



GREATER CAMBRIDGE CALL FOR SITES CONSULTATION

Land to the North- West of Balsham Road, Linton

Prepared by Strutt & Parker on behalf of Countryside Properties Ltd

March 2019

Site Name:	Land to the North of Balsham Road, Linton
Client Name:	Countryside Properties
Type of Report:	Greater Cambridge Call for Sites Consultation
Prepared by:	David Fletcher
Checked by:	David Fletcher
Date:	March 2019

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This representation has been prepared by Strutt & Parker on behalf of Countryside Properties Ltd to support the promotion of land to the north- west of Balsham Road, Linton as part of the Greater Cambridge Call for Sites, Local Plan Consultation March 2019.
- 1.2 For the purposes of this representation, the land to the north- west of Balsham Road, Linton, will be hereafter described as the 'application site.'
- 1.3 The application site is being promoted for a mixed use development that is proposed to accommodate the following:
- Up to 300 dwellings, including provision for market and affordable housing of a mixture of sizes and tenures
 - Provision for a new employment centre of approximately 1 hectare in size, with a focus on providing office space for small/start up and medium sized local businesses.
 - Provision of public open space, including new woodland area to the east of the site.
- 1.4 This representation is accompanied by the following documents:
- Letter of support from the landowners of the site;
 - Site Location Plan;
 - Illustrative Masterplan; and
 - Landscape Visual Assessment, including Opportunities and Constraints Plan, Site Context Plan, Topographical Features Plan, and Site Photo's, prepared by Barton Wilmore.
- 1.5 This representation has been prepared in accordance with the requirements set out within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). In particular, it has been prepared having regard to the tests of soundness as set out within paragraph 35, which sets out a requirement for Local Plans to be:
- a) **Positively prepared** – providing a strategy which, as a minimum, seeks to meet the areas objectively assessed needs, and is informed by agreements with other authorities, so that unmet needs from neighbouring areas is accommodated where it is practical to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development.
 - b) **Justified**- an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and based on proportionate evidence
 - c) **Effective**- deliverable over the plan period, and based on effective joint working on cross boundary strategic matters that have been dealt with rather than deferred, as evidenced by the statement of common ground; and
 - d) **Consistent with national policy**- enabling the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in this Framework
- 1.6 This representation details that the proposed allocation of this application site for a residential led mixed use development, is fully consistent with the principles of sustainable development as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework. It also demonstrates

that the application site represents a sound allocation within the emerging local plan. The site is also fully deliverable in planning terms.

2. SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1 The application site is situated on land to the north- west of Balsham Road, Linton. Linton is one of the larger villages in South Cambridgeshire, being located to the south- east of Cambridge.
- 2.2 The application site is located on the north-eastern side of Linton. It benefits from a very good relationship to the existing development boundary for Linton, as set out within the adopted Linton Proposals Map that forms part of the adopted Local Plan (2018). The application site is boarded to the south-west by residential properties in Tower View which are located off Balsham Road. Balsham Road abuts the southern boundary of the site with residential properties opposite the site's southern boundary. To the west of the site, is a green wedge with separates the site from a metal scrapyard. To the north, the site rises up onto the open countryside, with a water tower, which sits at the top of Rivey Hill. The land slopes away from Balsham Road up towards the water tower and is set within a valley.
- 2.3 Under Policy S9 of the Adopted South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (2018) Linton is identified as a Minor Rural Surface Centre, which is the second tier within the settlement hierarchy. Importantly, Linton unlike a number of the other Minor Rural Service Centres, benefits from being situated on land that is outside of the Cambridge Green Belt.
- 2.4 For a settlement of the size of Linton, the village is very well served in terms of facilities, schools and shops, all of which are located within walking distance of the application site. Linton also benefits from a regular bus service to Cambridge and Linton. Table 1 below, provides an overview of services within the village and their distance from the application site:

Service/facility	Closest service/facility	Distance from the site	Cycling Time	Walking Time
Primary School	Linton Heights Junior School	270 metres	1 min	4 mins
	Linton CofE Infant School	1 kilometre	3 mins	12 mins
Secondary School	Linton Village College	2.3 kilometres	8 mins	27 mins
Local Services	The Dog & Duck	1.4 kilometres	5 mins	17 mins
	BP Garage	1.7 kilometres	8 mins	10 mins
	Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin	1.4 kilometres	6 mins	16 mins
	Boswell's Bakery, Linton	1.4 kilometres	6 mins	18 mins

Service/facility	Closest service/facility	Distance from the site	Cycling Time	Walking Time
	Linton FreeChurch URC Church	1.4 kilometres	4 mins	17 mins
	Co-op Food, Linton	850 metres	2 mins	10 mins
	Jigsaw Bakery	800 metres	2 mins	9 mins
	Linton Post Office	1.2 kilometres	3 mins	14 mins
	Linton Pharmacy	1.2 kilometres	3 mins	15 mins
Community facilities	Linton Community Sports Centre	1.9 kilometres	6 mins	23 mins
	Linton Library	1 kilometre	3 mins	12 mins
	Linton Village Hall	1.3 kilometres	4 mins	14 mins
Public Transport	Bus Stop, Parsonage Way	800m	2 mins	9 mins
	Bus Stop, Hill Way	1 kilometre	3 mins	3 mins
	Bus Stop, High Street	1.5 kilometres	5 mins	18 mins
Healthcare	School Street Surgery, Great Chesterford	15.1 kilometres	31 mins	N/A

Table 1: Review of Services and employment facilities within Linton and their proximity to the application site

2.5 It is clear from table 1 above, that Linton is a very sustainable location and further housing and employment growth within the village. The bus service provides regular and reliable connection to Cambridge and Haverhill and runs every 30 minutes throughout the day.

3 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 The application site is being promoted for a residential lead mixed use development to include an employment area.
- 3.2 Being approximately 9.8 hectares in size, it is considered that the application site has capacity for delivery of up to 300 dwellings. This will include the delivery of a significant proportion of affordable housing and a range of tenures to meet the identified housing need.
- 3.3 The applicants consider that to fully promote a sustainable form of development, it is important to integrate housing and employment growth. In this regard approximately 1 hectare of the site is provided as employment land, for small/start up and medium sized businesses. This part of the site will predominantly be for B1 (Office) uses/innovation space. As shown on the Illustrative Masterplan that supports this submission, the employment area has been located centrally within the development, to provide a hub and focus for the development. It also ensures very good connectivity between the employment space and the surrounding residential parcels.
- 3.4 The applicants are committed to working closely with the Council and local stakeholders to further develop the vision for the site, as part of the Local Plan Process.
- 3.5 The proposals have been informed by an initial Landscape Visual Assessment, prepared by Barton Wilmore, who have influenced a landscape led approach to the illustrative masterplan submitted with this Call for Sites. The proposals include provision for a proposed strong woodland area along the eastern boundary of the site. This will create a strong buffer and provide a natural termination to the east side of the village. In addition, as shown on the Illustrative Masterplan, public open space will be provided within the site, as a public benefit to both new and existing residents.
- 3.6 Further engagement will be held with the Parish Council regarding any facilities / community facilities that they need within the local area.
- 3.7 The proposed site would be accessed from the south onto Balsham Road. Balsham Road benefits from being a straight road with good visibility in both directions and therefore the site is considered to be fully deliverable in this regard.
- 3.8 The benefits of the promotion of a mixed use development is set out in further detail within section 4 of this report.

