in favour of sustainable development, which is set out at Paragraph 14 as follows:

*"At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a **presumption in favour of sustainable development**, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking.*

*For **plan-making** this means that:*

- *local planning authorities should positively seek to meet the development needs of their area;*
- *local plans should meet objectively assessed needs, with sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change, unless:*
  - *any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or*
  - *specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted\*."*

(\* a footnote explains that restrictions would include sites protected under the Birds or Habitats Directives, SSSIs, Green Belt, Local Green Space, AONBs, Heritage Coast, National Parks, designated heritage assets or locations at risk from flooding or coastal erosion.)

*"For **decision-taking** this means:*

- *approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay: and*
- *where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting permission unless:*
  - *any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or*
  - *specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted\*.*



(\* unless material considerations indicate otherwise)"

4.8 This presumption in favour of sustainable development is underpinned by twelve core planning principles set out at Paragraph 17. These include that planning should:

*"proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes... that the country needs. ..."*

*"take account of the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of our main urban areas, protecting the Green Belts around them, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it;"*

#### SECTION 6: DELIVERING A WIDE CHOICE OF HIGH QUALITY HOMES

4.9 Paragraph 47 requires LPAs to maintain in excess of a 5 year land supply of housing and Paragraph 49 states that: *"Relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up to date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites."*

4.10 The most recently published Suffolk Coastal annual housing land supply assessment demonstrates that the supply of land is below the required 5 year supply of committed sites. As such and in relation to Paragraph 49, housing policies of the SDCLP are not considered to be up to date.

#### SECTION 7: REQUIRING GOOD DESIGN

4.11 Paragraph 58 states that:

*"Planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments:*

- 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;*
- establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit;*
- optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development, create and sustain an appropriate mix of uses (including incorporation of green and other public space as part of developments) and support local facilities and transport networks;*
- respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation;*

- *create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion; and*
- *are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.”*

4.12 Paragraphs 59 and 60 warn that although design codes and design policies can help to deliver quality outcomes, planning policies and decisions:

*“should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles. It is, however, proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness”.*

4.13 Accordingly Paragraph 65 states that:

*“Local planning authorities should not refuse planning permission for buildings or infrastructure which promote high levels of sustainability because of concerns about incompatibility with an existing townscape, if those concerns have been mitigated by good design (unless the concern relates to a designated heritage asset and the impact would cause material harm to the asset or its setting which is not outweighed by the proposal’s economic, social and environmental benefits).”*

#### **Planning Practice Guidance**

4.14 In March 2014 the Government revised and published its Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) as a web-based resource, which for the first time provided all planning practice guidance online in one accessible place at [planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk](http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk).

4.15 The PPG draws heavily on the NPPF and also other relevant Planning Policy Guidance and also reiterates that Landscape Character Assessment should be used as a tool to help understand the character and local distinctiveness of the landscape and the features that give it a sense of place.

#### **LOCAL PLANNING POLICY**

##### **Suffolk Coastal District Local Plan - Core Strategy and Development Management Policies (July 2013)**

4.16 The Core Strategy and Development Management Policies document was formally adopted by the Council on 5 July 2013. Policies have been included below due to

their relevance to landscape and visual issues in relation to the proposed residential development. Whilst a five year supply of housing land cannot presently be demonstrated, the strategy for housing development is deemed to meet the requirements of the NPPF and has enabled work to commence on a Site Specific Allocations document, which will allow the Council to meet the five year housing land supply once adopted.

#### POLICY SP29 – THE COUNTRYSIDE

- 4.17 The proposed development site lies outside of the Physical Limits boundaries of Melton village and is therefore defined as Countryside within the Suffolk Coastal District Local Plan and so Policy SP29 applies. This states:

*"The Countryside comprises an important economic, social and environmental asset within the district which it is important to sustain.*

*The strategy in respect of new development outside the physical limits of those settlements defined as Major Centres, Towns, Key and Local Service Centres or in accordance with Policy SP28, is that it will be limited to that which of necessity requires to be located there and accords with other relevant policies within the Core Strategy (e.g. Policies SP7 or DM13); or would otherwise accord with special circumstances outlined in paragraph 55 of the National Planning Policy Framework."*

- 4.18 The Core Strategy sets out the importance of conserving and enhancing landscape character, but states that this must be integrated with the need to accommodate change to address social, economic and community needs. The site does not fall within any designated areas, but the policies quoted below are relevant to the protection of landscape character and green space in the countryside generally.

#### POLICY SP15 – LANDSCAPE AND TOWNSCAPE

*"The policy of the Council will be to protect and enhance the various landscape character areas within the district either through opportunities linked to development or through other strategies.*

*In addition to the protected landscape of the AONB, the valleys and tributaries of the Rivers Alde, Blyth, Deben, Fynn, Hundred, Mill, Minsmere, Ore, Orwell and Yox, and the designated Parks and Gardens of Historic or Landscape Interest are considered to be particularly significant.*

*Many of the towns and villages in the district are of distinctive historical and architectural value, as well as landscape value and character, and the Council will seek to enhance and preserve these attributes and the quality of life in the generality of urban areas.*

*This strategy will extend to towns and villages where sites, gaps, gardens and spaces that make an important contribution to a particular location in their undeveloped form will be identified and protected where known; or more generally avoided where development in these locations would lead to coalescence. The location of such sites will be designated through the Site Allocations and Area Specific Policies, Area Action Plan or Neighbourhood Development Plan Document. Until then those sites currently allocated under "saved" Policy AP28 in the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan (incorporating 1st and 2nd Alterations) will continue to be protected."*

#### POLICY SP26 – WOODBRIDGE

*"The strategy for Woodbridge is to balance opportunities with the acknowledged physical and environmental constraints, (notably the Deben Estuary with its nature conservation and landscape designations to the east, the A12 to the west, areas at risk from flooding, and its high quality historic built environment) in order to maintain and enhance its roles as the principle market town within the district, an employment centre and tourist destination. .... Further significant expansion of Woodbridge (and Melton) will be sympathetically considered having regard to the local character and key physical thresholds."*

#### POLICY DM3 – HOUSING IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

*"New housing will firstly and primarily be directed to, and integrated within, the settlements for which physical limits boundaries have been defined or in accordance with Policy SP19. In the interests of safeguarding the countryside as set out in Policy SP29 as well as meeting sustainable objectives, new housing in the countryside will be allowed where it comprises:*

- (a) Replacement dwellings on a one to one basis where they are no more visually intrusive in the countryside than the building to be replaced;*
- (b) The sub-division of an existing larger dwelling where this would meet a local need;*
- (c) Affordable housing on 'exception' sites in accordance with Policy DM1;*

- (d) Conversions of existing buildings subject to certain controls (Policy DM13);*
- (e) Minor infilling within clusters of dwellings well related to existing sustainable settlements (Policy DM4); or*
- (f) Development which would otherwise accord with the special circumstances outlined in paragraph 55 of the National Planning Policy Framework....”*

#### **POLICY DM21 – DESIGN: AESTHETICS**

*“Proposals that comprise poor visual design and layout, or otherwise seriously detract from the character of their surroundings will not be permitted.*

*Development will be expected to establish a strong sense of place, using street scenes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit. Accordingly, development will be permitted where the following criteria are met:*

- (a) proposals should relate well to the scale and character of their surroundings particularly in terms of their siting, height, massing and form;*
- (b) in areas of little or no varied townscape quality, the form, density and design of proposals should create a new composition and point of interest, which will provide a positive improvement in the standard of the built environment of the area generally;*
- (c) alterations and extensions to existing buildings should normally respect the plan form, period, style, architectural characteristics and, where appropriate, the type and standard of detailing and finishes of the original building;*
- (d) in order for extensions to existing buildings to be acceptable, particularly on those that are considered to be architecturally and historically important (including vernacular architecture) and those located in sensitive locations, the extension shall be visually ‘recessive’ and its size and design shall be such that the original building will remain the more dominant feature on the site;*
- (e) layouts should incorporate and protect existing site features of landscape, ecological, heritage or amenity value as well as enhance such features e.g. habitat creation; and*
- (f) attention must be given to the form, scale, use, and landscape of the spaces between buildings and the boundary treatment of individual sites, particularly on the edge of settlements.*

*The District Council will support and strongly encourage the conservation of energy and the use of alternative and renewable sources of energy in the design*

*and layout of proposals for new buildings and conversion of existing buildings, provided it would not seriously detract from the character of the area. "*

- 4.19 The Core Strategy also sets out Development Management Policies which guide the design quality of new developments. The following policies are of relevance and have been taken into account in the development of the proposed site layout and landscape proposals:

DM22 – DESIGN: FUNCTION

DM23 – RESIDENTIAL AMENITY

DM26 - LIGHTING

**Suffolk Coastal Local Plan (2001) – (saved policies 2013)**

- 4.20 The Suffolk Coastal Local Plan was adopted in 2001 with some site-specific policies saved in 2013 when many policies were replaced by the adoption of the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies document.

- 4.21 SCDC is currently preparing a Site Allocations & Area Specific Policies Development Plan Document (see below). However until this is adopted, the remaining saved policies of the previous Local Plan remain considerations against which applications will be assessed. Those policies of relevance to landscape and visual issues in relation to the proposed residential development are listed below.

AP1 – CONSERVATION AREAS: – CONTROL OF DEVELOPMENT AND ENHANCEMENT

- 4.22 The site does not form part of a Conservation Area, however between the site and the settlement edge of Melton to the south, is the parkland at Melton Lodge. This parkland forms the northern extent of Melton Conservation Area and this green space forms an integral feature of the Conservation Area. The proposed development should avoid detracting from the character of the neighbouring Conservation Area, therefore the following policy will have some relevance:

*"To protect the character of the Conservation Areas, as shown on the Proposals Map, and to ensure that new buildings, alterations or other development preserve or enhance them, the District Council will, in the control of development within, or affecting, each Conservation Area, pay special attention to the following matters:*

- (i) *the building materials used, to ensure that they are consistent with the general character of the respective area;*
- (ii) *the form, scale, design and detailing of new buildings, alterations to existing buildings, and the space around buildings (including landscape schemes, roads and fencing), which should be in harmony with, and relate satisfactorily to, their surroundings;*
- (iii) *other development, including street furniture, road, footpath and other surfaces, lighting and advertisement displays, should be in keeping with the respective Conservation Area; wherever practicable, electricity, telephone and other cable systems should be placed underground, or in suitably concealed locations;*
- (iv) *natural features, including trees, should be preserved wherever possible; schemes of landscaping and tree planting will normally be required;*
- (iv) *Supplementary Planning Guidance;*
- (v) *the traffic implications arising from the proposed development."*

#### AP28 - AREAS TO BE PROTECTED FROM DEVELOPMENT

- 4.23 Given that the site falls between a Conservation Area and the parkland/golf course surrounding the St Audry's Hospital development, it forms part of the gap between Melton and St Audry's. Therefore saved policy AP28 will be relevant. This aims to protect the setting, character and the surrounding landscape of Melton.

*"Development will not normally be permitted where it would materially detract from the character and appearance of:*

- (ii) *other sites, gaps, gardens and spaces which make an important contribution in their undeveloped form to a Town or Village, its setting, character, or the surrounding landscape or townscape.*

*Outside of the physical limits boundaries of Towns and Villages, the area is defined as Countryside."*

#### POLICY AP13 – SPECIAL LANDSCAPE AREAS

- 4.24 Some distance to the east of the site lies land designated as Special Landscape Area, the closest point being approximately 200m to the north east. Special Landscape Areas are protected from development that would materially detract from their special landscape quality. Saved Local Plan Policy AP13 states:

*"The valleys and tributaries of the Rivers Alde, Blyth, Deben, Fynn, Hundred, Mill, Minsmere, Ore and Yox, and the Parks and Gardens of Historic or Landscape Interest are designated as Special Landscape Areas and shown on the Proposals Map. The District Council will ensure that no development will take place which would be to the material detriment of, or materially detract from, the special landscape quality."*

- 4.25 AP235 – PROTECTION OF OPEN CHARACTER/PARKLAND – ST AUDRY'S HOSPITAL  
Immediately to the north of the site is an area designated as Protection of Open Character/Parkland. Saved Local Plan Policy AP235 is partially out of date in that it largely provides guidance for the redevelopment of the former hospital site, which has long since been redeveloped. However, in relation to the area of golf course / parkland to the north of Jews Lane, it the policy states:

*"Development proposals for the St Audry's complex ... will be assessed against the following criteria:*

*(ii) the retention of significant trees on the site and the parkland area, as shown on the Proposals Map;*

*(iii) impact upon the landscape or the character of the land which separates Melton from Ufford."*

**Emerging Policy – Site Allocations and Area Specific Policies Development Plan Document (Preferred Options Consultation Document, Oct 2015)**

- 4.26 The Preferred Options consultation runs until the end of November 2015 and the planned timescale for adoption of the document is November 2016. When adopted this document will set out the framework for how the District (apart from Felixstowe Peninsula) will develop up to approximately 2027 and how this will be achieved through new residential allocations, increased economic opportunities, retail opportunities and protection of the environment.
- 4.27 The consultation document states that taking into account residential units already built or permitted up until the end of March 2015, Woodbridge would need to deliver at least 150-200 more residential units by 2027, to meet the Core Strategy's minimum target for the area.
- 4.28 The consultation draft does not identify any area-specific policies which apply to the location of the proposed development at Yarmouth Road Melton.



