

# **Landscape and Visual Appraisal and Green Belt Review**

for

## **Land off the High Street, Hauxton, Cambridgeshire**

on behalf of

Redrow Homes Limited

The Landscape Partnership Ltd is a practice of Chartered Landscape Architects, Chartered Town Planners and Chartered Environmentalists, registered with the Landscape Institute and a member of the Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment & the Arboricultural Association

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Appraisal has been prepared by The Landscape Partnership Ltd on behalf of Redrow Homes Ltd in relation to land off the High Street at Hauxton, Cambridgeshire (hereafter referred to as “the Site” or “the Hauxton site”). The purpose of the report is to undertake a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) of the site along with a Green Belt review of the site against the five purposes as set out within the NPPF.
- 1.2 These two different, but related, tasks are approached through:
- Providing an appraisal of the landscape features and characteristics for the Site.
  - Identifying details of statutory designations (relevant to landscape and visual amenity).
  - Establishing the character of the landscape, as defined at a district scale along with an assessment of landscape character at a local scale.
  - Identifying the visual envelope of the Site and the degree of visual enclosure.
  - Appraising the potential landscape and visual impacts associated with the potential development of the Site.
  - Establishing the visibility of the Site from the surrounding area, the main views towards and of the Site, and any potential effects on these views arising from any future residential development.
  - Assessing the role of the Site within the Green Belt and its contribution to the five purposes of the Green Belt.
  - Considering the suitability of the Site for development from a landscape and visual perspective and its possible release from the Green Belt to accommodate residential development.
- 1.3 This appraisal has been undertaken through a combination of a desktop study of relevant mapping and background documents combined with a visit to the Site and surrounding area on 2 October 2019. No consultations with the Local Planning Authority or other statutory consultees were undertaken.
- 1.4 It is understood that the findings of this report will form part of the evidence base for the promotion of the Site for residential development as part of the new local plan process for Greater Cambridgeshire.

## 2 SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

### Site location

- 2.1 The Site is located on the eastern margins of Hauxton, one of the 'Necklace' villages that surround Cambridge which is located to the north of the Site (refer to Figure 01). The Site is located within the Cambridge Green Belt and immediately adjoins the western edge of the M11 Motorway just south of Junction 11.

### Site Description

- 2.2 The Site comprises an area of land c. 31ha in size consisting of one large and one smaller adjoining field currently down to arable use. The only notable internal site feature is an existing mature hedgerow that is aligned in a broadly south west to north east direction through the centre of the northern half of the site and serves to partially separate the larger field to the east from a smaller one to the west.
- 2.3 The Site is bounded along its eastern boundary by the M11 Motorway embankment which supports established existing vegetation which already screens much of the motorway traffic. The south eastern site boundary is defined by the line of the Cambridge to Kings Cross mainline railway whilst the short south west site boundary adjoins existing arable land. These two short boundary lengths are unenclosed in marked contrast to both the eastern and western site boundaries.
- 2.4 The western site boundary is, in the main, defined by the well-treed settlement edge of Hauxton. The short north east site boundary adjoins the High Street which links Hauxton to Little Shelford which is located to the east of the motorway. A fragmented, remnant hedgerow defines the northern site boundary which is visually permeable along much of its length. Allotment gardens extend northwards from the northern side of the High Street and contribute to the perception of the settlement edge of Hauxton village extending eastwards towards the foot of the motorway embankment.
- 2.5 A section of the Site in the north west (the smaller field) is indented into the settlement of Hauxton such that it is well-enclosed to the north, west and south by existing mature vegetation associated with the settlement edge and rear gardens.
- 2.6 The site is effectively level with no more than a nominal variation of 1m between the northern and southern site boundaries with a gentle fall from 15m in the south to 14m in the north.

### Historical change – brief overview of the Site and the locality

- 2.7 Whilst an appraisal of the historical development and any heritage significance of the Site falls outside the scope of this study a brief initial review of early Ordnance Survey mapping of the local area has

been undertaken to enable a broader understanding of the Site and the nature of change that has taken place within the local landscape over the last hundred years or so.

- 2.8 The 1:2,500 OS County Series from 1886 shows the Site with recognisable site boundaries and located within an area of small/medium sized fields set within a landscape where fields are intermittently divided by shelterbelt planting, copses and larger areas of woodland. The railway line to Cambridge (the Cambridge & Shepreth Branch) is already in place as is the road linking Hauxton Mill to Little Shelford which defines the northern site boundary. The hedgerow which runs through the central portion of the northern half of the Site is also identifiable.
- 2.9 By the 1888-1891 1:10,560 OS County Series Hauxton and Hauxton Mill appear little changed in their extent and the link down The Lane to London Road is clearly shown. Field boundaries within and around the Site remain the same with small blocks of woodland dotted around the local landscape, in particular to the east and south west of the Site. Hauxton is shown as a small hamlet surrounded by woodland and located just to the south of the River Cam or Granta.
- 2.10 The landscape and settlements appear to change little over the next 40 to 50 years or so although by the time of the 1938-1951 1:10,560 OS County Series changes in the distribution of woodland is evident as are the small changes in the linear development of Hauxton. Changes in woodland cover include the emergence of a new woodland block to the west of The Lane and south of Hauxton and the woodland block to the north of the Obelisk located on the locally higher ground of St Margaret's Mount to the south of the Site. These are counterbalanced by the loss of woodland/parkland to the northern margins of Hauxton. The western edge of Little Shelford has also extended towards Hauxton with residential properties extending to the north of the railway line. The field patterns remain largely unaltered and the Site is still detectable.
- 2.11 By the 1960s the area of woodland to the south and west of Hauxton is developing, the settlement remains clearly linear and Harston is expanding along London Road. The Site still remains identifiable with the field pattern unaltered. By 1974 Hauxton is no longer a single linear settlement having now also extended southwards along The Lane. Infill residential development along London Road has consolidated the northern edge of Harston and the disused pits between Hauxton and Harston allowed to develop as woodland. The settlement gap between Hauxton and Little Shelford has narrowed as Hauxton has crept eastwards along the southern edge of High Street with the allotment gardens now established on the opposite side of the road.
- 2.12 The 1982 1:10,000 OS Plan now shows the M11 Motorway in place physically and visually separating Hauxton and Little Shelford, with Hauxton spreading eastwards from The Lane. The field boundaries associated with the Site are less well defined and some smaller copses within the vicinity of the site have disappeared.

**Sensitivity of the Site**

- 2.13 Table 2.1 below provides a summary appraisal of the identified value, susceptibility to change and underlying sensitivity of the landscape and visual attributes of the Site as a whole consistent with the guidance set out within GLVIA3 (Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, Landscape Institute and IEMA).

**Table 2.1 – Appraisal of Site Sensitivity**

| Factors contributing to Susceptibility to Change | Appraisal and commentary                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Landscape susceptibility to change</b>        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Topography                                       | Low – the Site is flat with no topographical variations and typical of much of the surrounding landscape. This would effectively remain unaltered through development.                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Enclosure by vegetation                          | Low-Moderate – the Site has a good level of enclosure along much of its western and eastern site boundaries. This would assist in reducing potential landscape and visual effects associated with development of the Site. The southern site boundary is the most open with limited enclosure.                                                                              |
| Scale and complexity                             | Low – the Site is of simple character, medium scale and with few defining elements. It comprises one large and one smaller adjoining field currently down to arable use.                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Historic character                               | Low interest – the Site contains no designated historic features.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Landscape condition                              | Low-Moderate – the Site forms an area with low-moderate strength of character and moderate landscape condition. Boundary vegetation and field hedgerows are present and generally intact but appear unmanaged. There are many mature trees and tree groups around the Site's boundaries most of which appear to be in reasonable condition.                                 |
| <b>Visual susceptibility to change</b>           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Openness to public view                          | Moderate – although the Site is generally well-contained visually it is easily seen from the north where it forms the key setting and context for the eastern edge of Hauxton. There are also views available from the south due to the uncontained character of the site's boundaries along the southern edge although there are few nearby visual receptors to the south. |
| Openness to private view                         | Low-Moderate – Private residential properties adjacent to the western boundary of the Site have close proximity views across the site from windows to the rear of properties. These appear to be largely screened/filtered by garden vegetation.                                                                                                                            |

|                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                           | There are also likely to be some longer distance views from upper storey windows of residential properties.                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Views towards landmark buildings/features | Limited – with medium distance views towards the rising ground of St Margaret's Mount to the south of the site otherwise no other distinctive landmark features (aside from the adjoining motorway embankment).                                                                                           |
| Relationship with existing built form     | Moderate – the Site adjoins the eastern edge of Hauxton and is wedged between the settlement and the M11 corridor. Development on the Site could be closely associated with the existing settlement, especially the western-most portion of the Site which presently encroaches into the settlement edge. |
| <b>Overall Susceptibility to Change</b>   | <b>Moderate-Low</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

| <b>Factors contributing to Landscape Value</b>                                                                                     | <b>Assessment and commentary</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Presence of landscape, biodiversity, historic and open space designations                                                          | Low – There are no landscape, historic or open space designations affecting the Site and limited existing vegetation within the Site itself.                                                                                                                           |
| Scenic beauty (ie sense of place, impact of landform, aesthetic appeal, level of visual interest and presence of attractive views) | Moderate – although flat and with no obvious site features beyond the hedgerow in the centre of the Site, the Site provides the local landscape setting to Hauxton when approaching from the north east. It also serves to separate the village from the M11 corridor. |
| <b>Overall Landscape Value</b>                                                                                                     | <b>Moderate-Low</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

- 2.14 Overall, the Site is considered to be of Moderate-Low landscape value and Moderate-Low susceptibility to change indicating a Moderate-Low sensitivity. Whilst the Site is of simple composition with few defining elements to distinguish it, it is relatively well enclosed by established off-site vegetation with a relatively intact historic field pattern that presently provides and defines the settlement edge of Hauxton.

