



WEST OXFORDSHIRE DRAFT LOCAL PLAN (2012)

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL REVIEW OF SUBMISSIONS FOR CARTERTON AND WITNEY STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS

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REVIEW OF LANDSCAPE SUBMISSIONS FOR CARTERTON AND WITNEY STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS

Executive Summary

This report is prepared by Kirkham Landscape Planning Ltd (KLPL) on behalf of West Oxfordshire District Council. Kirkham Landscape Planning Ltd were commissioned to examine the landscape and visual aspects of seven options for major development. These are four options on the edge of Carterton: Option A: east of Carterton by Bloor Homes and Christ Church; Option B: west of Carterton by Crest Nicholson; Option C: Kilkenny Farm by Figbury Ltd; and Option D: north of Carterton by David Wilson Homes; and three options on the edge of Witney: West Witney by Persimmon Homes, Bovis Homes and Sovereign Land; North Witney by the North Witney Consortium; and East Witney by The East Witney Land Consortium. The report goes on to make recommendations to WODC on the landscape and visual potential and constraints of each option and on a possible way forward.

The Report draws on earlier landscape character and landscape sensitivity studies undertaken on behalf of West Oxfordshire District Council: West Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment 1998 (WOLA) and the Witney and Carterton Landscape Assessments, 2007 and 2009 respectively, by Amanda Hopwood Associates (AHLC). Further field studies were undertaken and a detailed examination of the supporting landscape documents produced for the seven options. Particular attention has been given to the inter-relationship between the landscape hinterland and the main settlements and the nearby villages which lie within 1km of the towns (Shilton, Brize Norton, Alvescot, Hailey, Delly End and Poffley End, Minster Lovell, Curbridge and High Cogges); and to the degree that the landscape hinterland is representative of the wider landscape within which it lies. The study uses the 'updated settlement edge areas' (identified in AHLC) as its reporting units and endorses the boundaries of these areas. However the brief for the study also required a review of the landscape sensitivity and importance of these areas in the light of the recent development, landscape and visual assessments submitted by the developers (and the emerging Local Plan policies).

The study also required a re-examination of the role of Green Infrastructure, around Carterton and Witney. To date the provision of new green infrastructure has concentrated on providing landscape buffers to the open countryside which would also help to screen the new built form in time. However Government guidance looks for Green Infrastructure to provide multi-purpose open space opportunities to serve the community as a

whole. This study however does seek to help identify a meaningful landscape buffer to protect the separate identity and local distinctiveness of the surrounding villages. The final recommended buffers are plotted on Figures 1A (Carterton), 1B (North Witney), 1C (West Witney) and 1D (East Witney). In each case the proposed buffer takes into account the land use, landscape features and landscape pattern of the open land between the settlements; the level of visibility; and the character of the edges of each settlement. There are locations where the landscape buffer is already much narrower (as between Brize Norton and Shilton Park) and it can be seen that this has resulted in the erosion of the landscape ability to maintain the separate identity of the two settlements. The landscaped transition zones recommended in this Report in Figures 2A to 2D either lie within the landscape buffer or are in addition to the landscape buffer; and are also essential to maintaining the separate identity of the settlements and the landscape character and quality of the open countryside between them.

The Report sets out the analysis of each site, and the proposed development options, in some detail. It examines the potential harm to the key landscape, visual and settlement characteristics of the hinterland around Carterton and Witney and the wider landscape and the effects of development on a number of sites around the town edge. It examines the benefits to be gained from landscape mitigation measures, as promoted by the developers, and of the provision of Green Infrastructure.

A. Carterton

The land on the edge of Carterton is a mix of very contrasting settlement patterns and character. The study was not required to undertake a detailed assessment of the settlement pattern but identifies key features that will contribute to a better understanding of the best townscape option for the area.

A number of key factors have determined the best landscape, townscape and visual option for the expansion of Carterton:

- Retention of an open landscape setting to the villages of Shilton, Brize Norton, and Alvescot;
- Retention as far as possible of the existing visual envelope to Carterton and avoidance of expansion into prominent open fields beyond existing visually strong barriers;
- Protection of the built form character of Carterton and the surrounding villages;
- Integration of key areas of green infrastructure into the settlement either as part of the landscape transition zones to the town or as an internal asset forming part of the enhancement of the townscape pattern;
- Protection of the open countryside that was once designated as an Area of High Landscape Value at Shilton Downs and now recognised and valued for its key landscape features.

The study concludes that none of the sites can be developed, as they were promoted, without some harm to acknowledged landscape, visual or settlement attributes. However, it is recommended that all four options A to D could be pursued further as all have some potential to meet West Oxfordshire’s housing needs around Carterton. Options A (east), C (Kilkenny Farm) and D (north) should be much reduced in area and capacity from that promoted in 2011 order to avoid material harm to the landscape. Any development within Option B will lead to some harm and therefore it is recommended that this area should be either completely ruled out; or alternatively comprehensively developed as an integrated extension to the town, with its own settlement character, subject to a number of design constraints.

In conclusion none of the options should be ruled out and in this plan period a combination of sites may be the least harmful to the landscape, visual and settlement quality of the area. Figure 2A illustrates potential sites recommended for further investigation. The Table below summarises the sensitivity of each site as shown in Figure 2A, ranked 1 to 4 with 1 recommended as having the least impact on the quality and character of the landscape, visual and settlement pattern.

Site	Location	Comparative landscape sensitivity	Comparative visual sensitivity	Comparative settlement sensitivity	Ranking
Option D (reduced area)	North of Carterton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The area is the most contained and enclosed Development would be an extension of the existing northern site and could be contained by existing vegetation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development would not give rise to significant additional visual impact Low visual influence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact on Shilton can be avoided Development relates well to the existing settlement 	1
Option A (reduced area)	East of Carterton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Area that is already most influenced by urban elements Fewer important local landscape features Landscape buffer to Brize Norton can be protected Area most removed from the wider landscape 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visually exposed area Urban elements are already visually intrusive Development would not give rise to significant additional visual impact over and above that already in existence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site relates well to the town The setting of Brize Norton is already affected by the airbase The integrity of Brize Norton can be protected through a well designed and robust landscape transition zone Presents an opportunity for the creation of major Green Infrastructure 	2
Option C (reduced area)	Kilkenny Farm, Carterton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partial expansion into the open landscape Avoids development within the wider landscape Potential to be integrated into the local landscape features 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visually exposed Development would not give rise to significant additional visual impact if well designed Existing features (topography and vegetation) will help screen the site from the outset 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low impact on the existing settlement pattern Potential to create a new satellite ‘village’ in keeping with current pattern The integrity of Brize Norton can be protected through a well designed and robust landscape transition zone 	3

<p>Option B (modified area)</p>	<p>West of Carterton</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major expansion into open countryside of high sensitivity • The site is part of the wider landscape • Low level of harm to the few on site landscape features outside of the Shill Brook corridor • Potential to enhance Shill Brook valley • Landscape buffer to Shilton and Alvescot can be protected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visually exposed area • Visual impact on the wider landscape • More difficult to reduce the visual impact in the short term whilst planting is young 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presents an opportunity for the creation of major Green Infrastructure • Development can avoid the expansion of Carterton close to the existing villages • The site provides an opportunity to contain the expansion of Carterton to within one area 	<p>4</p>
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The reduced areas of Options A and D (ranking 1 and 2), together with their accompanying green infrastructure provision, could be pursued further without incurring an adverse cumulative landscape impact. This could provide for around 600 - 900 dwellings, limiting the harm to landscape, visual and settlement values in Carterton and its hinterland. However these two options alone, reduced as recommended in this report, are unlikely to deliver the previously identified indicative figure of 1000 homes on the edge of the town.

If Option D were to be developed concurrently with Option C (ranking 3), the landscape and visual impact on the northern setting of Carterton would be substantial, especially on Swinbrook Road and Kilkenny Lane. However, relocation of the football club to within Option A may provide an opportunity to remove the wider influence of floodlighting on this exposed edge. Option C could therefore be considered in a second phase of development to meet the current target figure.

The detailed analysis has identified that Options B and C would both result in an adverse impact on the landscape character, visual amenity and settlement pattern of Carterton's landscape setting. In both cases the development will require a high standard of good quality design, in keeping with the local character, and an appropriate provision of green infrastructure for the benefit of the local landscape, Carterton and the surrounding villages. The Report sets out recommendations on reducing the impact on the local and wider landscape and on the adjoining villages and on the provision of Green Infrastructure.

B. Witney

The area has a strong local landscape character and contains a marked contrast between the settlement pattern at Witney and that found within the villages. The current study was not required to undertake a detailed assessment of the settlement pattern but, as for Carterton, identifies key features that will contribute to a better understanding of the best townscape option for the area.

A number of key factors will determine the best landscape, townscape and visual option for the expansion of Witney:

- Retention of a traditional open landscape setting to the villages;
- Conservation and enhancement of the most sensitive and historically intact areas of open landscape within the existing rural hinterland;
- Retention of the existing visual envelope to Witney and avoidance of expansion into prominent open fields beyond existing visually strong barriers;
- Protection of the built form character of Witney and the surrounding villages;
- Conservation and enhancement of the Windrush Valley and Wychwood Forest
- Integration of key areas of green infrastructure into the settlement either as part of the landscape transition zones to the town or as an internal asset forming part of the enhancement of the townscape pattern; and
- Creation of an opportunity to significantly improve the hard urban edge and meet landscape targets for the area as set out in OWLS, WOLA and AHLC.

The analysis shows that none of the sites can be developed, as they are currently promoted, without some harm to acknowledged landscape, visual or settlement attributes and without being contrary to current emerging policy. It is however recommended that all three options, West, North and East Witney are able to contribute to West Oxfordshire's housing needs to a greater or lesser degree provided the potential area for development is pulled away from the most sensitive landscapes. Development on all of the sites must also be accompanied by a substantial enhancement of the local landscape to strengthen the landscape edge of the town and reinstate the traditional landscape pattern in the urban-rural transitional zone. It is therefore recommended that West Witney remains the preferred option although a small reduction in the developable area would help protect the wider landscape and enhance the key local landscape, visual and settlement features. It is recommended that the development in North Witney and East Witney Cogges Triangle (Area B) are reduced from that being promoted; that development in East Witney off Stanton Harcourt Road (Area C) is considerably reduced; and that the East Witney off Jubilee Way site option (Area A) is not pursued further. Figures 2B to 2D illustrate potential sites to be further investigated.

Option: West Witney

On the basis of the above landscape, visual and settlement analysis West Witney remains the preferred option to accommodate 1000 dwellings. Although there are no over-riding constraints to development of the site, a number of recommendations have been made to mitigate harm to the wider landscape and key landscape features and avoid further harm to the western edge of Witney.

Option: North Witney

This report concludes that, provided a substantive landscape transition zone is retained next to Hailey/Poffley End as shown in Figure 2B, this option could be developed on smaller scale as an extension to the existing built form. The landscape character is already influenced by the existing urban edge and the site could be partly developed without harm to the wider landscape. A number of recommendations seek to protect and improve the urban edge and local landscape features.

Option: East Witney

The three sites within the East Witney option are all subject to significant landscape, visual and settlement constraints and it is recommended that only Area B be pursued as a strategic site, albeit with a reduced footprint. Area C may have the potential to provide a small number of houses. Again a number of recommendations seek to protect and improve the valley and Wychwood landscapes and local landscape features.

Cumulative effects and phasing

All of the site options are fairly discrete, separated by the town, with little intervisibility except in the case of North Witney and East Witney Areas A and B. With the proposed amendments to Area B and the control of the height of development in West Witney, intervisibility with North Witney should be avoidable. However, even the reduced levels of development will have some damaging effect on the local landscape until such time that the landscape mitigation matures. Phasing of development at Witney should be considered to avoid the creation of further encirclement by extensive new estates with immature landscape settings.

The character led approach, promoted by West Witney, is commended as a means to create local distinctiveness and variety within the estates. This approach should be informed by a thorough understanding of the town wide and local landscape, visual and settlement characteristics. This approach should in turn inform phasing of the individual developments.

Summary of Recommendations: Carterton and Witney

Site	Location	Promoter	Submitted housing no.s	AHLC Area	Key constraints to development	Recommendation	Recommended action as shown in Figures 2A to 2D	Estimated housing capacity
Carterton Option A (Site 1A)	East of Carterton	Bloor Homes and Christ Church	1000	Carterton B1	Within setting of Brize Norton	Reduce to avoid setting of Brize Norton	Consider smaller area in combination with the existing playing fields	500 - 750
Carterton Option A (Site 1B)	East of Carterton		750	Carterton B1				
Carterton Option B	West of Carterton	Crest Nicholson	1000	Carterton D1 / D2	Within open limestone wolds beyond a natural barrier to the town	This area should be either completely ruled out or comprehensively developed as an integrated extension to the town, with its own settlement character.	Consider amendments to development form, green infrastructure provision and footprint	Up to 1000
Carterton Option C	Kilkenny Farm, Carterton	Figbury Ltd	1000	Carterton A2	Small part within setting of Brize Norton Within open limestone wolds beyond a natural barrier to the town	Amend to avoid setting of Brize Norton and expansion into open wolds in north	Consider smaller area on the southern part of the site	500 - 750
Carterton Option D	North of Carterton	David Wilson Homes	300	Carterton A1 / A3	Part within setting of Shilton and encroaches into open wolds	Contain development to within landscape character area A3 only	Consider smaller area in A3 as an expansion to the existing scheme	100 - 150
North Witney	North of Witney	North Witney Consortium	1500	North Witney C3/C4	High landscape sensitivity Need to protect the landscape setting of the villages and scattered farmsteads Need to protect the open valley landscape and its continuity with the valley northwards	Reduce area to avoid development within the landscape buffer which contains important surviving elements of the settled ancient pastures around the settlements	Consider smaller area on the southern part of the site whilst including proposed landscape transition zone to the existing edge of the town	750 - 850