4 SUITABILITY OF THE SITE FOR DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 This section sets out that the proposed development would be a sound allocation in planning terms and is the most suitable site to allocate for development in Linton, when considered against the alternatives.

Focus for Growth within emerging Local Plan

- 4.2 The recently adopted South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018, focuses much of its allocation to the north and west of Cambridge, in a series of large or new expanded settlements including Bourne Airfield, Cambourne, Northstowe and Waterbeach. As identified within the Inspectors report on the Local Plan, concern was raised in relation to the time that it will take for the major growth sites to be delivered. There was very little growth proposed in the adopted Local Plan around existing villages, particularly in the south and east of Cambridge. Interestingly and over the same period of time, there has been considerable job growth and economic development to the south of Cambridge. This has included the significant growth at the Cambridge Bio- Medical Campus, which also includes the imminent re- location of Papworth Hospital, which is estimated to create a further 30,000 jobs within the Addenbrookes Campus.
- 4.3 It is therefore considered that the joint new Cambridge Local Plan should seek to rebalance the distribution of growth and focus more development to the east and south of Cambridge, particularly within sustainable large and medium sized villages with the number of facilities, such as Linton. As detailed within section 2 Linton has a number of existing facilities that render it a very sustainable location for growth. Linton in particular has a very good access to the Addenbrookes Campus and is situated in very close proximity to Granta Park, science, technology and biopharmaceutical park. Granta Park is located only 3 miles from the application site and has extensive job opportunities. To the east, Linton is only 8 miles from Haverhill, which also has extensive employment opportunities both within the town centre and within the employment/industrial sites on the south side of the town.
- 4.4 Of the Minor Rural Centres identified within policy S/9 of the Local Plan, Linton is located the closest to Granta Park and is the only Minor Rural Service Centre to the east of Cambridge that is not within the Green Belt.

Green Belt

- 4.5 As set out within paragraph 136 and 137 of the NPPF, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified, through the preparation or updating of plans. Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances. As set out in paragraph 137 before concluding that exceptional circumstances exist to justify changes to Green Belt boundaries, the strategic policy- making authority should be able to demonstrate that it has examined fully all other reasonable options for meeting its identified need for development.
- 4.6 In order for the Local Plan to be considered as sound in planning terms, it is important that growth within South Cambridgeshire is focused on settlements that are located outside of the Cambridge Green Belt. In this regard, it is noteworthy that of the Minor Rural Service Centres, as identified within policy S/9, Comberton, Fulbourn, Girton and Milton are all within the Green Belt. In addition, Bar Hill and Waterbeach (the latter of which is already accommodating a significant proportion of growth) are located on the edge of the Green Belt. That only leaves Bassingbourn, Gamlingay, Linton, Melbourn, Papworth Everard, Swavesey and Willingham as the available Rural Service Centres that are located outside of the Green Belt. Linton is considered to be served significantly better in terms of services and access to employment than Bassingbourn, Gamlingay, Willingham and Papworth Everard.

4.7 Therefore, as one of the most sustainable settlements within South Cambridgeshire and the only Minor Rural Centre that is located to the east of Cambridge, with excellent access to job opportunities, it is considered that Linton represents a logical settlement to accommodate a reasonable proportion of the housing and employment growth required over the plan period.

Sustainability & Deliverability of the Application Site

4.8 In our view the application site is the most logical place to allocate for additional growth within Linton. Land to the west side of the village consists of very valuable landscape that is prominent when entering into the village from Cambridge. The west side of Linton is rolling landscape and it is likely that any development on this side of the town would have significant harm to views from Back Road (refer to Appeal Decision APP/W0530/W/17/3179762).

4.9 The application site by contrast is set within a valley on the east side of Linton and is significantly less valuable in landscape terms. As set out within the LVA prepared by Barton Wilmore, the site benefits from being visually well enclosed in landscape terms, particularly the southern part of the site, which is within the valley. To ensure that impact of the proposals in landscape terms, is fully mitigated against should development come forward, the applicants are committed to inclusion of the mitigation measures set out within section 6 of the LVA. These mitigation measures include:

- Retaining and enhancing the existing green infrastructure and landscape features within the site.
- Provision for planting of new native hedgerows and trees along the southern boundary of the site to provide for a landscaped gateway to the site.
- Delivery of a strong woodland buffer to the east of the site, to screen the proposed development to the east and north- east of the site and provide a natural termination to the village edge
- Development will respond sensitively to the rise in the land to the north- west of the site, by limiting the height of dwellings in this part of the site.
- Creation of usable areas of open space and providing good connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists through the site.

4.10 As detailed within the LVA, prepared by Barton Wilmore, provided the mitigation measures set out above are included, the site will respond positively to its local landscape setting and become a well- integrated and contiguous element of the existing settlement of Linton.

4.11 The approach to landscape mitigation is something that we would be happy to consider and discuss further with South Cambridgeshire District Council as part of the emerging Local Plan process.

4.12 In addition to landscape considerations, the road access onto Balsham Way and road network on this side of the village is preferable to the west side of the village. As detailed within section 2 the site is also located in close proximity to key services and facilities within the village.

Employment and Housing Growth

4.13 One of the most important factors that sets this proposed site promotion apart from other sites, is that it will provide both much needed housing and employment growth, at an appropriate scale.

- 4.14 The proposed promotion of the site for a residential and employment mixed use development is considered to be in full accordance with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Independent Economic Review (2018). The report has been produced by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Independent Economic Commission (IEC) which was established in June 2017 and is chaired by Dame Kate Barker. The report is an independent assessment of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough economy and its potential growth.
- 4.15 The report states that employment growth has not been matched by house-building or developments infrastructure which has consequently pushed up house prices and increased journey times which has intensified congestion. This has meant many have been forced to ensure unpleasant commutes as they've been priced away from Cambridge due to unaffordability. The report states this is negative for people and businesses and is unsustainable in terms of growth.
- 4.16 The report also identifies that Cambridge is rapidly approaching the point where high-value businesses may decide that being based in Cambridge is no longer attractive. This is a stark reality of success; the need to continue to grow and improve to meet the daily needs to people and businesses. The report goes on to state that if nothing is done, the damage to society from continuing drift away of less well-paid workers may become irreplaceable. Furthermore, the aging of the city, will threaten dynamism and the cost of people's mental health of commuting-induced stress and housing insecurity will rise.

“Cambridge is at a decisive moment in its history where it must choose whether it wants to once again reshape itself for growth, or let itself stagnate and potentially wither. We believe the latter would be disastrous for its people and the UK economy. Therefore, we conclude that improvements in infrastructure, and further development, must start in and around Cambridge.”

- 4.17 In addition, as highlighted within the Independent Economic Review (page 59) that there is insufficient supply of space for new start-ups. The proposed employment allocation within this development would assist with providing space for start-up businesses and also take some pressure off of employment space within Cambridge City.
- 4.18 The assertions within this report, are further supported by South Cambridge District Council's Annual Monitoring Report (January 2019), which states that in South Cambridgeshire there has been a year-on-year increase in jobs created in the District. This growth has been constrained by lack of suitable employment sites. The AMR has recorded a year-on-year loss of land on allocated employment site (in 4.40 hectare was lost in 2017-2018) to alternative uses. It is therefore critical that the Council seeks to allocate additional employment land in sustainable locations to meet this need.
- 4.19 It is considered that the proposed employment area, which could be used for small and medium sized/new businesses could be used by new residents moving into the new development, as well as providing an employment facility for existing residents within the village.