**Supplementary Planning Document – Melton Conservation Area Appraisal  
(June 2010)**

- 4.29 The site lies to the north of Melton Conservation Area. The part of the Conservation Area adjacent to the site is the parkland of Melton Lodge. The Conservation Area Appraisal states:

*"undeveloped spaces form a significant proportion of the conservation area and their green, open, and tree-ed aspect is an important and integral feature of their contribution to the conservation area. The parklands relate closely to their houses which reflect an important period in Melton's history of expansion and increasing wealth in the nineteenth century. It is, therefore, vital that the character of these spaces is preserved, and their historical contribution respected"*

**Supplementary Planning Guidance – SPG7 Location and Design of Small Residential Development (1993) and SPG9 Suffolk Design Guide (2000)**

- 4.30 These design guides set out greater detail on the implementation of specific policies. This guidance has been taken into account in the development of the site layout.

## **5. BASELINE LANDSCAPE CONDITIONS**

### **THE SITE AND ITS LANDSCAPE FEATURES**

5.1 This section provides a description of the landscape features within the proposed development site and their context within the surrounding 2km radius study area. The landscape context of the site and surrounding area are shown in Figure 6.

#### **Topography and Drainage**

5.2 The topography of the site varies between approximately 22m and 32m AOD and the site slopes gently down towards the east.

5.3 The topography within the wider landscape is generally low lying forming part of the Suffolk Coastal Plain. The wider topography gently undulates towards the River Deben (approximately 500m to the east) and further towards the coast.

5.4 There are no water bodies present on the site although the wider landscape contains numerous tributaries, brooks and drained farmland associated with the River Deben. Effects on drainage features and water bodies are therefore not assessed further.

#### **Land Use and Buildings**

5.5 The site comprises an agricultural field, principally utilised for arable crops. The main access points to this field are provided at an un-gated field opening at the western corner of the site at the intersection between Lodge Farm Lane and St. Audry's Road, at an opening within the southern field boundary along St. Audry's Road and an opening along the eastern boundary along the B1438.

5.6 The site also contains a disused quarry within the eastern corner of the site. This semi-circular area has naturally re-vegetated and is a mature established feature in the site.

5.7 Although the site itself is undeveloped, the site is bordered by a developed context both in terms of residential properties that lie adjacent to the proposed development site along the southern boundary and at the north eastern and north western corners of the site and by recreational facilities including St. Audry's Golf

Course to the north, St. Audry's Sports and Social Club Cricket Pitch to the west and Ufford Park Golf Course to the east.

- 5.8 Historic mapping indicates that much of the development to the north and east of the site including the creation of the golf courses, the cricket pitch and the residential development on the grounds of the former St Audry's Hospital has occurred within the last 60 years.
- 5.9 Within the surrounding landscape, the land use predominantly comprises a mix of villages (the most notable being Melton 500m to the south), historic estates (such as Foxboro Hall and Melton Lodge) and agricultural land.
- 5.10 The site is typical of the agricultural context within the study area, which consists predominantly of medium to large scale arable fields defined by hedgerows containing hedgerow trees. The fields to the south of the site which border the northern edge of the Melton Conservation Area are currently used for horse paddocks.

### **Vegetation**

- 5.11 Woodland blocks and plantations are common features within the surrounding landscape. These relate both to the agricultural context, boundaries to properties and estate grounds (such as Melton Lodge and Foxboro Hall) and relatively new planting carried out as part of the creation of adjacent Golf Courses.
- 5.12 The site itself is enclosed by hedgerows and mature trees. The character of these varies and is itemised by boundary below:
- The eastern boundary comprises native trees and shrubs within the disused quarry and an overgrown vegetated hedgerow boundary which is managed intensively along the highway (Yarmouth Road). This boundary contains a small number of openings and is largely intact along its length, providing a significant visual barrier to the east;
  - The northern boundary comprises an overgrown hedgerow (containing a number of gaps) along Jew's Lane Public Footpath as well as a number of mature trees both within the hedgerow and within the boundary of the adjacent Golf Course. Together these provide a high degree of maturity, screening and containment from the northern context;

- The north-western boundary of the site along Lodge Farm Lane consists of a tall intact hedgerow with an absence of hedgerow trees;
- The south western boundary is defined by a tall thorn hedgerow which contains a number of mature hedgerow trees; and
- The southern boundary adjacent to the properties contained by St. Audry's Road and Yarmouth Road comprises an informal mix of naturalised vegetation and residential hedgerows and fences.

5.13 There are no Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) present within the site. The closest protected trees relate to a small number of trees associated with Melton Day Nursery on Yarmouth Road opposite the south eastern corner of the site (as identified via the Suffolk Coastal Online Geographic Information System accessed during October 2015). Melton Conservation Area lies to the south of the site and trees within it are afforded a degree of protection through this designation.

#### **THE CHARACTER OF THE WIDER LANDSCAPE**

5.14 Landscape character is an expression of pattern within an area resulting from particular combinations of natural, built and historical factors which make one place different from another, creating areas that have a unity of character and a distinctive sense of place when viewed from a landscape-wide perspective.

5.15 Published Landscape Character Assessments have been produced that cover the proposed development site. Full wording of key characteristics as included within written descriptions are included within Appendix B. Pertinent features relevant to the site are described below.

5.16 Figure 3 shows the location of environmental character areas, landscape character types, landscape description units and residential typologies, which fall within the 3km study area.

#### **National Level Landscape Character**

5.17 At a national level of assessment, the site falls within the outer western extents of National Character Area (NCA) 82 Suffolk Coast and Heaths, while the edge of NCA 83 South Norfolk and High Suffolk Claylands, lies within a kilometre to the north east.

#### NCA 82 SUFFOLK COAST AND HEATHS

- 5.18 This character area is heavily defined by its predominantly low lying coastal context which contains a number of extensive coastal habitats synonymous with the Suffolk coastline.
- 5.19 The character description acknowledges that settlement is generally sparse comprising small isolated villages and farmsteads (excepting the distinctive coastal towns of Felixstowe and Harwich), and that the area is extensively used for mixed arable and pastoral farming.
- 5.20 Agricultural land use and well-vegetated boundaries contribute to a wider agrarian and well-treed landscape character.
- 5.21 This is a national assessment which aims to give a broad impression of a region and is not intended to be applicable at a site-specific level. As such, and because the proposed development would only be visible from a tiny area within NCA 82, there would be no potential for a development of the scale proposed to affect this NCA, so it is not considered further in this assessment.

#### **County Level Landscape Character**

- 5.22 At a County level, the site falls within Ancient Rolling Farmlands Landscape Character Type (LCT) as classified within the Suffolk County Council Landscape Character Assessment (updated 2011).

#### LCT - ANCIENT ROLLING FARMLANDS

- 5.23 The key characteristics of the Ancient Rolling Farmlands LCT of most relevance to the site and the proposed development are listed below, while the full description is included within Appendix B:
- *"Field pattern of ancient random enclosure. ...;*
  - *Hedges of hawthorn and elm with oak, ash, and field maple as hedgerow trees;*
  - *Scattered with ancient woodland parcels containing a mix of oak, lime, cherry, hazel, hornbeam, ash and holly;*
  - *Network of winding lanes and paths, often associated with hedges, create visual intimacy;*

- *Dispersed settlement pattern of loosely clustered villages, hamlets and isolated farmsteads of medieval origin;*
  - *Farmstead buildings are predominantly timber-framed, the houses colour-washed and the barns blackened with tar. Roofs are frequently tiled, though thatched houses can be locally significant;*
  - *Villages often associated with village greens or the remains of greens.”*
- 5.24 Development Management guidelines for this LCT recommend guarding against settlement expansion eroding characteristic form and vernacular styles:  
*“Parishes in this landscape tend to consist of multiple clusters of varying sizes. The release of land for development should, if at all possible, reflect the local pattern. Ribbon development destroys this pattern and can have a considerable impact on the wider landscape. When vernacular styles and detailing are used for housing or other development the choice should echo that of the immediate locality of the specific cluster in which the development is proposed.”*
- 5.25 The following Land Management Guidelines for this LCT are of relevance to the proposed development:
- *“Reinforce the historic pattern of sinuous field boundaries;*
  - *Maintain and increase the stock of hedgerow trees;*
  - *Maintain and restore the stock of moats and ponds in this landscape.”*
- 5.26 The site is characteristic of the landscape character of LCT Ancient Rolling Farmlands in terms of its agricultural land use, network of winding lanes and paths, dispersed settlement pattern, with hedgerows and boundary vegetation creating a distinct degree of visual intimacy.

### **Character of the Site and Immediate Surroundings**

- 5.27 At a local level the site represents a distinct parcel of arable land that is characteristic of the surrounding agricultural context. There is no public access to the site although the adjacent public footpath and lanes allow occasional glimpsed views across the site through gaps in the dense boundary vegetation. The site is enclosed by vegetated field boundaries some containing mature trees, with several woodland blocks in the vicinity, all of which lead to a well-treed landscape character. The existing field boundary vegetation and mature trees are of some value and are in reasonably good condition. The high degree of screening and containment by this vegetation, coupled with the relatively level topography in

the vicinity of the site, act to visually isolate the site from the wider landscape, leading to limited inter-visibility of the site with its wider surroundings.

- 5.28 Although the current land use is characteristic of the area, the site's relationship with the wider agrarian landscape is eroded by its proximity to, and visual inter-relationship with clusters of adjacent residential development at Melton Park, Upper Melton Terrace and properties on St Audry's Road and Yarmouth Road to the immediate south, and also by its proximity to neighbouring recreational facilities at St Audry's Sports Club, St Audry's gold course and Ufford Park golf course. An appraisal of the sensitivity of the site and local landscape character is provided in chapter 8.
- 5.29

### **LANDSCAPE DESIGNATIONS**

- 5.30 The site is not covered by any designation that recognises any specific or identified landscape importance or value. Relevant designations falling within the study area are outlined below and illustrated in Figure 4.
- 5.31 The assessment of potential effects on the setting of sensitive cultural heritage designations such as Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Registered Parks and Gardens, Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas does not form part of this assessment as this is assessed within the Cultural Heritage desk based assessment produced by The Heritage Collective, included as part of the planning application. However such designated features/areas which occur within the study area are identified below, as they provide an indication of the value and quality of the wider landscape character as well as providing an indication of potential visual receptors.

### **National/Regional Landscape Designations**

- 5.32 The Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) lies approximately 1.45km to the south west at its closest point. Due to intervening screening elements, there would be no inter-visibility between the site and locations within the AONB and therefore the potential for effects to arise as a result of the proposals is not considered further.

## **Local Landscape Designations**

### CONSERVATION AREAS

- 5.33 There are 2 Conservation Areas within 1 km of the site namely Melton Conservation Area and Ufford Conservation Area.
- 5.34 Due to intervening screening, there would be no inter-visibility between Ufford Park Conservation Area and the proposed development, therefore the potential for effects to arise as a result of the proposals is not considered further.
- 5.35 To the south of the site, separating the site from the edge of Melton Conservation Area are open paddocks to the north of Melton Lodge and its parkland. These paddocks are not designated and do not fall within the Conservation Area. They have a park-like character when seen from St. Audrey's Road with the character of the tree belts and parkland trees associated with Melton Lodge prevailing. The characteristics of these paddocks are more akin with the Melton Conservation Area and less with the site, which has an agricultural character and is separated from the paddocks and the Conservation Area beyond by St Audrey's Road and the tall hedgerows and trees along both sides of the road. Potential views are discussed within Chapter 9.

### AREA TO BE PROTECTED FROM DEVELOPMENT AND PROTECTION OF TREES AND CHARACTER

- 5.36 Land within the 'Area to be Protected from Development' and 'Protection of Trees and Character' lies 800m to the south west of the site beyond Melton village. Due to intervening screening elements causing an absence of visibility from the locations covered by these designations, the potential for effects to arise as a result of the proposals is not considered further.

### SPECIAL LANDSCAPE AREAS

- 5.37 The closest designated Special Landscape Area lies approximately 200m to the north east of the site. Due to intervening screening elements, there would be no inter-visibility between the proposed development and locations within Special Landscape Areas. The potential for effects to arise as a result of the proposals is not considered further in this assessment.



#### PROTECTION OF OPEN CHARACTER/PARKLAND

- 5.38 Immediately to the north of the site is an area designated as Protection of Open Character/Parkland at St Audry's Hospital. The application site falls outside the defined limit of this designation which is protected by Policy AP235. As such the potential for effects to arise as a result of the proposals is not considered further in this assessment.

## **6. BASELINE VISUAL CONDITIONS**

### **EXTENT OF VISIBILITY OF THE SITE**

- 6.1 A Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) map has been produced using digital terrain data to assist in illustrating locations from where views of the proposed development are theoretically available (assuming mainly 2.5 storey houses) without the effect of intervening screening elements within the wider landscape. This is illustrated in Figure 5.
- 6.2 Following initial desktop research and a site visit carried out in April 2014, it was identified that the actual extent of visibility of the proposed development is much more limited than the ZTV suggests, due to the scale of the development and the large amount of woodland and field boundary vegetation present within the immediate locality. This combined with relatively flat topography within the wider landscape acts to restrict views towards the site from a number of locations.
- 6.3 An approximate area of actual visibility of the proposed development was produced following desk study and site assessment, as illustrated with the ZTV in Figure 5. The area of actual visibility indicates that filtered views of the development would extend 500m from the site at the furthest point and would be restricted as follows.
- 6.4 Views from the north are limited by a mature vegetated boundary along the northern boundary of the site and Jew's Lane public footpath. This mature vegetation acts to visually disconnect the site from much of the context to the north. Potential views are limited to residents in adjacent properties on South Close and Upper Melton Terrace and users of the public right of way and St. Audry's Golf Course in locations where a break or gap in the overgrown hedgerow, or between mature trees is present.
- 6.5 Views from the south are limited by intervening vegetation and built form. Mature vegetation within the hedgerow along St. Audry's Road, Yarmouth Road and within the boundary of Melton Lodge Conservation Area act to restrict views from many locations to the south. Views of the site are limited to views from residents

along the southern boundary of the site, users of the paddocks to the south and users of St. Audry's Road.