West Witney	North Curbridge	Persimmon Homes, Bovis Homes and Sovereign Land	1000	West Witney G and H	Risk of coalescence of Witney and Curbridge. Need to protect the surrounding open rural landscape from visual intrusion. Containment of urban growth and integration with existing built form Protection of Colwell Brook landscape corridor	Slightly reduce area to enable landscape buffer to the open countryside Enhanced green infrastructure including Colwell Brook landscape corridor and links to small copse on Downs Road	Consider minor changes to extent of development. Particular care to be taken in determining the height of any development above the 104m contour to avoid any further visual intrusion from development on higher ground Short section of development to form frontage to Downs Road and Curbridge Road to enhance these gateways into town Consider slight increase in density within centre of development site to allow for additional open space provision as shown	1000
East Witney	East and south-east of Witney	The East Witney Land Consortium	450	East Witney D1/D2/F1	D1 is part of, and integral to, the Wychwood Forest area Higher ground in D2 forms an important part of the Witney/High Cogges landscape buffer and is an important backcloth to the town Views over the Windrush Valley and to St Mary's Church, Cogges F1 lies in the Windrush in Witney Project Area Landscape sensitivity of the floodplan and Windrush valley landscape	Part of Area B in Cogges Triangle below the 95m AOD contour, and a small part of Area C identified in F,1 have the potential to be developed for housing	Within Area B: development to be contained below the 95m AOD contour and to avoid the land south of Cogges Hill Road as shown in Figure 2D Within Area C: Consider two very small development areas: one in the north which would round off existing development and one to the south adjacent to and fronting onto Stanton Harcourt Road as shown in figure 2D Floodplain to be avoided	250-300

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REPORT STRUCTURE

1. Background to Study and Report

A. CARTERTON

- 2. Brief summary of the adopted Local Plan and draft Core Strategy (2011) guidance and policy in relation to the settlement expansion of Carterton**
- 3. Overview of landscape and visual characteristics and sensitivity and guidance from WOLA and AHLC**
- 4. Overview of settlement pattern at Carterton and its landscape hinterland, including Shilton, Brize Norton, Kencot, and Alvescot**
- 5. Summary of expansion options: west, north and east**
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- 7. Review of Development Options:**
 - 7.1 Assessment of Option A: Land East of Carterton (Bloor Homes and Christ Church)**

- 7.2 Assessment of Option B: Land West of Carterton (Crest Nicholson)
- 7.3 Assessment of Option C: Kilkenny Farm, Land North of Carterton (Figbury Ltd)
- 7.4 Assessment of Option D: Land North of Carterton (David Wilson Homes)
- 7.5 Evaluation of possible combinations of development options

8. Recommendations

B. WITNEY

- 9. Brief summary of the adopted Local Plan and draft Core Strategy (2011) guidance and policy in relation to the settlement expansion of Witney
- 10. Overview of landscape and visual characteristics and sensitivity and guidance from WOLA and AHLC
- 11. Overview of settlement pattern at Witney and its landscape hinterland, including the nearby villages
- 12. Summary of expansion options at Witney
- 13. Key constraints and opportunities
- 14. Review of Development Options:
 - 14.1 North Witney (North Witney Consortium)
 - 14.2 West Witney (Persimmon Homes, Bovis Homes and Sovereign Land)
 - 14.3 East Witney (The East Witney Land Consortium)
- 15. Recommendations

FIGURES

Figures 1A and 2A: Carterton

Figures 1B and 2B: North Witney

Figures 1C and 2C: West Witney

Figures 1D and 2D: East Witney

1. Background to Study and Report

- 1.1 This Report has been prepared by Kirkham Landscape Planning Ltd (KLPL) on behalf of West Oxfordshire District Council. KLPL were commissioned to examine the landscape and visual aspects of options for major development. These are four options on the edge of Carterton: Option A: east of Carterton by Bloor Homes and Christ Church; Option B: west of Carterton by Crest Nicholson; Option C: Kilkenny Farm by Figbury Ltd; and Option D: north of Carterton by David Wilson Homes; and three options on the edge of Witney: North Witney by the North Witney Consortium; West Witney by Persimmon Homes, Bovis Homes and Sovereign Land; and East Witney by The East Witney Land Consortium. The Report goes on to make recommendations to WODC on the landscape and visual potential and constraints of each option and on a possible way forward.
- 1.2 This Report draws on earlier landscape character and landscape sensitivity studies undertaken on behalf of West Oxfordshire District Council: West Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment 1998 (WOLA) and the Witney and Carterton Landscape Assessments, 2007 and 2009 respectively, by Amanda Hopwood Associates (AHLA). Further field studies have been undertaken and a detailed examination of the supporting landscape documents produced for the options. Particular attention has been given to the inter-relationship between the landscape hinterland and the main settlements and the nearby villages which lie within 1km of the towns (Shilton, Brize Norton, Alvescot, Hailey, Poffley End, Minster Lovell, Curbridge and High Cogges); and to the degree that the landscape hinterland is representative of the wider landscape within which it lies.
- 1.3 All of the promoters have submitted indicative masterplans. Carterton's Options B and D and Witney's West Witney Option are supported by landscape and visual impact assessments. This report assesses the submissions in general terms but does not comment on detailed design proposals. Instead it focuses on the main aspects of each development option and the impact on the key features of the landscape, settlement and visual environment that make Carterton or Witney, the surrounding villages and the surrounding countryside distinctive, sensitive, and valued. It explores the manner in which each option will either contribute to, or detract from, the local landscape, visual and settlement character.
- 1.4 West Oxfordshire District Council have received a number of comments on the options from a number of parties including the promoters, local residents, town and parish councils and other independent technical advisors. This report has had regard to them in making recommendations to the Council.

A. CARTERTON

2. Brief summary of the adopted Local Plan and draft Core Strategy (2011) guidance and policy in relation to the settlement expansion of Carterton

- 2.1 The West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 (adopted June 2006) defined strategic gaps and buffers around Carterton supported by policy NE2. Apart from the development identified in the Local Plan under the Carterton Objectives and Proposals 15 and 17, development in the gaps and buffers was restricted to limited types, which excluded housing.
- 2.2 The West Oxfordshire Draft Core Strategy Consultation January 2011 sets out a strategy for Carterton which identified two options (to the west or east) as areas of Future Development Potential. This strategy was informed by evidence from both the West Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment 1998 (WOLA) and the Carterton Landscape Assessment 2009 by Amanda Hopwood Associates (AHLC). The Core Strategy also identified a Northern Recreational Area, between Shilton and Brize Norton, north of the proposed new link road and housing between Shilton Road and Elmhurst Way. Other environmental allocations include Shilton Conservation Area and the Shill Brook Valley Biodiversity Conservation Target Area. The Local Plan policy of gaps and buffers has not been carried forward, in line with current Government guidance, but policy guidance that requires any development to respect, and where possible enhance, the character of the local landscape has been continued within Draft Policy CS24.

3. Overview of landscape and visual characteristics and sensitivity and guidance from WOLA and AHLC Landscape Character Assessments (LAs)

- 3.1 The WOLA study was undertaken in 1998 and the AHLC study in 2009. At the time of the latter, land remained allocated in the Local Plan either side of Swinbrook Road, including the new link road, which now has a resolution to grant planning permission. Further redevelopment has also taken place within RAF Brize Norton resulting in some large single buildings which are very visible from Brize Norton.
- 3.2 The WOLA and AHLC studies are taken as the starting point for this report and the key landscape characteristics of the area derived from this work. This report uses the 'updated settlement edge areas' identified in AHLC as its reporting units and endorses the boundaries of

these areas. However the brief for this report required a review of the landscape sensitivity and importance of these areas: Local areas (LAs) A1 to A3; B1 and B2; and D1 and D2, in the light of the recent development, landscape and visual assessments submitted by the developers (and the draft Core Strategy policies).

- 3.3 To date the provision of new green infrastructure has concentrated on providing landscape buffers to the open countryside which also help to screen the new built form in time. However Government guidance looks for green infrastructure to provide for open space opportunities with a multiple of purposes to serve the community as a whole. Conversion of open farmland to amenity open space remotely from the town would be detrimental to the local landscape character. Any woodland planting should also conserve and enhance the current landscape character, and not be used solely to screen development.

Table 3.1 Carterton below sets out the results of this review:

Carterton LA	AHLC landscape sensitivity	AHLC landscape importance	2011 conclusions	Reasons
A1	High	High local/medium district	Agree; although subject to approval for mineral extraction	Open rural landscape which is very much a part of the wider countryside; part of setting to Shilton; open exposed rising land leading to the Cotswolds AONB
A2	Medium	High local/medium-low district	Northern section is of high sensitivity; southern section is less sensitive	The northern part is typical of the open wolds landscape and has continuity with the Cotswold lower slopes. It is open and exposed rising land. The southern part is more enclosed and relates better to the settlement
A3	High	High	This area is less sensitive than the findings of the AHLC suggest	The area lies between existing settlement and approved new development to the south, and village facilities to the north. The area is well contained and relates well to the town, separated from the open countryside by established vegetation, the playing fields and allotments
B1	High	High local/medium district	This area is considerably influenced by the surrounding built form in both Carterton and the airbase and is therefore less sensitive than either A1 or A2 or D1 or D2	Eastern part is important to the setting of Brize Norton; western part is visually exposed but of lower landscape value and heavily influenced by the urban form
B2	High	High local/medium district	Agree	Small scale mainly rural landscape of small fields, tree groups, woodland and rural village built form (except RAF hangars); setting to Brize Norton
D1	High	High local/medium district	Agree	Open rural landscape which is very much a part of the wider countryside; part of setting to Shilton; open exposed rising land leading to the Cotswolds AONB
D2	High	High local/medium district	Agree	Well defined tree and scrub lined valley in strong contrast with surrounding open fields and Carterton; high bio-diversity value; part of landscape setting to Carterton; enclosed in south/ more open in north

4. **Overview of settlement pattern at Carterton and its landscape hinterland, including Shilton, Brize Norton, Kencot, Alvescot and RAF Brize Norton**
- 4.1 The area is a mix of very contrasting settlement patterns and character. The current study was not required to undertake a detailed assessment of the settlement pattern but identifies key features that will contribute to a better understanding of the best townscape option for the area.
- 4.2 This study also seeks to help identify a meaningful buffer to the surrounding villages. A landscape buffer of 500m was used as a nominal width in the first instance in order to maintain the perception of separation between these settlements and Carterton and in order to maintain the separate identity and local distinctiveness of the villages. Each buffer was then examined in the field. The final recommended buffers are plotted on Figure 1A. In each case the proposed buffer takes into account the land use, landscape features and landscape pattern of the open land between the settlements; the visual characteristics of the land; and the character of the limits of each settlement. A more detailed description of each buffer is set out below in Section 7. There are locations where the landscape buffer is already much narrower (as between Brize Norton and Shilton Park) and it can be seen that this has resulted in the erosion of the landscape in maintaining the separate identity of the two settlements. The landscaped transition zones recommended in this Report either lie within the landscape buffer or are in addition to the landscape buffer and are considered essential to maintaining the separate identity of the settlements and the landscape character and quality of the open countryside between them.
- 4.3 **Carterton:** Although Carterton is not a typical Cotswold town, it has a distinctive character of its own. The West Oxfordshire Design Guide identifies the town as a nucleated settlement located in the open wolds of the Limestone Wolds character area. It is a 20th century settlement laid out partly to in a grid in Carter's original vision for small holders; partly as housing for the RAF base; and partly as modern estates which are laid out to a separate layout of curving roads and cul-de-sacs. The town has an open character reflected in the lower rise development, wider roads, low number of mature trees internally, new planting along modern peripheral roads and flat topography. The town contrasts with the character of the surrounding villages. The retention of this contrast, whilst containing the influence of the town on the wider townscape/landscape, is important.
- 4.4 **RAF Brize Norton:** This an extensive area of open airfield and large buildings, especially those recently constructed, and has a distinctive character which has a strong influence on the landscape setting of the village of Brize Norton and the south side of Carterton. It also contributes to the separation of these two settlements with its balance of open land (grassed or hard standings) and large freestanding buildings. This is not expected to change.

- 4.5 **Brize Norton village:** The village is a dispersed linear settlement in the open wolds of the Limestone Wolds character area. Its loose knit form of old farmsteads has been infilled over time, with isolated farmsteads remaining on the periphery. A pattern of small fields with tree groups and some woodland create the immediate rural setting to the village despite the proximity of the airbase and views to its buildings. This is still open or rural in character except where the north-east corner of Shilton Park and Monahan Way come within 150m of the Grange Farm group. The addition of some open land west of LA B2 is needed to reinforce the rural and open character of the buffer and to reduce the visual influence of any new development. Figure 1A shows the recommended landscape buffer to the village.
- 4.6 **Shilton village:** The village is a Conservation Area, a nucleated linear settlement in an enclosed valley of the Limestone Wolds. Its built form, river, landform and vegetation pattern in the Shill Brook valley are distinctive and sharply contrast with the character of Carterton. Its landscape setting is a mix of the wooded valley around the village and open arable fields on land, beyond the valley, which gently rises northwards towards the Cotswolds AONB. The landscape buffer is shown on Figure 1A. Except for a small corner of the housing along the B4020 on the edge of Carterton, the buffer has a strong rural character which is important in retaining the separate identity of the village. Due to the open and unvegetated character and visual exposure of the area with LA A1 and D1 and the presence of a well defined edge between area A1 and A3 and to a lesser but significant degree along the track to Alvescot Down Farm, the buffer extends beyond 500m.
- 4.7 **Kencot and Alvescot:** These two settlements are linear villages in the low lying/floodplain of the Thames Vale character area. Kencot is 2km from Carterton and is not influenced by its built form. Alvescot is only 1km from the town and at present is separated by woodland and small fields and by the open runway of the RAF base. The village is therefore little influenced by the town itself at present but its landscape setting extends to the Shill Brook valley and into the open fields west of the town. Retention of the open rural buffer is important. The village's current sense of tranquillity and removal from the town is likely to depend on retaining a wider than 500m area of open countryside north of the village. This is shown in Figure 1A
- 4.8 The current autonomy and distinctive character of the settlements and the RAF base around Carterton are key features of the area. The character of Carterton lends itself to further expansion through major development but this places significant pressure on the character of the landscapes that extend from the wider countryside up to the edge of the town and on the surrounding villages. This report has therefore looked at both the impact of development and the potential for integrating new development and new green infrastructure into the town, the surrounding landscape and village pattern and for enhancing the existing urban-rural edge.