### 3 SITE CONTEXT AND IMMEDIATE SETTING

- 3.1 Turning to the Site's immediate context and setting, this comprises a mix of land uses which are summarised below.

#### **Access Routes and Rights of Way**

- 3.2 The key transport routes in the vicinity of the Site are shown on Figure 01 and include:
- The M11 motorway which follows a broadly north-south alignment immediately to the east of the Site. The motorway is locally raised on an approximately 20-25m wide embankment over a length of c2.5km as it traverses the River Cam floodplain.
  - Church Road/High Street/Hauxton Road which links the A10 Cambridge Road to the west, passing along the northern edge of the Site boundary to Little Shelford.
  - The Lane which forms the other principal road within Hauxton and comes to within c180m of the Site and provides access to the residential properties to the south of the High Street. Beyond the southern edge of Hauxton The Lane follows a broadly north-south alignment and becomes an unsurfaced ByWay which connects to the B1368 London Road at c550m to the south west of the Site.
  - Shelford Road follows a broadly east-west alignment to the south of the Site coming to within c 310m of the southern site boundary at its closest point.
  - The Cambridge to Kings Cross mainline railway which defines the southern site boundary.
- 3.3 There are no public rights of way that cross the Site or come within immediate proximity of its boundaries. The nearest public right of way is The Lane (Byway no.6) located at least c220m to the west of the Site (refer to Figure 04). Public right of way no 5 is located to the south of the Site and provides public access from Shelford Road up to the Obelisk on ST Margaret's Mount. Both of these fall within the identified zone of visual influence of the site as identified on Figure 04. Other public rights of way are located further afield but lie outwith the zone of visual influence.
- 3.4 The only current access into the Site is via two farm access points off the High Street at either end of the Site's northern boundary.

#### **Surrounding land uses**

- 3.5 The Site is located on the eastern edge of Hauxton with the residential properties of Hauxton and the associated perimeter vegetation providing a clear distinction between adjoining land uses. Arable fields adjoin the site to the south with the M11 motorway embankment dissecting the Site and the farmland

to the south from the rural landscape to the east of the motorway corridor. Whilst the landscape to the west and east of the motorway corridor forms part of the same local landscape character area (refer to Figure 03), the motorway embankment and the maturing vegetation provides a noticeable linear division within the local landscape around the Site.

- 3.6 Woodland and shelterbelt planting are a characteristic of the local setting to the Site, the largest area being the area of woodland now established within the area of disused pits between Hauxton and Harston. North of the High Street, Hauxton, vegetation is also characteristic of the local area with mature vegetation extending northwards towards the River Cam and beyond the allotments.
- 3.7 Hedgerows also occur within the rural landscape around the Site although these are in varying states of repair with evidence of some having been removed in the past. Mature hedgerows with trees characterise many of the local roads including London Road, Shelford Road and stretches of the High Street as well as The Lane Byway. In this regard the motorway embankment planting relates appropriately to local routes. Smaller areas of woodland are also common within the landscape setting of the Site with the most notable being the rectangular area on St Margaret's Mount to the south of the Site and the triangular area adjoining the motorway to the east of this.
- 3.8 To the north of the Site, allotment gardens extend along the High Street upto the foot of the motorway embankment. Whilst not built form, this enhances the perception of Hauxton extending further east beyond the existing settlement limits.

### **Topography and Hydrology**

- 3.9 Whilst there is no obvious visual connection between the Site and the course of the River Cam/Granta the Site is located within low-lying land that relates to the river. The Site lies at or below 15m AOD with the River Cam/Granta coming to within c250m of the site boundary to the north beyond the allotment gardens.
- 3.10 The majority of the surrounding local landscape that provides the context and setting for the Site is similarly broadly flat and low-lying. A localised area of notable higher ground occurs at c650m to the south of the Site at St Margaret's Mount where land rises to 43m AOD. This contained area of higher ground is twinned to the west by a similarly sized area, Rowley's Hill, which rises to 50m AOD. Both areas of higher ground are notable variations to the otherwise prevailing flat landscape within the locality. A further area of higher ground with a defined ridgeline occurs further west of the Site but this is beyond the immediate context and local setting for the Hauxton Site.

## 4 POLICY CONTEXT AND DESIGNATIONS

- 4.1 The South Cambridgeshire Development Plan comprises a range of documents. Those that are relevant to the Site and the immediate locality include the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018 and the Cambridgeshire Southern Fringe Area Action Plan 2008, supported by the Adopted Policies Map, February 2019 update.
- 4.2 Whilst only the defined Cambridge Green Belt applies to the Site itself various other designations are found within the wider setting of the Site (refer to Figure 02).

### Designations

- 4.3 Landscape-related designations/definitions which apply to the Site and the local surrounding areas are illustrated on Figure 02 and a summary of the nearest designations is provided in Table 4.1 below.

**Table 4.1 – Summary of key designations affecting the Site and surrounding area** (not exhaustive)

| Designation/Definition | Importance | Distance (closest points)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|------------------------|------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Cambridge Green Belt   | National   | Within and around the Site                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Conservation Areas     | National   | 130m to the NW (Hauxton);<br>550m to the E (Little Shelford);<br>1.15km to the E (Great Shelford)                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Listed Buildings       | National   | 140m to the NW (Hauxton – 6 no LBs)<br>650m to the W (Harston – London Road)<br>650m to the W (Little Shelford – 24 no LBs)<br>670m to the S (Obelisk, St Margaret's Mount)<br>1.23km to the NW (Hauxton Mill – 4 no LBs)<br>1.4km to the SW (Harston – 5 no LBs) |
| Scheduled Monuments    | National   | 340m to the NW;<br>475m to the N                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| SSSI                   | National   | 2.85km to the SE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Employment Allocation  | District   | 2.95km to the NE (South of Addenbrooks)                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Improved Landscaping   | District   | 1.3km to the NW (Trumpington);<br>1.85km to the NE (South of Addenbrooks)                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Country Parks          | Local      | 1.3km to the NW (Trumpington)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

| Designation/Definition         | Importance | Distance (closest points)                                                                                                   |
|--------------------------------|------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Local Green Space              | Local      | Adjoining the south west Site boundary;<br>1.35km to the SW (Harston);<br>3.7km to the W (Haslingfield)                     |
| Important Countryside Frontage | Local      | 400m to the W (Hauxton);<br>1.40km to the SW (Harston);<br>1.65km to the NE (Great Shelford);<br>2.05km to the S (Newton)   |
| Protected Village Amenity Area | Local      | 740m to the E (Little Shelford);<br>1.65km to the SW (Harston);<br>1.90 to the S (Newton);<br>3.5km to the W (Haslingfield) |

### Relevant Local Planning Policy Context

- 4.4 The South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018 sets out the current adopted planning policies within South Cambridgeshire. Chapter 2 of the Local Plan sets out the Spatial Strategy for the district and summarises the development strategy over the last twenty years and specifically references the importance of the Green Belt. Policy S/4: Cambridge Green Belt states the commitment to maintaining the Green Belt, acknowledges some minor revisions to its inner boundary and, of relevance to the Hauxton Site, acknowledges revisions to the boundaries around some inset villages. The policy also reasserts the primacy of the NPPF noting that new development in the Green Belt will only be approved in accordance with Green Belt policy as set out within the NPPF.
- 4.5 Chapter 6 addresses the matter of protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment and paragraph 6.2 highlights how the Green Belt is seen "*as vital to retaining the rural character of land and villages around Cambridge.*" The same paragraph also identifies the "*particular importance*" of the visual link between villages and the surrounding countryside and highlights the range of heritage assets which include historic landscapes.
- 4.6 Other key policies of relevance to the Site and potential development include:
- Policy NH/2: Protecting and Enhancing Landscape Character. This policy states that "Development will only be permitted where it respects and retains, or enhances the local character and distinctiveness of the local landscape and of the individual National Character Area in which it is located." The accompanying paragraphs tie the policy back to the NPPF, the National Character Areas and the finer-grained district landscape character. The

opportunity for landscape enhancement, particularly in the growth areas, is also referenced. A demonstrably positive and sensitive response to this policy could help facilitate potential development of the Site.

- Policy NH/3: Protecting Agricultural Land. This policy seeks to protect agricultural land from development unless it is allocated for development in the Local Plan or sustainability considerations and the need for development are considered to override the need to protect the agricultural value of the land. The potential conflict between the good quality agricultural land that lies around Cambridge and the larger settlements with the need to identify the most sustainable locations for future development is identified within the accompanying explanatory paragraphs. The importance of farmland, be it arable or pastoral, for biodiversity is also identified. The wording of this policy and the accompanying explanatory paragraphs suggest that the current use of the Site would not preclude it from potential development.
- Policy NH/4: Biodiversity. This policy requires that new development must *"..aim to maintain, enhance, restore or add to biodiversity."* It also states that where the primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity development proposals will be permitted. Accompanying explanatory paragraphs recognise that sensitively located and carefully designed developments can provide the opportunity for meaningful biodiversity enhancements and the creation of new habitats. It is considered that an appropriately designed layout that makes an evident and positive contribution through its landscape structure to biodiversity enhancement could be delivered in accordance with the requirements of this policy.
- Policy NH/6: Green Infrastructure. This policy serves to conserve and enhance green infrastructure within the district. Of relevance to the potential development of the Site is item 2 which states *"The Council will encourage [development] proposals which: a. Reinforce, link, buffer and create new green infrastructure; and b. Promote, manage and interpret green infrastructure and enhance public enjoyment of it."* The character of the areas surrounding the Site, in particular the extent and location of areas of existing woodland and vegetation, suggest that development of the Site could provide meaningful opportunities for contributing to strengthening green infrastructure subject to a detailed review of the Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy. Figure 7 in the Local Plan indicates that the landscape around Hauxton is on the periphery of the identified Green Infrastructure Strategy Network which includes the River Cam (refer to Figure 02).
- Policy NH/8: Mitigating the Impact of Development In and Adjoining the Green Belt. This policy sets out three criteria relating to potential development within the Green Belt. These state:

1. *"Any development proposals within the Green Belt must be located and designed so that they do not have an adverse effect on the rural character and openness of the Green Belt."*
2. *"Where development is permitted, landscaping conditions, together with a requirement that any planting is adequately maintained, will be attached to any planning permission in order to ensure that the impact on the Green Belt is mitigated."*
3. *"Development on the edges of settlements which are surrounded by the Green Belt must include careful landscaping and design measures of a high quality."*

Collectively, these highlight the importance of having an appropriate and considered landscape scheme integrated into the development proposals. Explanatory paragraph 6.34 notes that *"There are no villages within the Cambridge Green Belt, each is an 'island' inset within the Green Belt with its own defined development framework boundary."* Para 6.35 goes on to state *"Inappropriate development is by definition harmful to the Green Belt and will not be approved except in very special circumstances and in accordance with the approach set out in the NPPF (2012)."* As the Site is located within land currently defined as Green Belt the need to demonstrate compatibility with Chapter 13, Protecting Green Belt land, of the NPPF will be integral to the potential development of the Site. This is addressed more fully within Chapter 7 of this report.

