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Oxfordshire Cotswolds Garden Village West Eynsham Strategic Development Area

Landscape and visual assessment

Prepared by LUC
August 2019

Project Title: Oxfordshire Cotswolds Garden Village and West Eynsham Strategic Development Area:
Landscape and visual assessment

Client: West Oxfordshire District Council

Version	Date	Version Details	Prepared by	Checked by	Approved by
V1	13 2 19	Draft for issue	Paul Macrae	Nick James	Nick James
V2	24 4 19	Revised draft	Paul Macrae	Nick James	Nick James
V3	3 5 19	For issue	Paul Macrae	Nick James	Nick James
V4	15 5 19	Final	Nick James		Nick James



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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This report sets out the results of a landscape and visual assessment covering two allocated development sites to the north and west of Eynsham in West Oxfordshire.
- 1.2 There are two development areas for which advice was required.
- Land north of the A40 near Eynsham is allocated in the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 as a 'Strategic Location for Growth' (SLG) to accommodate a Garden Village (Policy EW1). The proposal - referred to as the 'Oxfordshire Cotswolds Garden Village' - is based on a working assumption of around 2,200 homes together with about 40 hectares of business land (B-class) in the form of a 'campus-style' science park. Other supporting facilities including community facilities, education, transport and green infrastructure will also be required. The Garden Village is envisaged as a stand-alone, self-contained settlement, though it is recognised that the relationship with adjoining Eynsham, and impacts of and on the A40 corridor will need to be addressed. The development will adopt Garden Village principles (see [Appendix 2](#)), including a commitment to a comprehensive green infrastructure network, net biodiversity gains, high quality open spaces and an accessible network of walking and cycling routes.
- The Garden Village will be taken forward in more detail through a separate 'Area Action Plan' (AAP) which the District Council is aiming to submit for independent examination in 2019. Once adopted, the AAP will sit alongside the Local Plan and form part of the statutory development plan for West Oxfordshire. Landscape advice will form part of the supporting evidence base for the AAP.
- Land to the west of Eynsham is allocated as a 'Strategic Development Area' (SDA) intended to accommodate an urban extension of Eynsham of around 1,000 homes together with supporting facilities including a new western spine road and primary school. Two schemes have already come forward within the SDA area¹, underlining the importance of defining a framework to secure co-ordinated development, including the provision of an enhanced green infrastructure network, to guide development.
- The West Eynsham SDA will be taken forward through a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in the form of a Development Framework which will set out a number of key principles and parameters. Whilst the SPD will not form part of the statutory development plan, it will be an important material consideration for any planning applications that subsequently come forward in this location. Landscape advice will form part of the supporting evidence base for the SDA.
- 1.3 These development areas are shown on [Figure 1.1](#), though it should be noted that the boundary of the Garden Village is indicative only and the intention is to more clearly define it through the AAP process.

Content and structure of the report

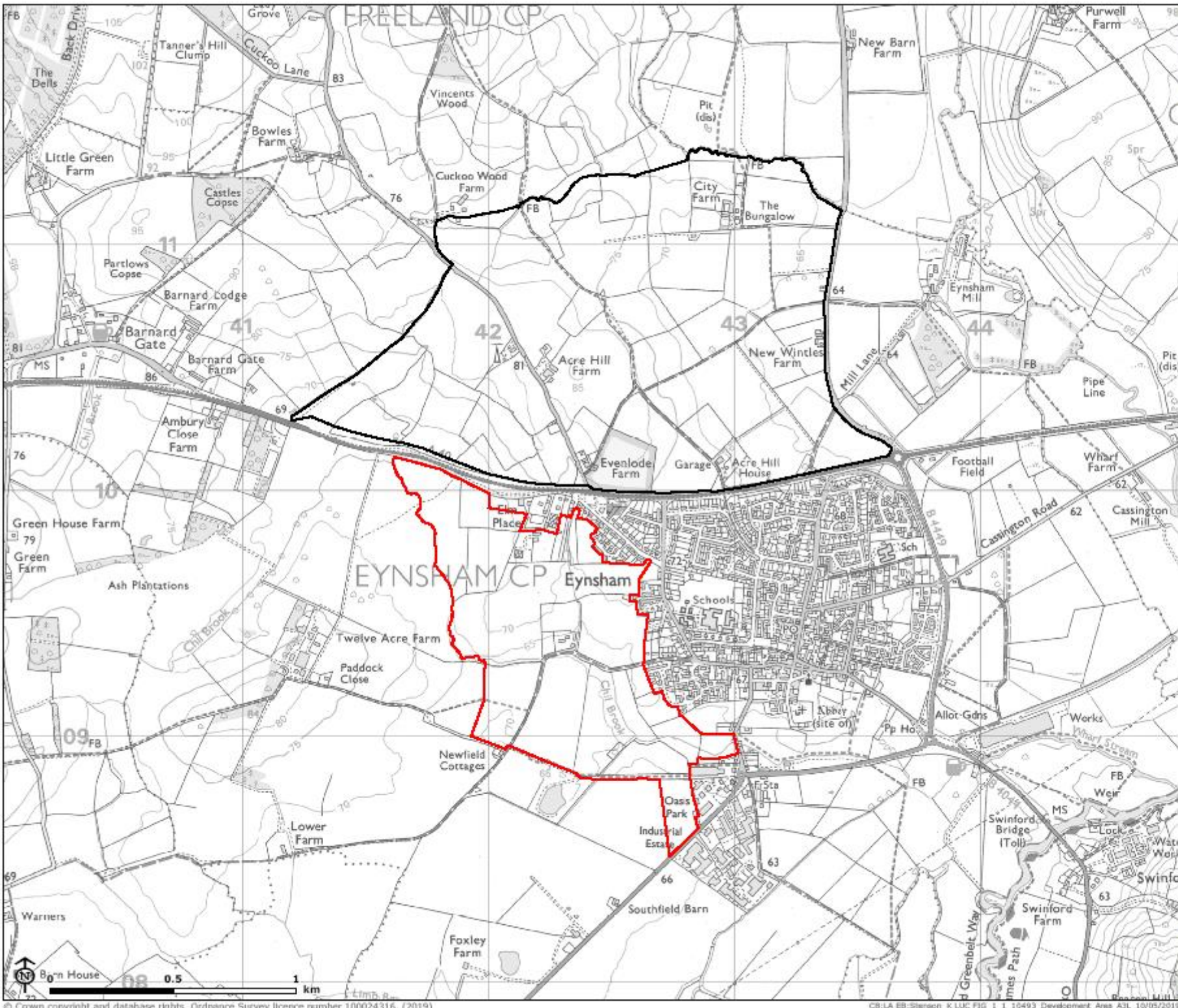
- 1.4 The remainder of this report comprises the following sections:
- Chapter 2: Aims, objectives and methodology
 - Chapter 3: Landscape baseline
 - Chapter 4: Landscape sensitivity
 - Chapter 5: Masterplanning recommendations

¹ 160 homes on land west of Thornbury Road and 77 homes on the former Eynsham Nursery and Plant Centre.

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Figure 1.1: Development Areas

-  Garden Village Site Boundary
-  West Eynsham Site Boundary



Map Scale @A3: 1:15,000



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2 Aims, objectives and methodology

- 2.1 This part of the report sets out the aims and objectives of the study, and the methodology that was adopted to fulfil them.

Aim and objectives

- 2.2 The purpose of this study is to provide landscape and visual evidence to West Oxfordshire District Council as follows:

- To identify the main issues and constraints relevant to each site from a landscape and visual perspective (both individually and where relevant, cumulatively); and
- Having regard to those issues and constraints, outline the main opportunities for each site in terms of how the proposed developments can most appropriately be accommodated.

- 2.1 Specific advice is provided on the following:

- The main constraints and opportunities relevant to each site from a landscape perspective;
- How to most appropriately address these constraints and opportunities through the proposed AAP and SPD including the key principles that should underpin the masterplanning of each site, the distribution and type of land uses, the form of development and the nature and extent of mitigation required; and
- In relation to the Garden Village site, the suitability of the current indicative site boundary from a landscape perspective.

Methodology

- 2.2 The landscape and visual appraisal has involved the following key steps:

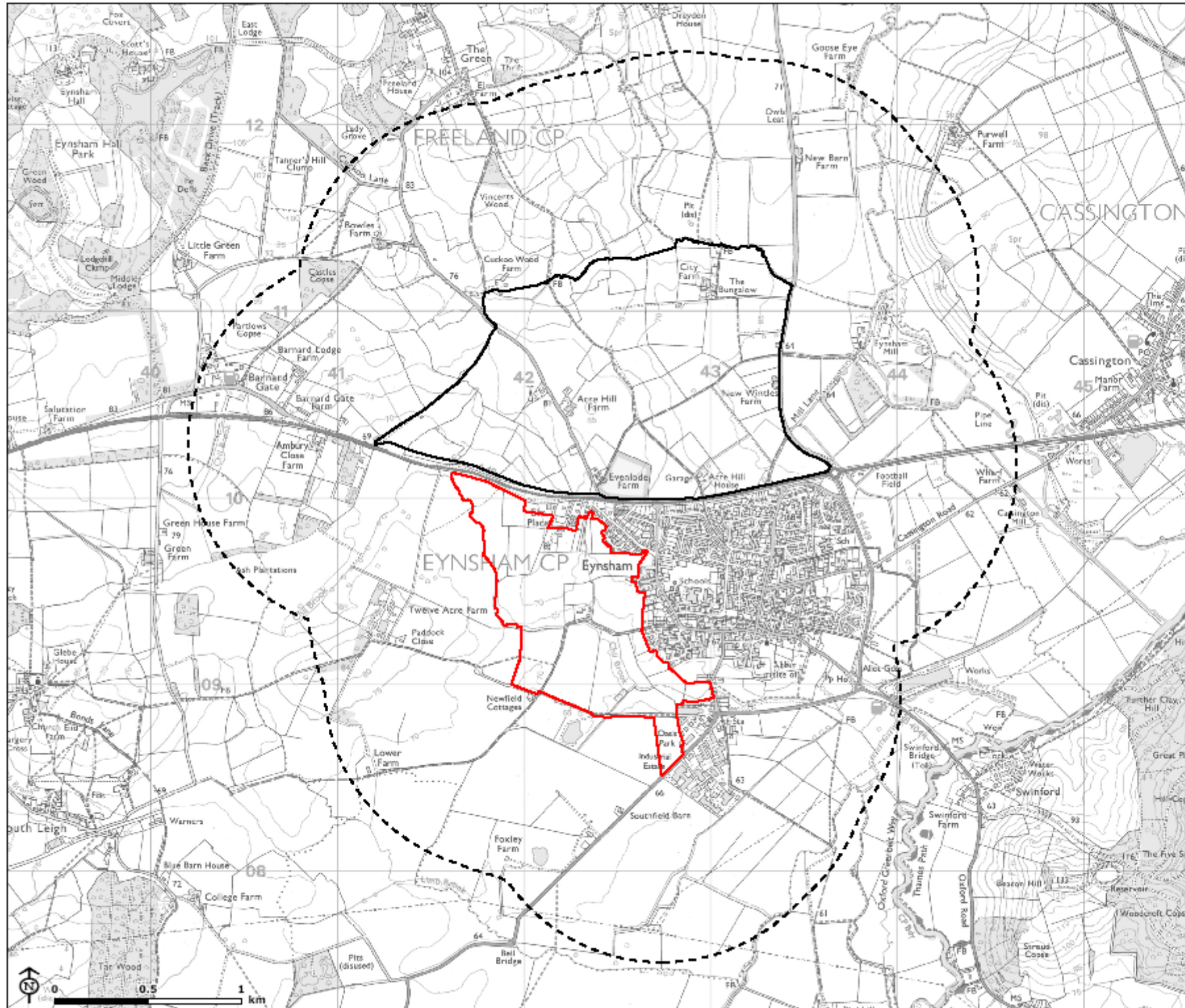
- Desk-based review of available baseline material (as listed in paragraph 2.4 below) and definition of a study area;
- Description of the landscape character of the study area, informed by desk study and field survey;
- Criteria-based appraisal of sensitivity to development for each site, and variations in relative sensitivity within each site; and
- Identification of key landscape and visual constraints and opportunities to inform masterplanning.

Geographical study area

- 2.3 To ensure that the study took due account of views and features at the edge of the defined Sites, an area up to 1km outside these boundaries has been examined, while views into and out of the study area from the wider landscape are also considered. Where the term 'study area' is used, this wider area is being described, incorporating both the Garden Village and the West Eynsham SDA (see **Figure 2.1**).




Sources of information

- 2.4 Sources of information relating to the landscape of the area that have been used in this appraisal include:
- Landscape character assessments undertaken at national, county and district scale;



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**Figure 2.1: Study Area:
Development Areas with 1 km
Buffer**

-  Garden Village Site Boundary
-  West Eynsham Site Boundary
-  1 km buffer

Map Scale @A3: 1:20,000



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Source: TVERC

- Natural England (2014) National Character Area Profile 108: Upper Thames Clay Vales. NE570. Available at [<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5865554770395136>];
- Atlantic Consultants (1998) West Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment. West Oxfordshire District Council. Available at [<https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/1234693/West-Oxfordshire-Landscape-Assessment-1998.pdf>];
- Oxfordshire County Council (2004) Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study. Available at [<http://owls.oxfordshire.gov.uk>].
- Oxfordshire Historic Landscape Characterisation Project GIS data;²
- Ordnance Survey mapping;
- Aerial and street-level photography available online;
- Eynsham Submission Draft Neighbourhood Plan 2018 – 2031 (version 3.12);
- Eynsham Village Design Statement (2001);
- Oxfordshire Cotswolds Garden Village Area Action Plan (AAP) – Issues Paper (June 2018);
- West Eynsham Strategic Development Area Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) – Issues Paper (July 2018); and
- Oxford Spatial Options Assessment (2016).

Sensitivity appraisal

2.5 The sensitivity appraisal has been undertaken with reference to carefully defined, transparent criteria to ensure that judgements can be clearly traced back to the underlying landscape baseline, and that the assessment is fully compliant with the NPPF. Criteria were agreed with the project steering group, and are listed in **Table 2.1**. Each of these has a series of ‘decision rules’ that help guide judgements about the level of sensitivity that is assigned. The criteria and decision rules are set out in full in **Appendix 1**.

Table 2.1 Sensitivity appraisal criteria

Criterion	Summary description
Physical character (including topography and scale)	The shape and scale of the landform in relation to the scale of potential development.
Natural character	The ‘naturalistic’ qualities of the landscape (e.g. trees, hedgerows) which could be vulnerable to loss from development.
Historic landscape character	The extent to which the landscape has ‘time-depth’.
Nature and setting of existing settlement/development	The overall settlement form and character of existing development within and adjacent to the site, and whether development in the landscape would be in accordance with this.
Views and visual character including skylines	The visual prominence of the landscape, reflecting the extent of openness or enclosure, and the degree of intervisibility with the surrounding landscape.
Access and recreation	The presence of features and facilities which enable enjoyment of the landscape, and the importance of these.
Perceptual and experiential	Qualities such as the rural character of the landscape, sense of

² See <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/environment-and-planning/archaeology/landscape-characterisation> for details.

Criterion	Summary description
qualities	remoteness or tranquillity.

- 2.6 The relative importance of the criteria varies. The appraisal does not comprise a rigid scoring system: rather, the sensitivity of each area is assessed through professional judgement guided by performance against the criteria. As the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA) notes, there are “*complex relationships between the different components of the landscape*”.³ The relative importance of different criteria varies across the study area.
- 2.7 Overall sensitivity judgements within each site have been recorded, identifying where sensitivity varies across the sites. This recognises that some attributes or elements of the landscape may be more important in defining character than others and may be more or less sensitive depending on their context. Because the changes in character and sensitivity across the site are subtle, these distinctions are not mapped as this may create a misleading impression of clearly-defined changes in sensitivity which does not reflect the situation on the ground. All judgements are therefore backed up with professional analysis. Sensitivity is recorded on a five point scale, as shown in **Table 2.2**.

Table 2.2 Sensitivity level definitions

Sensitivity judgement	Definition
High	The key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are highly sensitive to change.
Moderate-high	The key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are sensitive to change.
Moderate	Some of the key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are sensitive to change.
Low-moderate	Few of the key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are sensitive to change.
Low	The key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are robust and are unlikely to be subject to change.

Development parameters

- 2.8 Understanding the scale of the development proposed is important when applying the criteria. The Garden Village proposal is based on a working assumption of around 2,200 homes, 40 hectares of Class B business land in the form of a campus style business park, and supporting facilities including education, transport and green infrastructure. If it is assumed that gross average residential density is 30 dwellings per hectare, the residential component will require around 75 hectares (excluding green infrastructure elements). This would indicate that around one third of the 215-hectare site would be built on. This is intended as a lower limit designed to help explore the balance of developed and undeveloped land within the Garden Village.
- 2.9 Oxfordshire County Council have brought forward plans for a park and ride facility within the indicative boundary of the Garden Village site. Based on publicly available consultation plans, this facility will occupy 8 hectares to the west of Cuckoo Lane, and will be accessed via a new roundabout on the A40.
- 2.10 The West Eynsham SDA is intended to accommodate about 1,000 homes together with a primary school and a new western spine road. Within the SDA boundary, two schemes already have planning permission for 160 homes and 77 homes respectively. The remaining ‘residual’ number of homes within the SDA boundary is therefore about 760. On the same working assumption of

³ Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013) Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. 3rd Edition.

gross average residential density of 30 dwellings per hectare, this would require a development footprint of around 25 hectares, representing under one-third of the 88-hectare SDA.

- 2.11 The potential for cumulative landscape impacts to arise from the West Eynsham development in combination with the Garden Village proposal north of Eynsham is also considered.

3 Landscape baseline

- 3.1 This section of the report describes the existing landscape of the area around Eynsham, drawing on previous analysis of landscape character assessment and informed by LUC's own desk and field survey.

Landscape character assessments of the Eynsham area

- 3.2 The landscape of the Eynsham area is characterised at a number of levels. At the national scale, the area falls into the Upper Thames Clay Vales National Character Area (NCA).⁴ The NCA profile describes the "gently undulating lowland farmland bounded by the limestone scenery of the Cotswolds to the north and the narrow limestone outcrop of the Midvale Ridge to the south", which are "characterised by 18th and early 19th century enclosure landscapes of small woods and thorn hedges."
- 3.3 The NCA profile provides a wealth of background material on the landscape of the area, but at a broad level that offers more limited local insight. More detailed studies of the local landscape are presented in the West Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment (1998),⁵ and the Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (2004).⁶

West Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment

- 3.4 This 1998 study described West Oxfordshire as a 'predominantly rural agricultural landscape' with 'a diverse pattern of landscapes including rolling limestone uplands, pastoral river valleys, historic parkland, remnants of ancient forests, low-lying farmland and riverside meadows with a scattering of rural villages and some larger settlements'.
- 3.5 The study describes the significant influence of picturesque, designed landscapes of the eighteenth century, with notable examples including Lancelot Capability Brown's work at Blenheim Palace, William Kent's masterpiece at Rousham and at Ditchley Park and Humphrey Repton's work at Sarsden and Great Tew. Eynsham Hall Park, to the north west of Eynsham, was created by the enclosure of heath in the late eighteenth century, with further development in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. These designed landscapes (listed below and shown in **Figure 3.1**), and the influence they have on the character of the wider countryside, are a key characteristic of West Oxfordshire.