5. Summary of expansion options: west, north and east

5.1 The Draft West Oxfordshire Core Strategy - Consultation January 2011 identified two areas to the west and east of Carterton in Figure 4.4 for further investigation for future development potential. Previous consultation documents and the SHLAA Interim Report January 2011 identified a wider number of areas, including to the north. With the receipt of submissions for alternative sites to the north and of a number of submissions from other parties, this report includes a landscape review of all options. Options A and B closely reflect Figure 4.4 of the Draft Core Strategy, Option D lies within the 'Northern Recreation/Buffer Area' and Option C is unallocated. All of the sites are substantial, with submissions numbers ranging from 300 dwellings in Option D to 1000 dwellings in Option B. All four options will involve expansion of the town, to various degrees, into its rural hinterland. This report re-examines the landscape, visual and settlement attributes of each option and provides landscape guidance towards selecting the best way to deliver new dwellings on the edge of the town, whilst minimising the harm to landscape character, visual amenity and settlement pattern.

6. Key constraints and opportunities

6.1 A number of key factors will determine the best landscape, townscape and visual option for the expansion of Carterton:

- Retention of an open landscape setting to the villages of Shilton and Brize Norton in particular, and also to Kencot and Alvescot;
- Retention as far as possible of the existing visual envelope to Carterton and avoidance of expansion into prominent open fields beyond existing visually strong barriers;
- Protection of the built form character of Carterton and the surrounding villages;
- Integration of key areas of green infrastructure into the settlement either as part of the landscape buffer to the town or as an internal asset forming part of the enhancement of the townscape pattern; and
- Protection of the open landscape which was once part of the Area of High Landscape Value at Shilton Downs and now recognised and valued for its key landscape features.

7. Review of Development Options at Carterton

7.1 Assessment of Option A: Land East of Carterton (Bloor Homes and Christ Church)

Overview of proposals in relation to landscape and visual assessments

Two options have been put forward during 2011 and assessed. Option 1 is for 1000 homes and includes housing (250 homes) in the south of the site. Option 2 is for 750 dwellings and omits the area of housing in this southern area. Both options exclude the recreational land in the south-west corner at the junction of Monahan Way and Carterton Road. The majority of the site lies in local landscape character area (LA) B1 with the eastern part in LA B2. The eastern part of the site lies in the landscape setting of Brize Norton as shown in Figure 1A. No landscape and visual impact assessment has been submitted at this stage by the promoters. It should be noted that a revised masterplan has recently been submitted for 700 homes (April 2012) but this assessment comments on the two options as put forward in 2011.

Key landscape, visual and townscape features of proposals

Both options 1 and 2 locate all of the development within LA B1. The land in B2 is shown as planted open space and additional open land east of the site is offered to the Parish Council. The plans show a small amount of internal green infrastructure comprising tree lined roads and a central open space. Option 2 shows a large area of open space in the south of the site.

Assessment of impact on key characteristics of the landscape

Table 7.1.1:

Area LA	Key landscape characteristics	Comment on Option1 1000 homes	Comment on Option2 750 homes	Comments on landscape mitigation	Action recommended
B1 Brize Norton Plateau	Plateau with gentle slopes from north to south	Occupies slopes around the 90m contour (as for the centre of Carterton); at and below the eastern edge of Shilton Park.	As Option1 except does not extend so far down slopes	X	X

	Playing fields and arable	Playing fields excluded. Development on arable land only.	As Option1 except southern arable fields landscaped as open space	New open space may have greater Green infrastructure value	Consider including playing fields and making new provision for open space away from busy roads as part of the landscape buffer to Brize Norton
	Semi-mature tree cover around playing fields and along Monahan Way; thin hedgerows and few hedgerow trees	Internal hedgerows likely to be lost; peripheral planting could be retained.	As Option1	Additional new planting will enhance local green infrastructure	X
	Regular parliamentary enclosure field pattern	Will be lost	As Option1	Area lost is 47 ha (less than Options B and C)	X
	Large scale landscape	Will be lost	As Option1	Generous open space would compensate	X
	Open and exposed landscape	Will be lost	As Option1		X
B2 Brize Norton Minor Valley	Most characteristics	Unaffected	Unaffected	Additional tree cover proposed. Area to east offered as open space benefit to parish council	Landscape mitigation is welcomed but should not be used to justify development
	Irregular shaped fields	Northern field lost to open space	As Option1	Arable field to be planted as open space.	Landscape mitigation is welcomed but should not be used to justify development
Landscape setting of Brize Norton	Eastern part of B1 lies within the landscape setting	The northern and most easterly part of the area for housing encroaches into the buffer	As Option1	The provision of open space and offer of land to the village does not mitigate the impact of the encroachment into the setting	Omit built form from area of setting. The green space of the landscape setting could provide options for green infrastructure including replacement playing fields.

Assessment of visual impact on key views and visual qualities

Table 7.1.2:

Area LA	Key visual characteristics	Comment on Option1 1000 homes	Comment on Option2 750 homes	Comments on landscape mitigation	Action recommended
B1 Brize Norton Plateau	High level of intervisibility with Shilton Park; Burford Road, Brize Norton; and RAF base	Will appear as an extension to Shilton Park, despite severance by Monahan Way and its planting.	As Option1 except extent more limited and lesser impact on the RAF base	The open space in Option2 will help to reduce the visual impact on Carterton Road	Detailed design to avoid appearance of urban sprawl
	Visual continuity with open plateau to north and minor valley in LA B2	This will be lost but links with the plateau are already damaged by Shilton Park and the new roads. Loss of continuity with B2	As Option1 except less in extent	Open space along edge of B2 helps retain visual continuity	Removal of built form from setting of Brize Norton will significantly help to retain this visual continuity
	Views from Lew Hill	Will appear as an extension to Shilton Park, despite severance by Monahan Way and its planting. Continuous development between the north end of Monahan Way and Carterton road will merge Carterton with the built form on the airbase	As Option1 except less in extent	The open space in Option2 will help to reduce the visual impact	Removal of built form from setting of Brize Norton will significantly help to limit the visual impact. Detailed design to avoid appearance of urban sprawl
	Views of RAF base and hangars etc	OptionI would reduce the visual prominence of the base to some extent.	As Option1	The development may benefit views by screening the more intrusive elements on the base, but care must be taken to avoid eroding the visual character of the airbase which is an important feature of the area	Set back any development along Carterton Road to maintain the separate identity of the air base and Carterton

	Local landmarks in views across the site include Brize Norton church tower and Lew Hill	Some views may be affected	As Option1	Generous open space would help	Detailed LVIA to identify key views and masterplan to maximise the potential to retain or frame views
	Major part of open gap	Will be lost	As Option1	Generous open space would help	Reduction in developable area and inclusion of further open areas will limit impact
B2 Brize Norton Minor Valley	Views to LA B1 and Shilton Park	Development will remove these views. Built form will be much closer	As Option1 but to a lesser extent	Open space proposals will provide some separation and screen planting	A landscape transition zone within the setting will reduce the visual impact and the development will appear more contained
	Local views into the setting	No direct impact but setting will be more enclosed by development in Carterton	As Option1 but to a lesser extent	Open space proposals will provide some screen planting	As above
	RAF buildings intrusive	Some of these will be screened in some views	As Option1 but to a lesser extent	The development may benefit views by screening the more intrusive elements on the base, but care must be taken to avoid eroding the visual character of the airbase which is an important feature of the setting of Brize Norton	Detailed LVIA to identify key views to RAF buildings and masterplan to maximise the potential to retain, screen or frame views
	Openness around Brize Norton with large buildings very visible	The development would erode the visual gap at present.	As Option1 with an additional parcel in the setting	Open space proposals will help	The perception of visual separation is important.
Visual setting of Brize Norton		The development as currently proposed will have a significant adverse impact on the visual separation of Carterton and Brize Norton	As Option 1 but to a lesser extent	The proposed landscape treatment and open space will provide some screening but will also erode the openness between the two settlements	A landscape transition zone within the setting, the set back along Carterton Road and edge planting to the development will help to maintain a visual gap

Assessment of contribution to local townscape and settlement pattern

Table 7.1.3

Area LA	Key settlement characteristics	Comment on Option1	Comment on Option 2	Comments on landscape mitigation	Action recommended
B1 and B2	Strong edge to existing development at Shilton Park	Will create new urban edge to the east	Will create new urban edge to the east	Although the proposed planting will soften the eastern edge; the proximity of the development will merge Carterton with Brize Norton	Reduce the extent of the development. Further soften the eastern urban edge through planting along the edge and into the open space. Avoid straight urban edges cutting across the grain of the landscape
	Broken urban edge along Carterton Road	Option will further break up this approach to the town	Open space will help to strengthen urban edge to north		Development should address this issue and seek to improve the approach along Carterton Road
	Negative impact from RAF infrastructure	N/A	N/A	Open space proposals will help	Inclusion of set back along Carterton Road and of tree avenue to match that along the RAF boundary will help to enhance the Carterton Road approach
	Prominence of Shilton Park and other parts of Carterton	Will increase prominence in views from the east	As for Option1	Planted open space will in time reduce visual prominence	The visual benefits of new planting along Monahan Way are slow in coming. Avoid long linear urban edges and break up with fingers of internal green space to link with Green infrastructure
	Poor environmental quality	Improvements can be achieved through good design	As for Option1	Open space proposals will help	Include in requirements for enhancement as part of any development on this site
	Light pollution from airbase and generally	Will extend lit area	As for Option1	Detailed lighting design can mitigate	Avoid development where floodlighting may be a nuisance. Lighting to be designed to prevent additional light pollution
Integrity of Brize Norton	Importance of Brize Norton as a separate historic settlement, with its own identity, strongly contrasting with Carterton	The development is too extensive and will merge Brize Norton into the townscape of Carterton	As for Option1	The landscape mitigation has not been designed to preserve the integrity of the settlement pattern	A landscape transition zone within the setting, the set back along Carterton Road and edge planting to the development will help to maintain the separate identity of the settlements

Assessment of potential benefit of landscape mitigation and contribution to Green Infrastructure at Carterton

The two options include open space and planting to help mitigate the impact and integrate the development. However they do not maximise the potential to make a significant contribution to green infrastructure for the benefit of the town and Brize Norton to offset the loss of an open landscape to housing. It is important to create landscape, visual, ecological, recreational and access links (although not all of these are always appropriate) between Kilkenny Country Park, the landscape transition zone to Brize Norton, an open approach along Carterton Road, the openness of the airbase and links with the wider landscape within the built form.

Conclusion and recommendations

It is recommended from a landscape perspective that Option A is pursued further with major revisions to the extent of development and the layout. The number of potential dwellings will however be reduced in order to protect important landscape, visual and townscape features of the area.

- Provide a landscape transition zone between the site and Brize Norton to protect the character of the village and its landscape setting as shown in Figure 1A. Detailed landscape analysis should be used to determine the final width;
- Include existing playing fields within the landscaped transition zone shown in Figure 2A;
- Green infrastructure to link with Kilkenny Country Park, landscape setting to Brize Norton and open tree lined approach along Carterton Road;
- Landscape transition zone to be designed to retain the separate identity of the settlements; to retain field pattern important to the character of Brize Norton; to provide for open space; to meet local recreational needs; and to conserve and enhance biodiversity;
- Main frontage to face Monahan Way;
- Development along Carterton Road to be designed to maintain and enhance the character of this approach to the town, with housing set back behind an avenue of trees to reflect existing planting to the RAF airbase;
- Design internal green space to link into surrounding green infrastructure; and
- Design the new urban edge to respond to the shape of the local landscape and avoid a long linear urban eastern edge.

The potential area to be considered further is shown in Figure 2A.

7.2 Assessment of Option B: Land West of Carterton (Crest Nicholson)

Overview of proposals in relation to landscape and visual assessments

The proposed site is west of Carterton and includes the Shill Brook landscape corridor which runs along the western boundary of Carterton. The site lies some 1km from Shilton and mostly on middle to lower slopes below the 110m AOD contour which Shilton straddles. The site lies within LAs D1 (Alvescot Down) and D2 (Shill Brook). D1 is typical open limestone wolds with a small area of semi-enclosed limestone wolds (large scale) in the south; and D2 is minor valley within the Shilton Downs (WOLA). The AHLC identifies both D1 and D2 as having high landscape sensitivity and high local/medium district importance. A revised landscape and visual impact assessment was submitted by the promoters in June 2011.

Key landscape, visual and townscape features of proposals

The proposed development extends from the centre of D1 on the line of a track to Alvescot Downs Farm southwards down to B4477 Alvescot Road. The development is divided up into a series of land parcels, separated by proposed hedgerows. A belt of open space is proposed along the eastern edge of the road from Shilton to Alvescot. The Shill Brook corridor is largely retained as landscape/ecological asset except for a highway access with a small area of development at this point. A second access point is shown onto Alvescot Road south of Kenn's Farm (which is excluded from the site).