- 6.6 Views from the east are restricted by vegetation along the eastern boundary of the site (including the vegetation present within the disused quarry), vegetation and buildings within the adjacent residential area east of Yarmouth Road (the boundary to which is very well vegetated) and vegetation within Ufford Golf Course. Views are restricted to residents within adjacent properties along Yarmouth Road, users of the golf course and users of Yarmouth Road and Lower Road.
- 6.7 Views from the west are restricted by vegetation along both Lodge Farm lane and St. Audry's Road as well as vegetation along the public bridleway to the south of St. Audry's Sports and Social Club. Mature woodland along the boundary of Foxboro Hall restricts any distant views that may be available. Views are limited to users of the adjacent public bridleway as well as users of St. Audry's Sports and Social Club cricket pitch and users of Lodge Farm Lane.
- 6.8 Potentially sensitive receptors are listed below according to receptor type. The predicted visual effects are discussed in Section 9. Figure 7 shows the locations of these receptors.

### **RESIDENTIAL RECEPTORS**

- 6.9 A number of residential receptors exist within the wider landscape. Through fieldwork observations and an understanding of screening elements and general visibility, the majority of these have been discounted due to an absence of views.
- 6.10 Properties which offer the potential for residents to have a view towards the site are listed below.
- Residents within properties along the southern edge of the St. Audry's Hospital Development (approximately 6 properties) to the north west of the site within 200m;
  - Residents within properties on South Close (approximately 4 properties) adjacent to the north western boundary of the site within 50m;

- Residents within the southernmost properties along Upper Melton Terrace (approximately 6 properties) adjacent to the north eastern boundary of the site within 50m;
- Residents within properties to the east of Yarmouth Road, opposite the disused quarry to the south east of the site within 50m;
- Residents within properties adjacent to the southern boundary of the site between St. Audry's Road and Yarmouth Road (approximately 8 properties) within 50m; and
- Residents of Melton Lodge to the south of the site within 350m.

6.11 Due to a high degree of screening present within the wider landscape it is not anticipated that any other views from residential properties would be available.

#### **USERS OF PUBLICALLY ACCESSIBLE PATHS AND CYCLE ROUTES**

6.12 Although no Public Rights of Way (PROW) cross the site, a number exist within the wider study area. These include sections of the long distance recreational routes Sandling's Walk and Fynn Valley Walk. These have been discounted from this assessment as no views of the site are possible from locations along these routes due to distance and intervening screening.

6.13 Public Rights of Way which offer the potential for users to have a view towards the site include:

- Jew's Lane (public footpath) connecting Lodge Farm Lane and Yarmouth Road along the northern boundary of the site.
- A public bridleway ending at the western boundary of the site, located south of the cricket pitch. The bridleway broadly follows a north west to south east orientation.

6.14 No views of the site would be available from locations along National Cycle Route 1 Fakenham to Harwich (part of the Dover to Shetland Route) or Regional Cycle Route 41 (Snape to Bramfield), due to intervening screening elements.

## **USERS OF THE LOCAL TRANSPORT NETWORK**

6.15 Due to screening within the wider landscape, the only roads from which motorists and passengers are likely to receive views include:

- Lodge Farm Lane (adjacent to the western boundary);
- St. Audry's Road (adjacent to the southern boundary);
- Yarmouth Road/ B1438 (adjacent to the eastern boundary); and
- Lower Road (approximately 200 m to the south east).

## **USERS OF RECREATION, LEISURE OR CULTURAL SITES**

6.16 The 2km study area contains a number of recreation, leisure and cultural sites that have a recreational value and therefore have the potential to attract visitors to whom views of the landscape are potentially important. The National Trust's Sutton Hoo Estate is an example being located 2km to the south of the site. The majority of those identified however have been discounted as no views are anticipated to be possible due to intervening screening.

6.17 Due to screening, the only recreational receptors with the potential to receive views of the site include:

- Users of Ufford Park Golf Club (adjacent to the eastern boundary);
- Users of St. Audry's Golf Club (adjacent to the northern boundary); and
- Users of St. Audry's Sports and Social Club cricket pitch (adjacent to the western boundary).

## **7. MITIGATION PROPOSALS**

7.1 Successful green spaces can help create more attractive settlements, increase land values and safer routes while providing potential leisure and recreational opportunities. From an ecological perspective they can also increase flood protection and sustainable drainage as well as providing better microclimates and enhancing biodiversity. The proposed green spaces within the development would help promote a distinct sense of place, address a range of environmental issues and also be able to accommodate a variety of recreational and ecological functions. CABI guidance outlines the following eight qualities for open spaces to function successfully:

- Sustainability;
- Character and distinctiveness;
- Definition and enclosure;
- Connectivity and accessibility;
- Legibility;
- Adaptability and robustness;
- Inclusiveness; and
- Biodiversity.

7.2 The Design and Access Statement submitted with the outline planning application sets out how the indicative proposals aim to incorporate these qualities, and how they would be taken forward into the detailed design proposals at the reserved matters application stage.

### **LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL MITIGATION STRATEGY**

7.3 The project landscape and urban design team have worked with the rest of the consultant team as part of an iterative design process, to ensure that the baseline assessment of landscape and visual receptors has influenced the design and layout of the proposed development, and that the eight qualities above have been addressed and incorporated into the site layout. This has resulted in a landscape and visual mitigation strategy, which would minimise the landscape and visual effects of the proposed scheme and wherever possible, deliver landscape, visual, recreational and ecological benefits.

7.4 All of the mitigation measures proposed are located within the red line of the application site on land owned by the applicant. These measures could therefore be secured through planning conditions.

7.5 The principal aims of the landscape and visual mitigation are as follows:

- To create an appropriate landscape structure, retaining, enhancing and complementing existing valued landscape and ecological features such as boundary hedgerows and woodland, which integrate the site and proposed development into the surrounding landscape;
- To create an attractive setting for the new development, which strengthens and complements key characteristics and development management guidelines of the 'Ancient Rolling Farmlands' landscape character type. Such as maintaining the local pattern of hedgerows with trees, woodland parcels, network of paths associated with hedges, loosely clustered hamlets, settlements associated with village greens, buildings with tiled roofs, and red brick or colour-washed walls, while avoiding ribbon development;
- To minimise adverse visual effects and wherever possible, to enhance the quality of views from visual receptors. This could be achieved through the sensitive layout of the site and inclusion of softening or screening landscape buffer planting as appropriate;
- To enhance biodiversity of the site through strengthening and improving the connectivity of the existing wildlife corridors around the site and providing new habitats (such as grasslands and marginal wetland areas associated with open space and SuDS basins); and
- To create new public open spaces which provide opportunities for informal recreation and connection with nature.

7.6 Ecological benefits are set out within the Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey accompanying the outline application. The features of the landscape and visual mitigation strategy are illustrated within the Masterplan at Figure 2, the Landscape and Ecological Enhancement Plan at Figure 15, and set out below. These measures have been taken into account in making the assessment of landscape and visual effects throughout this assessment.

#### **Retention and Management of Existing Features**

7.7 The design of the scheme has sought to retain mature vegetation that surrounds the site. Existing vegetation contributes positively to landscape character which

would afford structure and maturity to the site, provide valuable screening, as well as provide valuable wildlife benefits. It is assumed for the purposes of this assessment that new development would be constructed with due regard to above and below ground arboricultural constraints posed by mature vegetation along the boundary of the site, with the exception of those identified for removal due to their poor structural/physiological condition and those that would require removal to facilitate site access arrangements.

7.8 The proposals would include the filling of gaps in the boundary hedgerows with native shrubs and trees. The existing hedgerows would also continue to be managed at a height in excess of 2m, and lower hedges allowed to develop to this height. This enhancement of the roadside hedgerows would strengthen local landscape character in line with management guidelines of the Ancient Rolling Farmland LCT: "*Reinforce the historic pattern of sinuous field boundaries*" and "*Maintain and increase the stock of hedgerow trees*". The planting would also soften and screen views towards the proposed development from adjacent roads and paths.

7.9 The wooded disused quarry within the site would be retained as a natural feature which would provide valuable wildlife benefits as well as form part of the site's public open space. The quarry would be partially filled using arisings from the site to reduce the steepness of the slopes. Existing vegetation would be retained and enhanced through new native shrub planting and the removal of vegetation of poor quality. The restoration of the quarry would facilitate recreational access.

#### **Proposed New Landscape and Ecological Features**

7.10 New tree planting and gapping up of the existing boundary hedges would be designed to soften, filter, frame and screen views of the development. Species would be appropriate to the Ancient Rolling Farmlands landscape character area and would comprise Hawthorn and Elm hedging with Oak, Ash, and Field Maple hedgerow trees. For the purposes of this assessment, average growth rates have been used to judge the resulting effect of the proposed mitigation.

7.11 Bird and bat boxes would be erected on retained mature trees throughout the site to enhance the site for breeding birds and roosting bats.



- 7.12 The proposed scheme incorporates several public open spaces within the housing matrix, which would provide opportunities for informal recreation. These spaces also function as a landscape buffer between proposed new development and adjacent dwellings to the northwest, northeast, southeast and south, respecting the visual amenity of existing residents.
- 7.13 The proposed scheme incorporates several naturalistic seasonal water features which are integrated into the site's Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS). These basins would be designed so as to provide a valuable ecological resource as well as contribute to the setting of proposed public open spaces. The provision of ponds corresponds with one of the management guidelines of the Ancient Rolling Farmland LCT in which the site is located: "*Maintain and restore the stock of moats and ponds in this landscape.*" Suitable native trees and shrubs would be planted around the basins, along with herbaceous marginal aquatic pond plants to improve habitats and biodiversity on site.
- 7.14 Ornamental and native trees, shrubs and areas of grass would be planted within public open spaces, private gardens, and along paths and roadways within the site. These would contribute to the visual amenity of residents and provide an attractive setting for the development. The species mix would include Oak, Lime, Cherry, Hazel, Hornbeam, Ash and Holly to contribute to local landscape character and biodiversity, in line with key characteristics identified within the Suffolk County Council Landscape Character Assessment and the Suffolk Hedgerow Survey. Tree planting within the site would be designed to frame views towards the central open space, enclose key spaces within the new scheme, or provide a focus for open spaces including the ponds within the site design.
- 7.15 To limit the potential effects of lighting on bats, lighting design for the site would comply with guidance provided by the Bat Conservation Trust and the Institute of Lighting Engineers.

## **8. EFFECT ON LANDSCAPE FEATURES AND CHARACTER**

- 8.1 The assessment of effects on landscape features and character firstly assesses the sensitivity of the landscape resource in terms of its susceptibility to residential development taking into account the value of the landscape resource. An assessment is then made as to the magnitude of the effect in terms of its scale or size.
- 8.2 The assessments of sensitivity of the receptor and magnitude of effect are then considered along with the duration and reversibility of the effect, to assist in determining the relative level of effect on each landscape feature or character area.

### **EFFECT ON LANDSCAPE FEATURES**

#### **Effect on Topography**

- 8.3 In terms of value, the landform is typical of the wider area but not remarkable or of any particular merit. Groundworks associated with a housing scheme have the potential to change topography but this is anticipated to be minimal in this scheme, so there would be little susceptibility to change. On applying the criteria from chapter 2 and the professional judgement of a chartered landscape architect, it is considered that the landform of the site is of medium sensitivity to residential development.
- 8.4 It is assumed for the purposes of this assessment that the new development would be constructed approximately at grade with current ground levels. The proposed development would involve a topsoil strip, temporary storage mounds, earthworks relating to SuDS ponds, earthworks associated with the restoration of the disused quarry, minor earthworks for foundations and service trenches and minimal re-grading taking place. Such effects are long term and permanent, but other than the creation of ponds (which are a characteristic typical of the local area) and the infilling of the disused quarry to facilitate recreational access, the development would not notably change the contours or topography of the site. Referring to the criteria in chapter 2 it is judged that there would be a very low magnitude of effect.

8.5 Overall it is assessed that there would be a **minor beneficial** level of effect on topography during construction, which would remain on completion of the development.

#### **Effect on Land Use**

8.6 The arable land use is typical of the wider agricultural context. Whilst the site has a degree of value in terms of its agricultural contribution it is not designated for any specific landscape value. The soils are Grade 3 'Good to Moderate' agricultural land. The high degree of screening and containment afforded by boundary vegetation and vegetation within the wider landscape, combined with the relatively flat topography acts to limit the site's influence and contribution to the wider agricultural landscape, meaning it would have some capacity to accommodate residential development. It is therefore considered that on applying the criteria from chapter 2 and professional judgement, the land use within the site is of medium sensitivity to residential development.

8.7 The proposed development would mark a notable change to the current land use of the site from arable to residential with public open space, but this would be at a site level only. On applying the criteria in chapter 2, it is considered that this would be a very high magnitude effect, which would be long term and permanent.

8.8 The resulting overall level of effect on land use would be **major** through all phases of the development.

#### **Effect on Vegetation**

8.9 The trees and hedges present along the boundaries contribute to a well treed landscape character and the sense of rurality. They may be locally valued as they line a local footpath and mark historic field boundaries. None of the trees on site are subject to Tree Preservation Orders (TPO's). Although trees are susceptible to damage as a result of residential development if not adequately protected, there is capacity for them to be accommodated within the development, within the proposed landscape buffer surrounding the built part of the development. The boundary trees and hedges on site are therefore considered to be of medium sensitivity to residential development.

8.10 It is assumed for the purposes of this assessment that new development would be constructed with due regard to above and below ground arboricultural

constraints posed by mature vegetation along the boundary of the site, excepting those few trees identified for removal due to their poor structural/physiological condition and those that would require removal to facilitate access arrangements. Tree protection measures would be guided by professional assessments and the anticipated loss in vegetation within the site boundary is negligible. As such it is assessed that there would be a low magnitude of effect.