Deliverability

- 4.20 As set out on the application forms that accompany this representation, the application site is fully deliverable in planning terms.
- 4.21 In terms of deliverability, the site is under the option of Countryside Properties and they are committed to the early delivery of development on this site. Picking up on concerns raised by the Planning Inspector of the 2018 Local Plan, it is considered important to allocate

sites that can come forward quickly without the need for substantial infrastructure. In this regard Countryside Properties Ltd are committed to early delivery of both the housing and the job growth on this site. It is considered that the proposed employment area will further assist in reinforcing Linton status as a very sustainable location for both housing and job growth as part of the emerging Local Plan process. The applicants are happy to work with South Cambridgeshire District Council in terms of the type of employment that this facility could provide.

- 4.22 Countryside are also happy, to provide further information to demonstrate the deliverability of the site as appropriate.

5 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 This representation has been prepared by Strutt & Parker, on behalf of Countryside Properties to support the allocation of a residential led mixed use scheme for up to 300 dwellings and approximately 1 hectare of land for employment.
- 5.2 The application site has a number of attributes that render it a sound allocation for growth, within the emerging Local Plan:
- It is located in a very sustainable location, with a Key Service Centre outside of the Green Belt
 - Linton is a very sustainable village to accommodate further growth and already has a number of services, villages and excellent education opportunities
 - It is the only Minor Rural Service Centre on the east side of Cambridge, that is outside of the Green Belt. Linton has excellent access to Granta Park and the Biomedical Campus.
 - The application site is situated on the east side of Linton, which is considered to be less sensitive in landscape terms and less constrained in terms of highways and site access, than land to the west of the village.
 - The site benefits from good access onto Balsham Road
 - The application site is being put forward for both residential and employment, which will promote sustainable movement of new residents and further support Linton as a sustainable location for growth.
 - The site is unconstrained and fully deliverable in planning terms.
 - Countryside Properties Ltd are committed to detailed engagement with both Planning Officers and statutory and non- statutory consultees, including working closely with the local community in the evolution of the vision for the site.
- 5.3 In light of the above, it there therefore considered that land to the north of Balsham Road, Linton provides an excellent location for development and would be a sound basis for allocation as part of the emerging Local Plan.

APPENDIX A – LOCATION PLAN

Land to North West of Balsham Road, Linton



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Promap
LANDMARK INFORMATION GROUP

APPENDIX B – EMAIL OF LANDOWNER SUPPORT

Charlotte Ellum

From: Peter Williams [REDACTED]
Sent: 25 March 2019 10:26
To: David Fletcher
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] Balsham Road Call for sites

Peter Williams MRICS MRTPI
Director (Land)
Housebuilding (Central)
Countryside Properties (UK) Ltd

T: [REDACTED] | M: [REDACTED] | countryside-properties.com



Countryside Properties | Turnford Place | Great Cambridge Road | Turnford | Broxbourne | Hertfordshire | EN10 6NH

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 25 March 2019 10:26
To: Peter Williams [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]; [REDACTED]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Balsham Road Call for sites

This message originated from outside Countryside Properties

Dear Peter

As the owners of the Balsham Road field in Linton, my family would like Countryside to make representations on our behalf for the promotion of the site within the call for sites process for the South Cambs. up and coming local plan.

Regards

[REDACTED]

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APPENDIX C – LANDSCAPE VISUAL ASSESSMENT

Balsham Road, Linton: Baseline Landscape and Visual Appraisal Statement

Prepared on behalf of Countryside Properties

March 2019

Balsham Road, Linton: Baseline Landscape and Visual Appraisal Statement

Prepared on behalf of Countryside Properties

Project Ref:	27440/A5
Status:	Issue
Issue/ Rev:	-
Date:	March 2019
Prepared by:	DM
Checked by:	MDC
Authorised by:	MDC

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Ref: 27440/A5
Date: March 2019
Status: Issue

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ILLUSTRATIVE MATERIAL

Figure 1: Site Context and Visual Appraisal Plan

Figure 2: Topographical Features Plan

Figure 3: Site Appraisal Plan

Figure 4: Opportunities and Constraints Plan

Site Appraisal Photographs (A-E)

Site Context Photographs (1-5)

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Barton Willmore LLP has been commissioned by Countryside Properties to undertake a Baseline Landscape and Visual Appraisal Statement (LVA) and appraisal of the opportunities and constraints to development on land north of Balsham Road, Linton (referred to as 'the Site') within the administrative boundary of South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) for residential development (the 'Proposed Development') to be submitted as part of the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan call for sites process.
- 1.2 This document forms part of the Call for Sites Consultation Statement as prepared by Strutt and Parker, on behalf of Countryside Properties (UK) Ltd, which also includes for a Sketch Masterplan within Appendix B of the document that has been informed by the findings of this baseline landscape and visual appraisal.
- 1.3 The extents of the Site are as outlined by the red boundary on **Figure 1: Site Context and Visual Appraisal Plan**.

2.0 LANDSCAPE CONTEXT AND SITE APPRAISAL

- 2.1 A comprehensive landscape and visual appraisal of the Site and the surrounding environment were undertaken in April 2017. **Figure 1: Site Context and Visual Appraisal Plan** illustrates the existing features and characteristics of the Site and its surroundings. **Site Appraisal Photographs A - E** illustrate the existing features and characteristics of the Site. The locations from which the Site Appraisal Photographs were taken are shown on **Figure 3: Site Appraisal Plan**.

Site Description

- 2.2 The Site comprises a single arable field immediately adjacent to Balsham Road to the south-east and residential development on Tower View and Paynes Meadow to the south and south-west within the administrative boundary of South Cambridgeshire District Council, as shown on **Figure 1**.

Settlement Pattern

- 2.3 The Site is situated immediately adjacent to existing residential development on the northern edge of the settlement of Linton (**Site Appraisal Photographs B-D**). The residential properties along Tower View are single storey bungalows of post-war architectural style and finishing. A more recent development comprising two-storey residential properties is situated at Paynes Meadow immediately adjacent to the south-western corner of the Site.

Topography and Hydrology

- 2.4 The landform of the wider study area, as shown on **Figure 2: Topographical Features Plan**, indicates that the Site sits on the edge of the shallow River Granta valley, which extends broadly north-west to south-east from Great Abington to Bartlow. The topographical variation ranges from approximately 35m AOD at its lowest to 75m AOD along the valley sides. Ridgelines of elevated ground at approximately 115m AOD extend to the north-east and south-west respectively.
- 2.5 The Site rises in topography from the south-east corner at 55m AOD to the north-west corner at 70m AOD (**Site Appraisal Photograph A**), making the north-west corner of the Site more visually exposed. Existing properties at Paynes Meadow lie at 60m AOD to the west of the Site, whilst properties along Tower View lie at between 55-50m AOD. Rivey Hill lies at 112m AOD approximately 500m north of the Site.

Vegetation and Field Pattern

- 2.6 The landscape of the Study Area is characterised by large scale arable field patterns delineated by hedgerows and interspersed by small-medium sized woodland blocks.
- 2.7 The southern boundary of the Site with Balsham Road, one of the few stretches of the road where no hedgerow exists (**Site Appraisal Photographs A-C**), allows open views into the Site from Balsham Road. The remaining three boundaries of the field in which the Site is located are marked by native hedgerows with trees of varying condition.

Access and Rights of Way

- 2.8 The Site is located immediately adjacent to the B1052 Balsham Road which extends from the A1307 to the south of Linton and extends around the bottom of Rivey Hill before extending north to Balsham. The Icknield Way National Trail passes north-south through the western extents of Linton before extending clockwise around the northern edge of Rivey Wood. A bridleway (146/20) runs north from Back Road in the centre of Linton continuing north along the western boundary of the Site and along the eastern edge of Rivey Wood.