Assessment of impact on key characteristics of the landscape

Table 7.2.1:

Area LA	Key landscape characteristics	Comment on Option	Comments on landscape mitigation	Action recommended if Option retained for consideration
D1 Alvescot Downs	Typical Cotswold gently undulating south sloping plateau	A large area of this part of the plateau will be materially changed	Some of the proposed landscape treatment is out of keeping with the open character of these plateau	Limit modifications to the landform. Retain continuity with the landscape character of the area to the west.
	Arable land with a few smaller grass paddocks	With the exception of a few small fields retained on the western edge, this will be materially changed by the development	The proposed landscape mitigation includes some small areas of grassland but this pattern is contrary to that found in the area	Retain agricultural character in the north and west of D1

	Few hedges and a few trees mainly along the western boundary	The few hedges and trees have been retained within the built form and used to divide the development into parcels.	The western boundary planting is reinforced with additional hedgerows and small copses. This approach is in keeping with the landscape guidelines in WOLA and AHLC but will affect the current range of open views	Use hedgerows and trees to define settlement pattern
	Regular parliamentary enclosure field pattern	This is partly reflected in the development pattern	The landscape pattern tends to follow this, but breaks up the scale	Continue this approach
	Large scale	A large scale development	The proposed landscape pattern is medium to small scale to provide different land uses and screen the development	Maintain large scale pattern within open space
	Open and exposed	The site itself will become enclosed with built form	The landscape will also become enclosed	Allow for open links through development
	Part of agricultural landscape setting to Shilton and Shill Brook valley with strong links to Cotswold landscape to the north	Development on this site will result in the loss of part of the open agricultural landscape of the lower Cotswolds which contribute to the character of the landscape setting to Shilton.	The landscape framework will reinforce the contrast between the new development and its immediate landscape setting and the typical open landscape to its north and widely to the west.	The development splits the open wold landscape west of Carterton in two and will appear as an alien intrusion into the open wolds. Development should be excluded from the landscape buffer which in turn should retain its open agricultural character
D2 Upper Shill Brook Valley	Narrow deep valley widening in south	Development largely avoids this area but the little proposed could be designed to respect the topography	The detailed design of this landscape corridor could respect the topography	Include in design requirements
	Mainly grassland with woodland and playing fields	This is largely retained	This is largely retained	Include in design requirements
	Extensive woodland/scrub in south and strong hedgeline /treeline along the brook in the north	This is largely retained	This is largely retained	Include in design requirements
	Meandering linear pattern with linear meadows	This is largely retained	The detailed design of this landscape corridor could respect the landscape pattern	Include in design requirements
	Medium to small scale	This is largely retained	The detailed design of this landscape corridor could respect the landscape pattern	Include in design requirements

	Strong topographical and vegetation enclosure	This is largely retained	The detailed design of this landscape corridor could respect the landscape pattern	Include in design requirements
	Soft landscape edge to Carterton proving marked contrast with the urban area to the east and the open field pattern to the west	If the development were to go ahead, D2 would still provide a strong contrast to the urban form	X	If Option Is pursued, recommend that D2 is integrated into the townscape as green infrastructure, linking into the wider valley landscape
	Important part of setting to Shilton	See below	X	See below
Landscape setting of Shilton	The landscape setting to Shilton is governed by the local topography, the open fields, local small areas of tree or hedgerow cover and Shill Brook valley	Development would not encroach into the immediate landscape setting	Proposed open space does not encroach into the immediate landscape setting	Create soft northern edge to development in keeping with the local landscape pattern
Landscape setting of Alvescot	The landscape setting to Alvescot is governed by the local topography, the pattern of small fields close to village, open fields off Alvescot Road, tree or hedgerow cover and Shill Brook valley	Development would not encroach into the immediate landscape setting	Proposed open space does not encroach into the immediate landscape setting	Maintain existing rural character of Alvescot Road west of the access to Kenn's Farm

Assessment of visual impact on key views and visual qualities

Table 7.2.2:

Area LA	Key visual characteristics	Comment on Option	Comments on landscape mitigation	Action recommended
D1 Alvescot Downs	High intervisibility across area	The development would sever the area into two parts, leaving the development visible from the north and constraining views from the south	Similarly landscape mitigation will limit intervisibility across D1	Retain open links along western edge and provide open links through development
	Views of soft edge of Carterton and Shilton	The new development would form a hard edge until the planting matured	Will soften views in time	Create soft edge avoiding linear screening which cuts across the grain of the landscape
	Intervisibility with wider Cotswold landscape and also LA D2 Shill Brook	Development will have an adverse impact on these views	Planting will in time adversely affect these views	Maintain views across the western edge to the wider landscape
	Long views south	Views will be over the development which will be intrusive	Some planting may block these views	Set development down from the higher ground
	Some views of Carterton from the northern part of the area	Development will substantially increase the perception of Carterton	Will soften views in time	Further intrusion from new development is to be avoided as far as possible
	Sensitive western skyline	Some of the development extends above the 100m AOD contour which forms the skyline	Planting on the open skyline will affect the character of views to the skyline	Maintain an open skyline along the Shilton-Alvescot road and contain all development below 100m AOD
D2 Upper Shill Brook Valley	Views into the valley from A1 and D1 and from Shilton Road	Development will interrupt these views	Some planting may block some of these views	Careful design may mitigate this
	Valley is an important part of the western screen to Carterton	Valley would retain its role in screening existing Carterton but would not benefit the development	X	Retain visual screen whilst allowing some limited continuity of built form through D2 on Alvescot Road and from Upavon Way

	Long views out from parts of the valley – others enclosed by vegetation or topography	Views will be over the development which will be intrusive and breach the skyline	Planting will also block some views	Create vistas up through development
Visual setting to Shilton	The high intervisibility between the edge of Shilton, the wider open wolds and the Shill Valley is a key feature of the area	The development will increase the perception of Carterton expanding towards Shilton	Edge will be softened in time	Avoid linear northern edge to development
Visual setting to Alvescot	No intervisibility between the village and Carterton	Topography and vegetation should screen new development	Proposed planting contributes to maintaining the visual separation of Alvescot and this extension to Carterton	No further recommendations

Assessment of contribution to local townscape and settlement pattern

Table 7.2.3

Area LA	Key settlement characteristics	Comment on Option	Comments on landscape mitigation	Action recommended
D1 Alvescot Downs	Lack of urban influences and very little settlement	Development will result in urban influence over the whole of D1	Proposed design of amenity open space increases perception of urban expansion	Detailed design must address this to limit the extent of urban influence
	Settlement avoids the higher exposed wolds and is found in valleys and lower slopes	Development extends up the slopes into the wold landscape	X	All development to lie below 100m contour
	Lies in a transition zone between the northern settlement pattern of the wolds and the southern Combrash limestone area with its string of settlements related to springs	Development could be perceived as part of the string but might be best integrated with the town	X	Development form should link with and complement Carterton, whilst creating a strong individual sense of place in keeping with this part of West Oxfordshire
D2 Upper Shill Brook	Some urban influences (Upavon Way, proximity of built form west of Shilton road and Upavon Way) but little settlement	Development would urbanise the central section of the Shill Brook valley	Landscape mitigation could improve the urban edge of Carterton	Enhance townscape quality to west Carterton through development proposals

Valley	Valleys are typical locations for small nucleated settlements as at Shilton	Very small scale development might be seen as following this pattern	X	X
Integrity of Shilton	Importance of Shilton as a separate historic settlement, with its own identity, strongly contrasting with Carterton	Development is sufficiently distant to avoid merging the two settlement to the detriment of their separate identities	X	X
Integrity of Alvescot	Importance of Alvescot as a separate settlement, with its own identity, strongly contrasting with Carterton	Development is sufficiently distant to avoid merging the two settlement to the detriment of their separate identities	X	X

Assessment of potential benefit of landscape mitigation and contribution to Green Infrastructure at Carterton

At present the site's role is as an extensive area of open wold landscape on the edge of Carterton. The Shill Brook valley has potential for enhancement and increased access which is not realised at the moment. Enhancement of the valley should not however be seen as a means of justifying development to the west in landscape terms. It is important that any change to the green infrastructure contributes to the health and wellbeing of the residents of Carterton as a whole and is also in keeping with the overall character of the western Shilton Downs.

Conclusion and recommendations

Any development west of the Shill Brook landscape corridor will inevitably result in both landscape and visual harm to the wider landscape, as described in the above tables. For this reason, a minor incursion into this area could not be justified.

Development on this site, part of it or even a greater area, would all result in a major change to the settlement and its relationship with Shill Brook and the wider wolds landscape. Up to date, the Shill Brook valley has been seen as a landscape transition zone to the edge of the settlement, clearly marking the edge of town and separating it from the open countryside. This role changes as soon as any development takes place to the west of this line. Therefore should development continue as an option here, it should be designed as a response to creating a new part of town with the Shill Brook valley as an internal area of green infrastructure for the benefit of the whole community and linking with the remaining more rural arms of the Shill Brook valley. A need to protect and enhance the key landscape, visual and settlement characteristics of the area must lead to a restriction

on the extent of the development. The proposed development, or an even larger major extension area in time, will inevitably undermine some key features of the area.

The key features of any future development west of this line are:

- The need to protect and enhance the landscape setting of Shilton, Alvescot and Kencot, both directly through the development footprint but also indirectly through the landscape design, transport proposals, lighting schemes etc which might erode the landscape character of these villages;
- The need to create a development area that appears as a evolved extension to Carterton which might include built form links along Alvescot Road; integration along Upavon Road, sympathetic absorption of the existing farm buildings; placing open space facilities within reach of the whole community;
- The need to protect the open wold rural character of the rising plateau by retaining a stretch of open fields (one field deep) to the east of the Shilton/Alvescot road, and through the provision of soft landscaping and amenity open space along the western edge of, and within, the development outside of this strip of land;
- The need to provide a softened western and northern edge which avoids creating linear urban edges cutting across the landscape grain; and
- Landscape transition zone to be designed to retain the separate identity of the settlements; to retain field pattern important to the character of Shilton and Alvescot and the Shilton Valley; to provide for open space; to meet local recreational needs; and to conserve and enhance biodiversity.

The potential area to be considered further is shown in Figure 2A.

7.3 Assessment of Option C: Kilkenny Farm, Land North of Carterton (Figbury Ltd)

Overview of proposals in relation to landscape and visual assessments

The proposed site is north of the proposed housing development either side of Swinbrook Road and Kilkenny Country Park on the northern edge of Carterton. The site lies within LA A2. LA A2 is noted in the AHLC as having a lower landscape and visual sensitivity and lower landscape importance than other areas around Carterton. This is largely due to the greater containment of the area and its location in a minor valley. However the area reaches beyond the existing northern landscape buffer at Kilkenny Country Park and Kilkenny Lane. No landscape and visual impact assessment has been submitted by the promoters. There are proposals to extend Burford Quarry to the area immediately west of the site.

In addition to the landscape features identified in the AHLC, this study noted that there are open views from Stonelands and Burford Road, as well as Kilkenny Lane, of open fields on land which rises into the Cotswold hills. Lodge Plantation, and the topography and hedgerows north of the plantation divide the site.

Key landscape, visual and townscape features of proposals

The proposed development is an extensive area of 1000 houses which is intended to reflect the New Rural type of development on settlement edges. It is likely that the scale of this proposal is far greater than normally envisaged for this type. The development is mainly orientated onto Burford Road with housing, a school, employment and local uses and landscape open space along Kilkenny Lane. An extensive area of open space with woodland is proposed within LA A1 to the west of the development site.

Assessment of impact on key characteristics of the landscape

Table 7.3.1:

Area LA	Key landscape characteristics	Comment on Option	Comments on landscape mitigation	Action recommended
A2 Minor	Shallow minor valley	Development would extend up valley sides and over 110m AOD contour	Development within the valley and sides would be partly contained by vegetation	Any development should avoid land above 110m AOD and be aligned to follow the contours

valley	Arable land with quarry in the north and some pasture in the south	All this agricultural land would be lost to development	Proposed open space will also result in the loss of arable land	Maintain open agricultural landscape outside of any development area
	Few hedges and a few trees in the north; copses trees in the south	Development could work around these elements	The open space design does not pick up on these elements	If this site is appropriate for a New Rural development it should retain and build on an extensive internal network of green infrastructure
	Regular parliamentary enclosure field pattern overlain with smaller paddocks in the south	All this agricultural land would be lost to development	Proposed open space will also result in the loss of the typical field pattern	The field pattern should be retained in the north of the site
	Large/medium scale	The proposed development is extensive and shows large parcels of land in scale but this would have an adverse landscape and visual impact	The proposed open space is extensive but would form a cordon of woodland along the northern edge of Carterton, with the loss of the open landscape	Any development which was a satellite to Carterton would need to be in scale with the local rural settlement pattern
	Enclosed by topography; and vegetation in the south	This might be partially successful if the development footprint was significantly reduced and confined to the southern area	Care needs to be taken in adding to the sense of enclosure to avoid detracting from the semi-open rural wolds character	The northern part of the site is quite open and reads as part of the wider landscape to the north-east. Any development should be confined to the southern part and lower valley slopes
	Part of rural landscape beyond Country Park	The development, particularly at this scale, would be perceived as a major intrusion into the open countryside, separated from the body of Carterton by Kilkenny Country Park	The aim to create a New Rural type development might mitigate this but the masterplan does not follow the New Rural ethos. There is the option to regard the Country Park as a new internal park, rather than as a buffer to the open countryside	Any development should be considerably reduced in scale to avoid an impact on the rural character of Burford Road and on the wider wolds landscape. Access onto Burford Road would need to be limited and reflect local character for this type of road
Landscape setting of Brize Norton	South-east corner falls within landscape buffer to Brize Norton – see Figure 1A	The most south easterly portion of the development intrudes into this gap	The very small open space is inadequate to maintain the separation of Brize Norton and Carterton	Any development should include an extension to the green infrastructure of the park within the landscape transition zone

Assessment of visual impact on key views and visual qualities

Table 7.3.2:

Area LA	Key visual characteristics	Comment on Option	Comments on landscape mitigation	Action recommended
A2 Minor valley	Views of Shilton Park in Carterton. In time will be screened in part by Kilkenny Country Park	The main open views are from the north and the boundary path and roads. The development would be a major visual intrusion if it extended as proposed	Woodland would in time screen the development but the character of the views would be irrevocably changed	Shilton Park lies on the horizon and the fact that it is quite intrusive does not justify new development per se into the countryside. Any development on the site would need to be carefully sited and designed to avoid causing similar visual harm
	Views of wooded setting to Shilton	These would be lost	Contributes to the loss of these views	Retain views across open fields to Shill Brook
	Visual links with the lower slopes of the Cotswolds landscape	This would be lost	Contributes to the loss of these views	Retain visual links in the northern sector
	Long views south and southwest	This would be lost	Contributes to the loss of these views	Any development on the site would need to be carefully sited and designed to retain attractive long views to the south
	Views generally contained by topography and vegetation	Views will be contained by development	Proposals would add to the sense of containment	This sense of containment is confined to southern part of A2 and therefore the northern part should retain its current open character and visual links with the wider landscape
Visual setting to Brize Norton	Vegetated gap between the two settlements is fragile but important	The development would encroach into this visual separation	Proposed woodland planted open space is insufficient	Increase area of woodland in the south-east corner

Assessment of contribution to local townscape and settlement pattern

Table 7.3.3

Area LA	Key settlement characteristics	Comment on Option	Comments on landscape mitigation	Action recommended
A2 Minor valley	Valley settlements avoiding the open exposed higher ground	The development would be centred on a minor valley but extend up the valley sides	X	Limit any development to the valley and lowest slopes
	Carterton has spread out, but with limited physical intrusion into the open wolds to date	Development in the north sector would extend Carterton well into the wolds landscape	X	Avoid creation of any settlement in the open wolds. There may be potential to emulate a valley settlement, distinct from Carterton
	Contained settlements, sparsely distributed	The development would significantly expand Carterton northwards	The proposed landscape mitigation will also extend the influence of the town northwards	There may be potential to create a contained settlement, distinct from Carterton
Integrity of Brize Norton	The site is very different to the linear dispersed character of Brize Norton. Importance of Brize Norton as a separate historic settlement, with its own identity, strongly contrasting with Carterton	In combination with the existing built form, the development would further undermine the rural character of the village	Proposed woodland planted open space is insufficient	It is important to create a development form which does not undermine the settlement character of the village or its rural setting

Assessment of potential benefit of landscape mitigation and contribution to Green Infrastructure at Carterton

If a New Rural type of development was to be considered appropriate on part of this site; this would provide good opportunities to create a substantive landscape structure, linked into the existing green infrastructure (including Kilkenny Country Park) and creating and maintaining the separate identity of the settlements of and around Carterton. The area shown as open space within LA A1 should be retained as open agricultural land.