- 8.11 It is assessed that this would result in a **moderate/minor** level of effect overall. During the construction phase and on completion this would be an **adverse** effect due to the removal of existing vegetation and the new planting being of immature form. However, by year 15 after completion, the effect would be **beneficial** because the proposed additional boundary vegetation, trees within public spaces, private gardens, road verges and street trees would have become established and the site would have a strong landscape structure with boundary planting that would strengthen local character and ensure that views towards the development from the wider landscape beyond the immediate surroundings are largely screened by vegetation.

#### **EFFECT ON LANDSCAPE CHARACTER**

- 8.12 The level of effect on landscape character is assessed through determining the sensitivity of the landscape character to a change of the type proposed, along with the magnitude of the effect. These factors are considered along with duration and reversibility of the effect to establish the level of effect on landscape character.
- 8.13 The ZTV in Figure 5 and Character Plan in Figure 3 indicate that theoretically, based on topography, the proposed development would be visible from much of the surrounding Ancient Rolling Farmlands Landscape Character Type to the north and west within the 2km study area. However, in reality, the numerous trees and hedgerows in the area mean that the development would be much less visible in the surrounding landscape than the ZTV suggests. The potential for the development to affect landscape character would largely be limited to the 'Primary Zone of Visibility' also shown on Figure 5. This corresponds to an area extending to a maximum of approximately 400m to the southwest and less in other directions.

### **Effect on the Landscape Character of the Site and Immediate Surroundings**

- 8.14 At a local level the assessment considers the landscape character as experienced within the site itself as well as the immediate locality of the site outside of the boundaries. This therefore includes an assessment of the effects on the character of Yarmouth Road, St. Audry's Road, Lodge Farm Lane, St. Audry's Sports Field, paddocks to the south and the adjacent golf courses.
- 8.15 The site and surrounding landscape is not designated for a specific landscape quality and due to the relatively high degree of screening by existing boundary vegetation from locations outside of the immediate site, the site contributes little to the wider landscape character and is not accessible to the public. The site represents an agricultural field which is not rare within the context of the locality; however, vegetation along the boundaries of the site is of reasonably good condition and does have value in contributing to the wooded character and in creating a degree of intimacy important to the rural character of adjacent roads and parkland. On balance it is judged that the landscape value of the site is medium. In terms of sensitivity to residential development, the site is well enclosed, is not of a notable condition or quality and has a residential / amenity context. Using the criteria in chapter 2 as a guide, the site level character is assessed as medium sensitivity.
- 8.16 Effects on the character of the site itself within the site boundaries are considered long term and permanent. Effects relate predominantly to a change in the current land use from agricultural to residential containing areas of green open space and new planting. The change is assessed as very high magnitude resulting in a **major adverse** level of effect on the character of the site itself during all phases of the development as a function of its change from arable agricultural land to a housing development.
- 8.17 Effects on the character of the immediate surroundings outside of the site boundaries are also considered long term and permanent. Effects relate to changes in the intimate leafy character of the adjacent lanes / roads and the more open character present in the Ufford Park golf course to the east and the paddock area to the south. This would change to a character with a slightly increased influence from built form, relating to the new residential context. Due to the retention of vegetation around the site and the presence of an existing residential

context within views, the magnitude of change is assessed as high during construction and on completion, reducing to medium in the longer term once additional boundary planting had become established. This would result in a **moderate adverse** level of effect during all phases.

- 8.18 The proposed layout responds well to the development density and local vernacular of other urban development in the locality and therefore any views of the development would be consistent with the surrounding context. Effects are not considered to alter significantly within a future scenario other than the maturation of boundary vegetation and internal planting would act to slightly reduce effects, but they would remain within the moderate range.

**Effect on County Landscape Character Type: Ancient Rolling Farmlands**

- 8.19 In terms of value, the landscape is described by the County LCA as being largely intact and accessible given the dense network of winding roads and footpaths. Although the character area is inherently rural, the high degree of visual intimacy and presence of commercial infrastructure within the character area reduce the susceptibility to change. The Ancient Rolling Farmland LCT is therefore assessed as being of medium sensitivity to residential development.
- 8.20 The site benefits from a high degree of visual enclosure and low inter-visibility with the wider surrounding landscape, which would act to reduce the effect of the development proposals on the wider landscape character.
- 8.21 The site layout has been developed to respect and strengthen landscape character. The development would not affect the local irregular field pattern, nor the pattern of winding lanes and paths. It would retain and enhance the characteristic native hedges with trees. The development would form a new hamlet-like cluster of houses relating to the local settlement pattern, while buildings would respect traditional building materials.
- 8.22 At this scale of characterisation and due to the limited extent of the influence the proposed development would have on the character area, although the development would represent a new area of housing, the potential effects are moderated by sensitive design and the existing residential/amenity parkland context. As such the magnitude of change is assessed as low resulting in a **minor**

**adverse** level of effect to county level landscape character during all phases of the development.

## **9. EFFECT ON VISUAL AMENITY**

- 9.1 In accordance with GLVIA3, the assessment of visual effects begins with an assessment of the sensitivity of each visual receptor in terms of their susceptibility to residential development and the value associated with the existing view. An assessment is then made as to the magnitude of the effect in terms of its scale or size.
- 9.2 These assessments of sensitivity of the receptor and magnitude of effect are then considered along with the duration and reversibility of the effect to assist in determining the relative level of effect on each visual receptor.
- 9.3 The visual effects of the proposed development on key visual receptors are assessed below. The effects are considered during construction, in the year in which construction is completed (noting any difference in effect with winter leaf loss in comparison with effects in summer when vegetation is in full leaf) and also in year 15 following completion of the development, when the proposed structure planting would have become at least semi-mature.
- 9.4 Photographs were taken of the site and surrounding area in April and June 2014. These have been included within this assessment as a means of illustrating some of the visual issues discussed below. The photograph locations are identified in Figure 7, while the photographs are presented in Figures 8 to 14.

### **EFFECTS ON RESIDENTIAL RECEPTORS**

- 9.5 Applying the criteria in chapter 2, residents at home are considered to be of high sensitivity to a change in their view involving residential development.

#### **St Audry's Hospital Development (Melton Park)**

- 9.6 Properties along the southern edge of the St. Audry's Hospital Development (approximately 6 properties) to the north west of the site (within 200m) can be partly seen in photograph 8. Views towards the site from the rear of these properties are likely to be from upper floors only and heavily filtered/screened due to intervening vegetation along the boundary of the properties and along the western boundary of the site. Views would relate to the upper roofs of properties within the westernmost extent of the site and seen in the context of the existing



sports pavilion building. The majority of the proposed development would be screened by vegetation along Jew's Lane. The magnitude of change is considered to be low during construction and on completion. The resulting level of effect during construction and on completion is considered to be **moderate/minor adverse**, reducing to **minor adverse** after several years when maturation of new planting along the western boundary would have reduced the level of effects further.

### **South Close**

- 9.7 The views of residents within properties on South Close (approximately 4 properties) adjacent to the north western boundary of the site (within 50m) are represented in photograph 10 and properties can be partly seen in photograph 12. The majority of views towards the site are screened by mature vegetation along the northern boundary of the site and as such the majority of views would be glimpsed through breaks in the vegetation although during winter months the effects of winter leaf loss would increase visibility. Heavily filtered views from upper front or rear windows from a select number of properties are anticipated. Views of the development would be oblique and partial over a small number of properties within the central section of the site. The magnitude of change is considered to be medium during construction and on completion, resulting in a **moderate adverse** effect in the short term. Several years post-completion, when buffer planting around the perimeter of the site had become semi-mature, the magnitude would be low, resulting in a **moderate/minor adverse** long term effect.

### **Upper Melton Terrace**

- 9.8 The southernmost properties along Upper Melton Terrace (approximately 6 properties) adjacent to the north eastern boundary of the site (within 50m) can be seen in photograph 1. Due to the orientation of this row of properties, direct views towards the site are only likely to be available from upper floors within the southernmost property. Views from other properties would be from upper rear windows only and very oblique. Views would be heavily filtered/screened due to intervening vegetation along the northern boundary of the site. Glimpsed views may be available through breaks in the vegetation and during winter months when the effects of winter leaf loss act to marginally increase visibility; however it is acknowledged that the density of vegetation along this boundary would retain a screening function. The magnitude of change is considered to be low during all

stages of the development. The resulting long term level of effect is considered to be **moderate/minor adverse**.

#### **Properties East of Yarmouth Road**

- 9.9 Residents within properties to the east of Yarmouth Road, opposite the disused quarry to the south east of the site (within 50m) are unlikely to have views of the proposed development due to intervening vegetation both within the property curtilage and within the disused quarry on the eastern boundary of the site. Heavily filtered oblique views from upper windows may become available during winter months where views of development within the eastern part of the site may become visible. The magnitude of change is considered to be very low to negligible during all stages. The resulting level of effect is considered to be **minor adverse** tending to **no effect**.

#### **Residences between Yarmouth Road and St Audry's Road**

- 9.10 Properties adjacent to the southern boundary of the site between St. Audry's Road and Yarmouth Road (approximately 8 properties) (within 50m) can be partly seen in photographs 2 and 4. Property numbers 3 to 7 share boundaries with the site and views would be dependent on the density of the vegetation present along this boundary which is generally sparse at present. Views would be experienced from the rear of properties (including both ground and first floor views as well as views from garden areas) through angled gaps in the proposed boundary shrub and tree planting, allowing views of the proposed attenuation basin and green open space along the southern edge of the site. Oblique views would also be available of the front of properties within the site, seen beyond the vegetated open space. The effect of winter leaf loss is likely to increase visibility to some degree. The magnitude of change is considered to be high during construction and on completion and the resulting level of effect is considered to be **major adverse** in the medium term. However, after several years when proposed boundary vegetation and vegetation within the open space surrounding the attenuation pond had become established, the magnitude of change from the existing situation is considered to remain high, but the overall effect would have changed from major adverse to **major neutral**.

#### **Residences within Melton Lodge Estate**

- 9.11 Melton Lodge is situated to the south of the site (within 350m). The boundary wall to the vineyard can be partly seen in photograph 5b, however the property

remains screened by vegetation. Views towards the site from the residential part of the property would be screened by outbuildings and garden walls associated with the property and by dense mature intervening vegetation both within the gardens, parkland and along St Audry's Road. As such any possible glimpsed views from the grounds would be heavily filtered and likely to be only during winter when the effects of leaf loss act to marginally increase visibility. The magnitude of change is considered to be very low during construction and on completion, reducing to negligible as the proposed site vegetation matures. The resulting level of effect during construction and on completion is considered to be **minor adverse** tending to **no effect**.

## **EFFECT ON USERS OF PATHS AND CYCLE ROUTES**

### **Jews Lane**

9.12 Applying the criteria in chapter 2, recreational users of Jew's Lane (public footpath) along the northern boundary of the site are considered to be of high sensitivity to a change in their view involving residential development.

9.13 This route is heavily vegetated along its length and views towards the site are heavily filtered except for limited locations where there is a break in the hedgerow. Views would become more available in winter when the effect of leaf loss and dieback of the under canopy herbaceous / scrub layer is likely to increase the extent of views available. Views are illustrated in photographs 11a and 11b. Views would be immediate over the site and generally oblique to the direction of travel. Views would comprise residential development and boundary buffer planting within the northern extent of the site. Some longer distance views would be available where views relate to the central open space. The magnitude of change is considered to be high in winter but low in summer during all stages and the resulting level of effect is considered to be **major adverse** in winter and **moderate/minor adverse** in summer.

### **Public Bridleway to southwest**

9.14 Users of the Public Bridleway located to the south of the Cricket pitch are considered to be of high sensitivity. This bridleway is very well vegetated along the majority of its length and views towards the site are limited to locations where there is a break in vegetation (as illustrated in photograph 8) and at its junction with St. Audry's Road (as illustrated in photograph 6). Views from the junction

with St. Audrey's Road would be immediate in nature and be of properties within the south western corner of the site and the retained access point. Development here is likely to screen the majority of development within the site and so views would relate to a small number of properties only. There would be no view of the development available from the length of path as it passes the cricket pitch and field to the west, but where the view opens out (location of photograph 8) the view would relate to the distant roofs of properties within the westernmost extent of the site and seen in the context of existing residential buildings at the south of the St. Audry's hospital site. Visibility is likely to increase in winter when the effect of leaf loss would increase the extent of views available, as well as when the intervening arable crop has been harvested. The magnitude of change at the junction with St. Audry's Road is considered to be high during all stages due to the immediacy of views, but where views are available further along the route, the magnitude of change is assessed as low. The resulting level of effect is considered to be **major adverse** at the junction with St. Audrey's Road, **no effect** along much of the route, and **minor adverse** further along the route where views are available.

## **EFFECT ON USERS OF LOCAL TRANSPORT NETWORK**

### **Lodge Farm Lane**

- 9.15 Users of Lodge Farm Lane (adjacent to the western boundary) are considered to have high sensitivity due to the rural character and recreational use of the lane. Views from the majority of the road are restricted by the mature hedgerow along the western boundary of the site (as illustrated in photograph 9) although a small section of the road (circa. 20m) would experience transient oblique views into the site when travelling in a northerly direction at the junction with St. Audry's Road (as illustrated in photograph 6). At this point the magnitude of change is considered to be medium overall due to the short exposure and transient nature of the view. The resulting level of effect on this short section of Lodge Farm lane is considered to be **moderate adverse**, but there would be a **negligible effect** on users along the majority of the length of the lane.