Designations

- 2.9 There are no landscape designations within or immediately adjacent to the Site and no spatial or functional designations of landscape relevance, such as Green Belt. There is an area of Ancient Woodland approximately 84 m to the north-western corner of the Site, known as Rivey Wood. There is a Grade II Listed water tower to the north of the woodland and this is seen rising above it (**Site Appraisal Photograph A - E**), forming a local landmark within the immediate area, particularly from Balsham Road.

3.0 LANDSCAPE POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 Policy of relevance to landscape and visual considerations has been published at a national and local level. A summary of the policies of particular relevance to the Site and Proposed Development are provided below.
- 3.2 At a national level, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), updated in February 2019, includes focus, among other points, on: protecting and enhancing the natural and built environment (paragraph 8); creating a strong sense of place sympathetic to local character and optimising the potential of the Site to accommodate development, including green space (paragraph 127); recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside (paragraph 170); and developing green infrastructure networks.
- 3.3 At present, Cambridge City Council and SCDC have recently adopted Local Plans (2018), which contain policies with a commitment to produce a Joint Local Plan, known as the Greater Cambridge Plan for examination by 2022. This includes the current call for sites process of which the Site is to be considered within.
- 3.4 At a district level, the adopted SCDC Local Plan (2018) contains policies relevant to landscape and visual matters, which comprise; Policy S/2 (Objectives of the Local Plan), Policy S/3 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development), Policy S/9 (Minor Rural Centres), Policy CC/8 (Sustainable Drainage Systems), Policy HQ/1 (High Quality Design), Policy HQ/2 (Public Art and New Development), Policy NH/2 (Protecting and Enhancing Landscape Character), Policy NH/6 (Green Infrastructure), Policy NH/13 (Important Countryside Frontage) and Policy NH/14 (Heritage Assets).
- 3.5 Despite being superseded by the adopted Local Plan (2018) the following evidence base documents still represent material considerations in planning decisions for SCDC:
- SCDC District Design Guide SPD (2010)
 - Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy (2011)
 - Trees and Development Sites SPD (2009)
 - Landscape in New Developments SPD (2010)
 - Open Space in New Developments (2009)
- 3.6 At a neighbourhood level, Linton is not covered by a made Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP).

4.0 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER CONTEXT

4.1 The landscape character of the Site and Study Area is described within published Landscape Character Assessments at different scales, from national to district. These are supplemented by an assessment of the character of the Site. A comparison of the character of the Site and its surroundings aids the understanding of the contribution that the Site makes to the wider landscape character and value.

4.2 This chapter identifies the Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) in which the Site and its surroundings are located. The key characteristics of each of these landscape character areas and types are summarised below. Landscape guidance for each of the identified character areas is set out at the end of this chapter.

Published Landscape Character Assessment

National Character Area 87: East Anglia Chalk

4.3 At a national level, the Site is situated within National Character Area (NCA) 87: Chalk Downs. Key characteristics relevant to the Site and Study Area are as follows:

- ***"Distinctive chalk rivers, the River Rhee and River Granta, flow in gentle river valleys in a diagonally north-west direction across the NCA (...)***
- ***The rolling downland, mostly in arable production, has sparse tree cover but distinctive beech belts along long, straight roads. Certain high points have small beech copses or 'hanger', which are prominent and characteristic features in the open landscape. In the east there are pine belts. (...)***
- ***Settlement is focused in small towns and in villages. There are a number of expanding commuter villages located generally within valleys (...)***

East of England Landscape Framework (2010)

4.4 The regional level assessment indicates the Site is situated partially within both the Landscape Character Type (LCT) Lowland Village Chalklands and LCT Chalk Hill and Scarps.

4.5 Character descriptions relevant to the Site include:

- ***"Lowland Village Chalklands - Low lying, but gently rolling arable landscape, dissected by small streams, with a distinctive pattern of nucleated villages and a patchwork of woodlands and shelterbelts.***
- ***Chalk Hill and Scarps - Low lying, but gently rolling arable landscape, dissected by small streams, with a distinctive pattern of nucleated villages and a patchwork of woodlands and shelterbelts".***

Cambridgeshire Landscape Guidelines – A Manual for Management and Change in the Rural Landscape (1991)

4.6 The county level assessment indicates the Site is situated within Character Area 2: Chalklands of which the following characteristics are relevant to the Site:

- ***"Smooth, rolling profile to rising ground.***
- ***Wooded escarpment emphasises landform.***
- ***Beech hanger forms strong focal point on brow of hill.***
- ***Good hedgerows and woodlands emphasise rolling landform and give sense of scale"*** (p.42).

South Cambridgeshire District Council District Design Guide SPD (adopted March 2010)

4.7 The District Design Guide forms part of the SCDC planning framework and includes a section covering Village Landscape and Settlement Analysis. The Site falls within Landscape Character Area (LCA) B: The Chalklands of which the following characteristics are relevant to the Site:

- ***"A distinctive landform of smooth rolling chalk hills and gently undulating chalk plateau.***
- ***A mostly large-scale arable landscape of arable fields, low hedges and few trees, giving it an open, spacious quality (...)***
- ***Small beech copses on the brows of hills, and occasional shelterbelts, are important features.***
- ***Shallow valleys of the River Ganta and River Rhee have a rich mosaic of grazing meadows and parkland (...)***
- ***Mostly strong rural character, though this is disrupted immediately adjacent to major roads such as the A505 and the M11"*** (p.34).

Contribution of the Site to Published Landscape Character

4.8 Barton Willmore LLP undertook a localised character assessment of the Site and its surroundings. This local level character assessment considered the key characteristics of the published landscape character assessments outlined above, which determined that the Site broadly accords with the characteristics identified in the wider published landscape character assessments, due to the fact that it is a large arable field situated on the southern slope of rising land to the north towards Rivey Hill, with boundaries delineated by hedgerows and Balsham Road. In terms of landscape rarity, the Site comprises common features found across the character area. At present, the Site is an arable grassland bounded by hedgerows with the northern hedgerow demonstrating degradation and is not covered by any statutory landscape designation.

Management and Guidance

4.9 Advice and recommendations contained in the Published Landscape Character Assessments, relevant to the Site are summarised below.

National Character Area 87: East Anglia Chalk

4.10 NCA: 87 sets out four Statements of Environmental Opportunity (SEO) of which the following are relevant to the Site:

- ***"SEO 3: Conserve and promote the landscape character, geodiversity, historic environment and historical assets of the chalklands, including the open views of undulating chalkland, large rectilinear field pattern and linear ditches, strong equine association and the Icknield Way prehistoric route. Improve opportunities to enhance people's enjoyment of the area while protecting levels of tranquillity;***
- ***SEO 4: Conserve the settlement character and create or enhance sustainable urban drainage systems and green infrastructure within existing and new developments, particularly in relation to the urban fringe and growth areas such as south-east Cambridge, to provide recreation opportunities, increase soil and water quality and enhance landscape character".***

4.11 Within these broad SEOs there are specific relevant landscape opportunities that are as follows:

- ***"Protect the character and integrity of the rural landscape by conserving its mosaic of cultural heritage and natural assets, semi-natural habitats and historic buildings and archaeological features.***
- ***Identify and conserve views to and from key viewpoints and landmarks by careful design and vegetation management, minimising the visual impact and effects of development, woodland planting and scrub encroachment.***
- ***Conserve and enhance the land use pattern, valued farmland species and productivity of the landscape by securing sustainable forestry and agricultural activity. This includes conservation of small farm woodlands, historic hedgerows, farmland birds and arable weeds.***
- ***Secure sustainable development which also reflects traditional local building styles and materials. Where landscape character and features are degraded by development, identify opportunities to redevelop areas and infrastructure. Encourage the widespread use of red brick and other local building materials and styles through the use of design guidance and strict planning control. Create strong visions in the urban fringe as it is developed, as this will contribute positively to the sense of place.***
- ***Seek to reduce threats to natural and historic features by conserving or restoring their setting, addressing the problem of fragmentation particularly associated with chalk grassland. Work at a landscape scale which reflects the***

ecosystem approach, ecological network approach and historic character.