Historic designed landscapes in West Oxfordshire⁷

Blenheim Palace	Great Tew	Sarsden House
Chastleton House	Heythrop	Shipton Court
Cornbury Park	Kelmscott Manor	Swerford
Cornwell Manor	Kiddington Hall	Tackley
Ditchley Park	Rousham	
Eynsham Hall	Sandford Park	

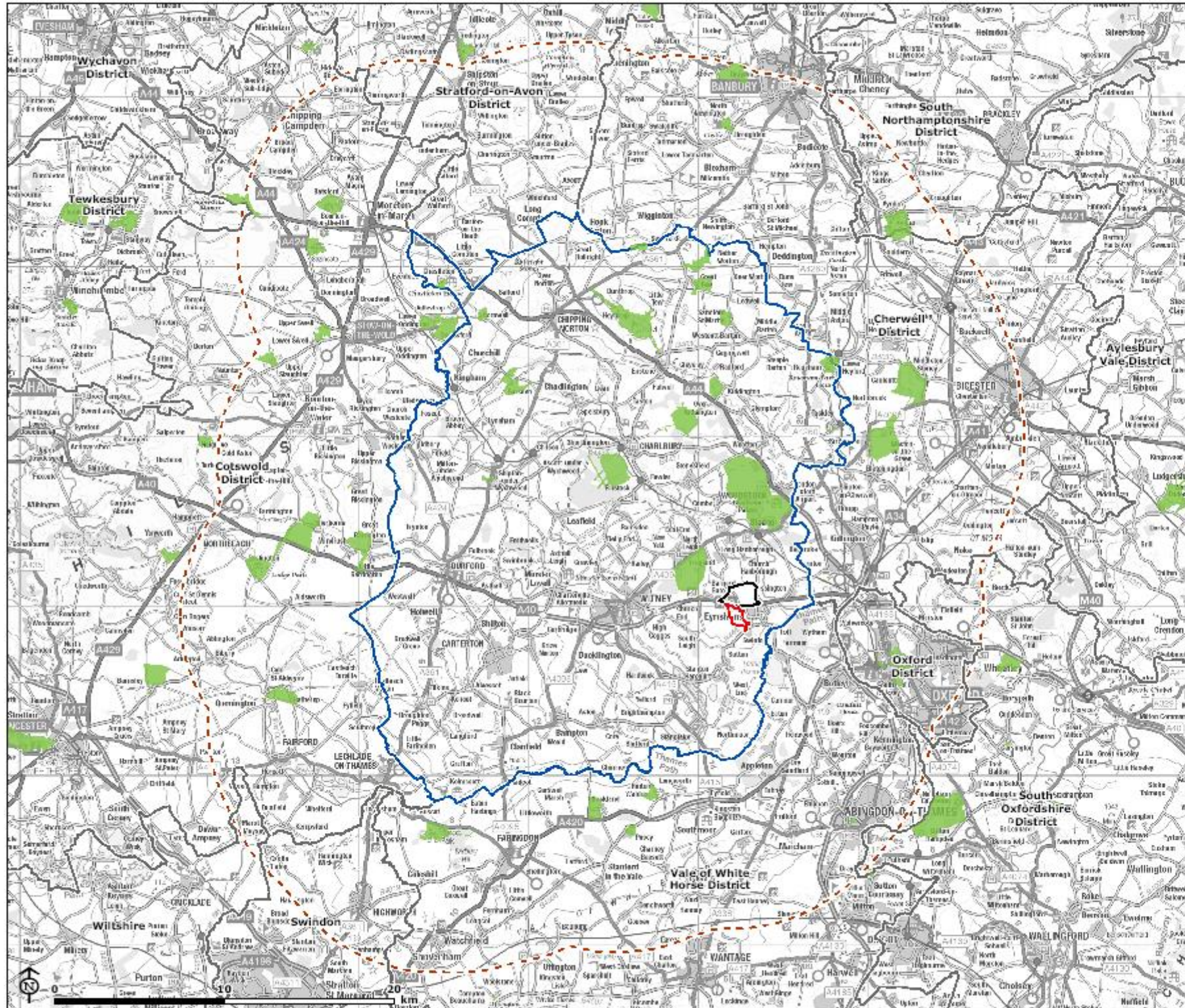
- 3.6 This 1998 study (see **Figure 3.2**) identifies the landscape to the north and west of Eynsham as 'rolling vale farmland', with areas to the east and south defined as 'flat vale farmland' and

⁴ Natural England (2014) National Character Area Profile 108: Upper Thames Clay Vales. NE570.

⁵ Atlantic Consultants (1998) West Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment. West Oxfordshire District Council.

⁶ Oxfordshire County Council (2004) Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study. Available at [http://owls.oxfordshire.gov.uk].

⁷ <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/what-is-designation/registered-parks-and-gardens/>



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Map 3.1: Registered Parks and Gardens

- West Oxfordshire District
- West Oxfordshire 10 km buffer
- Neighbouring Local Authority
- Garden Village Site Boundary
- Registered Park and Garden

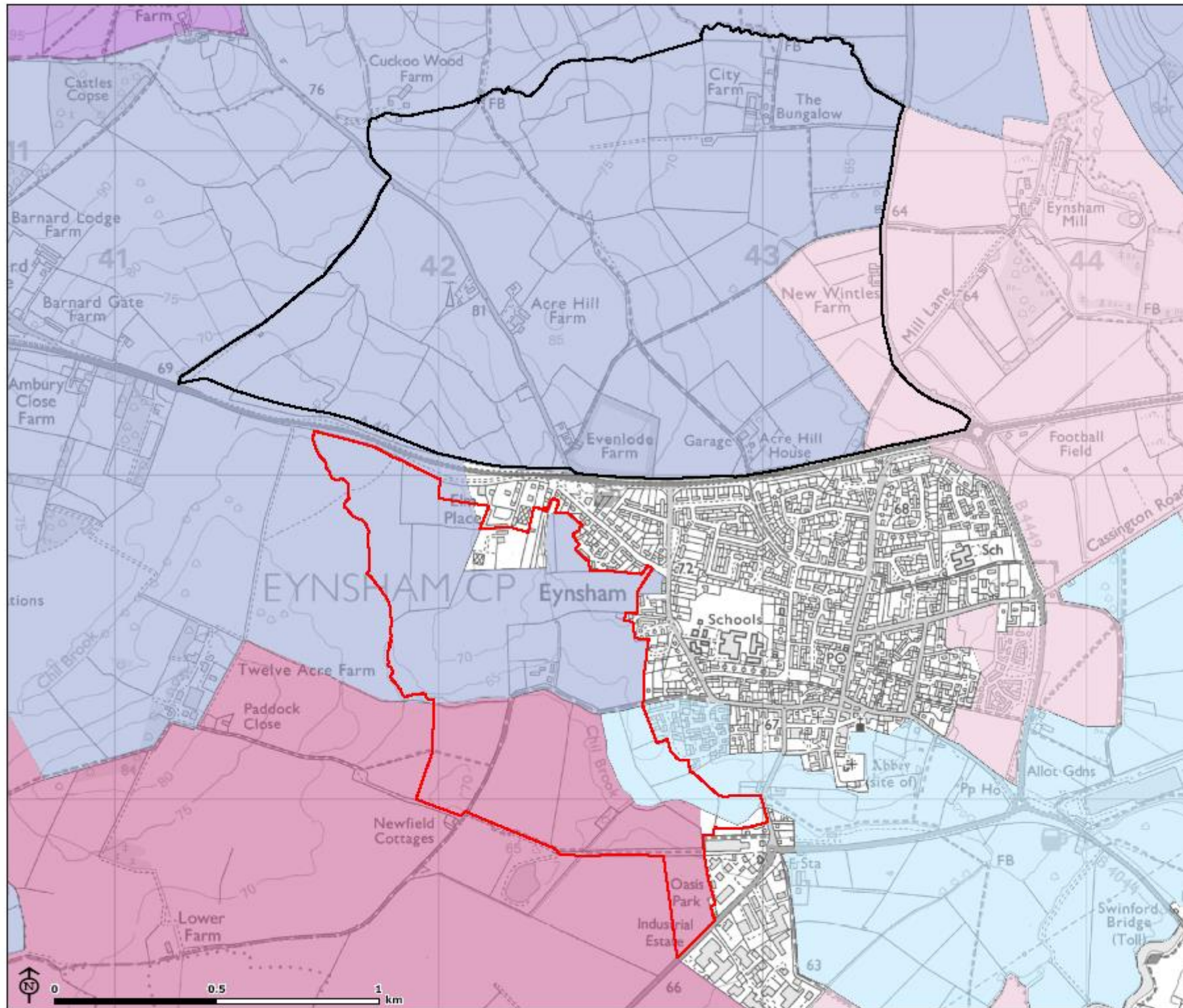
Map Scale @A3: 1:220,000



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Source: HE, WODC



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**Figure 3.2: West Oxfordshire
Landscape Assessment (1998)**

- Garden Village Site Boundary
- West Eynsham Site Boundary
- Landscape Character Type**
- Estate Farmland
- Floodplain Pasture
- Open Rolling Vale Farmland
- Semi-enclosed Flat Vale Farmland
- Semi-enclosed Rolling Vale Farmland

Map Scale @A3: 1:11,500



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'floodplain pasture'. This highlights the situation of Eynsham at the edge of the Thames floodplain, at the point where the Evenlode joins from the north. The 'rolling vale farmland' is further divided into 'open' to the south-west, and 'semi-enclosed' elsewhere, reflecting a difference in woodland and tree cover.

- 3.7 This distinction is reflected in the identification of separate character areas covering *Eynsham Vale* to the north and west, and *Lower Windrush Valley and Eastern Thames Fringes* to the south and east. With the exception of a small section of the lower Chill Brook, the study area is all within the *Eynsham Vale* character area which is "defined by its low-lying and gentle relief and the patchwork of large, regularly shaped fields and comparatively strong structure of hedgerows and trees."

Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study

- 3.8 This 2004 study (see **Figure 3.3**) draws a similar general distinction, but presents a gradual transition between the 'rolling clayland' to the west of Eynsham, the 'lowland village farmlands' to the north and south, and the 'alluvial lowland' and 'river meadowland' to the east and south of Eynsham.
- 3.9 Acre Hill and the upper Chil Brook are included in the 'rolling clayland' landscape type, with the following key characteristics:
- *"Rolling landform, strongly undulating in places;*
 - *Dense corridors of willows bordering many small streams and ditches;*
 - *Small to medium-size mixed plantations;*
 - *Small to medium-size grass fields and some arable cropping; and*
 - *Moderately sized settlements and dispersed farmsteads."*
- 3.10 The lower Chil Brook and the area around City Farm and New Wintles Farm are included in the 'lowland village farmland' landscape type, with the following key characteristics:
- *"A varied, gently rolling and almost flat topography;*
 - *Medium to large-sized arable and hedged fields;*
 - *Thinly scattered hedgerow trees, which are mostly ash;*
 - *Ash, willow and poplars fringing ditches and streams; and*
 - *Prominent village settlements scattered throughout the area."*
- 3.11 The study also defines a 'Wooded Estatelands' character type, which includes Eynsham Hall Park and Blenheim Park, and describes key characteristics as comprising:
- *"Rolling topography with localised steep slopes.*
 - *Large blocks of ancient woodland and mixed plantations of variable sizes.*
 - *Large parklands and mansion houses.*
 - *A regularly shaped field pattern dominated by arable fields.*
 - *Small villages with strong vernacular character."*
- 3.12 When considering landscape at a local scale, the boundary lines between character types become less important, though the local variations remain key to understanding the intrinsic character of an area. As such, the present study has not identified further local character areas, but seeks to describe local characteristics within the framework of these existing classifications.

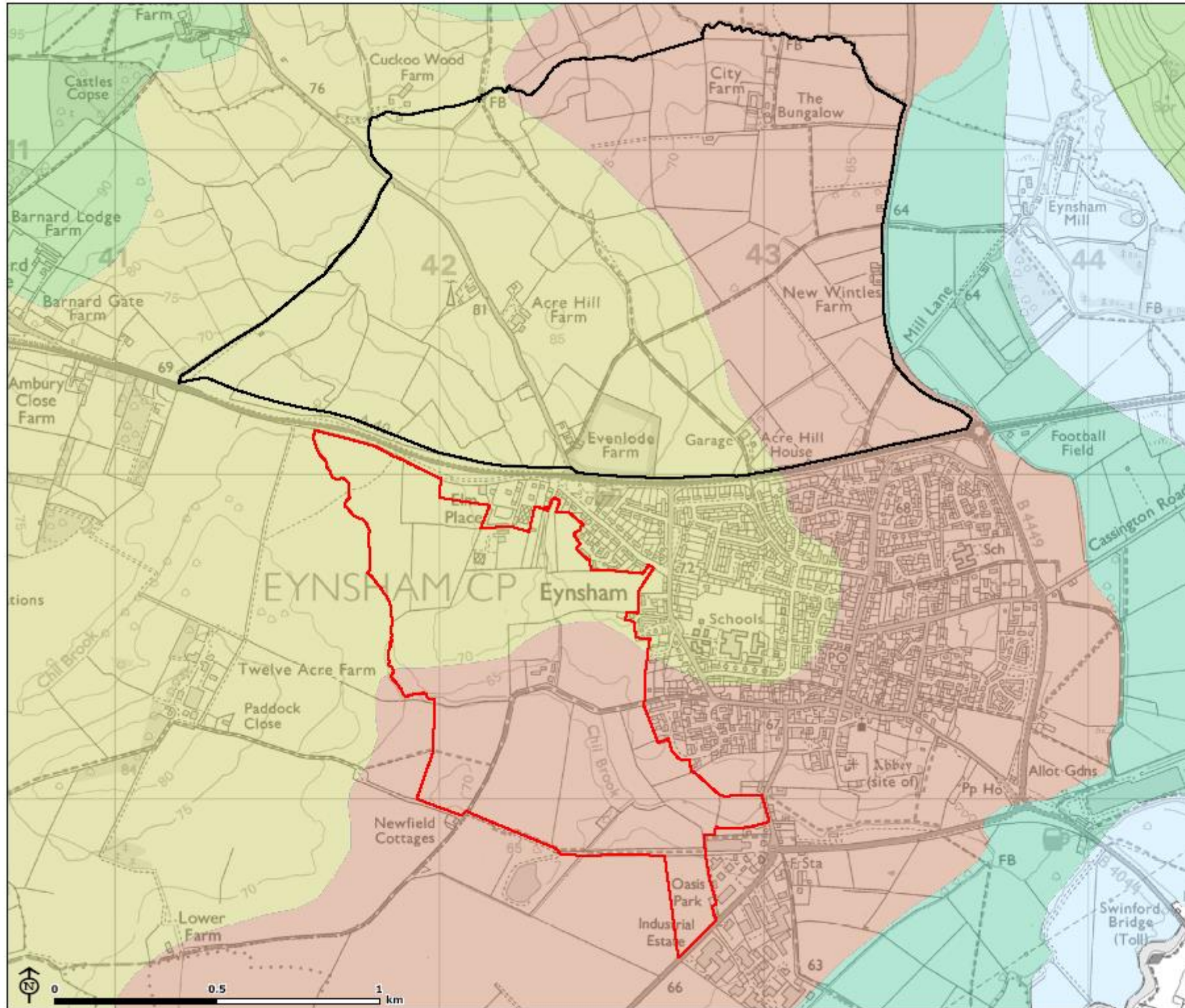
Landscape of the study area

- 3.13 The landform of the study area rises to its highest point - 85m at Acre Hill, roughly in the centre of the Garden Village area. Acre Hill extends in a low ridge to the north-west and south-east: to the east the land falls towards the floodplain of the Evenlode; and to the south it falls to the

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Figure 3.3: Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (2004)

-  Garden Village Site Boundary
-  West Eynsham Site Boundary
- Landscape Character Type**
-  Alluvial Lowland
-  Lowland Village Farmlands
-  River Meadowlands
-  Rolling Clayland
-  Wooded Estatelands



Map Scale @A3: 1:11,500



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Source: TVERC

meandering Chil Brook. Both watercourses flow southwards into the Thames, framing the settlement of Eynsham which sits just above the floodplain.



Acre Hill, looking south towards Wytham Hill *Flatter ground in the east of the GV site*

- 3.14 The lowest ground within the study area is just under 65m at the Evenlode (east of the GV site) and also along the lower Chil Brook in the south of the SDA, so that the variation is under 25m. The changes in elevation are subtle, and are perceived as a gently rolling topography rather than as prominent slopes or hills.
- 3.15 The Chil Brook flows through the southern part of the study area. This narrow stream follows an irregular course and is generally a minor feature in the landscape, forming a tree-lined field boundary. The Chil Brook is prone to flooding, affecting nearby parts of Eynsham. It drains the southern side of Acre Hill and feeds into the Thames south of Eynsham. North of Acre Hill, field drains flow east towards the Evenlode, and the northern boundary of the Garden Village site is marked by a tree-lined brook.
- 3.16 There is limited natural landcover within the study area, which has a predominantly rural nature. The land use is mainly pastoral on higher ground, with some arable on lower lying fields, particularly towards the Evenlode floodplain. There is a mix of improved pasture and rougher, more rushy pastures. Across Acre Hill and to the west, fields tend to be small and irregular in shape, and remnant ridge-and-furrow earthworks can still be discerned in places. On the lower ground to the east of the GV site and south of the SDA, fields become larger and more regular in outline, with even larger fields on the Evenlode floodplain proper, such as north of City Farm.



Oak trees along Cuckoo Lane (GV site)

Smaller fields along the Chil Brook (SDA)

- 3.17 Fields are generally divided by hedges, which vary in character from clipped hawthorn, to more outgrown lines of mixed scrub. Some hedges are gappy or missing. Along the A40 high hedgerows are a feature enclosing the road. Trees are an important element of field boundaries across the site, not only along watercourses as noted above. Many field boundaries are marked by trees, and occasionally there are dense tree lines as along the footpath north of the garage on the A40. Particular examples include the mature oaks lining the side of Cuckoo Lane, which runs across Acre Hill.