### **St. Audry's Road**

- 9.16 Users of St. Audry's Road (adjacent to the southern boundary) are considered to have high sensitivity due to the rural character and recreational use of the lane. Views towards ground level components of the proposed development would be

limited to a small number of gaps along the southern site boundary hedgerow (as illustrated in photographs 5a and 6). It is anticipated that the hedgerow along the majority of the road (as illustrated in photograph 4) would restrict views to partial glimpsed views of the upper parts of houses set back from the road within the southern part of the site only. Views would be transient and oblique in nature. At locations along St. Audry's Road where visibility is at its greatest, the magnitude of change is considered to be medium during all stages due to the built development being set back from the road, the short exposure, and transient nature of the views. The resulting level of effect is considered to be **moderate adverse**.

### **Yarmouth Road / B1438**

- 9.17 Users of Yarmouth Road/ B1438 (adjacent to the eastern boundary) are considered to have medium sensitivity due to the road's primary function being transport related. Views of the proposed development would be limited to views through the driveways of properties to the south of the site when travelling in a northerly direction (as illustrated in photograph 2) and a small section of the road (circa. 50m) where views into the site would be afforded by vegetation removal in line with the proposed principal access point (as illustrated in photograph 12). Views along the remainder of the route would be screened by the intervening hedgerow along the eastern boundary (as illustrated in photograph 1). At locations along Yarmouth Road where visibility is at its greatest, the magnitude of change is considered to be medium due to the short exposure and transient nature of the view. The resulting level of effect is considered to be **moderate adverse** at these locations, but there would be a **minor adverse to negligible effect** along the majority of the route as it passes the site.

### **Lower Road**

- 9.18 Users of Lower Road (approximately 200m to the south east) are considered to have high sensitivity due to the rural character and recreational use of the road. Views of the proposed development would be limited to a brief view through the driveways of properties to the south of the site when approaching the junction with Yarmouth Road travelling in a westerly direction (as illustrated in photograph 2) and oblique distant views of the eastern boundary hedgerow (as illustrated in photograph 3). Views of the proposed development would be largely limited to distant views seen across the golf course, and through the proposed site access point. As such views would relate to a small number of properties within the

eastern part of the site only. The magnitude of change is considered to be very low to negligible due to the short exposure and oblique/transient nature of the view. The resulting level of effect is considered to be **minor adverse to no effect**.

## **EFFECT ON USERS OF RECREATION, LEISURE OR CULTURAL SITES**

### **Ufford Park Golf Course**

- 9.19 Users of Ufford Park golf course (adjacent to the eastern boundary) are considered to have high sensitivity. Views of the proposed development would be limited to a small section of the south western part of the course where views into the site would be afforded by vegetation removal in line with the proposed principal access point (as illustrated in photograph 12b). Views of the upper roofs of the extra care facility may also be available above the intervening hedgerow, but views of the houses at Upper Melton Terrace would be more prominent within these views. The magnitude of change is considered to be low during all stages. The resulting level of effect is considered to be **moderate/minor adverse**.

### **St. Audry's Golf Course**

- 9.20 Users of St. Audry's golf course (adjacent to the northern boundary) are considered to have high sensitivity. Views are represented in photograph 10. The majority of views towards the site are screened by mature vegetation along Jews Lane along the northern boundary of the site and as such the majority of views would be glimpsed views through breaks in the vegetation during winter months when the effects of winter leaf loss acts to marginally increase visibility. However it is acknowledged that the density of vegetation along this boundary would retain a screening function. The magnitude of change is considered to be very low during all stages and the resulting level of effect would be **moderate/minor adverse**.

### **St. Audry's Sports and Social Club**

- 9.21 Users of St. Audry's Sports and Social Club cricket pitch (adjacent to the western boundary) are considered to have high sensitivity. Views would be restricted by the high mature hedgerow along the western boundary of the site (as illustrated in photographs 7 and 9). Views would relate to the upper roofs of properties within the westernmost extent of the site and would be seen in the context of the existing sports pavilion building and residential properties within the southern part of the St. Audry's Hospital development. The magnitude of change is considered to be

very low during all stages resulting in a **minor adverse** level of effect. Maturation of new planting along the western boundary may reduce the level of effect further in a future scenario.

## 10. CONCLUSIONS

### SUMMARY OF LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

#### Landscape Features

- 10.1 It has been assessed that within the site itself, there would be a **minor** level of effect on topography and a **moderate/minor** level of effect on existing vegetation during all stages of the development. The most notable effect relates to a **major** level of effect to current land use owing to the change from agriculture to a residential land use.

#### Landscape Character

- 10.2 It is has been assessed that there would be a **major** level of effect on the character of the site itself, but the level of effect would quickly reduce to **moderate** within the immediate surrounding areas owing to the immediacy of the development on the surrounding lanes. However, due to the design of the layout complementing the clustered nature of settlement in the local area and proposed strengthening of vegetated boundary features, together with the limited extent of views available in this landscape, there would only be a **minor** effect on the Ancient Rolling Farmland character type.

### SUMMARY OF VISUAL EFFECTS

- 10.3 It should be noted that the assessed level of effects represents the worst-case effect of the proposed development on views from any point along a path or road, or any window or part of a garden of a residential property.

#### Residential Receptors

- 10.4 Of the residential receptors, the most notable visual effects identified are in relation to properties adjacent to the southern boundary of the site between St. Audry's Road and Yarmouth Road. Property numbers 3 to 7 share boundaries with the site and the effect on views from these properties and their gardens during construction and on completion would be **major adverse** where properties do not already have substantial boundary vegetation or fencing. However, once proposed planting along the boundary and around the open space and balancing pond within the southern part of the site have become established, it is anticipated that this effect would reduce to a **major neutral** effect in the long term.



10.5 Visual effects identified on a small number of properties within South Close have been assessed as **moderate adverse** during construction and on completion, but these would reduce to **moderate/minor adverse** as proposed vegetation matures. These effects relate to upper floor windows only due to the screening provided by ground level vegetation along Jews Lane.

10.6 Effects on views from all other properties assessed ranged from **moderate/minor** to **negligible**.

#### **Users of Paths and Cycle Routes**

10.7 The most notable visual effects identified are in relation to a small number of locations along Jews Lane where gaps in the boundary vegetation allow views through to the site, and at the end of the public bridleway (located to the south of the cricket pitch) at the junction with Lodge Farm lane, where a view into the southwest corner of the site is afforded at the existing site access point. The effects at these points are assessed to be **major adverse**. However there would be **minor** or **no effect** along the majority of the length of these routes.

#### **Users of Local Transport Network**

10.8 The most notable visual effects on users of the local transport network relate to specific sections of road, approximately 20-50m in length, along St. Audrey's Road, Lodge Farm Lane and Yarmouth Road, where views are afforded by gaps in the vegetation or proposed entrances into the site. Views experienced by motorists would generally be transient in nature and oblique to the direction of travel. The level of effect is considered to be no greater than **moderate**. Boundary planting would act to reduce effects further in the longer term.

#### **Users of Recreation, Leisure and Cultural Sites**

10.9 Visual effects have been identified for users of some parts of Ufford Park golf course, St Audry's golf course and St Audry's cricket pitch, however, these effects are **moderate/minor** or **minor** and are not considered to be notable effects.

## **CONCLUSION**

- 10.10 The change from an agricultural land use to a residential land use would have a major effect on the immediate character of the site. However effects on character notably reduce within close proximity to the site owing to the filtering / screening effects of mature retained vegetation along site boundaries. Excepting these effects on immediate land use and site character, effects on landscape features and the wider landscape character would be no greater than moderate/minor and would not give rise to effects of particular note.
- 10.11 The site benefits from a high degree of screening from existing boundary vegetation. Views into the site from publically accessible locations are limited to the very close proximity and relate principally to gaps in the existing field boundary vegetation and field access points. Excepting the effects on the residents abutting the southern boundary of the site and on receptors at a small number of locations along Jews Lane public footpath and the end of the public bridleway to the southwest of the site, effects of the proposed development on visual amenity are very limited in extent and nature.
- 10.12 From a landscape and visual perspective, the proposed development responds sympathetically to the wider landscape and surrounding residential and amenity context and has been designed so as to minimise visual intrusion. The proposed layout also provides a strong green infrastructure network and new recreational linkages with the wider countryside.

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## **APPENDIX A - FIGURES**

Figure 1	Site Location
Figure 2	Illustrative Masterplan
Figure 3	Landscape Characterisation
Figure 4	Landscape Designations
Figure 5	Zones of Visibility of the Development
Figure 6	Site Context
Figure 7	Photograph Location Plan
Figures 8-14	Viewpoint Photographs
Figure 15	Landscape and Ecological Enhancement Plan

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Christchurch Land and Estates (Melton) Ltd.

Land off Yarmouth Road, Melton

Figure 1  
Site Location Plan

KEY  
 Application site boundary

Date: 17.07.2014

YOR.2251.001

Drawn by: SE

Checked by: JB



Scale: 1:7,500 at A3



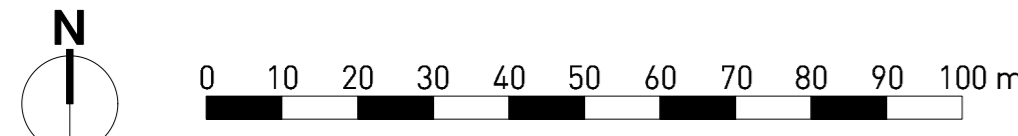


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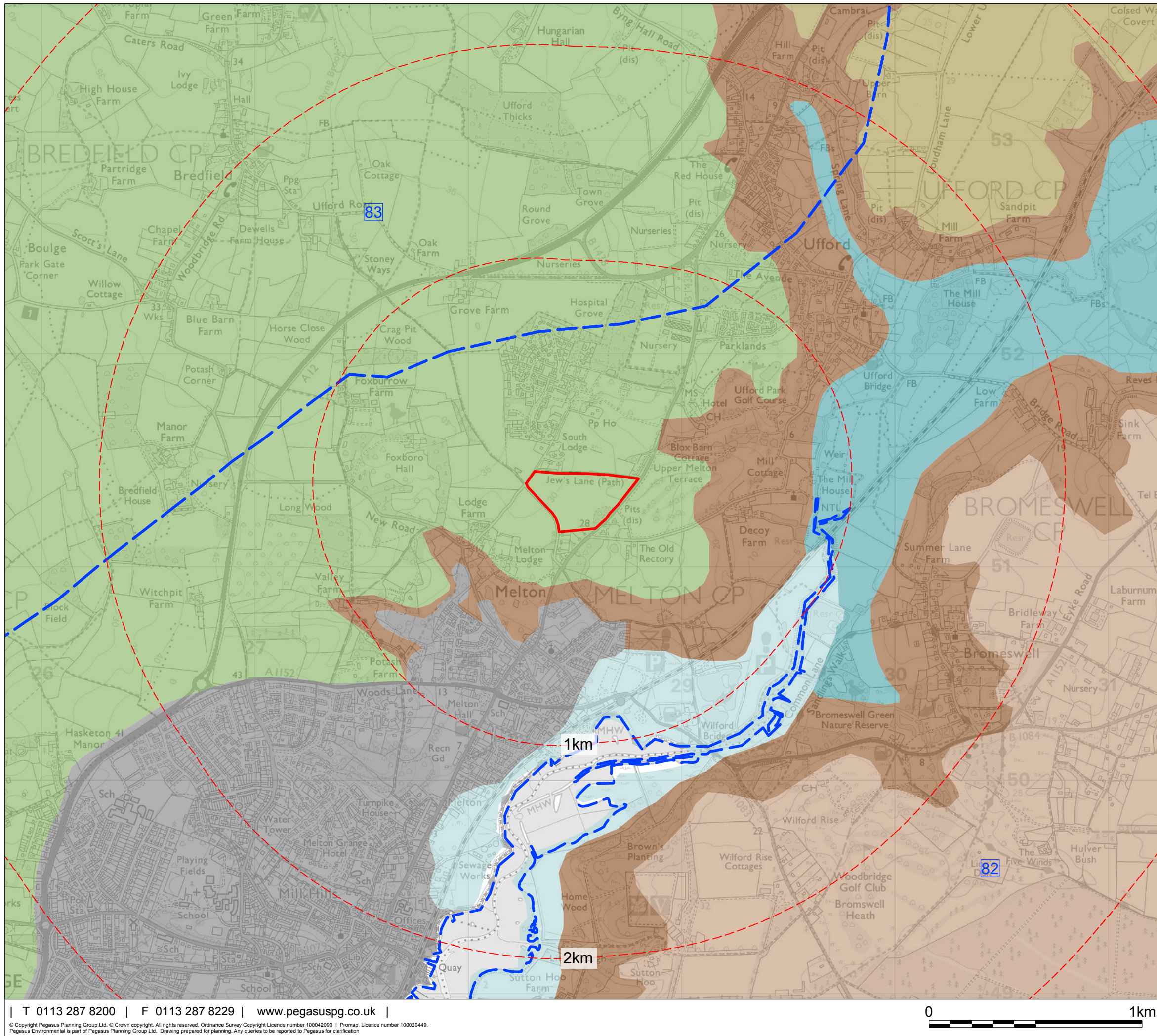


- KEY**
- Site boundary (9.8 ha)
  - Existing trees to be retained
  - Sustainable drainage basins
  - Proposed allotment / community orchard
  - Proposed POS over former quarry. Quarry to be part filled.
  - Railings around former quarry
  - Proposed footpath links
  - Nursing home
  - Main site access off Yarmouth Road
  - Public Open Space (POS)
  - Feature plots
  - Pumping station

- HOUSING MIX**
- Open Market (66% of development)**
- 23 x 2 bed
  - 37 x 3 bed
  - 32 x 4 bed
- Affordable (33% of development)**
- 12 x 1 bed
  - 22 x 2 bed
  - 12 x 3 bed
- TOTAL: 138 Units**