- ***Conserve, enhance and create new public access infrastructure, access links and accessible natural and cultural features, especially near settlements, in order to enhance the transitional areas between urban landscape and countryside.***
- ***Plan for the regeneration and replanting of existing, predominately small, hill-top beech plantations. Make sure that the resilience of woodland to climate change impact is understood and acted upon; particularly the valued beech woodland which is vulnerable. Consider new species compositions and secure woodland across a variety of aspects.***

Cambridgeshire Landscape Guidelines – A Manual for Management and Change in the Rural Landscape (1991)

4.12 Guidelines of relevance for the Chalklands character area are set out as follows:

- ***"Planting new mixed woodlands and shelter belts: carefully sited to enclose large tracts of rolling farmland and emphasise landforms (...)***
- ***Hedgerows: selected hedgerows should be reinforced, or managed for particularly significant impact, based upon their visual and wildlife potential. Historically significant hedgerows should be carefully conserved, and new hedges planted to emphasise the existing landscape"*** (p.43).

South Cambridgeshire District Council District Design Guide SPD (adopted March 2010)

4.13 Guidelines of relevance for LCA B: The Chalklands are set out as follows:

- ***"Maintain the distinctive, settlement pattern of the area and its local context (...)***
- ***Enhance village gateways and, where appropriate, consider provision of avenue planting on village approaches.***
- ***Take opportunities to create new village greens and/or wildlife areas within new developments.***
- ***Ensure new developments reflect the form, scale and proportions of the existing vernacular buildings of the area and pick up on the traditional building styles, materials, colours and textures of the locality (...)***
- ***Retain hedges along roads.***
- ***Enclose boundaries facing the street on village peripheries with hedge and tree planting"*** (p.39).

5.0 VISUAL APPRAISAL

- 5.1 A comprehensive landscape and visual appraisal was undertaken in April 2017. Five **Site Context Photographs** were selected from those taken to represent views towards the Site from near, middle and long distance views. Photographs were taken from a range of directions and distances, taking into account the topography and designated areas, under winter conditions, where the potential visibility of the Site is at its greatest in line with guidance set out in GLVIA 3. The location of the viewpoints are demonstrated on **Figure 1** and copies of the photographs are included within the Illustrative Material which accompanies this document. Site Appraisal Photographs are referenced where necessary to provide an understanding of near distant views of the Site.
- 5.2 The visual appraisal was undertaken to determine the relationship of the site with its surroundings and its approximate extent of visibility within the wider landscape from publicly accessible viewpoints (primarily roads, footpaths and open spaces), to determine the approximate extent of the area from which the Site is visible from the eye level of a person standing on the ground. The visibility of the Site is predominantly influenced by landform and the extent and type of vegetation cover and built elements within the surrounding landscape. Baseline studies of these features enabled the identification of the potential visibility of the Site from the surrounding area, to be tested through fieldwork.
- 5.3 Direct near distance views into the Site are possible from Balsham Road, primarily from the stretch along the south-eastern boundary of the field in which the Site is located due to the absence of boundary vegetation (**Site Appraisal Photographs A-C**). Views to the north from within the northern edge of Linton demonstrate a rising topography to the north and north-west with Rivey Wood sitting on the edge of the elevated landform of Rivey Hill (**Site Context Photograph 1**).
- 5.4 Middle distance views from the north and north-west beyond Rivey Hill and Rivey Wood would be screened by intervening woodland and undulating topography. Views to the south from near to Rivey Hill Farm Cottages are filtered by mature hedgerow vegetation and built form on the northern edge of Linton is partially visible. (**Site Context Photograph 4**).
- 5.5 Views towards the Site from PRow 146/20, which extends north-south along the western boundary, are filtered by hedgerow and tree vegetation and where the vegetation is less dense, glimpsed views across the Site of built form on the northern edge of Linton are possible (**Site Context Photographs 2 and 3**).

- 5.6 Longer distance views across the valley are possible from the A130 east of Linton with the Water Tower, on the locally prominent landform of Rivey Hill, visible set adjacent to Rivey Wood (**Site Context Photograph 5**). In these views the Site is not visible.

6.0 DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

Landscape and Visual Opportunities and Constraints

- 6.1 A robust analysis of the landscape and visual baseline of the Site has highlighted the following opportunities and constraints to development that have been considered as part of the masterplan process for the Site and indicated through **Figure 4: Opportunities and Constraints Plan** and the Countryside Properties (UK) Ltd Sketch Masterplan under Appendix B of the Call for Sites Consultation Statement prepared by Strutt and Parker.
- 6.2 Key development principles of note are as follows:
- Existing green infrastructure and landscape features within the Site would be retained and enhanced, primarily hedgerows, which would also support contribution to local landscape character.
 - New native hedgerows and oak trees would be established along the southern boundary of the Site as well as a substantial native woodland block to the eastern boundary to soften the transition of built form, lessen the perceived massing and respond to locally characteristic features.
 - Creation of strong east-west green infrastructure routes to account for the gently rising topography to the north-west and help integrate and soften built form within the landscape as well as benefiting biodiversity.
 - Development would reflect the context of Linton in terms of scale, massing and typology, particularly noting the proximity of single storey properties along Tower View to the southern boundary.
 - Development would respond sensitively to the land that rises to the north-west of the Site, which creates a more visually exposed area and focus areas of development areas relative to the adjacent existing built form and limited to two-storeys. The water tower to the north-east of Rivey Wood is a local landmark as is Rivey Hill and Wood. Development should be located so as to protect the setting of the hill, wood and tower as well as ensuring development has the minimum effect on the skyline.
 - Materials and typologies would reflect the distinctive local character, seeking to restore the character of this part of Linton.
 - Creation of local open space, which is well-designed, in keeping with the village setting and responds to the requirements set out in SCDC planning policy.
 - Improve pedestrian connections and provide new connections to supplement limited access to PRowS in the surrounding area.
 - Incorporation of SuDS features to enhance biodiversity and manage surface water runoff.

7.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Landscape Context and Site Appraisal

- 7.1 The Site comprises a single arable field immediately adjacent to Balsham Road to the south-east and residential development on Tower View and Paynes Meadow to the south and south-west. The Site rises in topography from the south-east corner at 55m AOD to the north-west corner at 70m AOD, making the north-west corner of the Site more visually sensitive. The southern boundary of the Site with Balsham Road, one of the few stretches of the road where no hedgerow exists, allows open views into the Site from Balsham Road. The remaining three boundaries of the field in which the Site is located are marked by native hedgerows with trees. There are no landscape designations within or immediately adjacent to the Site and no spatial or functional designations of landscape relevance, such as Green Belt. There is a Grade II listed Water Tower 390m to the north of the Site, which forms a locally identifiable feature in the landscape.