- NH/12: Local Green Space. This policy states that Local Green Spaces will be protected from development that would adversely impact on their character and significance to the local community. A locally-designated Local Green Space is located immediately adjoining the south west site boundary. Local Green Space (LGS) is a recognised designation within the NPPF and designated LGSs are protected from inappropriate development *"...that would adversely impact on the character and particular local significance placed on such green areas which make them valued by their local community."*
- NH/13: Important Countryside Frontage. This policy seeks to protect these areas from development where such development would compromise the purposes of their designation which are defined as *"...where land with a strong countryside character either a. Penetrates or sweeps into the built-up area providing a significant connection between the street scene and the surrounding rural area; or b. Provides an important rural break between two nearby but detached parts of a development framework."* Hauxton has a short stretch of 'Important Countryside Frontage' located just to the south of Church Road, 380m to the west of the site boundary although there is no prospect of intervisibility between the Site and the designated

frontage. Further stretches of 'Important Countryside Frontage' are located within Harston, Newton and Great Shelford but similarly have no physical or visual connection with the Site.

- 4.7 Further documents of relevance include the District Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (March 2010) and the Landscape in New Developments SPD (March 2010) which both serve to ensure that development respects the distinctiveness of the local and national landscape character areas. Both documents remain a material consideration in planning decisions.

## 5 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER CONTEXT

### National landscape character context

- 5.1 At a national level, the landscape character of England is set out in National Character Area Profiles produced by Natural England. The Site lies within National Character Area (NCA) 87, East Anglian Chalk (Natural England (2014)).
- 5.2 NCA 87 is a narrow continuation of the chalk ridge that runs broadly south west to north east across southern England. The area extends from Letchworth Garden City in the south, to the south of Cambridge and north east as far as Newmarket. The landscape character area is described as visually simple and consisting primarily of smooth, rolling chalkland hills with large regular fields enclosed by low hedges with few trees. This provides the backcloth for an understanding of landscape character which is then detailed more fully at a district level.

### District and local landscape character context

- 5.3 An assessment of landscape character covering the Site and surrounding landscape within and around Cambridge was included within the Cambridge Landscape Character Assessment, April 2003. This identified the Site as being located within the Rural Lowland Mosaic: Chalklands, which covers the landscape to the south and south east of Cambridge and incorporates the surrounding gently rounded and rolling hills. The fields are large, enclosed by generally very closely maintained low thorn hedges with few hedgerow trees. Shelter belts, often of beech, and hill top copses are an important feature of this landscape, the latter often acting as reference points. The roads tend to be straight and aligned towards Cambridge run across the contours, thus commanding some excellent panoramic views of the City and its environs. Addenbrooke's Hospital, on the edge of Cambridge, tends to dominate views of the City.
- 5.4 Characteristic features are defined as: *"views; area of open higher rolling landscape near Cambridge; and chalk grassland habitat including Site of Special Scientific Interest and Local Nature Reserve"*. The vision for the area was identified as *"To secure the area from inappropriate development, and at the same time conserve and where possible enhance landscape features and biodiversity to improve amenity while seeking opportunities for access and informal recreation opportunities."*
- 5.5 The 2003 Study was updated as part of the Cambridge Inner Green Belt Study (2015) (CIGBS), which identified the Site as lying on the edge of Landscape Type 4: River Valleys, and Landscape Character Area (LCA) 4B: Granta Valley (refer to Figure 03). This describes the LCA as follows:

*"The Granta Valley is situated to the south of Cambridge. It has the low-lying, gentle topography of the River Valley landscape type, but its character is distinguished by its wooded appearance and by the relatively built-up and suburban character of its villages. The woodland within the landscape gives*

*it a relatively enclosed character, increases the "greenness" of the landscape setting, and screens views. This restricts views to the villages, as well as more distant views to Cambridge.*

*Settlement comprises a relatively large proportion of the land area. Many villages have developed along key routes into Cambridge, including the A10 and the A1301. The majority of these villages (which includes Sawston, Shelford and Harston) have expanded through cluster or ribbon development, and this has led to a more suburban feel on the approaches to the city through this area."*

- 5.6 Many of the attributes referenced within the LCA description included within the CIGBS are applicable to the local landscape surrounding the Site. These include the characteristic topography, the relatively suburban character of some of the neighbouring villages, the wooded character, the relatively enclosed character and the restricted views. Proposed development of the Site would have a limited and contained effect upon this LCA due to the extent of visual enclosure afforded by the motorway embankment, existing vegetation and the adjoining settlement edge of Hauxton.
- 5.7 Figure 04 illustrates the approximate zone of visual influence of the Site indicating the containment to the east and west in particular, whilst Figure 05 provides an appraisal of the Site and the elements within the surrounding landscape that contribute to the degree of enclosure. Whilst the Site itself would be physically altered visual influences beyond the Site's boundaries would be limited and further contained by a well-considered landscape scheme. In particular, the more visually exposed southern site boundary could be addressed through a landscape mitigation scheme that could be responsive to both planning policy and local landscape character.
- 5.8 Accordingly, development of the Site will not significantly affect the key characteristics of the River Valleys Landscape Character Type or LCA 4B Granta Valley.
- 5.9 Further afield, Landscape Character Area 4C: Rhee and Bourn Valleys comes to within approximately 500m of the Site to the north and 1km to the west of the Site and is not anticipated to be affected either physically or visually by any development of the Site due to the distance to the Site and the extent of intervening elements that curtail potential visibility.
- 5.10 The only other landscape character type that may be visually affected by development of the Site is Landscape Character Type Chalk Hills, and LCA 3C, Newton Chalk Hills. This geographically small LCA is located approximately 500m to the south of the Site and includes areas of the surrounding landscape to the south of the Site and from within which there is likely to be some limited views of development within the Site (refer to Figures 03 and 04).
- 5.11 Figure 06, Viewpoint 4, illustrates the view available from the public footpath en route to the Obelisk on St Margaret's Mount which is located within the Newton Chalk Hills.

5.12 The CIGBS describes LCA 3C, the Newton Chalk Hills as follows:

*"This landscape character area is formed by a small outcrop of chalk between the valleys of the Granta and the Rhee. It is typical chalk landscape, containing a series of gently rolling hills used for arable agriculture. Public access to the hills is limited, but there are good views of the Granta Valley landscape character area from the obelisk on St Margaret's Mount. The landscape is open and vegetation is limited to shelterbelts and blocks of woodland. The predominant species is beech. Settlement consists of a few houses and farms alongside roads, particularly between Harston and Newton."*

5.13 This highlights the local importance of the views from the elevated landscape to the south of the Site which will need to be factored into any proposed development of the Site so as to minimise potential effects upon the visual attributes of this landscape character area and visual receptors on the public footpath that provides access to the Obelisk.

## 6 VISUAL CONTEXT AND VISUAL RECEPTORS

- 6.1 Despite its flat topography the Site has a relatively strong sense of visual enclosure which has been summarised in earlier sections and is illustrated in Figure 05. The Site is strongly enclosed along the length of its eastern boundary by the M11 embankment and the established existing vegetation and along its western boundary by residential properties and their associated rear garden and perimeter planting.
- 6.2 The Site's southern boundaries adjoin neighbouring arable fields that are divided by hedgerows in varying states of repair but which afford some limited fragmenting of visibility back towards, and out of, the Site. These views are more substantially filtered by the more distant mature hedgerows and trees that line Shelford Road to the south and London Road to the west. Visual enclosure along the northern site boundary is limited given the gappy remnant hedgerow that lines the southern side of the High Street. However, views out of the Site to the north are relatively contained by the mature trees and scrub vegetation associated with the River Cam/Granta margins and the smaller fields that adjoin the river immediately to the north of the allotment gardens.
- 6.3 Figure 04 illustrates the approximate zone of visual influence, identified through the on-site appraisal, associated with the Site. This figure also indicates those areas to the south of the Site from where there may be filtered views available towards the site. These areas include the southern half of The Lane, isolated locations along London Road (generally limited visibility) and limited locations along Shelford Road where gaps in the existing mature hedgerow with trees that lines the northern side of Shelford Road permits.
- 6.4 The flat topography of the Site and the surrounding area means that any intervening built form or vegetation will generally contribute to limiting/fragmenting potential visibility both towards and out of the Site. The only variation to this is the availability of views of and towards the Site from a short stretch of the public footpath that leads from Shelford Road to the Obelisk on St Margaret's Mount before it makes a right angled turn behind the southern edge of the woodland that lines the northern ridgeline. Long distance views that take in the Site as well as the southern edge of Cambridge on the horizon line are available from this location and will reveal how development of the Site would be seen in the context of the Green Belt.
- 6.5 However, overall, the relatively enclosed nature of the Site means that the number of visual receptors likely to be affected by any future residential development within the Site would be relatively restricted.
- 6.6 The principal visual receptors with views towards and into the Site will be limited to:

- Local motorists (with Medium sensitivity) and cyclists (with Medium-High sensitivity) travelling along High Street between the eastern end of Hauxton and the bridge under the motorway who will have oblique views directly into the Site.
- Local motorists (with Medium sensitivity) travelling along Shelford Road between the bridge under the motorway and the junction with London Road who may have very filtered and glimpsed oblique views across towards the Site.
- Those travelling by train (with Low sensitivity) who will have views directly into the site when passing to the west of the motorway.
- Local residents (with High sensitivity) along the eastern fringe of Hauxton who will have filtered views into the Site and of any new development.
- Local walkers (with High sensitivity) using The Lane Byway who will have filtered views towards the Site and any new development where there are gaps in the hedgerow that lines The Lane.
- Users of public footpath no. 5 (with High sensitivity) as it rises towards the right-angled turn that then leads to the Obelisk on St Margaret's Mount who will have views towards the Site in the middle distance with views of the southern built edge of Cambridge around Trumpington also visible beyond.
- Allotment holders (with Medium sensitivity) to the north of the High Street who will have available views of the northern edge of the Site and any development within it.