Conclusion and recommendations

In landscape and visual terms, the development of the whole of Option C would not be acceptable for the reasons set out in the tables above. However the southern part of the site is less sensitive and has the capacity to absorb a smaller area of development. It is recommended that the southern area of Option C could be pursued further with major revisions to the scale and layout. The number of potential dwellings will however be substantially reduced in order to protect important landscape, visual and townscape features of the area.

- Limit any development to below the 110m AOD contour and to the valley sides;
- Omit development along Burford Road, setting it back onto the west facing slopes, in order to retain the rural character of the road;
- Omit development north of the tree/hedgeline north of Lodge Plantation;
- Include open space within the landscape transition zone to Brize Norton;
- There may be potential to emulate a valley settlement, distinct from Carterton;
- Follow the principles of New Rural type development and look to create a northern 'village' satellite to Carterton;
- The response to the landscape, and provision of a well designed, appropriate and extensive green infrastructure, will be key in determining the acceptability of development on part of this site;
- Landscape transition zone to be designed to retain the separate identity of the settlements; to retain field pattern important to the character of Brize Norton; to provide for open space; to meet local recreational needs; and to conserve and enhance biodiversity;
- Any form or extent of development must be informed by a detailed landscape and visual impact assessment; and
- This site should not be developed concurrently with Option D.

The potential area to be considered further is shown in Figure 2A.

7.4 Assessment of Option D: Land North of Carterton (David Wilson Homes)

Overview of proposals in relation to landscape and visual assessments

The proposed site is north of the approved housing development at Swinbrook Road on the northern edge of Carterton. The site lies within LAs A1 and A3. Approximately half of the site lies in the landscape setting of Shilton as shown in Figure 1A. To the north the site abuts the football ground and the allotments, both of which are in A3. The site extends beyond the well defined hedgerow which marks the western boundary of the fields south of the football ground and into the open arable landscape. A landscape and visual impact assessment was submitted in March 2011. There are proposals to extend Burford Quarry to the area immediately north of the site.

Key landscape, visual and townscape features of proposals

All of A3, both sides of Swinbrook Road, are included for housing; together with the most southerly part of A1. The remainder of the site is proposed as open space. The development would be an extension of the Local Plan allocation which has a resolution to grant planning permission, running north of the proposed northern link road from Shilton Road to Elmhurst Way. A green buffer is shown along Swinbrook Road and central open spaces within the development both sides of this road. The landscape treatment to the open space includes extensive woodland belts to Shilton Road and along the southern edge of the footpath which forms the northern boundary. An arm of housing extends up the western side of the football ground.

Assessment of impact on key characteristics of the landscape

Table 7.4.1:

Area LA	Key landscape characteristics	Comment on Option	Comments on landscape mitigation	Action recommended
A1 Shilton plateau	Typical Cotswold gently south sloping plateau	Development footprint would be sited on lower slopes below the 110m AOD contour. However the scheme would result in housing on higher land than anywhere else around the town.	X	Remove development off higher ground

	Arable land with quarry in the north-east	The development footprint is separated from the future quarry extension by the proposed open space. A substantial area of arable land would be lost, either to housing or designed open space.	The arable land is typical of this part of the Cotswolds fringe and is strongly rural in character.	Delete area for housing within LA A1 and retain this area, and the area set aside for open space, as predominantly arable fields.
	Few hedges and a few trees to field edge of area	This would be replaced with substantial woodland planting which would not be in keeping with the vegetation pattern in this lower Cotswold landscape.	The thin line of hedgerows and few trees would benefit from additional planting but the current linear pattern of field boundaries should be retained. The proposed landscape mitigation is not in keeping with the character of the area.	The existing hedgerow edge between A1 and A3 should form the outer edge of north Carterton. The development, including provision of open space, should be confined to A3.
	Regular parliamentary enclosure field pattern	This would be lost on the site.	This loss cannot be mitigated.	Retain field pattern in A1
	Large scale	The parcels of building land and open space will create small spaces	The proposed mitigation, and need to screen the development, increases the fragmentation of the landscape	Retain large scale fields in A1
	Open and exposed	Both the development and proposed open space will enclose the area	See above	By retaining the open arable fields, this key characteristic will be maintained on the site
	Part of agricultural landscape setting to Shilton with strong links to Cotswold landscape to the north	The development will materially alter the character of the wider landscape setting to Shilton, undermining its rural character.	The proposed substantial woodland planting is designed to screen the development and create a visual buffer between Shilton and Carterton. In doing so the proposals have a significant adverse impact on the character of the lower Cotswold landscape and its relationship with Shilton.	Delete all housing and open space provision within the transition zone. Planting along the edge of the new link road needs to soften the edge as well as screen the approved development.
A3 Rural fringe	Part of the sloping plateau	These slopes relate well to Carterton, although development would extend further up the Cotswold plateau than anywhere else at Carterton.	X	X

	Paddocks, allotments and football ground	The development would result in the loss of the fields. However the approved scheme has already encroached into this area of mixed open spaces. The allotments and football ground would be unaffected	Development would have the advantage of integrating the town with its football ground, allotments and Country Park	Green infrastructure provision on the site should be designed to integrate with the existing open spaces.
	Well hedged and treed	Existing vegetation appears to be retained as boundary features.	The retention of existing vegetation and small parcels of development will help to retain an treed setting to the development	A high level of tree planting and subdivision of the site by green corridors is recommended
	Regular parliamentary enclosure field pattern overlaid with small holding pattern typical of Carterton	This would be lost.		Design of the site could reflect the field pattern
	Small scale	Development could retain small scale pattern	Similarly the landscape design can reinforce this pattern	The small scale of the area could be reflected in the layout
	Enclosed	This too can be reflected in the design and layout	Perimeter planting must be retained and enhanced as shown to enclose the built form	Reinforce the boundary landscape features to soften and screen the urban edge. Avoid linear belts, which reinforce urban edges cutting across the landscape.
	Soft landscape edge to Carterton	This can be retained	This can be reinforced	See above
	New road will create new strong landscape edge to the town	The approved scheme extends north of the road already. A further extension within A3 would provide an opportunity to create a softer more sympathetic northern edge	Landscape mitigation can be designed to create a better strong landscape edge	Potential to improve landscape edge
Landscape setting of Shilton	LA A1 is a very important part of the landscape setting of Shilton	The development and the proposed open space will materially alter the character of the landscape setting to Shilton, undermining its rural character. The open agricultural nature will be lost.	The proposed landscape mitigation will screen Carterton from Shilton and create a buffer zone, but will undermine the rural character of the village and result in the loss of a perceived open gap along Shilton Road. Woodland, as shown, would merge the two settlements	Omit development from LA A1. In order to protect the setting of Shilton further, the landscaped edge of the development in LA A3 should be designed to soften the rural/urban edge respecting the local vegetation pattern

Assessment of visual impact on key views and visual qualities

Table 7.4.2:

Area LA	Key visual characteristics	Comment on Option	Comments on landscape mitigation	Action recommended
A1 Shilton plateau	Views of northern edge of Carterton	Development will increase the exposure of the northern edge of the town	Extensive woodland planting will screen the new and existing edge in time	Avoid further visual intrusion. Soften existing edge.
	Long views north and west	Development will have little effect	Views from the footpath PROW/4 will be lost or interrupted to the west	Retain open character of A1
	Visual links with Shill Brook Valley	These will be lost through development in A1	These will be lost through woodland planting	Retain open character of the site
	Long views south to North Wessex Downs	Development will have little effect	Views from the footpath PROW/4 will be lost or interrupted to the south	Retain open character of the site
A3 Rural fringe	Views limited by vegetation	No significant change	Retains and enhances this characteristic	X
	Little visual connectivity	May provide opportunity for some new internal views	May provide opportunity for some new internal views	X
	Vegetation contributes to screening northern edge	Vegetation will no longer screen the built form	X	Existing vegetation to be retained as north and western boundary screening
Visual setting to Shilton	Open gap between Carterton and Shilton	The development encroaches into the open land between the two settlements	Landscape mitigation to screen the development will further merge the two settlements visually	Avoid development within the open transition zone and substantive planting to screen the built form. Soften the urban-rural edge including tree planting.

Assessment of contribution to local townscape and settlement pattern

Table 7.4.3

Area LA	Key settlement characteristics	Comment on Option	Comments on landscape mitigation	Action recommended
A1 Shilton plateau	Valley settlements avoiding the open exposed higher ground – as at Shilton	Development is not in keeping with settlement pattern in the wolds	Open space contains settlement to lower slopes	Avoid development into higher ground
	Carterton has spread out but with limited intrusion into the open wolds to date	Development extends Carterton north up into open wolds	X	Avoid development into the open wolds
	Contained settlements, sparsely distributed	Development would further increase the loss of containment on the northern edge of the town	Open space proposals extend the influence of the town	Maintain and enhance containment of Carterton
A3 Rural fringe	Small scale pattern at edge of C20th small holder settlement	Development pattern could reflect this characteristic	Landscape mitigation could reinforce this	X
	Intrusive lighting at football ground	Lighting would be slightly less incongruous once related better to the built form	Measures help to screen lighting in local views	Improve tree planting around the grounds
Integrity of Shilton	Importance of Shilton as a separate historic settlement, with its own identity, strongly contrasting with Carterton	Development would erode the sense of containment and relative isolation of Shilton	X	Maintain and enhance separate identity and relative isolation of Shilton by omitting development in A1

Assessment of potential benefit of landscape mitigation and contribution to Green Infrastructure at Carterton

The major area of open space proposed on the north side of the development has little merit except in the provision of screening. Any substantive new open space for the benefit of Carterton residents should be integral to the town and more accessible to the majority. There may be some merit in the provision of an area of open space linking the approved woodland on Shilton Road to the football ground along the northern edge but this should be predominantly open in character and create additional pasture. Woodland planting is recommended for the Shilton Downs (WOLA) to link up with existing woodland but extensive woodland in this area would merge the settings of Carterton and Shilton, remove the characteristic contrast between the Shill Brook Valley and the open wolds, and erode the open agricultural character. However some substantive tree planting

would be beneficial to soften the new northern edge. Option D shows a strong planted corridor along Swinbrook Road which will link well with the open rural fringe landscape and the Country Park, retaining some of the current character of LA A3.

Conclusion and recommendations

In landscape and visual terms, the development of the whole of Option D would not be acceptable for the reasons set out in the tables above. However the southern part of the site is less sensitive and has the capacity to absorb a smaller area of development as an extension to the approved housing scheme. It is therefore recommended that Option D is pursued further with major revisions to the layout. The number of potential dwellings will however be reduced in order to protect important landscape, visual and townscape features of the area.

- Delete housing from LA A1;
- Retain and enhance existing western boundary planting to area LA A3 to soften the edge and screen the development;
- Retain small scale pattern through housing layout and internal planting within LA A3;
- Avoid any further major woodland planting within LA A1 and retain open agricultural setting to Shilton;
- Open space provision along the northern edge should retain the open wolds character and be designed to meet the landscape objectives for this character area;
- Landscape transition zone to be designed to retain the separate identity of the settlements; to retain field pattern important to the character of Shilton and the wider wolds landscape to soften the northern edge of the built form; and to conserve and enhance biodiversity
- The western extension should retain a landscape buffer to Shilton Road and the landscape corridor to the proposed road; and
- This site should not be developed concurrently with Option C.

The potential area to be considered further is shown in Figure 2A.

7.5 Evaluation of development options and possible combinations

The above analysis shows that none of the sites can be developed, as they are currently promoted, without some harm to acknowledged landscape, visual or settlement attributes without being contrary to current emerging policy. The report does however recommend that all four options A to D have some potential to meet West Oxfordshire's housing needs and the prevailing objective to locate a substantial amount of that housing in and around Carterton. However it is recommended that the potential areas for development in options A (east), C (Kilkenny Farm) and D (north) are much reduced from that being promoted during 2011. This leads to the conclusion that none of the options should be ruled out and that in this plan period a combination of sites may be the least harmful to the landscape, visual and settlement quality of the area. Figure 2A illustrates potential sites to be further investigated.

Option A: East of Carterton

This report concludes that provided a substantive landscape transition zone is retained next to Brize Norton as shown in figure 2A, Option A could be developed on a smaller scale as an extension to the existing built form. The landscape character is already influenced by both Carterton and the RAF base and the site could be developed without harm to the wider landscape.

Option B: West of Carterton

Option B however expands into open countryside well beyond existing landscape transition zones. In the case of Option B, any development west of Shill Brook will have an adverse impact on the wider landscape and views in that area. Either this site should be totally excluded or the development accepted - subject to the constraints recommended in the tables above - and integrated with the town. As the Shill Brook is a Conservation Target Area with County Wildlife Sites next to Carterton, great care would be needed to avoid compromising the ecological objectives of the CTA.

Any further consideration of the expansion of Carterton westwards, beyond Option B, would require further detailed studies of the wider landscape, visual and settlement implications of such development into the open countryside.

Option C: Kilkenny Farm, land north of Carterton

Options C also expands into open countryside beyond existing landscape transition zones. The inclusion of the northern part of the submitted development would have a significant detrimental effect on the wider wolds landscape. However this report concludes that a more limited scale of development in the southern less sensitive part of the site may be possible.

Option D: Land north of Carterton (David Wilson Homes)

This report concludes that Option D could be developed on smaller scale as an extension to the existing built form, provided the developed area is contained within LA A3. Limited development here if well designed should not have a cumulative impact on Shilton or the wider landscape. This small area is already influenced by existing and approved development and the site could be developed without harm to the wider landscape.

Cumulative effects and phasing

This report recommends a staged approach. The reduced areas of Options A and D (ranking 1 and 2), together with their accompanying green infrastructure provision, could be pursued further without incurring an adverse cumulative landscape impact. This could provide for around 600 - 900 dwellings, limiting the harm to landscape, visual and settlement values in Carterton and its hinterland. However these two options alone, reduced as recommended in this report, are unlikely to deliver the previously identified target figure of 1000 homes on the edge of the town.