Landscape Character

- 7.2 The Site broadly accords with the characteristics identified in the wider published landscape character assessments due to the fact that it is a large arable field situated on the southern slope of rising land to the north towards Rivey Hill with boundaries delineated by hedgerows and Balsham Road. In terms of landscape rarity, the Site is formed of common features found across the character area. At present, the Site is an arable grassland bounded by hedgerows with the northern hedgerow demonstrating degradation and is not covered by any statutory landscape designation.

Visual Appraisal

- 7.3 Direct near distance views into the Site are possible from Balsham Road, primarily from the stretch along the south-eastern boundary of the field in which the Site is located due to the absence of boundary vegetation. Middle and longer distance views from further north of Rivey Hill and Rivey Wood would be largely restricted by intervening topography and woodland. Longer views from the south-east across the valley demonstrate the Water Tower, on the locally prominent landform of Rivey Hill, visible set adjacent to Rivey Wood. The Site is not directly visible at present however, the introduction of built form would potentially introduce built elements into views from the south-east although where visible would be seen adjacent to the built northern edge of Linton and against a well-wooded backcloth.

Policy and Evidence Base

- 7.4 Key policies relevant to the Site as identified under Section 3.0 relates to the protection and enhancement of the character of the countryside, including the protection and enhancement of landscape features such as trees and hedgerows. High quality design and promotion of local distinctiveness are also identified within SCDC planning policy.

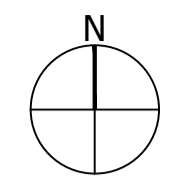
Development Principles

- 7.5 It can be considered that by implementing the mitigation measures highlighted in section 6.0 of this report, the Site would respond positively to its local landscape setting and become a well-integrated contiguous element of the existing settlement of Linton.


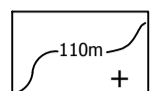

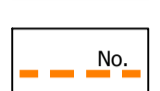





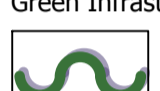



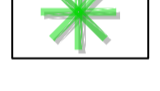

Conclusion

- 7.6 Overall, is it considered that based on the context of the Site and relationship with existing settlement pattern and built up edge, which defines the southern and eastern boundaries of the Site; the Site could successfully accommodate appropriate built form that is sympathetic and responds sensitively to the local landscape character, undulating topography and existing landscape features. Proposed development would be underpinned by a well-considered landscape strategy that aids in the visual and physical integration of the scheme within the receiving local landscape.

APPENDIX D – BACKGROUND PLANS AND PHOTOS



LEGEND

-  Site Boundary
-  Contours/Spot Heights (Metres AOD) ^
-  Approximate Location of Rectangular Crop Mark
-  Public Rights of Way *
- Landscape and Visual Opportunities and Constraints**
Landscape Sensitivity and Development Capacity
(and Green Infrastructure Feature)
-  Low Density Development with space for large trees
-  Medium Density Development
-  Native woodland planting
-  New Footpath Link
-  Unofficial Footpath
- Green Infrastructures**
-  Retain/ Reinforce Existing Structural Planting
-  Proposed Native Hedgerow
-  Create New Green Infrastructure Linking with Existing Wider Network
-  Water Tower
-  Views into Site
-  Partial Views into Site

Sources:
 * OS Mapping
 # Natural England GIS Data Set
 - Historic England National Monument Record GIS Data Set
 + Kennet Council Definitive Map
 . Sustrans National Cycle Network GIS Data
 Department of Transport Cycle Network Model
 ++
 Data collected for constraints and analysis mapping is based on publicly available sources at the time of preparation. Inferred using the British National Grid and may itself not be accurate. Barton Willmore shall not be liable for the accuracy of data derived from external sources.

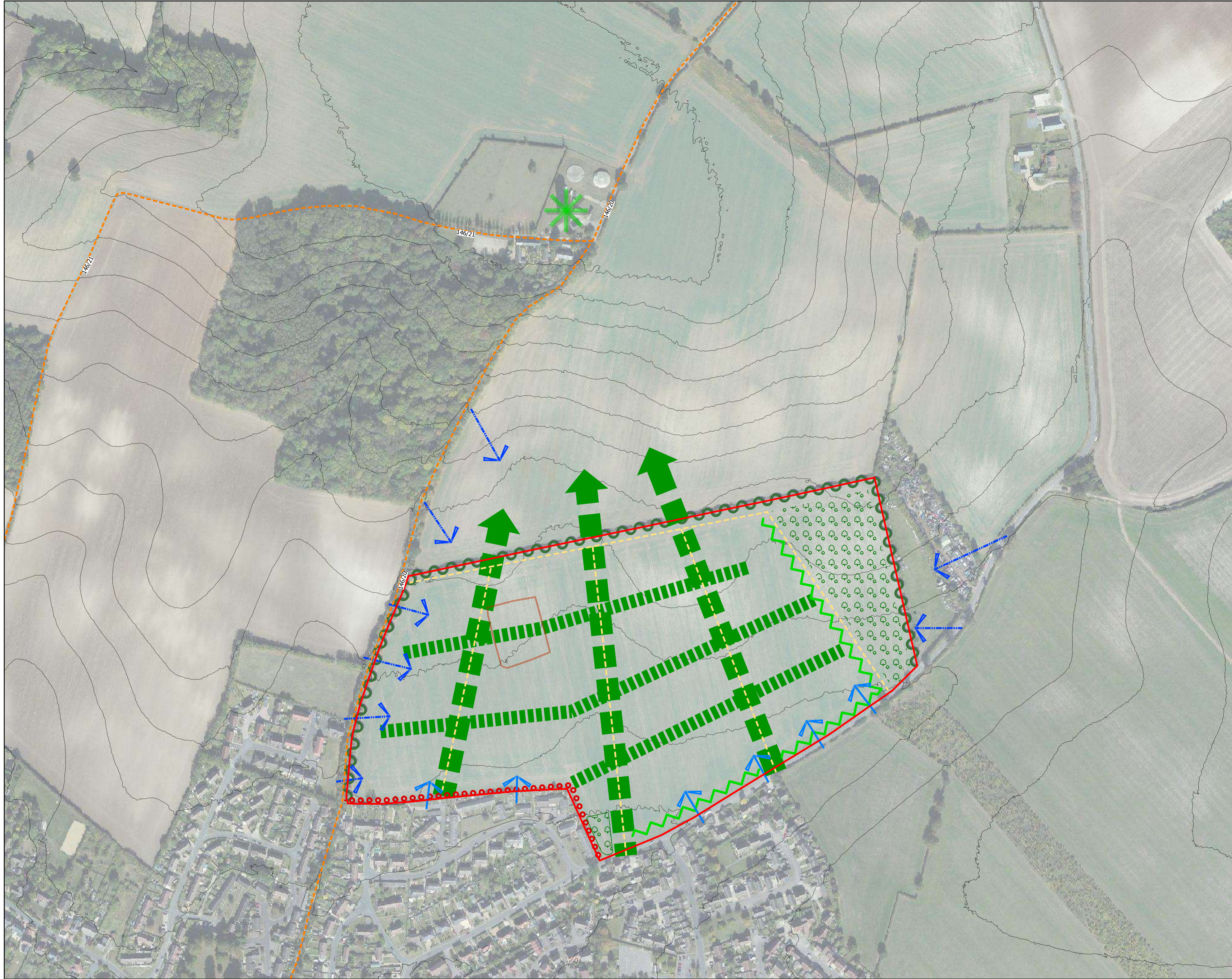


FIGURE 4

Project
Balsham Road, Linton

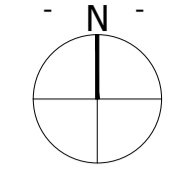
Drawing Title
Opportunities and Constraints Plan