### **Visual Envelope**

- 6.7 From within the Site views out over the surrounding landscape are similarly confined. Views available are predominantly to the south where the immediate field pattern is more open although there are few visual receptors in this direction. There are also filtered views available out of the Site towards the allotment gardens to the north but, beyond the allotment gardens, these are then limited by mature existing vegetation. Views out of the site to the east are wholly curtailed by the motorway embankment and the vegetation whilst those to the west are similarly fractured and limited by the built edge of Hauxton and the extent of mature existing vegetation that defines rear gardens and other associated areas.
- 6.8 As Figure 04 conveys, the extent of visual influence of the Site is considerably contained by a combination of the flat terrain which affords elevated views from only a single location, the extent of mature existing vegetation surrounding the Site, the arrangement of built form and the M11 motorway embankment and corridor.

- 6.9 Consequently there are a wide range of visual receptors who will be unaffected by any proposed development of the Site. These include:
- Residents of Little Shelford, residents of Harston (except potentially for those at the easternmost end of London Road) and the majority of the residents of Hauxton, except for those whose properties back onto the Site.
  - All users of the public rights of way network within the vicinity of the Site except for those on The Lane Byway (no 6) and public footpath (no. 5) and, potentially for a short stretch only, users of public footpath no 4 to the south of Harston where it crosses over the mainline railway.
  - All residents, workers and footpath users to the north of Church Road and the High Street, Hauxton.
  - Motorists along the A10 south of Junction 11 with the motorway.
- 6.10 Figure 06 includes a set of six photopanel which are representative of the existing views towards the site available to a range of these visual receptors.
- 6.11 **Viewpoint 1:** is representative of the views available looking south west across the Site from the High Street along the northern site boundary. The viewpoint itself is located at the end of the hard surface that gives access into the field from the north east corner of the Site by the motorway bridge. It shows how flat the Site is and the mature hedgerow that runs up its central spine. The photopanel also illustrates the well-vegetated eastern edge of Hauxton.
- 6.12 This view is representative of the view across the site that will be available to those travelling the High Street including local motorists, cyclists and pedestrians (who are also most likely to be local residents). These receptors will have different levels of sensitivity to change ranging from Medium (motorists) to High (local residents and pedestrians). Development of the Site would bring about a major change to the view with the existing simple composition of open agricultural fields set against a backcloth predominantly of existing established vegetation with filtered views of residential dwellings being replaced by a mix of new residential development and infrastructure set within a landscape framework. The open attributes of the existing view would be lost as would the sense of separation between the motorway bridge and the built edge of Hauxton. However, development would be understood and seen as relating to the existing village and, depending upon the design and the disposition of new built form with areas of open space and framework landscape planting, views into the Site need not be inconsistent with the local landscape and townscape character.

- 6.13 The magnitude of overall visual change would be Very High which, taking account of the sensitivity of those visual receptors anticipated to experience the view, would result in a Major or Major-Moderate significance of effect upon visual receptors and the view. This would initially be an Adverse effect during the construction stage and upon completion but, with a well-conceived layout and an appropriate landscape scheme, this could ease to Moderate significance and become Neutral as the landscape scheme matures and views of built development are increasingly filtered and the development absorbed into the local landscape setting.
- 6.14 **Viewpoint 2:** is located on the westernmost edge of Little Shelford and is representative of the absence of any view of the Site or development within it from the High Street/Hauxton Road east of the bridge under the M11 motorway. The photopanel shows how the motorway embankment and existing vegetation combine to prevent views of the Site from the edge of Little Shelford.
- 6.15 This view is also representative of the view that will be available to those travelling the High Street/Hauxton Road to the east of the M11 including local motorists, cyclists and pedestrians (who are also most likely to be local residents). These receptors will have different levels of sensitivity to change ranging from Medium (motorists) to High (local residents and pedestrians). Development of the Site will remain undetectable and wholly screened from view by the existing motorway embankment and its associated maturing vegetation combined with the mature vegetation that lines the southern edge of the local road.
- 6.16 There would consequently be no magnitude of change to the view and no effect upon visual receptors resulting in no significance of effect once complete. Any effects during the construction stage would be limited to Negligible visual effects associated with construction traffic activity from vehicles approaching and leaving the Site.
- 6.17 **Viewpoint 3:** is representative of the view looking northwest towards the Site from a gap in the hedgerow giving access to the field just to the west of the motorway bridge across Shelford Road. The view shows the limited visibility of properties on the southern edge of Hauxton and the otherwise largely uninterrupted views that will be available towards development on the Site which could extend up to the railway line in the middle distance.
- 6.18 This view is representative of the glimpsed view that will be available to those travelling Shelford Road including local motorists, cyclists and any pedestrians (who are also most likely to be local residents). These receptors will have different levels of sensitivity to change ranging from Medium (motorists) to High (local residents and pedestrians). Development of the Site would bring about a small to noticeable change to the view in the middle distance and beyond. The prevailing simple composition of open agricultural fields set within a well-vegetated landscape will remain with the addition of filtered views through intervening vegetation towards the development over approximately a third of the available

view. The extent of visibility of development will depend upon the apportionment and layout of dwellings in conjunction with the associated landscape scheme. However, the new development would be seen as relating to the existing village edge.

- 6.19 The magnitude of overall visual change would be Medium which, taking account of the sensitivity of those visual receptors anticipated to experience the view, would result in a Major-Moderate or Moderate significance of effect upon visual receptors and the view. This would initially be an Adverse effect during the construction stage and upon completion but, with a well-conceived layout and an appropriate landscape scheme, this could ease to Moderate-Minor significance and become Neutral as the landscape scheme matures and views of built development are increasingly filtered and the development absorbed into the local landscape setting.
- 6.20 **Viewpoint 4:** is representative of the elevated view that is available to visual receptors from just off the public footpath that leads to the Obelisk on St Margaret's Mount. It shows the extensive vegetation that lines the motorway corridor and the wider wooded context. The hedgerow-lined Shelford Road is seen defining the far edge of the arable field that extends across the foreground. The new development around Trumpington is also identified beyond the Site.
- 6.21 This view is obtained by those taking the public right of way that leads south from Shelford Road up to the Obelisk. These visual receptors will have a High sensitivity to change. The view is taken from slightly off the public footpath as this gives the clearest window towards the Site. Development of the Site would bring about a major to noticeable change to the view beyond the middle distance with residential development extending across the existing agricultural landscape beyond the railway line that traverses the view. Whilst the prevailing open attributes of much of the existing view would be retained the development would introduce new built form into a rare, slightly elevated view that looks across the Green Belt towards the built edge of Cambridge and the emerging new development around Trumpington. Whilst the built edge of Hauxton is identifiable within the view it is largely seen in the context of a well vegetated edge around the settlement and new development on the Site would, at least temporarily until the associated landscape scheme has matured, become the primary built form in the view.
- 6.22 The magnitude of overall visual change would be Medium-High which, taking account of the High sensitivity of the users of the public footpath, would result in an initially Major-Moderate significance of effect upon visual receptors and the view. This would initially be an Adverse effect during the construction stage and upon completion but, with a well-conceived layout and an appropriate landscape scheme, this could ease to Moderate/Moderate-Low significance of effect and ease to Neutral as the landscape scheme matures and the views of built development are increasingly filtered such that the development is increasingly absorbed into the local landscape setting.

- 6.23 **Viewpoint 5:** is representative of views that are available from The Lane to the south of Hauxton where there are gaps in the hedgerow that lines both sides of the Byway. Where such gaps occur there will be generally uninterrupted views available towards development on the Site. However, at least half of the Site will remain concealed from view due to the intervening built edge of Hauxton and the associated mature existing vegetation, in particular that associated with the Local Green Space.
- 6.24 This view will be available to those visual receptors (High sensitivity) utilising the Byway. The route is lined by intermittent mature vegetation along much of both sides of its length between the southern edge of Hauxton and the B1368, London Road to the south. From the northern section of The Lane upto 80% or more of development on the Site will be screened from view by the combination of built form and existing vegetation associated with Hauxton. Visibility of the new development will increase in the southern section but approximately 50% of the Site will always remain concealed from view.
- 6.25 The magnitude of change at this location will be Medium but will be less from locations along the Byway further to the north. Bearing in mind the sensitivity to change of these visual receptors this indicates a generally Moderate significance of effect or lower during the construction stage and upon completion. The effects will initially be Adverse but as the landscape scheme matures this will ease as will the magnitude of effect.
- 6.26 **Viewpoint 6:** is representative of views eastwards towards the Site from London Road on the edge of Harston. It illustrates how the hedgerow vegetation lining The Lane Byway, coupled with the woodland between Hauxton and Harston and the vegetation associated with Hauxton itself combine to limit visibility of the Site in spite of the absence of hedgerows in defining the three smaller arable fields in the foreground.
- 6.27 This view will be available to a range of visual receptors at the easternmost extent of Harston including motorists, cyclists, pedestrians and local residents, all of whom will have varying levels of sensitivity to change between Medium and High. The view looks across the arable landscape and illustrates the extent of existing vegetation that is characteristic of the locality. Given the extent of intervening screening it is anticipated that development of the Site would bring about no more than a Low to Very Low magnitude of change to the view. Views are likely to be limited to selected glimpsed views only through the existing vegetation during the early project stages and dependent upon the apportionment of the site to built form, open space and landscape framework planting. The open attributes and prevailing characteristics of the existing view would effectively remain unaltered.
- 6.28 The magnitude of overall visual change would be Low-Very Low which, taking account of the sensitivity of those visual receptors anticipated to experience the view, would result in a generally Negligible and Neutral significance of effect upon visual receptors and the view.