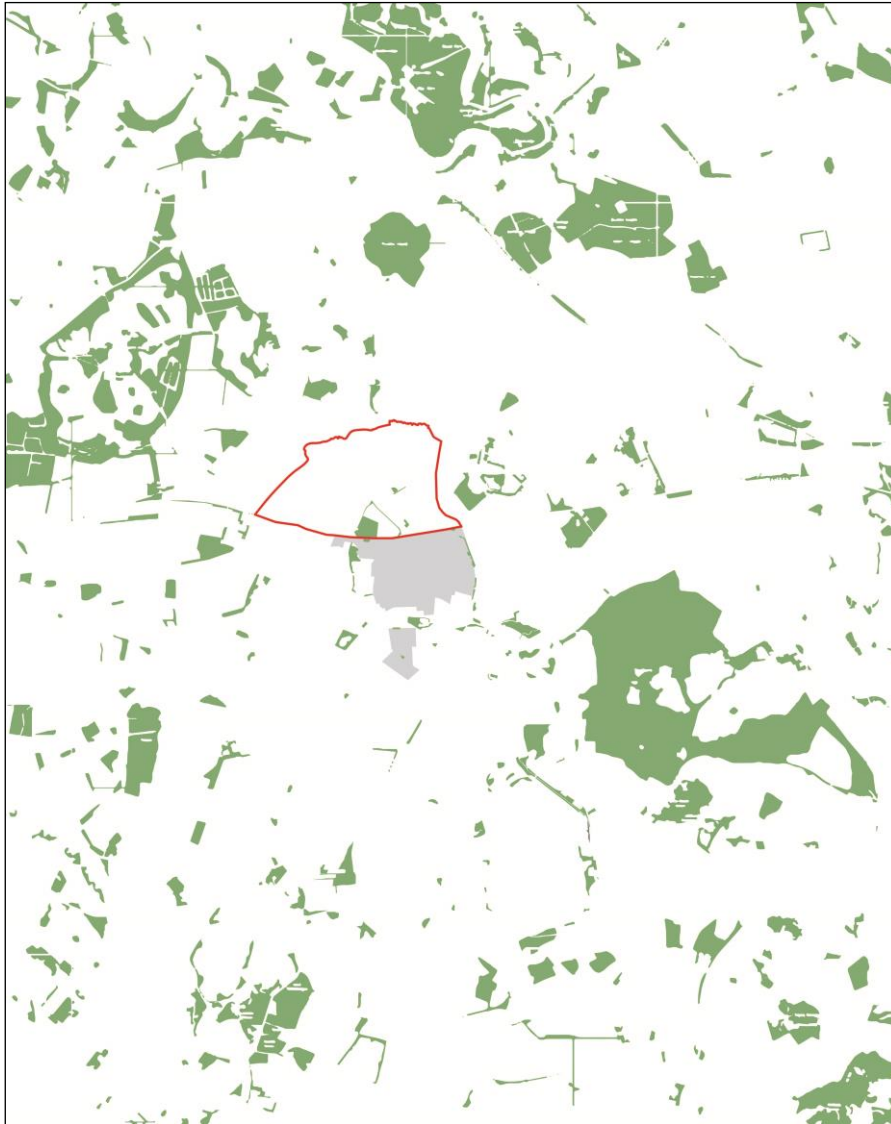


Figure 3.4: Analysis of woodland cover

- 3.18 While the wider area is characterised by woodland cover (**Figure 3.4**), much of it associated with historic designed landscapes, there are few areas of woodland in the study area: the most significant is Eynsham Wood, a recently planted millennium woodland, comprising 5 hectares of native species with managed grass paths for access. To the south of Old Witney Road is a second area of woodland at Fruitlands. Although woodland is not widespread, combined with the good level of field boundary trees the area has a semi-enclosed character, with trees being a feature in almost all views. This contributes to the sense of an intact landscape in good condition.
- 3.19 Several farms and other commercial enterprises are located within the study area. Some of these, including aggregate recycling in the east of the area, are quite extensive, but are well screened by the frequent field boundary trees noted above. Farm and agricultural buildings are generally non-traditional in character, with the exception of City Farm an early 19th-century farmhouse and outbuildings.



View over City Farm from Acre Hill

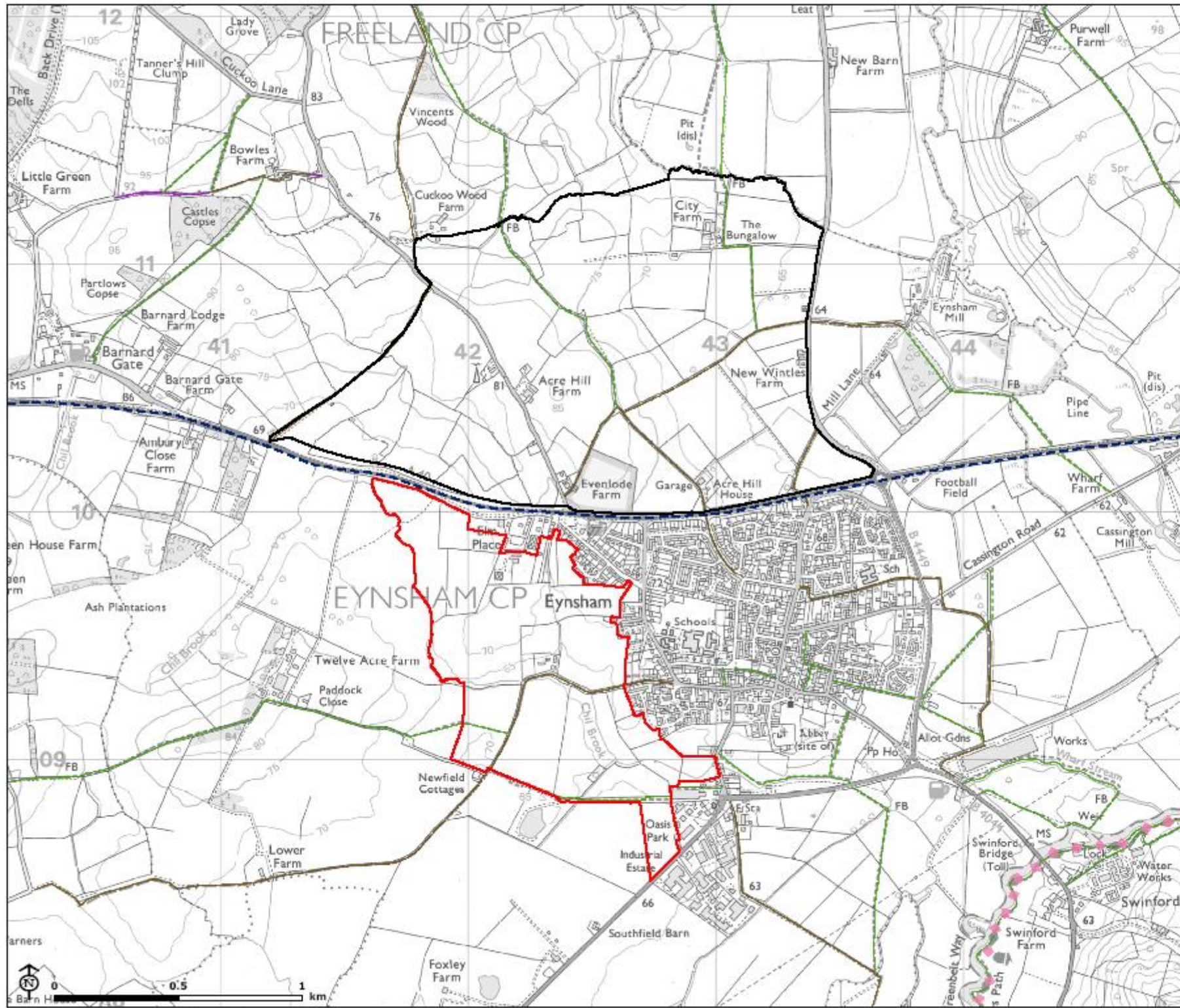


St Leonard's church from the West Eynsham site

- 3.20 The A40 forms a firm boundary along the north edge of Eynsham, but to the west the settlement extends into the adjacent countryside north of the Chil Brook. In this area, residential development forms an irregular edge, adjoining open spaces and horse paddocks. Closer to the A40 are commercial premises, and to the south of the Chil Brook is the Oasis Park industrial estate. Much of Eynsham comprises relatively modern residential development, with more traditional building types along High Street, Acre End Street, Mill Street and Newland Street, that together form the historic nucleus of the settlement.
- 3.21 A network of public rights of way gives access through the study area, including routes east-west and north-south across the Garden Village site, and east-west across the West Eynsham site, with paths continuing into the wider countryside (see **Figure 3.5**). The A40 incorporates footpath/cycleways on either side, though this wide busy road presents a barrier to north-south access.
- 3.22 Away from the noise of the A40, this is a strongly rural landscape with a relatively high level of tranquillity. Light pollution maps indicate brighter skies around Eynsham itself, but relatively dark skies in the north of the Garden Village site.
- 3.23 The subtle changes in elevation and layers of field boundary trees means that long, open views are not a feature across most of the area, with few visible landmarks. However, from the more elevated parts of Acre Hill, and particularly from the public footpath that crosses this higher ground, there are attractive views north to the spire at Church Hanborough; south-east to the wooded slopes of Wytham Hill, over the roofs of Eynsham; and north-east over City Farm to higher ground beyond the Evenlode. The West Eynsham site is more visually contained by rising ground, though there are views across the Thames to Wytham Hill. St Leonard's Church in Eynsham is a local landmark and is seen in views from some locations in the West Eynsham site, and more prominently from the south of the settlement.

Key characteristics

- 3.24 The key characteristics of the study area can be summarised as follows:
- Gently rolling clay vale landscape, with subtle changes in elevation;
 - Strongly rural character, a landscape in good condition;
 - Parcels of small irregular fields with hedges and field boundary trees particularly associated with streams, giving way to more open arable land on river floodplain areas;
 - Small-scale streams provide local variety and connections through the landscape;
 - Traditional building types are found within Eynsham and, for example, at City Farm;
 - Woodland is limited, but dense hedges and hedgerow trees provide a wooded character; and
 - Character is locally affected by mineral workings, settlement edges and by the busy A40.



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Map 3.5: Map Showing Existing Rights of Way and Cycle Routes Around Eynsham

- Garden Village Site Boundary
- West Eynsham Site Boundary
- Bridleway
- Footpath
- Restricted Byway
- National Trail
- Cycle route

Map Scale @A3: 1:15,000



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4 Landscape sensitivity

- 4.1 This part of the report analyses the sensitivity of the landscape to change. It refers to previous sensitivity appraisals that have been undertaken for the wider area, and presents new site-specific appraisals for the Garden Village site and the West Eynsham SDA.