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**Land off Yarmouth Road, Melton**

**Figure 3**  
Landscape Characterisation

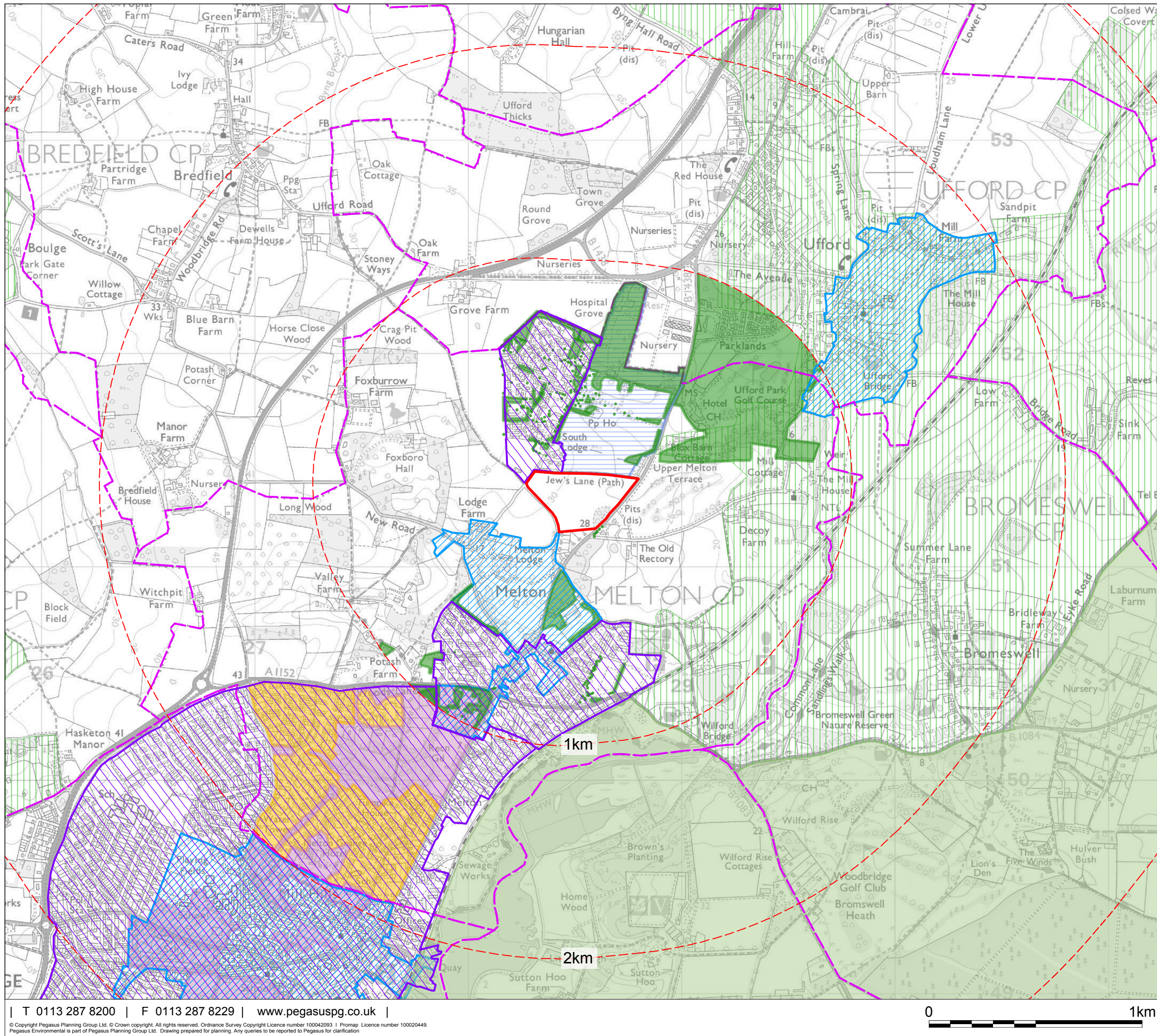
- KEY**
- Application site boundary
  - Radii from site boundary
  - National Character Areas
  - 82 - Suffolk Coast and Heaths
  - 83 - South Norfolk and High Suffolk Claylands
- Suffolk Landscape Character Typology**
- Ancient rolling farmlands
  - Coastal levels
  - Estate sandlands
  - Plateau estate sandlands
  - Rolling estate sandlands
  - Valley meadowlands

Date: 17.07.2014	YOR.2251.017
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Drawn by: SE	Checked by: MS
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**Land off Yarmouth Road, Melton**

**Figure 4**  
Landscape Designations

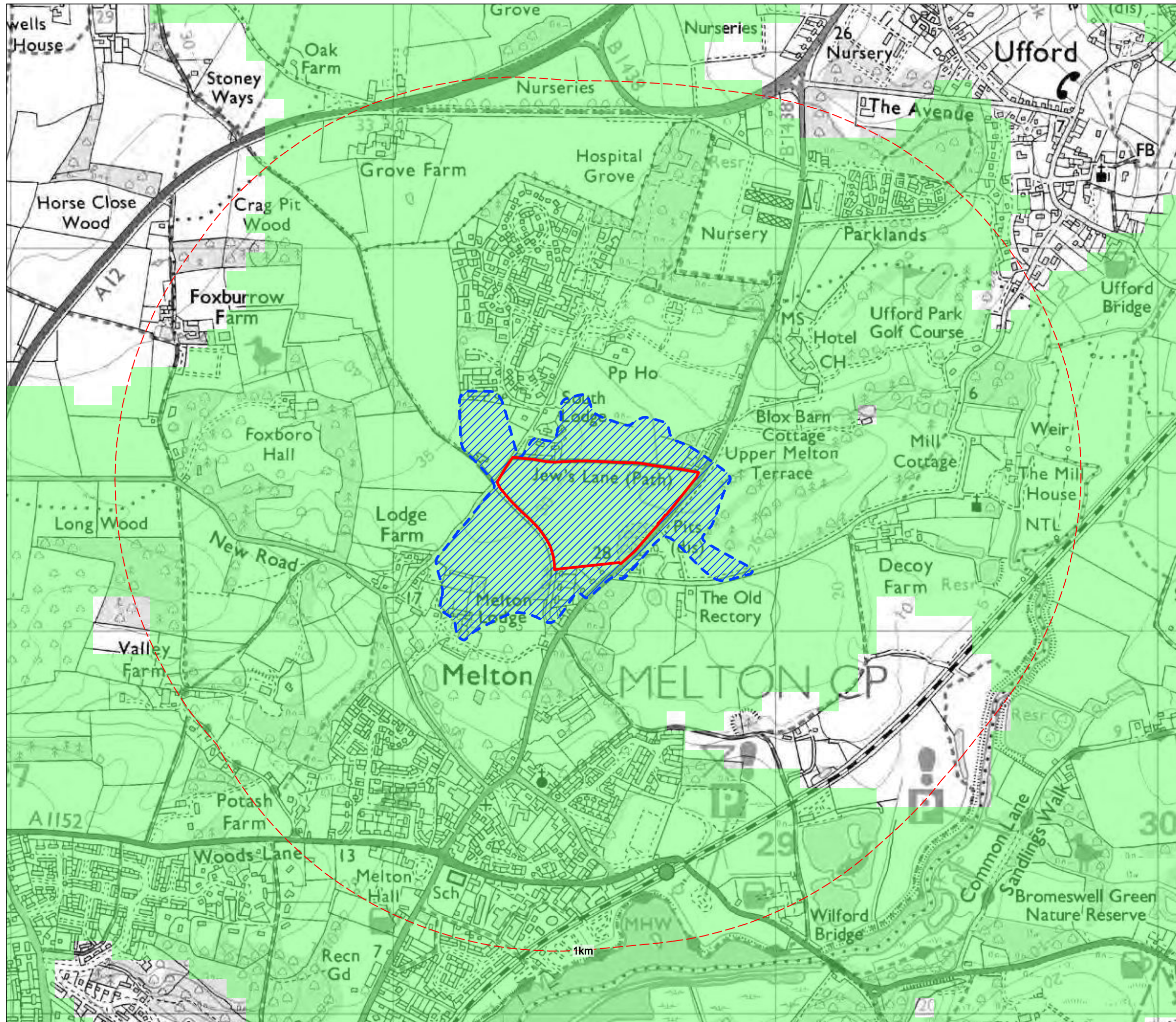
- KEY**
- Application site boundary
  - Radii from site boundary
  - Parish Boundaries
  - Woodbridge, Melton and St Audry's Hospital Physical Limits (AP230, AP235, AP236)
  - Conservation Area (AP1)
  - Area to be Protected From Development (AP28)
  - Special Landscape Areas (AP13)
  - Protection of Open Character/Parkland (AP235)
  - Melton - Protection of Trees and Character (AP237)
  - Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty - Suffolk Coast & Heaths (SP8, SP14, SP15, DM17, DM18, DM21, DM29)
  - Tree Preservation Orders (within 1km)
  - Individual trees
  - Groups / Areas / Woodland

Source: Suffolk Coastal District Local Plan - Core Strategy and Development Management Policies, and GIS website

Date: 17.07.2014	YOR.2251.004
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Drawn by: SE	Checked by: JB
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**Christchurch Land and Estates (Melton) Ltd.**

**Land off Yarmouth Road, Melton**

**Figure 5**  
Zones of Visibility of the Development

**KEY**

- Application site boundary
- 1km radius from site boundary
- Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) to 10m (modelled on properties being 10m in height)

The Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) image illustrates the theoretical extent of where houses would be visible when viewed from a height of 1.6m, assuming 100% visibility. It is generated using terrain data only and does not take into account any screening that vegetation or the built environment may provide. It is, as such, 'a worst case' scenario and the actual extent of visibility is likely to be much less extensive.

**Primary Zone of Visibility**

The Primary Zone of Visibility indicates the extent of the majority of visual effects, although the proposed development may have some limited visibility from some individual locations beyond this zone.

Date: 25.10.2016

YOR.2251.002 Rev B

Drawn by: SE

Checked by: JB

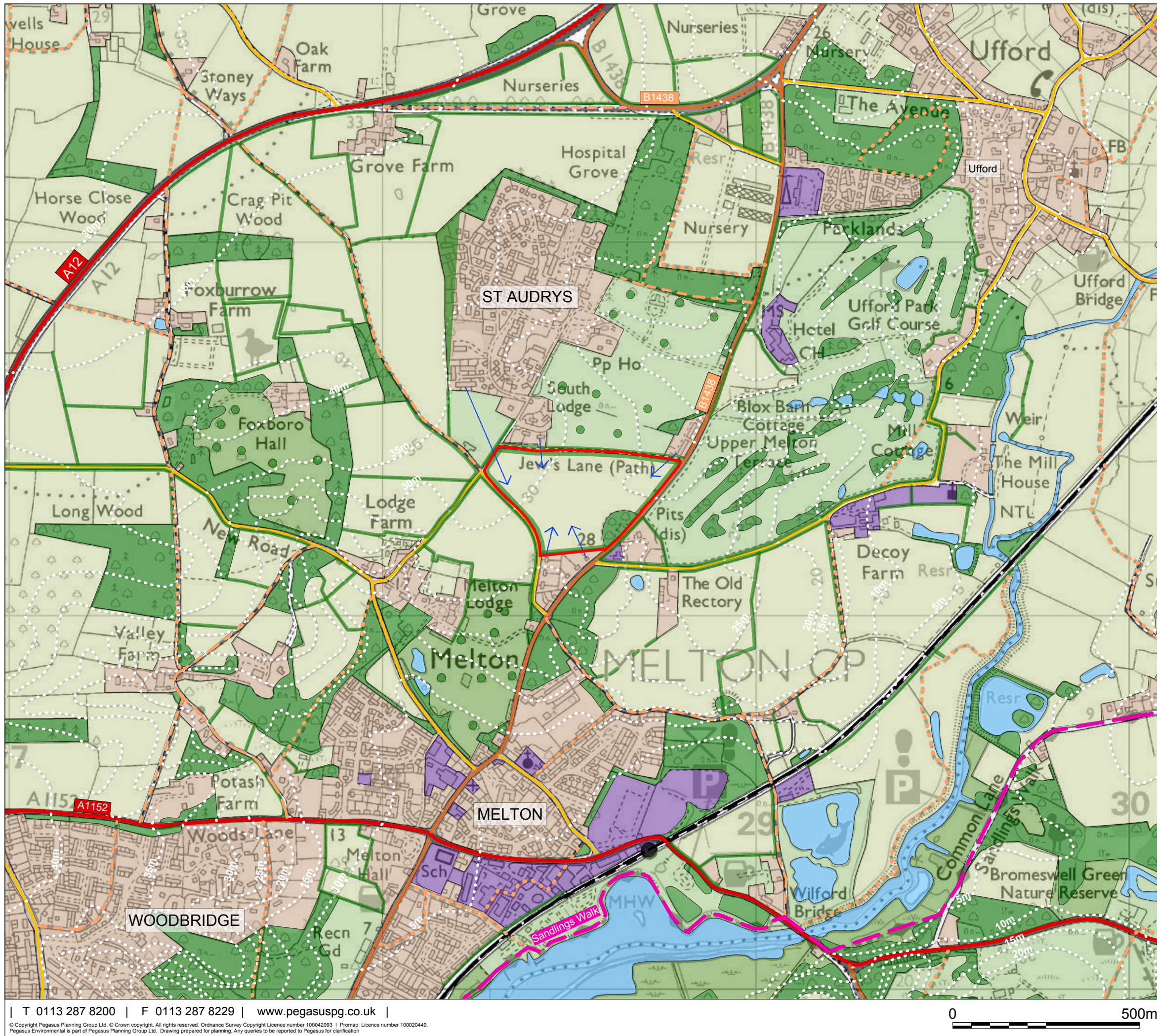


**Pegasus Group**

Scale: 1:10,000 at A3







**Christchurch Land and Estates (Melton) Ltd.**

**Land off Yarmouth Road, Melton**

**Figure 6**  
Site Context

- KEY**
- Application site boundary
  - Inward views from neighbouring dwellings
  - Transport routes**
  - Main 'A' Roads
  - Secondary 'B' Roads
  - Minor Roads
  - Railway and Station
  - Public Rights of Way**
  - Public Footpaths
  - Public Bridleways
  - Public Byways / Other routes with public access
  - Long Distance Footpath Sandlings Walk
  - Landscape Features**
  - Contours (5m)
  - Watercourses / Ponds
  - Woodland / Trees / Hedges
  - Land Use**
  - Agricultural / Horticultural
  - Residential / Settlements
  - Employment / Community Facilities
  - Leisure / Recreation
  - Parkland / Heath / Marsh