## 7 THE GREEN BELT

- 7.1 The Site falls within the Cambridge Green Belt which forms part of an extensive area of undeveloped land which was established with the purpose of controlling development in and around the Cambridge built up area, to prevent the coalescence of nearby villages and to preserve the historical character of the city. Protection of the Green Belt remains a key element of national planning policy and the former PPG2 set out five functions of the Green Belt which have been brought forward in para 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

### National Planning Policy Framework

- 7.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2018 (February 2019) sets out the protection of Green Belt land in Section 13, in which it identifies that *"The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence."* (paragraph 133). It sets out the five purposes of the Green Belt as:

1. *"to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;*
2. *to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;*
3. *to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;*
4. *to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and*
5. *to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land"*(paragraph 134).

- 7.3 The NPPF highlights the importance that Government attaches to Green Belts and their fundamental aim of keeping land permanently open through their essential characteristics of openness and permanence. At para 136 the NPPF states that *"Green Belt boundaries should only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified..."*.

- 7.4 The NPPF highlights that, by definition, inappropriate development is harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances (Paragraph 143). However, the NPPF does recognise that Green Belt boundaries may be altered stating that *"...Green Belt boundaries should only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified, through the preparation or updating of plans."*(para 136).

- 7.5 As Figures 01 and 02 illustrate, the Site is located within, and surrounded by, Green Belt and Hauxton is one of many 'necklace' villages within the vicinity which the Green Belt aims to protect. The

contribution of the Site to the key Green Belt purposes as defined within the NPPF is considered further below.

### Methodology for the Green Belt appraisal

- 7.6 There is currently no statutory guidance as to how to approach an analysis of the contribution that a site may make to the Green Belt although there are a number of recent and emerging studies that provide a useful reference and steer as to how this may be undertaken. The approach adopted below draws upon these as appropriate.
- 7.7 This appraisal of the Site's contribution to the Green Belt functions focuses upon the first four purposes of the Green Belt as set out in para 134 of the NPPF. The fifth purpose ("*to assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land*") was not included as this purpose is equally applicable to all Green Belt land and thus does not influence the relative importance of different areas within the Green Belt.
- 7.8 Table 7.1 below sets out the criteria relating to each of the purposes as considered within this appraisal.

**Table 7.1: Green Belt appraisal criteria**

| Purpose                                                  | Criteria                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Level of Openness/Contribution of Site to Green Belt Purpose                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Openness                                                 | 1) Is the Site free from built development and other urbanising elements?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <p><i>High</i> – Site is free of built development and urbanising elements and is fully open in Green Belt terms.</p> <p><i>Moderate</i> – Site is partially developed and is partially open in Green Belt terms.</p> <p><i>Low</i> – Site is substantially developed and has low sense of openness in Green Belt terms.</p>               |
| To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas | <p>2) Does the site act, in itself, as an effective barrier to prevent sprawl from large built-up areas within or outside the District</p> <p>3) Does the site contribute, as part of a wider network of parcels, to a strategic barrier against the sprawl of built-up areas?</p> <p>4) Would development in this site lead to ribbon development?</p> | <p><i>Substantial</i> – Site adjoins a large built-up area and forms an effective edge/barrier between the built-up area and countryside.</p> <p><i>Partial</i> – Site adjoins a large built-up area but does not form a strategic barrier against sprawl.</p> <p><i>Limited</i> – Site not adjoining a large built-up area but close.</p> |

|                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                             | 5) Do natural and physical features provide a good existing edge/barrier between the existing urban area and countryside? If development breached this barrier would it contribute to sprawl?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <i>Insignificant</i> – Site is neither adjoining nor close to a large built-up area.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another | 6) Does the site provide, or form part of, a gap or space between existing key settlements (neighbouring towns/villages)?<br>7) What is the distance of the gap between the settlements?<br>8) Is there evidence of ribbon development on major route corridors?<br>9) What is the visual perception of the gap between settlements from major route corridors?<br>10) Would a reduction in the gap compromise the separation of settlements in physical or visual terms? | <p><i>Substantial</i> – Site forms all or a key part of a physical and perceived gap between existing neighbouring towns. Development would result in coalescence between towns or significant substantial reduction in physical or perceived separation.</p> <p><i>Partial</i> – Site forms part of a physical and perceived gap between neighbouring towns. Development would result in a reduction in the gap between settlements but a perceived sense of separation between the towns would remain intact.</p> <p><i>Limited</i> – Site forms a small part of a physical and perceived gap between neighbouring towns. Development would result in a minor reduction in the gap between settlements but the perceived sense of separation between the towns would not be significantly affected</p> <p><i>Insignificant</i> – Site does not form part of a physical and perceived gap between neighbouring towns.</p> |
| To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment | 11) What countryside / rural characteristics exist within the Site, including agricultural land uses, and how is this recognised in established national and local landscape designations?<br>12) Has there already been any significant encroachment by built development or other urbanising elements?                                                                                                                                                                  | <p><i>Substantial</i> – Site has a strong rural character, contains little or no built development or urbanising characteristics and is rural countryside typical of the local landscape character.</p> <p><i>Partial</i> – Site contains some built development or urbanising characteristics but retains a rural character.</p> <p><i>Limited</i> – Site contains significant areas or elements of built development/ urbanising features which has erode the rural character of the Site.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

|                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <i>Insignificant</i> – The site contains significant areas of built development and is predominantly urban or suburban in character.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns | <p>13) Does the Site contribute to preserving the setting and special character of Cambridge and, if so, to what extent?</p> <p>14) What are the attributes of the Site that contribute to this purpose of the Green Belt?</p> | <p><i>Substantial</i> – Site is integral to preserving the setting and special character of historic towns</p> <p><i>Partial</i> – Site has an important contributory role in preserving the setting and special character of historic towns</p> <p><i>Limited</i> – Site makes a peripheral contribution to preserving the setting and special character of historic towns</p> <p><i>Insignificant</i> – Site makes a minimal contribution to preserving the setting and special character of historic towns</p> |

### Contribution to Green Belt Functions

- 7.9 An appraisal of the existing contribution of the Site to the NPPF Green Belt functions is provided in Table 7.2 below.

**Table 7.2: Green Belt appraisal of the Site**

| Purpose  | Commentary                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Level of Contribution of Site to Green Belt Purpose |
|----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Openness | <p>The Site is wholly down to arable use and is free from of any built development. Urbanising influences are limited to the filtered views of residential housing along the western Site boundary and the proximity of the M11 motorway corridor (in particular the noise).</p> <p>The openness of the Site is most readily perceived from the High Street to the north of the Site and from fractured locations to the south and south west, including the elevated St Margaret's Mount. The sense of openness and the Site's contribution to the setting of Hauxton is most evident from these locations.</p> <p>In terms of the setting of Cambridge the Site's contribution to this is primarily registered from the higher ground around St Margaret's Mount where</p> | Moderate to High                                    |

|                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |         |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
|                                                             | there are few visual receptors aside from the users of the public footpath. The Site, however, is located in the middle distance of views towards Cambridge.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |         |
| To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas    | <p>The Site is not located within an area where large built-up areas dominate nor does it adjoin such an area. Rather, it is located within the Green Belt and is contiguous with adjoining agricultural land to the south. It also forms the only open area of landscape that separates Hauxton from Little Shelford to the east but neither settlement can be classed as a large built-up area. On a strategic district scale it does, through its definition as Green Belt, contribute to checking the unrestricted sprawl of Cambridge but, in this context, its role is much diluted.</p> <p>As a village, Hauxton is largely contained around its boundaries by river floodplain, woodland, built development to the north west and infrastructure, except for to its south and east where open arable farmland defines the Site and the neighbouring landscape. To the east of the Site, the M11 corridor with its embankment acts as the key element to checking unrestricted sprawl.</p> <p>As such the site does not play a significant role in checking unrestricted sprawl.</p>                                                                                              | Limited |
| To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another | <p>The Site occupies an important land parcel that physically separates Hauxton from Little Shelford, contributing to approximately 50% of the separation distance between the two villages (overall separation gap is approximately 350m, including the M11 motorway corridor).</p> <p>The gap between the settlements is well defined and consolidated by the M11 corridor and its wooded embankments.</p> <p>Elsewhere, Hauxton is separated from Harston by the large area of woodland associated with the disused pits to the west and south west. The corridor of the River Cam ensures separation from development/road infrastructure to the north of Hauxton whilst redevelopment of land around Hauxton Mill to the north west is also separated from Hauxton by a short stretch of farmland (over approximately 120m along Church Road).</p> <p>When travelling by road between Hauxton and Little Shelford the Site is a key element in the perception of the gap between settlements given that it affords filtered views across to the south when west of the motorway bridge. Whilst linear, ribbon development has occurred within the vicinity this would not arise</p> | Partial |

|                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |         |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
|                                                                 | with development of the Site albeit development would compromise the extent of separation between Hauxton and Little Shelford.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |         |
| To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment     | Whilst the Site is evidently rural in that it is wholly down to arable use, it is enclosed by built elements including the M11 embankment and the settlement edge of Hauxton. It is also well-contained visually and is only contiguous with neighbouring countryside along its south eastern and south western borders. As such its role in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment is restricted.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Partial |
| To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns | Both Hauxton and Little Shelford contain historic buildings and conservation areas although there is no intervisibility of either historic centres with the Site. The lack of intervisibility suggests that the contribution that the Site makes to preserving the setting and special character of these historic centres is limited but this is more appropriately the domain of a cultural heritage specialist.<br><br>The Site does make a very minor contribution to the strategic setting of historic Cambridge but given the distance between Cambridge's historic centre and the Site this is minimal and largely confined to how the historic centre of Cambridge is perceived in views from the higher ground around St Margaret's Mount to the south when the Site will be seen in views back towards the historic city. | Limited |