Previous sensitivity appraisals

- 4.2 A large proportion of the two sites were previously examined as part of the Oxford Spatial Options Assessment, a strategic study to identify and appraise options for accommodating Oxford's unmet housing need.⁸ This included a high-level landscape sensitivity appraisal as well as wider environmental and planning considerations. The study was undertaken as a comparative exercise looking at 36 spatial options. The landscape sensitivity element was based on criteria adapted for a strategic study.
- 4.3 The 'land north of Eynsham' (similar but not identical to the Garden Village site as identified in the Local Plan 2031 insofar as it excluded the land around City Farm) was identified as having medium-high overall landscape sensitivity (p.290), based on a mix of medium-high, medium and medium-low findings on the individual criteria. The summary of overall landscape sensitivity highlights:
- rural character with little modern development;
 - frequent woodland cover along field boundaries and at Eynsham Wood;
 - open views, particularly in the east of the site; and
 - more prominent areas such as Acre Hill.
- 4.4 In relation to the 'land west of Eynsham' (again, similar but not identical to the West Eynsham site as identified in the Local Plan 2031 insofar as it excluded the land south of Chilbridge Road), sensitivity was identified as medium across all criteria, leading to medium overall landscape sensitivity (p.298). The summary notes:
- contribution to the rural setting of Eynsham;
 - naturalistic features including mature hedgerows/trees and Chil Brook; and
 - rural character with good levels of tranquillity.
- 4.5 These appraisals provide relevant background to this report which has been undertaken as a more detailed, site-specific analysis rather than as part of a strategic, comparative exercise. Furthermore, unlike the previous study, this report considers the whole of the site areas as identified in the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031.

Sensitivity appraisal

- 4.6 This section sets out the sensitivity appraisals for the Garden Village and the West Eynsham SDA. The criteria-based appraisals are presented in **Tables 4.1** and **4.2**, based on the criteria set out in **Appendix 1**. Further description of sensitivity variations across each site is also provided.

⁸ LUC; BBP Regeneration (2016) Oxford Spatial Options Assessment. Oxfordshire County Council. Available at [<https://www2.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/sites/default/files/folders/documents/communityandliving/partnerships/GrowthBoard/OxfordSpatialOptionsFinalReport.pdf>].

Table 4.1: Sensitivity appraisal: Garden Village

Criterion	Sensitivity appraisal
Physical character (including topography and scale)	<p>The landform of the site is subtly rolling, with few distinctive topographical features. However, it is not featureless or uniform, and the subtlety of its landform lends a degree of sensitivity. The underlying landscape is large in scale, but is overlain by an agricultural pattern of varied scale. Larger-scale intensive landscapes in the east of the area are of low-moderate sensitivity, and coincide with flatter topography. The smaller scale fields with more continuous hedgerows are located in the western part of the site, on slightly higher ground. Together with the highest ground of Acre Hill, this area is of moderate sensitivity. The slightly incised tree-lined brook at the north of the site is of moderate-high sensitivity.</p>
Natural character	<p>There is limited natural landcover across the site, the great majority of which is under pasture or arable cultivation. There are no designated habitats in the site, though fields to the north of the Garden Village site are identified as Local Wildlife Sites for meadow habitat and arable flora with City Farm as a whole considered by Plantlife to be of European importance for arable plants. There is one area of native woodland, and many mature trees and dense hedgerows across the site. On the other hand, there are areas of intensive cultivation and commercial use. The landscape is not one of wholly natural appearance, but of rural character with frequent semi-natural features, and sensitivity is moderate.</p>
Historic landscape character	<p>The field patterns across the site comprise a mix of planned and piecemeal enclosure, with the older pattern of smaller, more irregular fields in the west giving way to more recent regular fields in the east, although the listed buildings at City Farm gives the eastern area historic character. While there are a number of historic environment features recorded, including a deserted medieval village and several prehistoric features, these are not readily apparent in the landscape. To the untrained eye the time-depth of the landscape is of a long-established rural area, though with deeper knowledge longer historical vistas can be perceived. Sensitivity is judged to be moderate.</p>
Nature and setting of existing settlement/ development	<p>The core of Eynsham lies on the lower slopes closer to the river, south-east of the site. The settlement has expanded northward onto the slightly higher slopes, but remains within the Thames Valley. The high ground of Acre Hill forms a watershed between the Thames to the west and south and the Evenlode to the east. The existing settlement boundary is the busy A40 which forms a barrier in the landscape, and there is limited intervisibility between the site and the existing settlement. In wider views such as from Beacon Hill, the open country to the north provides a backdrop to Eynsham. New development will not relate strongly to the existing settlement, but its impact on settlement setting may also be limited. Development may offer opportunities for enhancing the relationship between Eynsham, the A40 and the landscape to the north. The site is therefore judged to be of moderate sensitivity.</p>

Criterion	Sensitivity appraisal
Views and visual character including skylines	Due to the subtle topography of the site, long views are limited except in the east where the site is open to the Evenlode valley, with the gentle ridge of Acre Hill forming a low backdrop. Otherwise, skylines are not distinctive and are characterised by layers of field boundary trees. In wider views across the landscape Acre Hill can be identified, though it is not nearly as prominent as Wytham Hill to the south, forming instead part of a wooded skyline. From high ground on Acre Hill, there are views north to Church Hanborough; south-east over the roofs of Eynsham to Wytham Hill; and north-east to higher ground beyond the Evenlode. Views of development in other parts of the site would mainly be from close at hand, such as from the roads adjacent to the site. The high ground of Acre Hill and the land to the west is therefore of moderate-high sensitivity, while the rest of the area is relatively visually contained and of low-moderate sensitivity.
Access and recreation	Eynsham Wood is a publicly accessible area of recently planted woodland by the A40. There are public footpaths and bridle paths across the site, which lead into Eynsham to the south, although the A40 is a barrier to access. There are no formal attractions or promoted paths, but rights of way provide recreational routes north to Freeland and Church Hanborough. As a locally valued area sensitivity is moderate .
Perceptual and experiential qualities	This is a strongly rural landscape, with a well-established and largely undeveloped character. It has few intrusive modern features other than the aggregate recycling works at New Wintles, and occasional functional buildings. The presence and noise of the A40 and associated garage is a detractive feature in the south, though its influence wanes and to the north the landscape is increasingly tranquil. This is particularly apparent in the more enclosed sections such as along the northern brook. Sensitivity is judged to be moderate-high .

Summary of sensitivity: Garden Village

- 4.7 The landscape analysis has not identified any areas of the highest sensitivity against any of the criteria, though the strongly rural nature of the landscape is judged to be of moderate-high sensitivity for perceptual qualities. The other criteria were generally appraised as moderate, though with some local variation within the site. The high ground across Acre Hill was identified as being of higher sensitivity than the rest of the site in relation to topography and views. The northern brook is also judged to be of relatively higher sensitivity. The semi-natural features of the landscape – trees, woodland and hedgerows – contribute to many of the criteria and are also identified as a key sensitive feature in the landscape.

Table 4.2: Sensitivity appraisal: West Eynsham

Criterion	Sensitivity appraisal
Physical character (including topography and scale)	There is very little topographical variation across this site, with less than 10m separating high and low points. The landform is a very shallow valley of the Chil Brook, which meanders between slightly higher ground to north and south. To the west beyond the site is a low rise that provides some containment. Further enclosure is provided by the smaller, tree-lined fields around the western edge of Eynsham, including some fairly substantial areas of outgrown hedgerow, as well as the trees surrounding the pond to the south of the site. The stream valley is slightly more pronounced in the east, where more hedgerows

Criterion	Sensitivity appraisal
	and trees enclose small paddocks. Overall the landscape is of low-moderate sensitivity, with areas of moderate sensitivity associated with the small enclosed fields and paddocks closer to Eynsham.
Natural character	Natural landcover is represented by the hedgerow belts across the site, for example the belt which runs north from Corlan Farm linking in to Fruitlands wood. Chilbridge Road is lined by mature hedges, with trees along most of the Chil Brook. In the south-east there is a local network of hedges connecting with the wooded pond south of the site, and enclosing a series of small irregular fields along the stream, that support semi-natural grassland. There are no biodiversity designations on the site. The landscape has a rural or urban edge character with frequent semi-natural features, and sensitivity is moderate .
Historic landscape character	Field patterns across most of the area are the result of relatively modern field amalgamation. In the south-east, post-medieval pattern of small irregular enclosures has survived largely intact around the Chil Brook, and this is continuous with the brook corridor to the south of Eynsham, which is within the conservation area. There is an extensive scheduled monument to the south of the site, but this and other recorded sites have little or no visible presence in the landscape, other than the listed Chil Bridge. The line of the former railway is now barely discernible following development in the area where the station once stood. The sensitivity is moderate in the area of smaller fields, and low-moderate elsewhere.
Nature and setting of existing settlement/ development	Eynsham has spread steadily westwards from its historic core in a piecemeal fashion. Recent developments off Witney Road/ Old Witney Road have resulted in an uneven settlement edge without clear and robust settlement boundaries, and there are opportunities to enhance this relationship between built form and landscape. To the south, commercial development around the former station has created a separate focus of development, separated by the Chil Brook as a green corridor. The brook corridor forms an important boundary to the historical settlement further east. The site plays an important role in the setting of this western edge of Eynsham, including how it is viewed from the south-west. The site is therefore judged to be of moderate sensitivity.
Views and visual character including skylines	The site is generally contained by hedgerows and trees. However there are some key views from Chilbridge Road towards the roofs of Eynsham and the local landmark of the St Leonard's Church. From the southern part of the site there are views to Wytham Hill across the Thames. Local views west look up to Twelve Acre Farm on its low hill. The site is overlooked from the playing field and housing along its north-eastern perimeter, and can be glimpsed from the A40 through mature roadside vegetation. From the south it is more open, and development in this area may be visible from the south-west approaches to Eynsham such as the B4449. Being low-lying within the flat landscape, it does not form a feature in wider views, but the wooded farmland forms part of the countryside surrounding Eynsham. Sensitivity is judged to be moderate .
Access and recreation	Chilbridge Road is marked as a bridle path, and there are public footpaths along the south side of the site, linking Station Road with Twelve Acre Farm. There is also clear evidence of informal footpath routes through the fields in the southern part of the site. These routes

Criterion	Sensitivity appraisal
	are well used and likely to be valued by the community as they provide direct and accessible links from the settlement into the countryside, with options for longer and shorter circular routes. The SDA also includes the Bartholomew School Playing Field off Witney Road. The north-western part of the site does not play a significant role in access and recreation. Sensitivity is judged to be moderate .
Perceptual and experiential qualities	The south-eastern part of the site benefits from enclosure within small fields with a semi-natural character: despite being close to the large commercial buildings to the south this area has a higher level of tranquillity. Chilbridge Road, which is not a through route, also has a degree of rural tranquillity. To the north-west the noise of the A40 becomes more apparent as the land use becomes more intensive, and tranquillity is reduced. There is limited scenic value across the area, which in places has a slightly neglected urban fringe character. Overall sensitivity is low-moderate , though locally moderate in the small irregular fields to the south-east.