Date: 03.09.2014 | YOR.2251.006.revA

Drawn by: SE | Checked by: JB



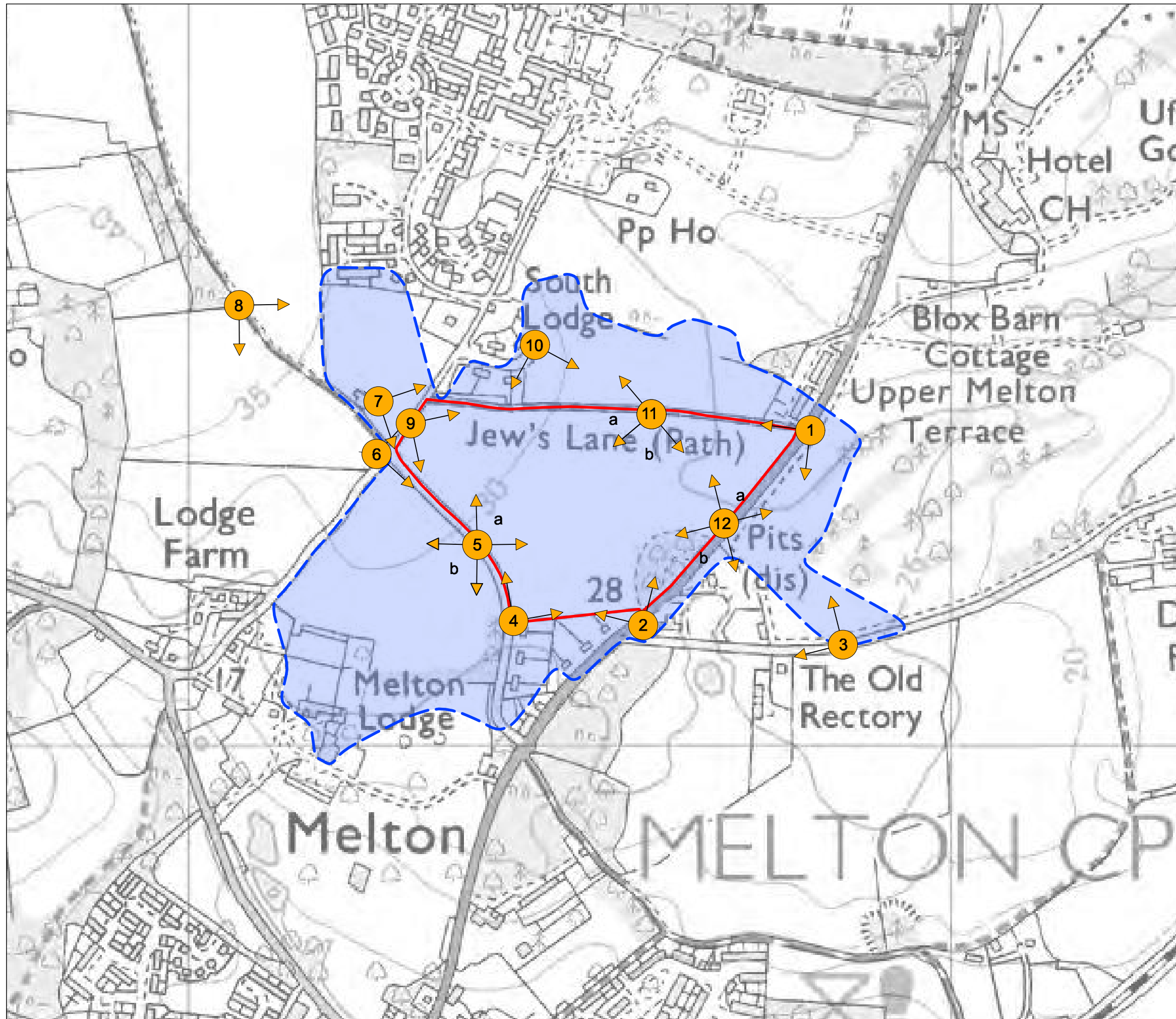
**Pegasus**  
Group

Scale: 1:10,000 at A3





**Figure 7**  
Photograph Location Plan



**KEY**

Application site boundary

Primary Zone of Visibility

**Photograph Locations**

1. Yarmouth Road opposite Upper Melton Terrace
2. Yarmouth Road junction with Lower Road
3. Lower Road view across Ufford Park Golf Course
4. St Audry's Road beside 7 St Audry's Road
- 5a. Field gateway on St Audry's Road towards site
- 5b. Field gateway on St Audry's Road towards Melton Lodge
6. St Audry's Road junction with Lodge Farm Lane
7. St Audry's Sports and Social Club pavilion
8. Bridleway northwest of site
9. Lodge Farm Lane at western edge of site
10. Outside 4 South Close
- 11a. Jew's Lane footpath, view along path
- 11b. Jew's Lane footpath, view across site
- 12a. Yarmouth Road opposite proposed site entrance, view north
- 12b. Yarmouth Road opposite proposed site entrance, view south

Date: 25.10.2016

YOR.2251.003.rev B

Drawn by: SE

Checked by: JB



Scale: 1:5000 at A3








Photograph 1a - View south along Yarmouth Road opposite site



Photograph 1b - View north along Yarmouth Road opposite Upper Melton Terrace



Photograph 2 - Yarmouth Road junction with Lower Road

Land at Yarmouth Road, Melton		
Title: Figure 8 - Photographic Record		
Client: Christchurch Land and Estates (Melton) Ltd.		
Photos taken: Apr-Jun 2014	Drawn/Checked: SE/JB	
Drawing: YOR.2251.016.A	Date: 11.03.2016	



Vegetation along eastern boundary



Photograph 3 - Lower Road, view across Ufford Park Golf Course

St Audry's Road

Vegetation along northern boundary

7 St Audry's Road



Photograph 4 - St Audry's Road, beside 7 St Audry's Road

Land at Yarmouth Road, Melton

Title: Figure 9 - Photographic Record

Client: Christchurch Land and Estates (Melton) Ltd.

Photos taken: Apr-Jun 2014 Drawn/Checked: SE/JB

Drawing: YOR.2251.016.A Date: 11.03.2016








Photograph 5a - Field gateway on St Audry's Road, looking towards site



Photograph 5b - Field gateway on St Audry's Road, looking towards Melton Lodge

Land at Yarmouth Road, Melton		
Title: Figure 10 - Photographic Record		
Client: Christchurch Land and Estates (Melton) Ltd.		
Photos taken: Apr-Jun 2014	Drawn/Checked: SE/JB	
Drawing: YOR.2251.016.A	Date: 11.03.2016	






Photograph 6a - St Audry's Road junction with Lodge Farm Lane



Photograph 6b - St Audry's Road junction with Lodge Farm Lane



Photograph 7 - St Audry's Sports and Social Club car park

Land at Yarmouth Road, Melton		
Title: Figure 11 - Photographic Record		
Client: Christchurch Land and Estates (Melton) Ltd.		
Photos taken: Apr-Jun 2014	Drawn/Checked: SE/JB	
Drawing: YOR.2251.016.A	Date: 11.03.2016	

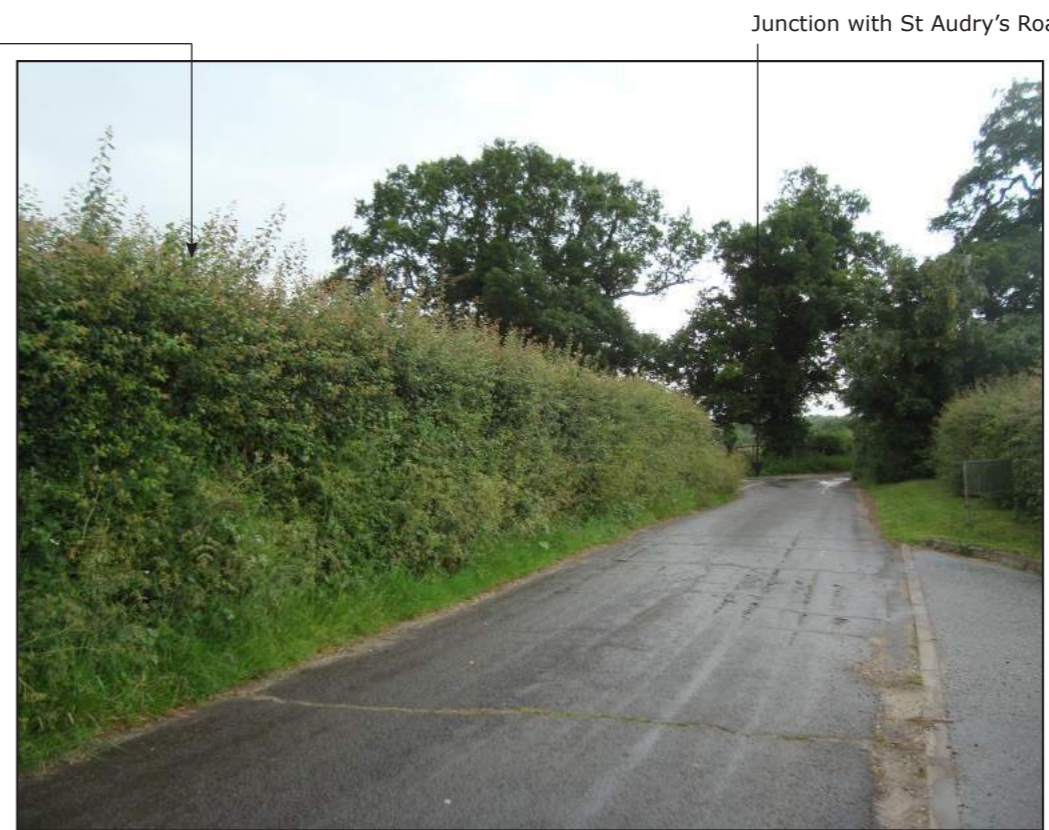





Photograph 8 - Bridleway northwest of site



Photograph 9a - View north along Lodge Farm Lane at western edge of site



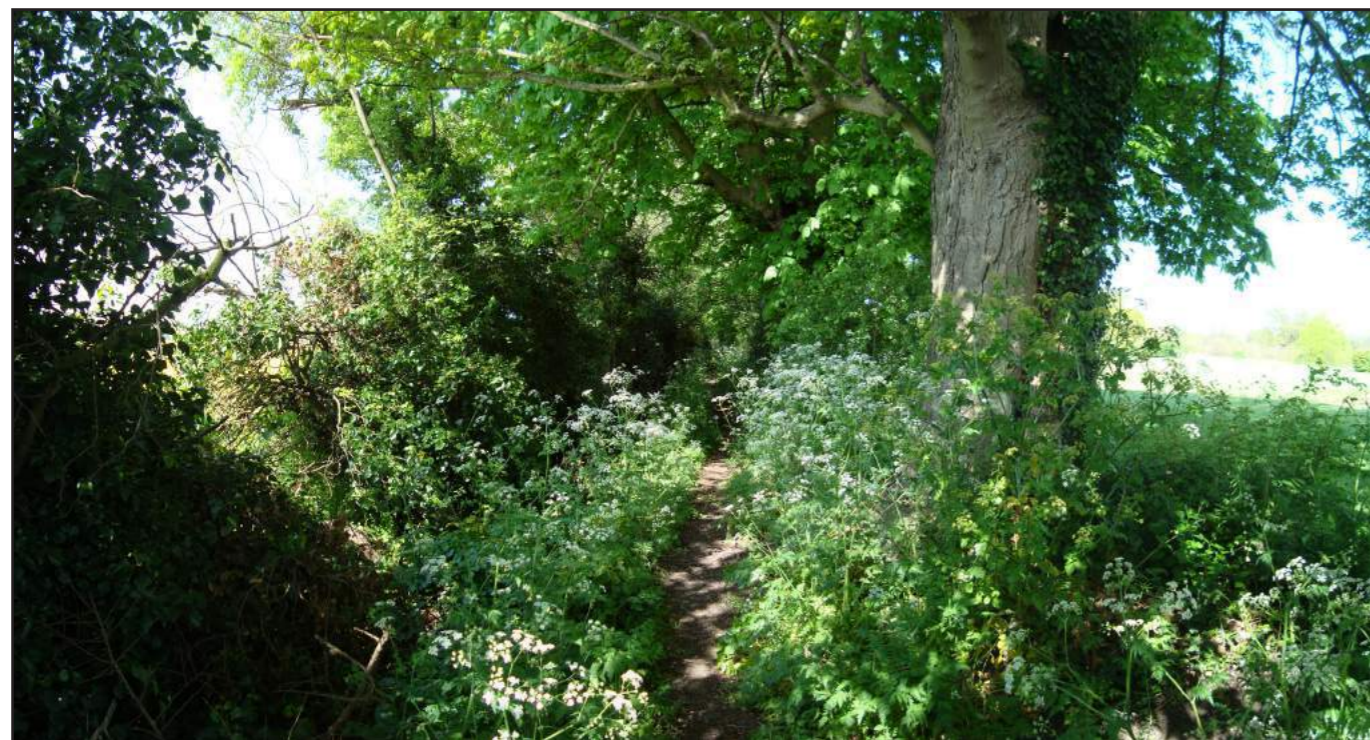
Photograph 9b - View south along Lodge Farm Lane at western edge of site