7.10 Para 133 of the NPPF notes that "...the essential characteristics of the Green Belts are their openness and their permanence". Accordingly, the condition, quality and use of land is therefore not of relevance to the inclusion of land within the Green Belt. However, para 141 of the NPPF states that once Green Belts have been defined, local authorities should "...plan positively to enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity; or to improve damaged and derelict land." It is therefore useful to also briefly consider the existing role of the Site in contributing towards these objectives. A review of this is summarised in Table 7.3 below.

**Table 7.3: Contribution of Site to Green Belt Objectives**

| Green Belt objective | Current role of the Site in fulfilling objective                                                                                |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Access            | There are no public rights of way within the Site and there is currently no provision for public access to or through the Site. |

|    |                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2. | Opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation                           | The Site makes no current contribution to outdoor sport or recreational opportunities.                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 3. | Retention and enhancement of landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity | The prevailing arable attributes of the Site indicate that, beyond contributing to the local landscape character and local visual amenity, its contribution to biodiversity is limited and primarily associated with the hedgerow that is located within the north western section of the Site. |
| 4. | Improvement of damaged and derelict land                                 | N/A                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

7.11 In summary, it is considered that the Site has a Moderate - High degree of openness but that, principally due to its noted sense of enclosure along its eastern and western boundaries, it is not located within a strategically important part of the Green Belt. It currently makes a Limited contribution to the functioning of the Green Belt in checking unrestricted sprawl and a Partial contribution to preventing towns (villages) from merging into each other and safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. It is also judged to make a Limited contribution to preserving the setting and special character of historic towns (villages). In terms of functions and use of the Green Belt, the Site is considered to be of Moderate-low value.

### South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018

7.12 At a local level, three purposes have been defined within Local Plan policy for the Cambridge Green Belt, namely:

- "Preserve the unique character of Cambridge as a compact, dynamic City with a thriving historic centre
- Maintain and enhance the quality of its setting
- Prevent communities in the environs of Cambridge from merging into one another and with the City" (paragraph 2.30).

7.13 Particular reference is made in paragraph 2.31 to a number of factors associated with the Green Belt that help define the special character of Cambridge and its setting:

- *"Key views of Cambridge from the surrounding countryside;*
- *A soft green edge to the city;*
- *A distinctive urban edge;*

- *Green corridors penetrating into the city;*
- *Designated sites and other features contributing positively to the character of the landscape setting;*
- *The distribution, physical separation, setting, scale and character of GreenBelt villages; and*
- *A landscape that retains a strong rural character."*

7.14 Of the seven factors identified above the first, sixth and seventh are considered to be most directly relevant to the Hauxton Site. Policies S/8 and S/9 specifically address Rural Centres and Minor Rural Centres around Cambridge with accompanying paragraphs noting that *"....there is no strategic constraint on the amount of development or redevelopment of land for housing that can come forward..."*(paragraph 2.56) within the Rural Centres as these are the most sustainable villages within the District whilst schemes of up to approximately 30 dwellings are seen as appropriate for Minor Rural Centres. It is noted that Hauxton is not classed as either a Rural Centre or a Minor Rural Centre.

7.15 Hauxton is classed as a Group Village under Policy S/10 which identifies an indicative scheme size of 8 dwellings (or up to 15 dwellings for a brownfield site) as being appropriate for inclusion within the development frameworks.

### **Cambridge Inner Green Belt Boundary Study**

7.16 The Cambridge Inner Green Belt Boundary Study (CIGBBS) (November 2015) provides an update of the previously prepared 2012 Inner Green Belt Boundary Study, December 2012. This Study identified 19 sectors of the Inner Green Belt which were then assessed to understand their importance to the performance of the Green Belt purposes. Most of the sectors were then also divided into sub-areas, where there were differences within the sector.

7.17 The Hauxton Site is located beyond the limits of the study area for the CIGBBS with the closest sectors located to the east of the M11 corridor, these being Sector 7, Sub Area 7.1, South west of Trumpington; and, Sector 8, Sub Area 8.1, Large arable fields. These are located approximately 1.56km and 450m from the Site to the north and north east respectively.

7.18 It is noted that one of the main conclusions within the study was that *"West of the city, the Inner Green Belt plays a critical role in maintaining the impression of a compact city, with countryside close to the historic core. The rural character of the land emphasises this and is seen as the foreground in views from approaches to the city, the M11 and the countryside west of the M11."* In addition, a second main conclusion notes *"Areas of land on all sides of the city form the rural setting of necklace villages or contribute to separation between the villages and Cambridge or between the villages themselves."*(CIGBS, paragraph 0.6.1)

7.19 The CIGBBS identifies a hierarchy for the city and all surrounding land within the Green Belt which seeks to define the level of contribution that the landscape within the Green Belt makes to the three purposes of the Cambridge Green Belt as defined within local policy, the categories being: Visually cohesive historic core; Distinctive townscape/landscape; Supportive townscape/landscape; Connective townscape/landscape; visually detracting townscape/landscape; and, Outer rural areas of the Green Belt. The area of landscape within which the Hauxton Site is located is included within the 'Connective Townscape/Landscape' category which extends west of the M11 corridor to embrace the landscape around Haslingfield, Hauxton and Harston.

7.20 The CIGBBS describes 'Connective townscape/landscape' as follows:

*"These are areas of townscape/landscape which are an integral part of the city and its environs, but may lack individual distinction or do not make a significant contribution to the setting of the city. This does not signify that these areas are unimportant, or lacking in their own identity; they may have significant merit in their own right. Rather, they are often areas with little relationship to their landscape setting, or to landmarks within the Historic Core or its landscape setting. Due to their location or character, they may contribute little to views of the city or other elements of its setting. Generic development forms with little sense of place can also contribute to the loss of local identity.*

*Areas of Connective townscape/landscape include much of the large scale suburban development to the north, east and south of the city. These areas are not distinctive to Cambridge but act as a relatively modern urban framework to Supportive and Distinctive parts of the city and landscape.*

*Connective landscape forms the remainder of the landscape from where the city is visible, or where it forms part of the foreground to more distant isolated viewpoints, with the exception of the detracting features or areas..."* (CIGBBS, paragraphs 4.14.17 – 19)

7.21 It is noted that this Connective townscape/landscape is separated from the Supportive townscape/landscape by the M11 corridor which is identified as 'visually distracting' as is the A14 corridor and a limited number of built areas within Cambridge itself but outwith the Green Belt. In terms of the Hauxton Site it is thus in a lower category of the hierarchy and in the lee of a recognised 'visually distracting' communication corridor that bears *"..no relationship to its [Cambridge's] historical development or character, or to the historical pattern and character of the landscape."* (CIGBBS, paragraph 4.14.23)

7.22 The CIGBBS also includes a visual assessment within section 4. This includes identification of the 'Approximate area of Green Belt from within which Cambridge may be seen' along with the identification of 'Key elevated views', 'Distinctive/memorable features in the setting of Cambridge' and ridgelines all of which have a bearing upon the Hauxton Site:

- The Site lies just within the identified approximate area of Green Belt from which Cambridge may be seen, albeit the site visit indicated that this is primarily of the new development around Trumpington with historic Cambridge difficult to depict on the horizon line.
- St Margaret's Mount to the south of the Site terminates a subtle, local rideline (refer to Figure 04) and affords a key elevated view across the Site towards Cambridge beyond as referred to above (see Figure 06, Viewpoint 4).
- The elevated view across the Site includes two village churches at Hauxton and Trumpington.

7.23 The Inner Green Belt assessment was based on the Study's defining of 16 qualities, which were considered equally important in contributing to the performance of Green Belt purposes. Although the Hauxton Site is located outwith the Inner Green Belt, in the interests of adopting a comprehensive approach to appraise the implications of potential development of the Site, it was also judged appropriate and helpful to consider the potential effect of development of the Site upon these 16 defining attributes of the Cambridge Green Belt. These are identified in Table 7.4 below with accompanying appraisal notes added summarising the anticipated effects arising from potential development on the Site.