Date 20.03.2019	Scale 1:2,000 @A1 1:4,000 @A3	Drawn by ML	Check by DM
Project No 27440	Drawing No L1	Revision -	



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Legend

- Site Boundary
- LPA Boundary ^
- Ancient Woodland #
- Existing Woodlands, Copses and Tree Belts ^
- Existing Scrub ^
- Existing Water Courses and Features ^
- Contours/Spot Heights (Metres AOD) ^
- Public Rights of Way *
- Countryside Rights of Way Access Areas #
- ★ Listed Buildings ~
- Conservation Area ##
- Scheduled Monument ~
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest #
- Landscape Character**
- Natural Character Area (NCA) Profiles #**
- NCA 86: South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland
- NCA 87: East Anglian Chalk
- South Cambridgeshire Landscape Character Areas ** (Appx.)**
- South East Claylands
- Chalklands
- Visual Appraisal**
- Location of Photographic Viewpoints (Site Context Photographs: 1-5)

Sources:
 * OS Mapping
 # Natural England GIS Data Set
 - Historic England National Monument Record GIS Data Set
 + Cambridgeshire County Council and Essex County Council PROW GIS Data
 - Department of Transport Cycle Network Model
 ## South Cambridgeshire District Council Local Plan 2018 Proposals Map Adopted
 ** South Cambridgeshire District Council Design Guide SPD, March 2010

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FIGURE 1

Project
Balsam Road, Linton

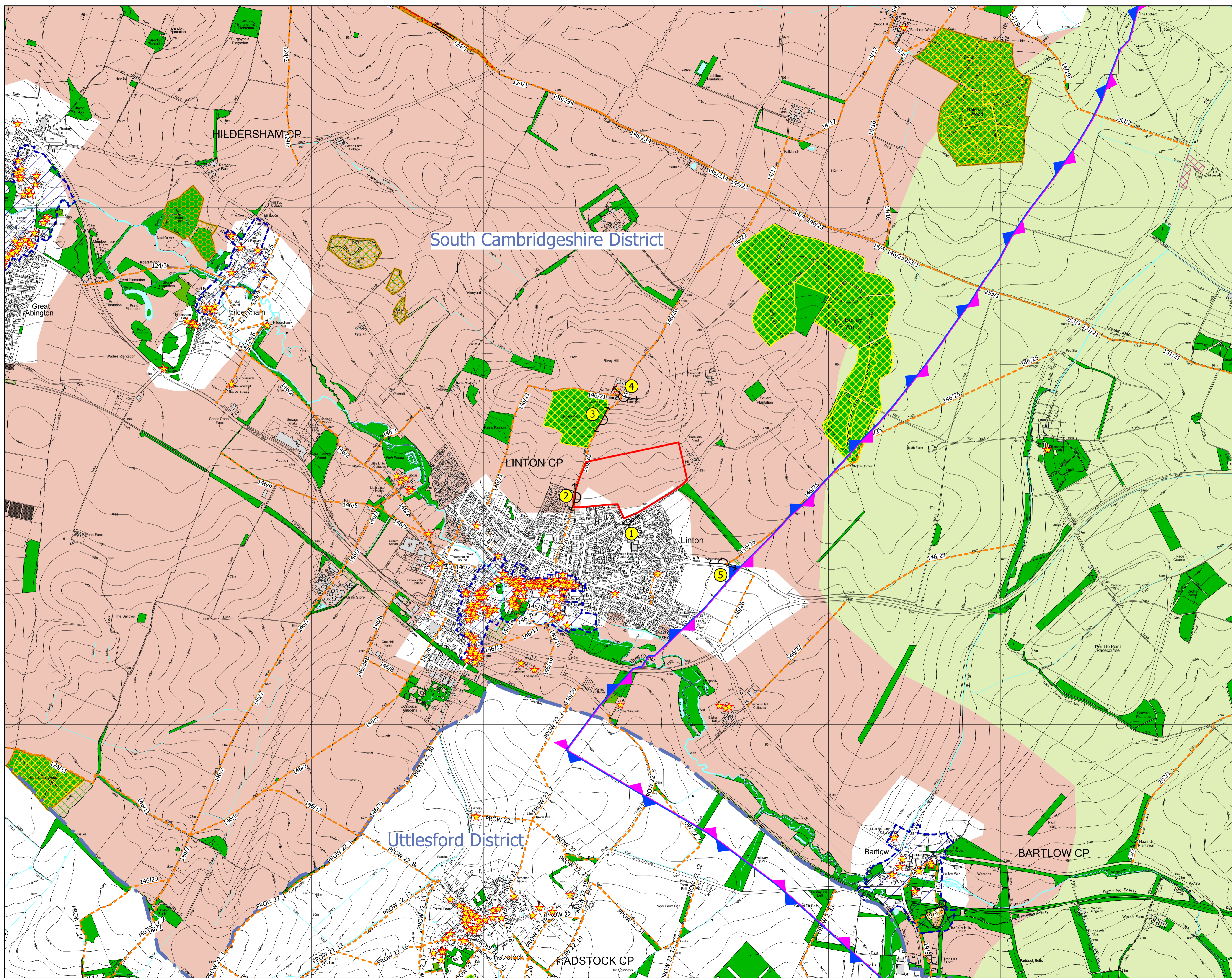
Site Context and Visual Appraisal Plan

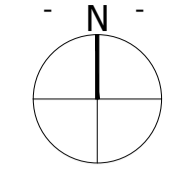
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Project No	27440	Drawing No	LN-LP-01	Revision	-		

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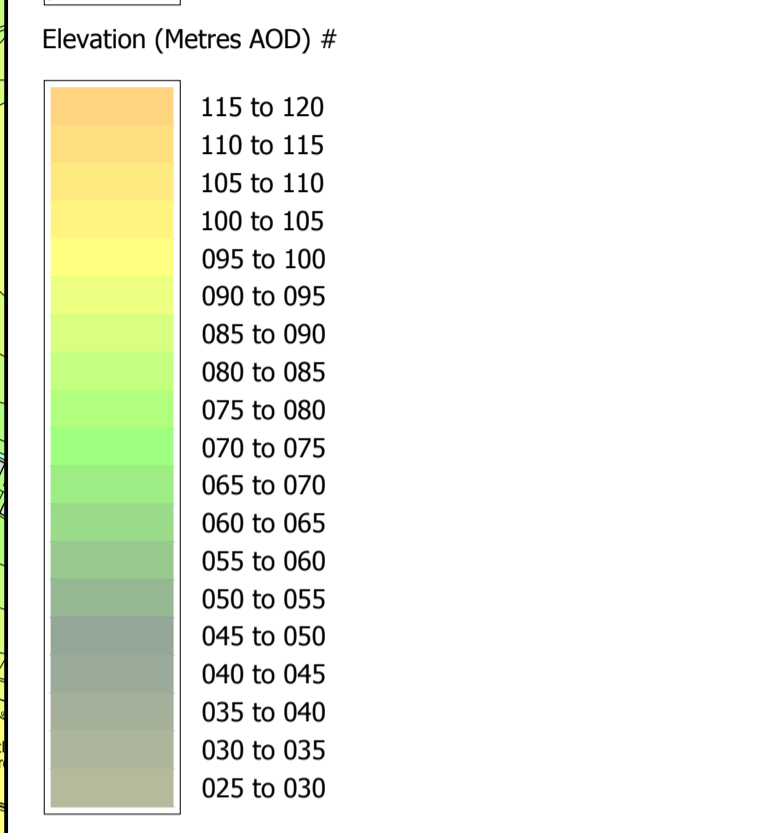
Offices at Birmingham Bristol Cambridge Cardiff Edinburgh Glasgow Leeds London Manchester Newcastle Reading Southampton





Legend

- Site Boundary
- Existing Water Courses and Features ^
- Ridgelines
- Valleys
- Contours/Spot Heights (Metres AOD) #



Sources:
 ^ OS Mapping
 # OS Terrain 50

Data collated for constraints and analysis mapping is based on publicly available sources at the time of preparation inserted using the British National Grid and may itself not be accurate. Barton Willmore shall not be liable for the accuracy of data derived from external sources.