If Option D were to be developed concurrently with option C (ranking 3), the landscape and visual impact on the northern setting of Carterton would be substantial, especially on Swinbrook Road and Kilkenny Lane. However, relocation of the football club to within Option A may provide an opportunity to remove the wider influence of floodlighting on this exposed edge. Option C could therefore be considered in a second phase of development to meet the current target figure. Options A and D could be developed in conjunction with Option B (ranking 4) without a significant cumulative impact.

The detailed analysis has identified that Options B and C would both result in an adverse impact on the landscape character, visual amenity and settlement pattern of Carterton's landscape setting. In both cases the development will require a high standard of good quality design, in keeping with the local character, and an appropriate provision of green infrastructure for the benefit of the local landscape, Carterton and the surrounding villages. The detailed analysis in the Report sets out recommendations on reducing the impact on the local and wider landscape and on the adjoining villages and on the provision of Green Infrastructure.

8. Summary of Recommendations: Carterton

Site	Location	Promoter	Submission housing no.s	AHLC Character Area	Key constraints	Recommendations	Recommended action as shown in Figure 2A	Estimated housing capacity**	Ranking
Option A (Site 1A)	East of Carterton	Bloor Homes and Christ Church	1000	B1	Within setting of Brize Norton	Reduce to avoid setting of Brize Norton	Consider smaller area in combination with the existing playing fields	500 - 750	2
Option A (Site 1B)	East of Carterton	Bloor Homes and Christ Church	750	B1	Within setting of Brize Norton	Amend to avoid setting of Brize Norton	Consider smaller area in combination with the existing playing fields		
Option B	West of Carterton	Crest Nicholson	1000	D1 / D2	Within open limestone wolds beyond a natural barrier to the town	This area should be either completely ruled out or comprehensively developed as an integrated extension to the town, with its own settlement character.	Consider amendments to development form, green infrastructure provision and footprint	Up to 1000	4
Option C	Kilkenny Farm, Carterton	Figbury Ltd	1000	A2	Small part within setting of Brize Norton Within open limestone wolds beyond a natural barrier to the town	Amend to avoid setting of Brize Norton and expansion into open wolds in north	Consider smaller area on the southern part of the site	500 - 750	3
Option D	North of Carterton	David Wilson Homes	300	A1 / A3	Part within setting of Shilton and encroaches into open wolds	Contain development to within landscape character area A3 only	Consider smaller area in A3 as an expansion to the existing scheme	100 - 150	1

** Estimated numbers are based on reduced site area, open space requirements and potential range of housing density. Final numbers will depend on more detailed assessments, housing needs, requirements for Green Infrastructure and an appropriate built form for each area in keeping with the local character.

B. WITNEY

9. Brief summary of the adopted Local Plan and draft Core Strategy (2011) guidance and policy in relation to the settlement expansion at Witney

- 9.1 The West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 (adopted June 2006) defined strategic gaps and buffers around Witney supported by policy NE2. Development in the gaps and buffers was restricted to limited types, which excluded housing. This included North Witney and two East Witney site options either side of Oxford Hill. A third East Witney site option lies within the Windrush in Witney policy area WIT3. The Local Plan includes the North Witney and East Witney, north of Oxford Hill, option areas in the Wychwood Project Area.
- 9.2 Urban capacity in Witney is relatively limited and to meet the identified housing requirement for the town, it will be necessary to develop on Greenfield land on the fringe of the town. The West Oxfordshire Draft Core Strategy Consultation January 2011 identified a strategic development area to the west of the town. Land in this area is also identified in the adopted Local Plan as reserve land for future expansion. Other options to the north and east of Witney have previously been promoted and in light of the recent decision on Cogges Link Road, the Council has undertaken a detailed appraisal of all potential options at Witney (other than south Witney which was previously ruled out through consultation and is not affected by the Cogges Link decision). Land on the edge of Witney was considered in both the West Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment 1998 (WOLA) and the Witney Landscape Assessment 2007 by Amanda Hopwood Associates (AHLC). The adopted Local Plan policy of gaps and buffers has not been carried forward, in line with current Government guidance, but policy guidance that requires any development to respect, and where possible enhance, the character of the local landscape has been continued.

10. Overview of landscape and visual characteristics and sensitivity and guidance from WOLA and AHLC Landscape Character Assessments (LCAs)

- 10.1 The WOLA study was undertaken in 1998 and the AHLC study in 2007. The WOLA and AHLC studies are taken as the starting point for this report and the key landscape characteristics of the area derived from this work. This report uses the 'updated settlement edge areas' identified in AHLC as its reporting units and endorses the boundaries of these areas. However the brief for this report required a review of the landscape sensitivity and importance of those areas affected by development options.

10.2 To date the provision of new green infrastructure has concentrated on providing landscape buffers to the open countryside which would also help to screen the new built form in time. However Government guidance looks for green infrastructure to provide for open space opportunities with a multiple of purposes to serve the community as a whole. Any tree or woodland planting should also conserve and enhance the current landscape character, and not be used solely to screen development.

Table 10.1 Witney below sets out the results of this review:

Witney LA	AHLC landscape sensitivity	AHLC landscape importance	2012 conclusions	Reasons
North Witney				
C3	High	High local and district	The larger northern area is of high sensitivity but the most southerly part has a high level of intervisibility with the urban edge of the town. This part however still retains strong landscape and visual connections with the rest of the LA, giving a medium rising to high sensitivity with distance from the town edge	C3 is an open rural landscape which is very much a part of the wider countryside; and part of setting to Poffley End and Hailey. The area comprises an area of small scale fields within the small valley and shallower slopes falling south-east from New Yatt and North Leigh. The area is an important landscape buffer between the villages and Witney's town edge estates. However these qualities are less evident adjacent to the town
C4	Low	Low to moderate local / low district	Agree; this part of C4 is particularly influenced by the town edge	A simple topography and arable land cover on lower slopes rising to North Leigh in the north. Enclosed by hedgerows with limited intervisibility with the wider landscape
East Witney				
D1	High	High	The whole area has strong landscape links with the landscape to the north and east with the higher ground the most visually sensitive. Although a small pocket lies below the 95m AOD contour which still largely defines the eastern limit of settlement at Witney, overall D1 has a high landscape and visual sensitivity.	Cogges Wood to the north-east is a local landmark to which D1 forms an important open rural setting. The small scale well hedged field pattern is a surviving remnant of agricultural clearance in the Wychwood Forest. Visibility is partly contained by perimeter planting and landform. Key views from the north. WOLA recommends that small scale development may be acceptable provided it 'conforms to existing field pattern, is sensitively designed and does not significantly alter settlement form'. The rural character of the area is affected by both Jubilee Way and housing at Madley Park. However even localised major development east of Jubilee Way would erode the integrity

				of the whole of D1
D2	High	High	Agree that the higher ground of the ridge at the east end of area is highly sensitive. The lower west facing area is of moderate sensitivity due to the quality of the landscape, urban influence and lower visibility.	This area is contained by the A40 and a tree belt, a strong belt of vegetation on the Oxford Hill B40222 approach and the urban form east of Stanton Harcourt Road / Cogges Hill Road. Severance from the wider landscape has resulted in a slight urban fringe appearance. Views out from the higher ground are extensive and Cogges Church in its treed river setting is an important landmark. A shallow ridge demarcates the slopes dropping towards the town from those looking eastwards to the open countryside.
F1	High	High	Agree; the whole of F1 is an important landscape asset defining the character of this part of Witney and a transition from the wider Windrush lower valley to the south and the town river setting to the north. Part of Area 12 of the Windrush in Witney Project area, is subject to the landscape management strategy for this area.	The area of F1 lies within the floodplain with a coherent meadow landscape subdivided by belts of trees, water's edge scrub and mature gappy hedges. Despite the vegetation cover, long views over the valley are highly valued. The modern urban edge is exposed in places but this is counterbalanced by views to local landmarks such as St Mary's Church and Cogges Manor.
West Witney				
G	High	High	The sensitivity of this landscape has been rather compromised (by the A40 and the approval of development at Coral Springs). However the local character is an important contrast to the more open wold and vale landscapes and an important landscape buffer between Curbridge and Witney. The land south of the A40 remains of high sensitivity with the land to the north of moderate sensitivity, although this retains its high level of importance in protecting this gateway to Witney	Small fields and boundary vegetation are key characteristics of the area. The Colwell Brook forms the centre of a linear landscape corridor which extends into Area H. The A40 slices through the centre of this area with the result that the northern sector now relates more to Witney than the open countryside to the south. The approach to Witney is however characterised by the tree lines and framed views into open fields.
H	High to moderate on lower ground	High	The sensitivity of the landscape is moderate due to the scale of the landscape and the land uses of the area. The existing buildings on higher ground are widely visible and intrusive in the landscape, including from the Cotswolds AONB to the north, demonstrating the very high visual sensitivity on the more elevated parts of the area. The whole area however does have an important role to play in forming a sympathetic and high quality rural landscape hinterland to west Witney in the future.	This is a large area which extends up to the eastern edge of Minster Lovell (Charterville) and includes a variety of rural, semi-rural and urban uses. The upper slopes and the ridge are visually exposed and create a viewshed between the Upper Windrush Valley and AONB hills to the north and the Vale landscape to the south.

11. Overview of settlement pattern at Witney and its landscape hinterland

- 11.1 The area is a mix of contrasting settlement patterns and character. The current study was not required to undertake a detailed assessment of the settlement pattern but identifies key features that will contribute to a better understanding of the best townscape option for the area.
- 11.2 This study also seeks to help identify a meaningful buffer to the surrounding villages. The landscape buffers were in this case determined by the need to protect the surviving historic landscape character of the scattered farmsteads south of Hailey and Poffley End; to maintain the perception of separation between these settlements and Witney; to protect the landscape setting of Curbridge and High Cogges and to maintain the separate identity and local distinctiveness of the villages. The final recommended buffers are plotted on Figures 1B to 1D. In each case the proposed buffer takes into account the land use, landscape features and landscape pattern of the open land between the settlements; the visual characteristics of the land; and the character of the limits of each settlement. The landscaped transition zones recommended in this Report in figures 2B to 2D are in addition to the landscape buffer and are considered essential to maintaining the separate identity of the settlements and the landscape character and quality of the open countryside between them.
- 11.3 **Witney:** Witney is a typical Cotswold town, with a distinctive character of its own centred on the Windrush river corridor and the historic core. The West Oxfordshire Design Guide identifies the town as a nucleated settlement historically located in the low lying/floodplain of the Limestone Wolds character area, although modern development has extended up into the open wolds. The town centre contrasts, by virtue of its scale and extensive 20th century peripheral development, with the character of the surrounding villages but shares many architectural and historic patterns in common. The retention of this contrast, whilst conserving the townscape character of the town, is important. To the north, west and east of the historic core the land rises onto the plateau above the river valley. In the north-west from 100m AOD above the land lies within the Cotswolds AONB. The Wychwood Project Area covers the open higher ground north and east of the town. To the south the land gently slopes away into Bampton Vale and Lower Windrush Valley. Overall the town has remained largely contained below the 95m AOD contour on slopes dropping down to the town in the north and east. To the west it has extended onto the ridge up to 110m AOD, resulting in significant visual prominence over a wide area and unsympathetic urban spread above of the valley sides. In this generally open rolling landscape this extension of the town from 95m to 110m makes a big difference to the containment of the town, the visibility of the built form from the wider countryside including the AONB and the overall settlement form.
- 11.4 **Hailey, Poffley End and Delly End:** Hailey forms the focus and principal village centre of a polyfocal village pattern which includes the linear village of Poffley End to the south and nucleated village of Delly End to the north. All three settlements together are Conservation Areas set within gently undulating settled ancient pasture landscape. This is not expected to change.

- 11.5 **Minster Lovell:** The Conservation Area lies down in the Upper Windrush Valley, extending to within 300m of the West Witney employment Area and is protected from the expansion of Witney simply by the topography and belts of highway trees along Burford Road (see Figure 1C). The village centre lies further north-west but this narrow gap is very vulnerable to any development either side of Burford Road. The newer houses at Charterville south of the historic village are physically separated from the town by a golf course and some remaining open fields and the shoulder of higher ground at 110 to 115m east of the Charterville Allotments. The visual separation has been eroded by the development of the large employment buildings on the top of this ridge. Due to this visual erosion, physical separation of the settlement from Witney and woodland and tree belt planting is essential to retain its separate identity.
- 11.6 **Curbridge:** The hamlet has a strong rural identity in contrast to the modern estate character of south-west Witney. It forms a discrete area, separated by only 700m, and with the landscape buffer severed by the A40. The setting of the village is the small scale landscape of minor valleys which include the Colwell Brook which are very vulnerable to further urban erosion. There is no intervisibility with south-west Witney at present.
- 11.7 **High Cogges:** This small hamlet also has a strong rural character but due to the local landform and the A40 (in a cutting) is orientated towards the wider landscape to the east. There is some inter-visibility with the higher land south of Oxford Hill (LCA D2). The landscape buffer is however very narrow, 400m at its narrowest, and both visual and physical separation is needed to retain the separate identity of this hamlet.
- 11.5 The past expansion of Witney lends itself to further expansion through urban extensions but this places significant pressure on the character of the landscapes that extend from the wider countryside up to the edge of the town and on the surrounding villages. This report has therefore looked at both the impact of development and the potential for integrating new development and new green infrastructure into the town, the surrounding landscape and village pattern and for enhancing the existing urban-rural edge.

12. Summary of expansion options

- 12.1 Urban capacity in Witney is relatively limited and to meet the identified housing requirement for the town, it will be necessary to develop on Greenfield land on the fringe of the town. With the receipt of submissions for the North, West and East of Witney development site options, this report includes a landscape review of these options. The site options are substantial, with 1500 dwellings proposed in North Witney; 1000 dwellings in West Witney; and 450 dwellings in East Witney; expanding the town into its rural hinterland. The sites at North and West Witney each consist of one large homogeneous area. The sites at East Witney lie in three defined areas: Area A: north of Oxford Hill, off Jubilee Way (promoted as a business park); Area B: Cogges Triangle; and Area C: Land west of Stanton Harcourt Road, in the Windrush Valley, (both promoted for housing). This report re-examines the landscape, visual and settlement attributes of the alternative

options at Witney and provides landscape guidance towards selecting the best way to deliver new dwellings on the edge of the town, whilst minimising the harm to landscape character, visual amenity and settlement pattern.