**Table 7.4: Effect of Potential development upon the 16 CIGBBS Criteria**

|   | CIGBBS Quality –<br>Assessment Criteria                           | Effect of potential development of the Hauxton Site                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|---|-------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | A large historic core relative to the size of the city as a whole | Expansion to the south west of historic Cambridge has historically been limited but this is changing with the development at Trumpington Meadows. The River Cam and Hobson's Brook remain as constraints to this development as does the M11 corridor. The Site's location to the west of the M11 means that it remains detached from the historic core and the city as a whole. Development of the Site would thus have a <i>Negligible</i> effect upon this criterion. |
| 2 | A city focussed on the historic core                              | Development of the Site would have no bearing upon the focus on the historic core of Cambridge due to its physical separation and to the type of development proposed which is for residential rather than as a service/local centre that might provide a degree of competition, albeit minimal, with the historic heart of the city.                                                                                                                                    |

|   |                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|---|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|   |                                                                                       | Development of the Site would thus have a <i>Negligible</i> effect upon this criterion.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 3 | Short and/or characteristic approaches to the historic core from the edge of the city | The Site's location and limited interface with the High Street, coupled with the High Street's east-west alignment, means that it does not contribute to or interact with part of an approach into the historic core of the city. Development of the Site would thus have a <i>Negligible</i> effect upon this criterion.                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 4 | A city of human scale easily crossed by foot and by bicycle                           | The Site's location to the west of the M11, coupled with its village location means that it is at some distance from the edge of the city with no direct route to the historic core. The most direct routes in are via the A10/Hauxton Road or the A1301 which are both 'suburban' approaches into the city with limited appeal to cyclists or those on foot at this distance from the city. Development of the Site would thus have a <i>Negligible</i> effect upon this criterion.                                                    |
| 5 | Topography providing a framework to Cambridge                                         | The Site's topography is undistinctive but none-the-less contributes to the landscape framework that provides the setting to Cambridge, particularly when seen in the context of the surrounding rural landscape (eg from St Margaret's Mount). Development of the Site would affect the perception of the local topography and thus have a <i>Minor</i> effect upon this criterion.                                                                                                                                                    |
| 6 | Long distance footpaths and bridleways providing access to the countryside            | There are no public rights of way that traverse the Site or adjoin its boundaries. Whilst development of the Site could facilitate the opportunity to enhance public access to the countryside it is judged that development would have a <i>Negligible</i> effect upon this criterion.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 7 | Key views of Cambridge from the surrounding landscape                                 | An identified Key elevated view is located approximately 600m to the south of the Site's southern boundary. Development of the Site would bring about a noticeable change to the view and affect the perception of the setting of historic Cambridge and the city within the Green Belt. The Site is located directly within the view towards the historic centre, albeit the newer development at Trumpington Meadows more readily draws the eye. Development of the Site would have <i>Major-Moderate</i> effect upon this criterion. |
| 8 | Significant areas of Distinctive and Supportive townscape and landscape               | The Site is not located within either a Distinctive or Supportive area of townscape/landscape. It's role is limited to a 'Connective' role and it is located immediately to the west of the 'Visually detracting' M11 corridor which has its own area of influence. Accordingly, development of the Site would have a <i>Negligible</i> effect upon this criterion.                                                                                                                                                                     |

|    |                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 9  | A soft green edge to the city                                             | The Site does not currently contribute to the 'soft green edge' to the city due to its village location. Development of the Site would thus have a <i>Negligible</i> effect upon this criterion.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 10 | Good urban structure with well-designed edges to the city                 | The Site has a short interface with the High Street between the existing edge of Hauxton and the M11 corridor. It also has a visually exposed and open southern boundary and site area. However, development of the Site would have <i>Negligible</i> effect upon this criterion given the Site's distance from the urban edge of the city.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 11 | Green corridors into the city                                             | The Site does not form part of a green corridor into the city nor is it located within the vicinity of one. Development of the Site would thus have a <i>Negligible</i> effect upon this criterion.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 12 | The distribution, physical and visual separation of the necklace villages | The Site and the surrounding open arable countryside makes an important contribution to the perceived visual and physical separation of Hauxton from Little Shelford in particular and, when seen in elevated views from the higher ground to the south, to the perceived separation of the necklace villages from Cambridge. The Site provides the only stretch of open landscape to the south of the road that links Hauxton to Little Shelford. Whilst land to the east of the M11 also contributes to the actual and perceived separation of the settlements the Site is integral to this and the Site frontage will require careful consideration to limit the effects upon this criterion. Development of the Site could, at worst, have a <i>Major</i> effect upon this criterion but, through good landscape and urban design, this could be limited to <i>Moderate-Minor</i> through the acceptance of the loss of an open separation with the replacement of a wooded separation which is not uncharacteristic of the locality. |
| 13 | The scale, character, identity and rural setting of the necklace villages | The Site also plays an important role in defining the rural setting of Hauxton being the only noticeably open (short) stretch of landscape that adjoins the village. The majority of Hauxton's village edges are defined by a more wooded or treed landscape setting which both provides a rationale for converting the northern edge of the Site to woodland whilst also elevating its importance as an open landscape. Either way the Site is integral to the setting of Hauxton and any development upon it will bring about a significant change. Development of the Site would thus have a <i>Major</i> effect upon this criterion albeit this could be managed down through good site design and a strong, well-conceived landscape scheme that relates well to the locality and surrounding landuses.                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

|    |                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 14 | Designated sites and areas enriching the setting of Cambridge                      | The Site does not include any designated sites or areas of landscape. It does contribute to how the setting of Cambridge is perceived, in particular from the key elevated views from the higher ground of St Margaret's Mount to the south. Development of the Site would have a <i>Minor</i> effect upon the setting aspect only of this criterion.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 15 | Elements and features contributing to the character and structure of the landscape | The key characteristic of the Site is its level, open and uncluttered quality. The only other elements of note are the hedgerow located within the central section of the Site along with its strong sense of enclosure along its eastern and western boundaries. Collectively these contribute to the local landscape character with the sense of openness providing a contrast to the surrounding wooded areas. Development of the Site would result in the loss of openness but the other characteristics of the Site and the site boundaries would remain. The loss of the open qualities of the Site could be replaced, in part, by perimeter areas of woodland which would not be out of keeping with key attributes of the surrounding landscape which would assist in mitigating the effects upon this criterion. Development of the Site would, depending upon the layout and design as previously stated, have a potentially <i>Moderate</i> effect upon this criterion. |
| 16 | A city set in a landscape which retains a strongly rural character                 | The Site is located at some distance from the city and is sited in the lee of the 'visually distracting' M11 corridor. Its visually enclosed character and its proximity to the M11 limits its contribution to the perceived landscape setting of Cambridge, it's contribution only being more demonstrable when seen from the locally elevated land to the south of the Site. Development of the Site would have a potentially <i>Minor</i> effect upon this criterion.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

### Importance of the Site to Green Belt Purposes

- 7.24 In summary, it is anticipated that of the 16 defining criteria that contribute to the purposes of the Cambridge Green Belt identified within the CIGBBS, potential development of the Hauxton Site would have a Negligible effect upon nine of them and only a Minor effect upon another three. Those judged most likely to be effected are criteria 7, 12, 13 and 15 with the first three being the focus of any effects.
- 7.25 Whilst overall the Hauxton Site has a negligible role in contributing to the perceived setting of Cambridge it's contribution to the setting is elevated when seen from the locally elevated ridgeline to the south of the Site within the vicinity of the public footpath that rises up to the obelisk on St Margaret's Mount.

- 7.26 The Site, however, does have a role in contributing to the perceived physical and visual separation of Hauxton from Little Shelford and any potential development of the Site would need to be sensitive to this if this aspect of the Site's contribution to Green Belt purposes is not to be unacceptably compromised.

## 8 ABILITY OF THE SITE TO ACCOMMODATE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

### Landscape opportunities

8.1 From a landscape and visual perspective the key opportunities provided by the Site to accommodate residential development are:

- The Site is generally well-contained visually by a combination of existing vegetation, motorway embankment and built development meaning there are relatively few visual receptors likely to be affected by the introduction of development on the Site.
- The mature trees and existing vegetation that characterise the Site's longer eastern and western site boundaries considerably reduce the potential visibility of development on the Site in spite of the Site's open attributes.
- The ease of access that can be achieved off the High Street with minimal, if any, loss of existing vegetation.
- The opportunity to present a stronger, defined eastern edge to Hauxton village.
- The 'rear of gardens' mature existing vegetation along the western site boundary in particular, supported by the mature south west to north east aligned hedgerow within the northern section of the Site, are positive landscape features which can contribute to the sense of place of the development and provide some sense of historic continuity.
- The established existing vegetation along the west bank of the M11 embankment is also effective in providing strong visual enclosure and in considerably limiting any potential visibility of traffic travelling along the motorway.
- Proximity to the existing village edge which provides the opportunity to integrate new development with the existing village fabric, with a connection to the existing road network via a new entrance close to the last property of Hauxton to the south of the High Street.
- Opportunity to 'stitch' the new development into the existing local landscape through the incorporation of substantive perimeter woodland planting, principally along the southern site boundary, that would relate well to the Hauxton Local Green Space and the woodland to the west of residential properties along The Lane.
- A broader opportunity to build upon the wooded and well-treed character of the area and to strengthen local landscape character whilst also addressing the more visually exposed areas of the Site, principally to the south.

- Opportunity to incorporate a woodland tree belt along the southern site boundary that would assist in limiting visibility of the development in views from the south, in particular the longer distance views available from the locally elevated locations on the public footpath that leads to the Obelisk on St Margaret's Mount.
- Strength of the existing 'rear garden' planting which contributes to limiting views into the Site and potential development for the nearest local residents.
- Opportunity to provide greater public access, including a circular loop that ties into Hauxton's Local Green Space and The Lane (via Willow Way).

8.2 The above opportunities will build upon the key enclosure elements identified in Figure 05, Site Appraisal, and respond to the visual attributes and characteristics of the Site and the surrounding area as identified in Figure 04, Visual Envelope and Context.