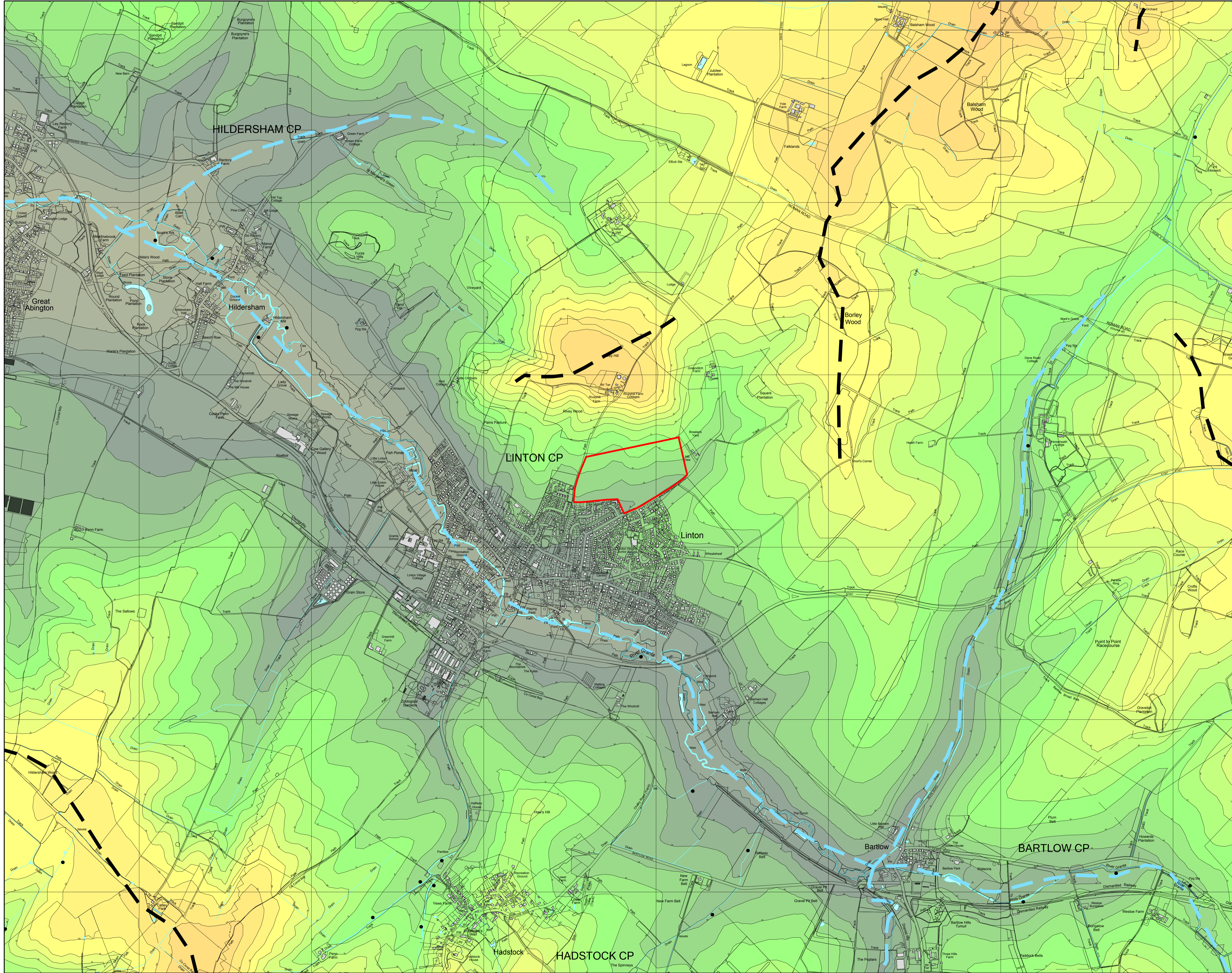


FIGURE 2
 Project
 Balsham Road, Linton

Drawing Title
Topographical Features Plan

Date 20.03.2019	Scale 1:10,000 @A1 1:20,000 @A3	Drawn by GS	Check by DM
Project No 27440	Drawing No LN-LP-02	Revision -	

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Revision	Date	Drm	Ckd
-	-	-	-

LEGEND

-  Site Boundary
-  Ancient Woodland #
-  Contours/Spot Heights (Metres AOD) ^
-  Public Rights of Way *
-  Location of Photographic Viewpoints (Site Appraisal Photographs: A-E)

Sources:
 ^ OS Mapping
 # Natural England GIS Data Set
 * Cambridgeshire County Council ProW GIS Data

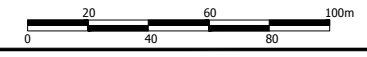
Data collated for constraints and analysis mapping is based on publicly available sources at the time of preparation inserted using the British National Grid and may itself not be accurate. Barton Willmore shall not be liable for the accuracy of data derived from external sources.

FIGURE 3

Project
Balsham Road, Linton

Drawing Title
Site Appraisal Plan

Date	Scale	Drawn by	Check by
20.03.2019	1:2,500 @A3	GS	DM
Project No	Drawing No	Revision	
27440	LN-LP-03	-	



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Google Earth aerial photograph captured in July 2018



SITE APPRAISAL PHOTOGRAPH A



SITE APPRAISAL PHOTOGRAPH B



SITE APPRAISAL PHOTOGRAPH C

BALSHAM ROAD, LINTON

**SITE APPRAISAL
PHOTOGRAPHS: A - C**

**DATE TAKEN: APR 2017
PROJECT NUMBER: 27440**

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SITE APPRAISAL PHOTOGRAPH D



SITE APPRAISAL PHOTOGRAPH E

BALSHAM ROAD, LINTON

**SITE APPRAISAL
PHOTOGRAPHS: D - E**

**DATE TAKEN: APR 2017
PROJECT NUMBER: 27440**

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SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 1: VIEW NORTH FROM A SIDE ROAD OF BALINGDON LANE



SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 2: VIEW EAST FROM PROW 146/20



SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 3: VIEW EAST FROM PROW 146/20

BALSHAM ROAD, LINTON

SITE CONTEXT
PHOTOGRAPHS: 1 - 3

DATE TAKEN: APR 2017
PROJECT NUMBER: 27440

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SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 4: VIEW SOUTH FROM RIVEY HILL



SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 5: VIEW NORTH FROM HORSEHEATH ROAD

BALSHAM ROAD, LINTON

**SITE CONTEXT
PHOTOGRAPHS: 4 - 5**

**DATE TAKEN: APR 2017
PROJECT NUMBER: 27440**

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