Summary of sensitivity: West Eynsham

This site includes the corridor of the Chil Brook, which continues eastward into the conservation area, and includes historic field patterns bounded by mature hedges. There is a reasonably strong landscape framework formed by these hedges and linking outwards to woodland at Fruitlands and at the pond to the south of the site. These features are sensitive to development, but could also allow sensitively designed development to be accommodated into this landscape whilst enhancing the relationship between built form and countryside, which is currently fragmented. The flat landscape allows limited views in and out, though development is most likely to be visible from the south-east approaches to Eynsham. There are key views from within this site that are sensitive to change, including views to St Leonard's Church in Eynsham and Wytham Hill, from locally valued recreational routes. Lower sensitivity is assigned to the land in the north-west, closer to the noise of the A40, and with fewer field boundaries. However, development in this area would relate less well to the existing settlement.

5 Masterplanning recommendations

- 5.1 Based on the general description and analysis of local character, and the analyses of landscape sensitivity, key constraints were identified for each site. These are features and elements of the landscape that may reduce or limit the potential to deliver the projected developments. The same analyses have also identified opportunities in terms of locations where it may be possible to site development in such a way that adverse effects are limited. As such, the focus is not on preserving the current situation, but on accommodating change in a way that retains local character and allows enhancement of key landscape features and elements
- 5.2 These constraints and opportunities are listed below as a series of principles that should be given consideration in the AAP/SPD/masterplanning process that will guide future development within both sites.
- 5.3 As an overall aim, development of both sites should be implemented in a way that will respect the predominantly rural landscape of West Oxfordshire, reflecting the 'diverse pattern of landscapes' identified in the West Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment. Of particular relevance to these sites are the 'historic parkland', 'low lying farmland and riverside meadows', and the 'scattering of rural villages' referred to in the landscape assessment.

Garden Village

- 5.4 Key principles for accommodating development in the landscape of the Garden Village site:
 - Careful consideration to be given to the siting, scale, massing and design of any development on the highest part of the site, across Acre Hill, where it would be more visible in the wider landscape, and appear on skylines in local views;
 - Ensure a degree of topographical, visual and landscape separation from Eynsham, with the latter facing the Thames and the Garden Village relating to the Evenlode;
 - Retain the rural character of listed buildings at City Farm by creating an offset that respects their setting, in line with the recommendations of the LUC historic environment assessment (see separate report);
 - Utilise and enhance screening vegetation around the aggregate recycling facility at New Wintles Farm to incorporate this feature into the more developed area of the Garden Village, while retaining separation from dwellings;
 - Avoid intensive development in the area west of Cuckoo Lane, where historic field boundaries are more vulnerable, and where buildings would be highly visible from the A40 – development in this area would ideally be lower in density, using and enhancing existing landscape structure to provide screening;
 - Ensure a landscape structure to the A40, to reduce traffic noise within residential development and to retain a landscape backdrop to Eynsham when seen in wider views from the south;
 - Along the eastern boundary, seek to retain the rural character along Lower Road, especially to the south, so as to retain perceptual separation from Eynsham;
 - Retain as much of the existing hedgerow as is reasonably practicable, using retained hedges and tree lines as landscape structure within the masterplan – key features include the double hedge north of the garage, and the older field boundaries to the west of Cuckoo Lane;
 - Create a woodland and open space network throughout the site, forming a landscape framework that provides green links (access and vegetation) between the established Eynsham Wood and other woodlands, hedgerows and watercourses;
 - Retain public rights of way through the site, and seek to preserve their rural setting and outlook – particularly views towards Wytham Hill from the paths on Acre Hill; and

- Retain and enhance vegetation along the brook to the north of the site as a robust settlement edge.

Advice on Garden Village Site boundary

- 5.5 The eastern boundary of the Garden Village site follows Lower Road. This forms a logical physical boundary and there is no reason to extend the site beyond this. Doing so may affect perceptual separation between settlements, as road users would pass through the new village prior to arriving at Eynsham. It would also intrude into the Oxford Green Belt.
- 5.6 While City Farm Brook forms an appropriate northern edge to the development, including land on the north side of the brook would allow the stream corridor to be safeguarded and as a broader open space, including woodland and informal recreational space as well as the existing pond, to allow a transition from settlement to open countryside. Allowing built development on the north side of City Farm Brook would not be appropriate however, as it would extend built form further up the Evenlode, with no clear boundary beyond.
- 5.7 To the west there is no clear boundary feature with the indicative Garden Village boundary following the route of a public right of way and in part, Cuckoo Lane. Any development proposals in this part of the site would therefore need to include measures to create a strong new settlement edge, building on the long-established hedgerows that are a feature of the landscape. There are no clear boundaries beyond the current site that would form a more logical edge, and therefore no landscape reason to expand the site boundary in this area.

West Eynsham

- 5.8 Key principles for accommodating development in the landscape of the West Eynsham site:
- Retain the small fields and hedgerows along the Chil Brook, and seek to develop this as an open space corridor with eastward links into the conservation area;
 - Retain as much of the existing hedgerow as is reasonably practicable, using retained hedges and tree lines as landscape structure within the masterplan – key features include the hedge along Chilbridge Road, and the hedge linking north to the wood at Fruitlands;
 - Create a woodland and open space network throughout the site, building on woodlands to the north and south of the site, and linking with retained hedgerows and watercourses;
 - Retain public rights of way through the site, and seek to preserve their rural setting and outlook – particularly the views to the parish church and Wytham Hill from the paths around the south side of the site;
 - Development should be carefully stitched in to the existing irregular settlement edge, to ensure integration of character and avoid the creation of a physically separate place;
 - Development should seek to enhance sections of weaker settlement edge where these currently exist, with the overall intention of deliberately creating a stronger, defensible and more permanent boundary to the west of Eynsham, replacing the current piecemeal character;
 - Enhance the tree cover along the northern section of the Chil Brook to extend this landscape corridor into the adjoining countryside, and to form a transition along the western settlement boundary from built form to open farmland;
 - Create a robust southern settlement boundary along the public footpath south of the Chil Brook – new woodland planting will help to screen views from the south, and separate residential development from the commercial uses at Oasis Park;
 - The route of the spine road should be carefully considered to minimise impacts on hedgerows and other valued features; and
 - Design of the spine road should avoid creation of a ‘transport corridor’ through integration of the route into the development and associated open space – the route could form part of the development boundary, facilitating the transition from settlement to countryside.

Appendix 1

Landscape sensitivity criteria

Landscape Sensitivity Appraisal Criteria

Physical character (including topography and scale)

This considers the shape and scale of the landform, landscape pattern and landscape elements in relation to the scale of potential development. Smooth, gently undulating or flat landforms are likely to be less sensitive to development than a landscape with a dramatic landform, distinct landform features or incised valleys with prominent slopes. This is because developments may mask distinctive topographical features which contribute to landscape character.

This criterion considers how developments fit with the scale of the landform (understanding the scale of the development proposed is important when applying this criterion). Larger scale, simple landforms are likely to be less sensitive to larger scale developments than smaller scale, enclosed landforms (where large scale developments could appear out of scale with the underlying landform). Conversely, smaller developments may be able to be screened within enclosed landforms, therefore reducing landscape sensitivity. Existing small-scale features in the landscape in the form of existing buildings or trees will influence the scale of development that can be accommodated in the landscape.

Low sensitivity	Low-moderate sensitivity	Moderate sensitivity	Moderate-high sensitivity	High sensitivity
<i>e.g. the landscape has smooth, gently undulating or featureless landform with uniform large-scale landscape pattern and low density of overlying landscape features.</i>		<i>e.g. the landscape has an undulating landform and some distinct landform features; it is overlain by a mixture of small-scale and larger scale field patterns and a moderate density of small-scale landscape features.</i>		<i>e.g. the landscape has a dramatic landform or distinct landform features that contribute positively to landscape character; the area has a high density of small-scale landscape features and is overlain by a small-scale field pattern.</i>

Natural character

This criterion considers the 'naturalistic' qualities of the landscape in terms of coverage of semi-natural habitats and valued natural features (e.g. trees, hedgerows) which could be vulnerable to loss from development. Areas with frequent natural features (including large areas of nationally or internationally designated habitats) result in increased sensitivity to development, while landscapes with limited natural features (including intensively farmed areas or areas with high levels of existing development) will be less sensitive.

Low sensitivity	Low-moderate sensitivity	Moderate sensitivity	Moderate-high sensitivity	High sensitivity
<i>e.g. much of the landscape is intensively farmed or developed with little semi-natural habitat coverage and few valued natural features.</i>		<i>e.g. there are areas of valued semi-natural habitats and features found in parts of the landscape, whilst other parts are intensively farmed or developed.</i>		<i>e.g. large areas of the landscape are nationally or internationally designated for their nature conservation interest; there is a frequent occurrence of valued natural features across the landscape.</i>

Historic landscape character

This considers the extent to which the landscape has 'time-depth' (a sense of being an historic landscape, with reference to the Historic Landscape Characterisation) and/or the presence of heritage assets that are important to landscape character (i.e. Conservation Areas, Scheduled Monuments, listed buildings, archaeological features and remains or other features listed in the landscape character assessment).