13. Key constraints and opportunities

13.1 A number of key factors will determine the best landscape, townscape and visual option for the expansion of Witney:

- Retention of built form on slopes facing in towards Witney and avoidance of any further expansion onto exposed high ground;
- Retention of an open landscape setting to the villages;
- Conservation and enhancement of the most sensitive and historically intact areas of open landscape within the existing rural hinterland;
- Conservation of the continuity of the landscape types around the town;
- Retention of the existing visual envelope to Witney and avoidance of expansion into prominent open fields beyond existing visually strong barriers;
- Protection of the built form character and separate identity of Witney and the surrounding villages;
- Protection of the unique river Windrush landscape which is a defining feature of the town and its landscape setting;
- Integration of key areas of green infrastructure into the settlement either as part of the landscape transition zone to the town or as an internal asset forming part of the enhancement of the townscape pattern; and
- Creation of an opportunity to significantly improve the hard urban edge and meet landscape targets for the area as set out in OWLS, WOLA and AHLC.

14. Review of Development Options in Witney

14.1 Assessment of Land North of Witney (North Witney Consortium)

Overview of proposals in relation to landscape and visual assessments

The proposed site abuts the northern built up boundary of Witney - east of the B4022 Hailey Road; either side of New Yatt Road between the town and Merryfield Farm; and north of the A4095 Woodstock Road opposite the Madley Park estate. The centre of the villages of Hailey and Poffley End are situated 900m from the northern boundary, with New Yatt and North Leigh 2 - 2.5km away, respectively. The site lies within the southern part of LA C3 (North Witney: Small Scale Valleys) and the south-western half of LA C4 (North Witney: Plateau). C3 is typical of the more enclosed small scale wolds with farmland and farmsteads carved out of the old Wychwood Forest. C4 is a small flat area of simple character. The AHLC identifies C3 as having high landscape sensitivity and high local and district importance. C4 is of low sensitivity with low to moderate local and district importance. No landscape and visual assessment has been submitted but the Consortium's Development Framework Document March 2011 identifies some of the local landscape features.

Key landscape, visual and townscape features of proposals

The proposal is for a new neighbourhood community of some size: up to 1500 dwellings. An illustrative masterplan indicates that the built form would abut the northern edge of Witney between New Yatt Road and the A4095 Woodstock Road and along part of the site's south-western boundary. Elsewhere the development includes open space occupied by school grounds, playing fields and ponds at the southern end of the central valley. The valley itself is retained as a narrow open space (green spine) with a series of ponds and a narrow link to the open countryside to the north; although the line of the valley is interrupted by built form at its northern end. The northern boundaries of the site with the surrounding countryside are defined by shallow landscape buffers of wooded planting and open grassland linking into the existing hedgerow and copse pattern. This buffer continues along the B4022 approach into Witney and around the main vehicular access off Hailey Road. Narrower landscape hedgerow buffers flank New Yatt Road and the A4095, with further access points off these two roads. The built form is further broken up by landscaped vehicular and pedestrian routes, mainly running in a north-south alignment.

Assessment of impact on key characteristics of the landscape

Table 14.1.1:

Area LA	Key landscape characteristics	Comment on Option	Comments on landscape mitigation	Action recommended
C3 North Witney: Small Scale Valleys	Rolling small scale with distinctive valley feature	Most of the town sits below the 100m AOD contour with rare exceptions as at West Witney. This pattern can be replicated on the site. The option partly retains the central valley as a distinctive feature but this is damaged by development at the northern end of the valley which straddles the valley and severs the links with the continuation of the valley north	Proposed tree planting to valley edge reinforces alignment of the valley but will further divorce the valley from its wider context.	Remove development from within valley floor altogether and ensure clear topographical link with valley as it rises northwards
	Dispersed farmlands of medieval origin - mainly arable with some pasture	The site is more open with larger fields. The current field pattern has been reflected in the layout of the site	Landscape structure reflects the field pattern	Retain open farmland setting to scattered farmsteads. Pull development south away from Downhill Farm (see Figure 2B)
	Many good ancient hedges/trees and copses	The development layout allows for retention of these existing landscape features	Existing features reinforced with adjacent open space	X
	Irregular sinuous small scale field pattern	Mainly found on the edge and outside of the site. The current field pattern has largely but not consistently been reflected in the layout of the site	Landscape structure has largely but not consistently reflected the field pattern	Minor modifications to ensure consistent retention of field boundary pattern

	More enclosed southern part	Development would lead to high level of enclosure	Some sense of openness achieved through creation of open space between the development and existing built form. New planting will add to perception of enclosure	X
	Early enclosure field pattern	Loss of surviving open fields	String of open spaces does not mitigate loss	Retain open farmland setting to scattered farmsteads. Pull development south away from Downhill Farm (see Figure 2B)
	Part of the Wychwood Forest Project area	Loss of that part of the Wychwood Forest project closest to Witney	Enhancement of the wooded edge of north Witney through creation of reinforced landscape buffers. Loss of historic landscape character cannot be mitigated	Withdraw development away from cleared Forest setting of farmsteads south of Poffley End
C4 North Witney: Plateau	Small plateau	Half of this small plateau will be altered by development	N/A	X
	Mostly arable with some pasture	Loss of arable land	N/A	X
	Well maintained hedges and hedgerow trees to roadside; exposed edge of rear gardens	Boundary planting largely retained	No provision for additional boundary planting or retention of open buffer to New Yatt Road or strong landscape structure as recommended in AHLC and WOLA	Set development further away from New Yatt Road to create semi-rural landscape gateway to town. Reinforce eastern native boundary planting, to link with semi-mature planting south of A4095 and provide strong wooded edge to town
	Regular old enclosure field pattern	Development contained within single field	N/A	X
	Medium scale	Medium scale of development in this part	N/A	X

	Generally open	Open landscape lost though built form	A small central open area is linked by planting to north boundary	X
Landscape setting of Poffley End/Hailey	Pattern of small sinuous fields within rolling small scale topography with good hedgerows and tree cover, including copses. Scattered farmsteads above local small valley feature north-south east of the villages	The development would reduce the landscape setting separating the villages from Witney by half its current width. The character of the setting has either been eroded or is less typical in the southern part of the site and can better withstand change	The proposed landscape buffer to the northern edge improves on the current raw edge to Witney but is insufficient in depth to mitigate the encroachment into the landscape setting	Pull development south away from Downhill Farm (see Figure 2B). Further enhance the small scale wolds landscape and the contrast in settlement pattern through woodland planting along valley sides and in large blocks connected to existing remnant woodland (see WOLA guidelines)

Assessment of visual impact on key views and visual qualities

Table 14.1.2:

Area LA	Key visual characteristics	Comment on Option	Comments on landscape mitigation	Action recommended
C3 North Witney: Small Scale Valleys	Low intervisibility in some locations within valleys	Valley feature becomes more enclosed; loss of intervisibility from within site	Reinforces sense of enclosure	X
	Northern part has strong visual connections with Wychwood uplands to the north	Visual connections severed	Landscape buffer would help screen development but does not provide opportunity to provide substantive compensation	Major woodland planting along northern boundary

	Intervisibility between higher ground and higher ground to the west of Witney and within LCAs D1 and D2 (south of Cogges Wood) and with LCAs areas A, C2 and C4	Much of this intervisibility will be lost in views out from the site. Views back to the site will be affected by development rooflines extending up the contours either side of the valley	Landscaped open spaces allow for some intervisibility from the site and break up mass of development in views from beyond the site	Creation of key views through the development to the landscape beyond to be included in the layout
	Some views to Witney Church spire but the church is set within the roofs of surrounding houses	The development would not directly affect any important views of the spire but care is needed to avoid obscuring views from the wider landscape to the spire	X	Key views to the spire from the wider landscape over the site to be identified and protected. This information to be used to inform development form and pattern
	Long views across the area	These will be largely lost	X	Long vistas to be included in final layout
	Existing town edge visually exposed in views from the southern part of C3	Town edge extended further from centre of town up hillsides	Landscape buffers help to soften edge of development. Open space in the south integrates the existing urban edge	Pull development south away from Downhill Farm (see Figure 2B). Further enhance the small scale wolds landscape and the contrast in settlement pattern through woodland planting along valley sides and in large blocks connected to existing remnant woodland (see WOLA guidelines).
	Upper slopes form wooded backcloth to the town in views from the higher ground to the south	Erosion of wooded backcloth with views of built form	Landscape and open space helps to break up mass of built form.	Reinforce wooded back cloth through major woodland planting, as above.
	Sense of tranquillity away from urban edge of Witney	Further erosion of tranquillity within Wychwood Project Area	X	Pull development south away from Downhill Farm (see Figure 2B) to protect sense of tranquillity south of Poffley End.
	Individual buildings in wooded skyline (Middlefield Farm and school)	Development north of Middlefield Farm creates urban skyline above 95m AOD contour northwards away from Witney	Landscape buffer retained on slightly higher ground	Reinforce woodland planting to create dominant wooded skyline
C4 North Witney: Plateau	Low intervisibility with wider landscape; and from adjacent road network due to hedgerow and tree cover	Limited visual impact in views from the open countryside	Retained hedgerow helps to conserve low intervisibility	Reinforce visual containment on eastern boundary with woodland planting

	Views from parts of site to north east up slopes	Views will be available to some houses	Open space could create an opportunity for a view up towards North Leigh	Create visual link through development
	Edge of town visually exposed	Opportunity to create better landscape edge to town	No additional mitigation	Reinforce visual containment on eastern boundary with woodland planting
	Views across site from New Yatt Road gap in hedgerow to Cogges Wood	Design could allow for retention of key vista	Not considered	Create visual link through development
Visual setting of Hailey/Poffley End	Important visual gap between Hailey and Witney. Often visually enclosed with long views opening up in all directions from more open viewpoints	Significant encroachment into current visual separation. Although development would be less perceptible from the surrounding road network, the visual setting of the farmsteads south of Poffley End would be eroded and views from the footpath network lost.	The proposed landscape structure is not sufficient to protect the remaining part of the landscape gap, and to mitigate visual intrusion as required by the WOLA guidelines.	Pull development south away from Downhill Farm (see Figure 2B). Further enhance the small scale wolds landscape and mitigate the visual impact through woodland planting along valley sides and in large blocks connected to existing remnant woodland (see WOLA guidelines).

Assessment of contribution to local townscape and settlement pattern

Table14.1.3

Area LA	Key settlement characteristics	Comment on Option	Comments on landscape mitigation	Action recommended
C3 North Witney: Small Scale Valleys	Affected by adjacent town edge estates	Increase in length of urban edge within C3	Landscape buffers help to soften urban edge	Reduce length of urban edge (see Figure 2B) and enhance the small scale wolds landscape and mitigate the visual impact through woodland planting along valley sides and in large blocks connected to existing remnant woodland (see WOLA guidelines).

	Dispersed farmsteads	No farmsteads within development footprint. However, development brings urban edge much closer to scattered farmsteads and envelops Middlefield Farm into urban form	X	Pull development south away from Downhill Farm (see Figure 2B). Retain open landscape link between Middlefield Farm and Merryfield Farm.
	Modern school with playing fields adjacent to C4	Incorporated into layout	Incorporated into open space between development and existing built form	X
	Scattered development along the B4022 including Witney Rugby Ground	Brings urban form much closer to Highcroft Farm	Landscape buffer to B4022	Reinforce contrast between scattered farmsteads in farmland and built form of Witney through major woodland planting south of Highcroft Farm.
	Urban form set down in lower slopes of valley north of river Windrush	Urban form will extend beyond 100m AOD and up northern arms of the valley slopes	X	Pull development south away from Downhill Farm (see Figure 2B) and below 100m AOD.
	Rural approach to Witney enclosed by hedgerows and tree cover with abrupt change in character with a weak urban edge	Development incorporates transition zone	Hedgerows retained and landscape buffer created	Need to create higher quality approach to Witney to mitigate current weak urban edge. Design to vehicular access and landscape buffer should create distinctive character in keeping with the best townscape features within Witney and enhancing the landscape character of the setting of Poffley End at this point.
	Polyfocal settlement at Hailey, with linear 'end' settlement at Poffley End, to the north of C3. Medieval villages 'carved' out of Wychwood Forest.	Bring urban form much closer to Poffley End	Landscape buffer to B4022	Reinforce contrast between scattered farmsteads in farmland and built form of Witney through major woodland planting south of Highcroft Farm. Pull development south away from Downhill Farm (see Figure 2B). Further enhance the small scale wolds landscape and mitigate the visual impact through woodland planting along valley sides and in large blocks connected to existing remnant woodland (see WOLA guidelines).

	Contrasting settlement pattern at Witney: one of a number of riverside towns set historically on a landform island on lower slopes above the alluvial floodplain; recently spreading up onto more exposed wolds	Risk of further erosion of traditional settlement pattern at Witney	X	Amendments to the layout and extent of the development as described above and as shown in Figure 2B.
C4 North Witney: Plateau	Affected by adjacent town edge estates	Development would be enclosed by existing estates on two sides	N/A	X
	Busy A4095 passes the site	Additional development would be acceptable	N/A	X
	Town is expanding on to these lower plateau	In keeping with local pattern	N/A	X
	Modern generic estate style entrance to Witney along A4095	This could be addressed through detailed design	Landscape treatment on this road could enhance the local character	Enhance eastern approach to Witney through development proposals
	Approach along New Yatt Road retains local characteristics	This could be addressed through detailed design	Landscape treatment on this road could enhance the local character	Enhance eastern approach to Witney through development proposals
Integrity of Hailey/Poffley End	Northern part of the option falls within the landscape buffer area – see Figure 1B. Importance of medieval settlement with its own identity, strongly contrasting with the settlement pattern at Witney, and in particular the more expansion along the B4022 and A4095	Development as proposed would encroach into the recommended landscape buffer to protect the landscape setting and separate identity of Hailey and Poffley End (Figure 1B)	The proposed landscape structure is not sufficient to protect the landscape setting.	Pull development south away from Downhill Farm (see Figure 2B). Further enhance the small scale wolds landscape and mitigate the visual impact through woodland planting along valley sides and in large blocks connected to existing remnant woodland (see WOLA guidelines).

Assessment of potential benefit of landscape mitigation and contribution to Green Infrastructure at Witney

At present the site contributes to the rural landscape setting of Witney and that of the historic villages of Hailey and Poffley End. It also contributes to the visual separation of these settlements from Witney. However the existing northern edge of Witney is exposed with the built form detracting from the quality of the rural landscape and the townscape character of Witney. An acceptable form of development on this site has the potential to

provide substantive improvements to the settlement pattern in north Witney and to the interface between the rural landscape and the town; and to deliver some of the landscape and visual objectives identified in WOLA and AHLC.