### **Landscape Constraints**

8.3 The key constraints associated with the Site from a landscape and visual perspective include:

- The visibility of the Site from the locally elevated landscape to the south of Shelford Road along the public footpath to the Obelisk on St. Margaret's Mount. This is a valued view given that it provides an opportunity to sight Cambridge and to locate it within its Green Belt setting.
- The visibility of the Site to the south, principally from the railway line (Low sensitivity visual receptors) and from intermittent locations along Shelford Road.
- The open character of the Site with only the hedgerow line as an internal site feature render the site more visible than it might otherwise be from more elevated locations to the south.
- An offset will be required between the development edge and areas of retained mature vegetation within and around the site boundary due to the root protection areas.
- Residential properties to west of the Site currently enjoy views across an open, undeveloped field with existing framework planting beyond, albeit set against the backcloth of the M11 motorway. Development on the Site could potentially be seen as an intrusive feature into these views.
- Possible adverse effect on views from pedestrians and vehicles travelling along the High Street west of the M11 bridge due to the introduction of a new development edge adjacent to the road (unless set behind a well-vegetated edge which would be consistent with local landscape character). This effect could also be potentially minimised through careful site planning

involving the retention of existing roadside vegetation and an appropriate set-back between the development edge and the road.

- Development would extend built form into the Granta Valley LCA which would change the landscape character within the Site. However, this would be a localised effect and would affect only a small proportion of the LCA.

### **Proposed Design Strategy**

- 8.4 Following this initial landscape and visual appraisal of the Site, it is considered that the widest, central portion of the Site has the greatest capacity to accommodate development within the Site. This is due to the significant enclosure available from existing mature vegetation and built form around the Site's perimeter. Aside from the south west to north east aligned mature hedgerow there are no other obvious on-site constraints to development. This hedgerow (refer to Figure 05) should be retained and will assist in the sub-division of the Site with the land parcel to the west of it being particularly well enclosed with Hauxton wrapping around its southern, western and northern boundaries.
- 8.5 Visibility into and across the Site from the north is confined to a relatively short stretch of the High Street between the M11 motorway bridge and the easternmost extent of Hauxton. The existing open character of this short northern site boundary contributes to the perceived rural setting of Hauxton. The design alternatives are to either bring development towards the High street in line with the existing properties to the south of the High Street or to, alternatively, set development well back from the road such that the over-riding perception when travelling between Hauxton and Little Shelford is one of the oblique views across the open character of the land adjoining the road having been retained. The latter approach would also have the benefit of retaining the full width of the perceived landscape gap that exists between the two settlements whereas the former approach would demonstrably bring development closer to the edge of Little Shelford, albeit the motorway embankment will ensure that there is no risk of coalescence.
- 8.6 It is also considered that the most appropriate design approach to help 'stitch' development into the village fabric would be to include a generous belt of tree planting along the south east and south west site boundaries. This would help address the visually exposed southern site boundary and provide a demonstrable biodiversity enhancement that could link the planting along the motorway embankment back to the existing landscape and the Local Green Space that sits alongside the southern part of the western site boundary. This would not be out of keeping with the local landscape and would also assist in initially filtering and then screening views of the development from the south and south west.

8.7 Key principles which should inform the development of a design strategy for the Site are:

- Retention of a northern strip of open space/landscape as an undeveloped margin against the northern site boundary.
- Retention and integration of the mature hedgerow vegetation within the development site.
- Incorporation of new woodland planting along the south east and south west boundary of the Site to form a connection between the planting on the motorway embankment just to the north of the railway line and the area of Local Green Space on the southernmost corner of Hauxton.
- Proposed built character should reflect/reference the local vernacular and materials in order to meet national and district scale landscape character guidelines.
- Incorporation of an east-west aligned shelterbelt framework of tree and shrub planting within the development area to soften and visually fragment views of the development, in particular those from the area of locally important higher ground to the south around St Margaret's Mount. This should include provision of sufficient space to allow the full growth of large maturing species of trees and the use of native tree and shrub species.
- A commitment to the early implementation of the woodland planting along the southern site boundary as advance works to maximise the window for plant establishment and growth during the construction stage of development.
- Use of advance and/or semi-mature planting to ensure the mitigation effects of new planting take effect as soon as possible in the development process
- The Creation of safe walking and cycling routes through the site which connect onto the High street and The Lane (via Willow Way) to provide a circular route within the village and to provide a footpath link that ties back into The Lane Byway.

## 9 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

### Potential Effects on Visual Amenity and Landscape Character if the Site is developed

9.1 It is considered that the introduction of development on the Site (subject to achieving an appropriate scale, layout and massing of development) is likely to result in limited and localised effects on landscape character and visual amenity. The key potential effects are likely to be:

- Adverse effects on some local views from adjacent or nearby residential properties which overlook the Site from the west. Structural planting within the development site and around the perimeter of the Site would help to mitigate this to some extent.
- Major-Moderate adverse visual effects in views from a short stretch of the High Street immediately along the northern site boundary, including those available to allotment owners to the north of the road.
- Moderate adverse effects on views from the mainline railway line as it passes the Site to the south. Glimpsed views of development would result in a reduced sense of openness and a minor reduction in the perceived sense of separation between Hauxton and Little Shelford, in part depending again on the apportionment of built form to landscape within the Site. The retention of an undeveloped green corridor adjacent to the railway line and the introduction of structural planting around the development areas would help to reduce these effects and be consistent with existing local landscape character.
- Very localised and limited major-moderate effects on the northward facing views that look towards Cambridge and are available to users of the public footpath that gives access to the Obelisk on St Margaret's Mount.
- Moderate adverse effects on views available to visual receptors on The Lane Byway to the west of the Site.
- Loss of the open countryside and extension of built development on land that presently provides the setting along the eastern edge of Hauxton when approaching from the east.
- Whilst development of the Site would change the landscape character of the Site the existing areas of woodland to the west and along the motorway embankment are helpful in that they provide the basis for a more wooded and enclosed landscape treatment for the Site to be developed. This will assist with the integration of the new development into the locality and be in keeping with the woodland blocks that are a characteristic element of the local landscape.

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**Potential effects on Green Belt if the Site is developed**

- 9.2 A consideration of the likely effects on the Cambridge Green Belt should the Site be developed involves taking account of both the potential effects on the site itself and also those upon the residual functioning of the wider Green Belt.
- 9.3 For the Site itself, residential development would involve the introduction of a substantial area and volume of built development which would erode the sense of openness across most of the Site and represent encroachment into the countryside. Following development, it is unlikely that the areas of residential development would be considered 'open' in Green Belt terms. However, if the northern Site frontage were to be retained as an open area with development set well back from the road and seen in the context of a strong green edge, it would be possible to maintain some of the sense of separation between Hauxton and Little Shelford rather than leaving this to be reliant upon the separation that is defined by the M11 motorway corridor.
- 9.4 In addition to the northern edge of the Site, the southern section of the Site most widely contributes towards the perception of openness of the Site. However, this would be lost as a consequence of development of the Site. If the southern boundary of the Site could be retained as a predominantly wooded green corridor (that effectively screens/filters views into the development) it is considered that this would considerably assist in compensating for the sense of openness lost as a result of the development.
- 9.5 Regarding the effects on the functioning of the residual Green Belt were the Site to be developed, it is considered that the Green Belt purposes assessed would not be significantly affected if the Site were developed. Each of the four purposes are summarised below.
- 9.6 Purpose 1: To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas – As noted in the tables above, the Site makes only a *Limited* contribution to fulfilling this purpose and it does not in itself form part of a strategic barrier to urban sprawl. Locally, the large area of woodland associated with the disused pits to the west of Hauxton, the M11 motorway corridor to the east and the River Cam valley and floodplain to the north form the most important strategic barriers and these would all continue to function effectively in performing this role if the Site were to be developed.
- 9.7 Purpose 2: To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another – The Site currently makes a *Partial* contribution to this purpose. The introduction of development on the Site would result in an evident physical and a visual reduction in the gap between Hauxton and Little Shelford which would be reduced by approximately 50%. However, the M11 corridor and its associated wooded embankments arguably form a more important separation element between the two settlements and there will still be no intervisibility between the two settlements were the Site to be developed. The character of the gap will, of course, change with the loss of the sense of openness associated with the

Site and the reduction in the extent of the physical space between Hauxton and Little Shelford. Development of the Site would have no bearing upon any perceived merging with other villages around Hauxton.

- 9.8 Development on the site could however affect the glimpsed perception of separation between these settlements for those travelling by train past the southern site boundary. Views north from the railway line as it passes the Site would change from glimpsed views over open arable fields to glimpsed views of the development (set within a wooded landscape edge?). The extension of the built area across the Site would reduce the proportion of the journey time between the settlements which passes through or adjacent to open countryside and thus could result in a perceived reduction in separation between the settlements.
- 9.9 Purpose 3: To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment – Although development on the Site would itself constitute encroachment of the countryside, it is considered that the Site makes only a *Partial* contribution to this purpose and that development upon it would not compromise the function of the wider Green Belt in fulfilling this purpose. The Site is well contained by the built edge of Hauxton and the M11 corridor such that a wide swathe of Green Belt will remain around the Site to the north, east and south. This would all be safeguarded as undeveloped countryside with clearly defined edges to the proposed development area which would assist in protecting the adjacent areas of countryside from future encroachment.
- 9.10 Purpose 4: To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns – Although development of the Site is within relative close proximity to the historic heart of both Hauxton and Little Shelford there is no intervisibility between the Site and the two conservation areas or the listed buildings within the villages. It is considered therefore that the Site makes only a *Limited* contribution to this Green Belt purpose even though, on a strategic scale, it does make a contribution to the setting and special character of Cambridge, specifically from the key elevated views available from the locally higher ground to the south of the Site at St Margaret's Mount.
- 9.11 In terms of the future quality and use of the Green Belt, it is considered that development of the Site provides a number of opportunities for enhancing the Green Belt in the local area. Key opportunities include:
- Creation of pedestrian and cycle connections through the Site to form improved access and connectivity between the built areas and the Green Belt.
  - Access and landscape improvements to the Site with the opportunity to link the maturing planting on the M11 corridor embankments to the woodland to the west of Hauxton which

would assist in fracturing the strong linearity of the M11 route visually to create a more diverse landscape in keeping with the attributes of the existing landscape character.

- Deliver biodiversity enhancements through enriching the landscape and ecological attributes of the Site.