Landscapes with small-scale, more irregular field patterns of historic origin are likely to be more sensitive to the introduction of modern development than landscapes with large, regular scale field patterns because of the risk of losing characteristic landscape patterns.

Low sensitivity	Low-moderate sensitivity	Moderate sensitivity	Moderate-high sensitivity	High sensitivity

Landscape Sensitivity Appraisal Criteria

<i>e.g. A landscape with relatively few historic features important to the character of the area and little time depth (i.e. large intensively farmed fields).</i>		<i>e.g. A landscape with some visible historic features of importance to character, and a variety of time depths.</i>		<i>e.g. A landscape with a high density of historic features important to the character of the area and great time depth (i.e. piecemeal enclosure with irregular boundaries, ridge and furrow)</i>
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Nature (form, density, identity) and setting of existing settlement/development

This considers the overall settlement form and character of existing settlement edges and considers whether development in the landscape would be in accordance with the general pattern, setting and form of current development. It also relates to the landscape pattern associated with existing settlement edges (where relevant), for example if it is well integrated by woodland cover or open and exposed to form a 'hard edge' to the adjoining landscape.

This criterion also considers the extent to which the landscape contributes to the identity and distinctiveness of settlements, by way of its character and/or scenic quality, for example by providing an attractive backdrop/ setting, or playing an important part in views from a settlement. This also considers the extent to which the area contributes to a perceived gap between settlements (the loss of which would increase coalescence).

Low sensitivity	Low-moderate sensitivity	Moderate sensitivity	Moderate-high sensitivity	High sensitivity
<i>e.g. the area does not contribute positively to the setting of the settlement or play a separation role. Development in the assessment area would have a good relationship with the existing settlement form/ pattern, and could provide the opportunity to improve an existing settlement edge.</i>		<i>e.g. the area provides some contribution to the setting of the settlement by providing, or plays some part in views from the settlement, or play a role in the perception of a gap between settlements. Development in the assessment area may be slightly at odds with the settlement form/ pattern, and may adversely affect the existing edge to some extent.</i>		<i>e.g. the area provides an attractive backdrop/ setting to the settlement, plays an important part in views from the settlement, or forms an important part in the perception of a gap between settlements. Development in the assessment area would have a poor relationship with the existing settlement form/pattern, and would adversely affect an existing settlement edge (which may be historic or distinctive).</i>

Views and visual character including skylines

This considers the visual prominence of the assessment area, reflecting the extent of openness or enclosure in the landscape (due to landform or land cover), and the degree of intervisibility with the surrounding landscape (i.e. the extent to which potential development would be visible). Visually prominent landscapes are likely to be more sensitive to development than those which are not so visually prominent. Landscapes which are visually prominent and inter-visible with adjacent landscapes (both urban and rural) are likely to be more sensitive to development than those which are more hidden or less widely visible.

It also considers the skyline character of the area including whether it forms a visually distinctive skyline or an important undeveloped skyline. Prominent and distinctive and/or undeveloped skylines, or skylines with important landmark features, are likely to be more sensitive to development because new buildings/structures may detract from these skylines as features in the landscape. Important landmark features on the skyline might include historic features or monuments.

Low sensitivity	Low-moderate sensitivity	Moderate sensitivity	Moderate-high sensitivity	High sensitivity
<i>e.g. the area is enclosed/visually contained and/or has a</i>		<i>e.g. the area is semi-enclosed or has some enclosed and some open</i>		<i>e.g. the area is open and/or has a high degree of visibility from</i>

Landscape Sensitivity Appraisal Criteria				
<i>low degree of visibility from surrounding landscapes and the area does not form a visually distinctive or important undeveloped skyline</i>		<i>areas. It is likely to have some inter-visibility with surrounding landscapes, and may have some visually distinctive or undeveloped skylines within the area.</i>		<i>surrounding landscapes, and/or the area forms a visually distinctive skyline or an important undeveloped skyline.</i>
Access and recreation				
<p>This criterion considers the presence of features and facilities which enable enjoyment of the landscape, and the importance of these. They may include public rights of way, bridleways, open access land, and outdoor tourist / visitor attractions with facilities. Recreation activities such as walking, cycling, horse riding or more formal recreation activities where enjoyment of the landscape is important to the experience. Importance of features may be indicated by designation as long distance footpaths or recreation routes, national cycle routes, proximity to areas of local population, presence of National Trust land ownership, and outdoor tourist attractions often marked on Ordnance Survey maps.</p>				
Low sensitivity	Low-moderate sensitivity	Moderate sensitivity	Moderate-high sensitivity	High sensitivity
<i>e.g. recreation value limited to community sports facilities and local open spaces. Limited provision of access routes which are likely to be of community importance, e.g. local footpaths, bridleways and limited areas of open access land.</i>		<i>e.g. landscapes with green spaces or recreation areas valued in the local context. Well-used landscapes with some access land, footpaths and public rights of way, possibly with long distance recreation routes or outdoor attractions.</i>		<i>e.g. landscapes regionally important for access and enjoyment of the landscape, with popular outdoor tourist attractions, country parks, or a concentration of locally important outdoor attractions with visitor facilities, or well-connected long distance routes and public rights of way linking centres of population.</i>
Perceptual and experiential qualities				
<p>This considers qualities such as the rural character of the landscape (traditional land uses with few modern human influences), sense of remoteness or tranquillity. Landscapes that are relatively remote or tranquil (due to freedom from human activity and disturbance and having a perceived naturalness or a traditional rural feel with few modern human influences) tend to increase levels of sensitivity to development compared to landscapes that contain signs of modern development. High scenic value and dark night skies also add to sensitivity in relation to this criterion. This is because development will introduce new and uncharacteristic features which may detract from a sense of tranquillity and or remoteness/naturalness.</p>				
Low sensitivity	Low-moderate sensitivity	Moderate sensitivity	Moderate-high sensitivity	High sensitivity
<i>e.g. the area is significantly influenced by development/ human activity, where new development would not be out of character.</i>		<i>e.g. A landscape with some sense of rural character, but with some modern elements and human influences.</i>		<i>e.g. A tranquil or highly rural landscape, lacking strong intrusive elements. A landscape of high scenic value with dark skies and a high perceived degree of rural character and naturalness with few modern human influences.</i>

Appendix 2

Garden Village Principles

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's [prospectus on Garden Communities](#)⁹ defines a series of qualities which developments are expected to embody:

- **Clear identity** – a distinctive local identity as a new garden community, including at its heart an attractive and functioning centre and public realm.
- **Sustainable scale** – built at a scale which supports the necessary infrastructure to allow the community to function self-sufficiently on a day to day basis, with the capacity for future growth to meet the evolving housing and economic needs of the local area.
- **Well-designed places** – with vibrant mixed use communities that support a range of local employment types and premises, retail opportunities, recreational and community facilities.
- **Great homes** – offer a wide range of high quality, distinctive homes. This includes affordable housing and a mix of tenures for all stages of life.
- **Strong local vision and engagement** – designed and executed with the engagement and involvement of the existing local community, and future residents and businesses. This should include consideration of how the natural and historic environment of the local area is reflected and respected.
- **Transport** – integrated, forward looking and accessible transport options that support economic prosperity and wellbeing for residents. This should include promotion of public transport, walking, and cycling so that settlements are easy to navigate, and facilitate simple and sustainable access to jobs, education, and services.
- **Healthy places** – designed to provide the choices and chances for all to live a healthy life, through taking a whole systems approach to key local health & wellbeing priorities and strategies.
- **Green space** – generous, accessible, and good quality green and blue infrastructure that promotes health, wellbeing, and quality of life, and considers opportunities to deliver environmental gains such as biodiversity net gain and enhancements to natural capital.
- **Legacy and stewardship arrangements** – should be in place for the care of community assets, infrastructure and public realm, for the benefit of the whole community.
- **Future proofed** – designed to be resilient places that allow for changing demographics, future growth, and the impacts of climate change including flood risk and water availability, with durable landscape and building design planned for generations to come. This should include anticipation of the opportunities presented by technological change such as driverless cars and renewable energy measures.

The prospectus defines Garden Villages as comprising between 1,500 and 10,000 homes, and indicates that proposals can be for a discrete new settlement, or take the form of transformational development of an existing settlement, both in nature and in scale. All proposals must be of sufficient scale to be largely self-sustaining and genuinely mixed use.

The Town and Country Planning Association¹⁰ has defined garden settlements as holistically planned new settlements which enhance the natural environment and offer high-quality affordable housing and locally accessible work in beautiful, healthy and sociable communities.

It defines [Garden City Principles](#) as a framework for their delivery:

- Land value capture for the benefit of the community.
- Strong vision, leadership and community engagement.
- Community ownership of land and long-term stewardship of assets.
- Mixed-tenure homes and housing types that are genuinely affordable.
- A wide range of local jobs in the Garden City within easy commuting distance of homes.

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https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/734145/Garden_Communities_Prospectus.pdf

¹⁰ <https://www.tcpa.org.uk/garden-city-principles>

- Beautifully and imaginatively designed homes with gardens, combining the best of town and country to create healthy communities, and including opportunities to grow food.
- Development that enhances the natural environment, providing a comprehensive green infrastructure network and net biodiversity gains, and that uses zero-carbon and energy-positive technology to ensure climate resilience.
- Strong cultural, recreational and shopping facilities in walkable, vibrant, sociable neighbourhoods.
- Integrated and accessible transport systems, with walking, cycling and public transport designed to be the most attractive forms of local transport.