Land at Yarmouth Road, Melton		
Title: Figure 12 - Photographic Record		
Client: Christchurch Land and Estates (Melton) Ltd.		
Photos taken: Apr-Jun 2014	Drawn/Checked: SE/JB	
Drawing: YOR.2251.016.A	Date: 11.03.2016	

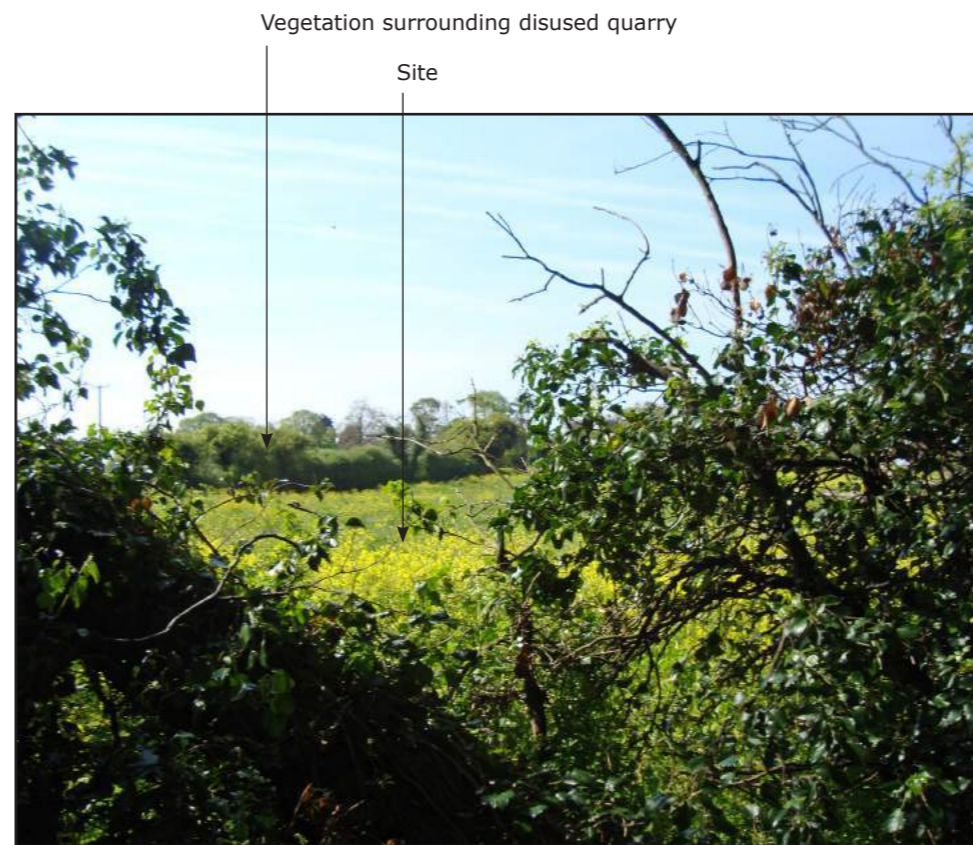





Photograph 10 - Outside 4 South Close



Photograph 11a - Jew's Lane footpath, view along path



Photograph 11b - Jew's Lane footpath, view south across site

Land at Yarmouth Road, Melton		
Title: Figure 13 - Photographic Record		
Client: Christchurch Land and Estates (Melton) Ltd.		
Photos taken: Apr-Jun 2014	Drawn/Checked: SE/JB	
Drawing: YOR.2251.016.A	Date: 11.03.2016	






Photograph 12a - Yarmouth Road opposite proposed site entrance, view north



Photograph 12b - Yarmouth Road opposite proposed site entrance, view south

Land at Yarmouth Road, Melton		
Title: Figure 14 - Photographic Record		
Client: Christchurch Land and Estates (Melton) Ltd.		
Photos taken: Apr-Jun 2014	Drawn/Checked: SE/JB	
Drawing: YOR.2251.016.A	Date: 11.03.2016	





- KEY**
- Site boundary (9.8 ha)
  - Existing tree removed
  - Existing hedge removed
  - Existing trees retained
  - Proposed tree planting
  - Existing hedge retained and enhanced (gapped up and maintained at height in excess of 2m)
  - Proposed hedge and shrub planting
  - Retention basins for sustainable drainage - planted with native emergent species
  - Species-rich meadow grass and wildflower mix of local provenance suitable for neutral sites (shade tolerant mix in quarry area)
  - Amenity grassland
  - PROW and internal pedestrian routes
  - Allotments or community orchard



Revisions: A - Indicative plant species added  
First Issue: 24/03/16 SE

**Figure 15 -  
Landscape and Ecological  
Enhancement Plan**

Yarmouth Road, Melton

Client: Christchurch Land & Estates (Melton) Ltd.  
DRWG No: YOR2251\_21 Sheet No:- REV:A  
Drawn by : SE Approved by: JB

Date: 29/03/2016

Scale: 1: 2,000 @ A3



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## **APPENDIX B - LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT EXTRACTS**

(INTENTIONALLY BLANK)



Scale of Assessment: <b>NATIONAL</b>	<b>CHARACTER AREA: NCA 82</b> <b>SUFFOLK COAST AND HEATHS</b>
<p><b>Key Characteristics:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A predominantly low-lying landscape with some areas along the coastal plain below or at sea level. Changes in relief are slight, but enough to distinguish the Sandlings, sandy rolling 'upland' between estuaries.</li> <li>• Crag deposits covered by deep, free-draining sands, gravels and till, forming light, sandy, easily worked soils on the Sandlings, giving rise to characteristic variation in land cover.</li> <li>• A dynamic coast, shaped by long, sweeping bays, cut by the series of more sheltered estuaries. The shoreline is defined by shingle beaches and structures, sea defence features and in places low, soft crumbling cliffs.</li> <li>• Rivers flow west - east forming intimate, twisting alluvial valleys. Estuaries support internationally important salt marshes and intertidal flats with large numbers of waders and wildfowl, while their open waters are busy with pleasure and commercial craft.</li> <li>• Expansive coastal level grazing marshes divided by drainage dykes contain internationally important reedbeds and fens. Many are managed as nature reserves owing to their rich biodiversity, which includes a nationally important concentration of breeding bittern.</li> <li>• Fragments of internationally important lowland heathland support nightjar, woodlark, adder and silver-studded blue butterfly. Views across the dry farmland and heathlands are open and extensive, except where enclosed by woodland.</li> <li>• Farm woodlands, plantations and field boundary trees provide a treed character with substantial coniferous forests (Rendlesham, Tunstall and Dunwich) in the core of the NCA. Ancient broadleaved woodland and parkland wood pasture cloak the southern river valley and estuary slopes.</li> <li>• The coastal levels are largely devoid of trees.</li> <li>• High-quality vegetable production and outdoor pig units are distinctive agricultural land uses. Beef cattle graze the coastal levels although drainage has led to the conversion of many of the grazing marshes to arable production.</li> </ul>	



Scale of Assessment: <b>NATIONAL</b>	<b>CHARACTER AREA: NCA 82</b> <b>SUFFOLK COAST AND HEATHS</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inland valleys contain small-scale historic patterns of irregular drained meadow enclosure, bounded by elm hedgerows. The Sandlings and the coastal plain show 18th- to mid-19th-century large-scale regular enclosure.</li> <li>• Pine lines and shelterbelts are characteristic of the Sandlings.</li> <li>• A rich archaeology includes Saxon burial mounds, medieval rabbit warrens and numerous country house estates. The coast supports Napoleonic Martello towers, Second World War pillboxes and the Orford Ness Cold War testing area with its distinctive 'pagodas'.</li> <li>• Settlement is sparse, with small, isolated villages and farmsteads. Larger urban settlements are confined to the north and south (Lowestoft, Ipswich and Harwich). Distinctive coastal towns (Aldeburgh, Southwold and Felixstowe) enjoy a relatively unspoilt atmosphere.</li> <li>• Traditional buildings utilise soft-hued red bricks with straw thatch, pantiles or peg tiles. Some are rendered and painted (often in 'Suffolk Pink') while others (including churches) use locally occurring split or knapped flint.</li> <li>• Brightly painted beach huts line the coastal resort seafronts</li> <li>• Large commercial ports (Harwich and Felixstowe), Sizewell nuclear power station, the Cobra Mist transmitting station and the Orwell Bridge all contribute landmark diversity. Major transport infrastructure includes the A14 and A12 and the main East Coast rail line.</li> <li>• Public access is extensive both on the land and on the rivers. The sense of tranquillity and wildness is integral to the distinctiveness of the NCA, inspiring many writers, artists and naturalists, and supports the area's popularity as a recreation and tourist destination.</li> </ul>	

Scale of Assessment: <b>NATIONAL</b>	Character Area: <b>NCA 83</b> <b>SOUTH NORFOLK AND HIGH SUFFOLK CLAYLANDS</b>
<p><b>Key Characteristics:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large plateau area of chalky glacial till that is generally flat or only gently undulating, but can be locally concave. The edges of the plateau have been dissected by watercourses that form greater slopes, especially along the tributaries of the Waveney.</li> <li>• Views are frequently open, only sometimes confined by hedges and trees, with some woodland present. The small valleys support quite confined landscapes with intimate views.</li> <li>• Chalk bedrock overlain by glacial till, gravels and sands. Heavy, seasonally waterlogged chalky clay soils occur on the plateau, with small areas of better soils at the edges. The valley bottoms contain areas of glacial outwash deposits as well as some areas of deep peat.</li> <li>• Scattered areas of ancient woodland, game copses, shelterbelts, valley floor plantation and carr woodland as well as hedgerow trees provide a treed landscape character, despite much boundary loss.</li> <li>• A mix of remnant medieval ancient countryside, some of it with a decidedly coaxial character, although irregular field patterns and large modern amalgamated open fields dominate.</li> <li>• Sinuous field boundaries are formed by deep ditches, some with hedgerows and hedgerow trees.</li> <li>• Large plateau area of chalky glacial till that is generally flat or only gently undulating, but can be locally concave. The edges of the plateau have been dissected by watercourses that form greater slopes, especially along the tributaries of the Waveney.</li> <li>• Views are frequently open, only sometimes confined by hedges and trees, with some woodland present. The small valleys support quite confined landscapes with intimate views.</li> <li>• Chalk bedrock overlain by glacial till, gravels and sands. Heavy, seasonally waterlogged chalky clay soils occur on the plateau, with small areas of better soils at the edges. The valley bottoms contain areas of glacial outwash deposits as well as some areas of deep peat.</li> </ul>	

- Scattered areas of ancient woodland, game copses, shelterbelts, valley floor plantation and carr woodland as well as hedgerow trees provide a treed landscape character, despite much boundary loss.
- A mix of remnant medieval ancient countryside, some of it with a decidedly coaxial character, although irregular field patterns and large modern amalgamated open fields dominate.
- Sinuous field boundaries are formed by deep ditches, some with hedgerows and hedgerow trees.
- Small slow-flowing rivers and streams and the River Waveney drain the clay plateau. The River Waveney has a relatively large-scale open valley landscape compared with the other river valleys which have narrow valley bottoms. High density of isolated farm ponds in the southern half of the NCA.
- Historic features include Palaeolithic archaeology, evidence of Roman enclosures, bronze- age and iron-age activity, remnant medieval and Tudor deer parks, scattered small parkland estates and Second World War airfields. Round-towered Saxo-Norman and medieval churches and 19th-century windmills are prominent historic landscape features.
- Large number of isolated moated timber-framed farmhouses and farm buildings with steeply pitched clay-tiled or long-straw thatched roofs. Little flint, some brick (especially in towns).
- A dispersed settlement pattern of small nucleated market towns with architectural variety and colour, loosely clustered villages and scattered hamlets. Settlement is often focused around large medieval greens. Many of the market towns have modern extensions.
- Some major transport links including the Norwich to London main rail line but infrastructure routes are predominantly an extensive network of narrow lanes and byroads.
- The Mendlesham and Tacolneston masts (tall communications masts), wind turbines at Eye airfield and high-tension overhead power lines are prominent modern features in the landscape.

Scale of Assessment: <b>COUNTY</b>	Character Type: <b>ANCIENT ROLLING FARMLANDS</b>
<p>A rolling landscape of medium clay soils studded with blocks of ancient woodland</p> <p><b>Key Characteristics:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rolling arable landscape of chalky clays and loams</li><li>• Dissected widely, and sometimes deeply, by river valleys</li><li>• Field pattern of ancient random enclosure. Regular fields associated with areas of heathland enclosure</li><li>• Hedges of hawthorn and elm with oak, ash and field maple as hedgerow trees</li><li>• Substantial open areas created for airfields and by post WWII agricultural improvement</li><li>• Scattered with ancient woodland parcels containing a mix of oak, lime, cherry, hazel, hornbeam, ash and holly</li><li>• Network of winding lanes and paths, often associated with hedges, create visual intimacy</li><li>• Dispersed settlement pattern of loosely clustered villages, hamlets and isolated farmsteads of mediaeval origin</li><li>• Farmstead buildings are predominantly timber-framed, the houses colour-washed and the barns blackened with tar. Roofs are frequently tiled, though thatched houses can be locally significant</li><li>• Villages often associated with village greens or the remains of greens</li></ul>	