Conclusion and recommendations

The site lies within two AHLC character areas C3 and C4. Development within C4 would be acceptable in landscape and visual terms subject to the landscape design objectives set out below. Development within C3 as proposed, would damage the landscape and visual separation of the historic settlements of Hailey and Poffley End from Witney and have a significant adverse impact on the settled ancient pastures with scattered farmsteads within a landscape pattern of woodland, hedgerows and small fields within Hailey Parish which are acknowledged to be of high sensitivity and rare in Oxfordshire (OWLS). It is important that an appropriate landscape buffer be retained to protect these villages (see Figure 1B). The built form on the northern edge of Witney however has a negative impact on both the rural landscape quality and the townscape character and although the local field pattern is largely intact, the immediate landscape and visual setting of Witney has been eroded, although many significant landscape elements remain such as the distinctive valley feature (reinforced by perimeter planting of historic origin), hedgerows, and copses. Most importantly the pattern of scattered farmsteads enclosed by small fields remains a key feature of the rural landscape south of Poffley End. If development were to be allocated to this site, it is essential that this pattern is conserved and protected from adverse impact from local development. The need to protect and enhance the key landscape, visual and settlement characteristics of this area must lead to a restriction on the extent of the development.

It is recommended from a landscape perspective that if the North Witney option is pursued further, major revisions will be needed to the extent of development and the layout governed by protection of the key landscape assets of this area and a comprehensive Green Infrastructure masterplan prepared for the site. The number of potential dwellings will however need to be reduced significantly in order to protect important landscape, visual and townscape features of the area.

- Open valley corridor to be conserved as a key dominant feature of the site and be extended in keeping with the historic and topographical alignment of the stream and valley floor to connect to the wider landscape;
- Secondary linear open space on the perimeter and within the development area should build on the existing field pattern and landscape features;
- Substantive new woodland planting to be provided to the perimeter of the site, building on the existing distribution of tree and hedgerow cover;
- Retention of the open landscape and visual link between Middlefield and Merryfield Farms;

- The provision of playing fields could be accommodated on the periphery of the development in the vicinity of Middlefield and Downhill Farms provided the field pattern and provision of major landscape infrastructure is also achieved (see Figure 2B);
- The provision of amenity open space between the existing and proposed built form should be designed to integrate and link the new with the old and serve both communities as part of a Green Infrastructure plan for the site;
- Protection and significant enhancement of the significant landscape features on the site;
- Major contribution to the landscape and visual objectives for this area as set out in OWLS, WOLA and AHLC;
- Detailed design of the landscape setting to each vehicular access and the existing road corridor should reflect the different character of each approach to Witney with particular attention to retaining the rural character of New Yatt Road; the landscape interface between the ancient farmsteads south of Poffley End along Hailey Road and the entrance to Witney; and woodland screening to the A4095. A major peripheral road would be out of keeping with the local landscape character and would be visually intrusive; and
- Design and layout of the development should avoid uniformity and reflect the small scale more enclosed series of distinctive spaces in a well treed historic pattern.

The potential area to be considered further is shown in Figure 2B.

14.2 Assessment of Land West of Witney (Persimmon Homes, Bovis Homes and Sovereign Land)

Overview of proposals in relation to landscape and visual assessments

The proposed site lies north of the A40 and abuts the Downs Road/Range Road Industrial Estate on Burford Road to the north; the Witney Lakes Golf Course to the west and Deer Park Road and the existing housing in Witney to the east. The centre of the villages of Curbridge and Minster Lovell are situated 300m and 1.8m respectively from the site boundary. The Conservation Area at Minster Lovell lies 900m to the north-west of the site in the Upper Windrush Valley. The site lies within the eastern part of H (West Witney Ridge) and a small part of G (West Witney: Minor Valleys). H is typical of the open limestone wolds on the plateau above the River Windrush Valley west of Witney. G is a more complex valley landscape of the semi-enclosed rolling vale landscape in Shilton Downs. The AHLC identifies H as having high landscape sensitivity on the higher ground, moderate on lower slopes, and high local and district importance. G is of high sensitivity with high local and district importance. A detailed landscape and visual assessment has been submitted in support of an outline application (July 2012).

Key landscape, visual and townscape features of proposals

The proposal is for a new sustainable community of some size up to 1000 dwellings plus 10 ha of employment land. An illustrative masterplan indicates that the built form would abut the western edge of Witney with a narrow landscape corridor separating the site from Deer Park Road. Part of the site, to the south of the existing employment area, is proposed for employment. Housing is proposed south of the employment area, linking to the housing in the east. A major part of the housing would be 2 storey (max 8m) with 3 storey housing in the centre and 2 to 3 storey commercial buildings (12 to 15m high) in the north. Elsewhere the development includes open space running south-west to north-east across the site with a large area to the south leading to the A40. A second more minor landscape corridor also crosses the site with landscape buffers created along Downs Road and the A40. The built form is further broken up by landscaped vehicular and pedestrian routes. A full description can be found in the Design and Access Statement accompanying the outline application.

Assessment of impact on key characteristics of the landscape

Table 14.2.1:

Area LA	Key landscape characteristics	Comment on Option	Comments on landscape mitigation	Action recommended
G: West Witney: Minor Valley	Rolling small scale valley	Significant modification of the landform to construct new access off Downs Road and minor modification to create access off Curbridge Road A4095	Landscaped community gardens, SUDS pond and infrastructure planting should not affect the local landform	Grade highway infrastructure into local landform and use planting to reduce impact;
	Colwell Brook with substantive tree planting; A local landscape asset	Subsumed into proposed housing; Rural character eroded	Minor landscape buffer treatment	Maintain the Colwell Brook corridor as a well defined landscape feature continuing east of the A4095 and west into Area H. Open space on the western edge of the brook therefore to be generous
	Informal open space and balancing ponds (designated in Local Plan)	Open agricultural setting to open space lost to new housing	Landscape buffer to stream partly mitigates the impact of housing	Limit the extent of housing in this small area. In order to conserve landscape relationship between open space and wider countryside at this point the land immediately north of the A40 should be retained as open space. The Colwell Brook landscape corridor forms the northern boundary to development. The introduction of well designed housing in keeping with the older settlement housing pattern facing onto the A4095 could create an attractive approach to complement the tree lined edge of the Coral Springs development to the south of the A4095
	Some pasture and arable agricultural land	Loss of grassland to highway infrastructure and housing	Remaining agricultural land in the west not likely to be viable as farmland. Area in east proposed for communal gardens, SUDS pond and tree planting	See above. Remaining grassland to be included in green space provision
	Poplars along Curbridge Road	X	Retained	X
	Regular field boundaries except along stream	New boundaries created by development	X	Retain irregular treatment to stream boundary

	Small scale field pattern	Localised severance of field pattern	Scale maintained	X
	Enclosed valley, more open slopes above	Enclosed valley occupied by housing; all sense of enclosure lost in area of highway infrastructure	Enclosure replaced through highway planting;	Maintain sense of enclosure through planting as part of the development pattern
	Severed by A40 and A4095	Western end of the area completely severed by highway infrastructure; impact on A4095 increased; eastern section further fragmented by housing on the site (development at Coral Springs and Springfield Nurseries will also fragment area)	Impact of highway infrastructure and housing only partly mitigated by planting.	Slightly reduce area of housing as illustrated in Figure 2C. See above recommendations for this part of the site. The area south of the A40 to be protected from any further development in order to avoid further fragmentation of this fragile landscape.
H: West Witney Ridge	Plateau ridge between Upper and Lower Windrush Valleys; Gently sloping to the south east	Development footprint extends up to approx. 104m AOD and down the south facing slopes, just below existing employment on the plateau at 105 to 110m AOD. Development adds to substantial built form on the highest ground	X	Ensure that new development does not increase prominence of development on the high ground of the plateau. Break up mass of built form on the highest land above the 100m AOD contour by retaining a good landscape buffer to Downs Road and providing a landscape buffer a minimum of 15m wide along the Colwell Brook to meet Downs Road. See Figure 2C
	Range of land uses including arable land on the site; large employment areas with large scale buildings; golf course and football pitch; local roads. Open land covers around 75% of area H	Substantial increase in built up area of area H to bring the open land down to around 50% of the area	Substantial increase in communal green space	X
	Short upper section of Colwell Brook with substantive tree group and species rich hedgerow in the south-east section	Subsumed into proposed housing; Rural character eroded	Minor improvements to stream corridor	Reinforce Colwell Brook as an important local landscape feature (see above)
	Arable land with some pasture	Loss of largest area of arable land	Arable fields within 25% of the site to be laid out as green infrastructure incorporating the hedgerow spine running south-west to north-east across the site	X

	Neat hedges; few trees west of Downs Road; Semi-mature planting associated with employment areas; Young golf course planting; Semi-mature planting along Downs Road	Principal landscape features retained within development footprint except for along Downs Road (reduced substantially in width)	Better quality landscape features retained and incorporated into Green Infrastructure	Retain and reinforce existing tree planting belt along Downs Road; Increase tree cover across the site within the development blocks
	Medium sized field pattern and regular field boundaries	Part of field pattern retained as boundaries to building compartments; Medium sized development blocks	Large area of open space with two medium sized landscape corridors	Provide landscape corridor to north and eastern boundary – see Figure 2C
	Generally open large scale landscape	Loss of open character over 75% of the site; Large scale development	Openness retained in open space	X
Landscape setting of Curbridge	Area G makes up the landscape setting to Curbridge and is very vulnerable to further erosion.	Highway infrastructure lies north of the A40, reducing its impact on the immediate landscape setting to Curbridge; Although separated by the A40, proposed housing erodes a narrow gap between Witney and Curbridge	Proposed planting will help to mitigate the erosion of the landscape setting	Include landscape proposals for the land remaining around the proposed highway works; Limit area of housing in G as shown in Figure 2C
Landscape setting of Minster Lovell	The open character of the golf course and narrow rural corridor between area H and the Minster Lovell Conservation Area are important in maintaining the landscape setting but there is scope for improving the landscape quality of this landscape. The developing tree cover along Downs Road is an important linear landscape feature defining the edge of Witney	Development erodes the tree belt along Downs Road	X	Retain and reinforce existing tree planting belt along Downs Road

Assessment of visual impact on key views and visual qualities

Table 14.2.2:

Area LA	Key visual characteristics	Comment on Option	Comments on landscape mitigation	Action recommended
G: West Witney: Minor Valley	Low intervisibility within valleys	Elevated nature of development likely to very visible beyond area G	Proposed planting will enclose valleys further	See below
	High visual links with Lower Windrush to the south from eastern part of the site; and with area H to the north in the west of the area	Housing development erodes links with Lower Windrush	X	Reduce area of housing in east of area to conserve open landscape visual links with lower Windrush – see Figure 2C
	Colwell Brook willows and poplars on Curbridge Road prominent	Built form of housing may impact on visual prominence of willows	Landscape buffers shown adjacent to the these features	Enhance streamside tree planting as a landscape feature
	Vegetation important in screening southern edge of Witney	Urban edge of Witney extended southwards	Additional screen planting along A40	Screening to highway infrastructure important. By reducing housing in east section greater opportunity to screen existing housing and proposed housing in areas G and H
H: West Witney Ridge	Prominent plateau skyline	Site does not form a part of the skyline	X	X
	Strong visual connection with Upper and Lower Windrush Valleys and Area G	Development on site will be highly visible from the south and west. Long views from Downs Road southwards might be affected by clearance of the wooded edge to the site along Downs Road	Insufficient tree planting to mitigate the impact of the development blocks. Main open space and linear landscape corridors help soften development	Increase tree planting within the blocks to break up the built form Retain wooded edge to Downs Road to screen development as shown in Figure 2C
	Employment areas visible from AONB north of Minster Lovell	Risk of development increasing the built form on the high ground in these views	X	Height of new development to be analysed against existing to ensure that there is no increase in visual prominence of the employment uses

	Planting along Downs Road beginning to be an effective screen of the lower parts of the employment area	Loss of depth to this screening element in part	Replacement tree planting not sufficient to mitigate where the development requires the removal of the planting	Retain and enhance existing tree belt as shown in Figure 2C
	Tree cover limits views	Development will limit views	X	Maximise opportunities to provide vistas over the development to the wider landscape
	Existing employment buildings are prominent on the skyline in views from all directions	Risk that new employment built form will increase the visual impact on the skyline in views from the west and south in particular	Inadequate landscape buffer to break up proposed massing of employment with the existing	Ensure that new development does not increase prominence of development on the high ground of the plateau. Break up mass of built form on the highest land above the 100m AOD contour by retaining a good landscape buffer to Downs Road and providing a landscape buffer a minimum of 15m wide along the Colwell Brook to meet Downs Road. See Figure 2C. Height of new development to be analysed against existing to ensure that there is no increase in visual prominence of the employment uses
Visual setting of Curbridge	At present Curbridge is visually separated from Witney by local landform and tree cover	New highway infrastructure will impinge on the northern landscape setting to Curbridge; Roofs of proposed housing may be visible	Little landscape treatment south of the new highway to mitigate any visual impacts; Tree planting along the A40 helps to screen visual impact from housing	Reinforce planting to south of highway infrastructure
Visual setting of Minster Lovell	With the exception of the existing large scale employment buildings north of the site, the town is not visible from Minster Lovell due to the local topography	Significant risk that the employment built form will increase the visibility of both the existing and new buildings	Loss of the depth of the tree belt along Downs Road would increase the visibility of the western edge of Witney	Retain and enhance existing tree belt: Height of new development to be analysed to ensure no increase in visual prominence of the employment uses

Assessment of contribution to local townscape and settlement pattern

Table 14.2.3

Area LA	Key settlement characteristics	Comment on Option	Comments on landscape mitigation	Action recommended
G: West Witney: Minor Valley	Landscape buffer between Witney and Curbridge	Landscape buffer bridged by new access and proposed housing	New planting will help to retain visual buffer	Retain area south of the A40 as open rural land. Minimise the impact of housing on the A4095 north of the A40. Planting to the new access to link into the existing planting pattern
	Highway corridor	Substantial increase in highway infrastructure so that western part becomes a highway landscape	Insufficient landscape mitigation	Planting to the new access to link into the existing planting pattern
	Important rural approach to the town from the south and Bampton Vale	Eastern housing erodes rural approach to town	Proposed communal open space in keeping with valley landscape character	Reduce housing; see Figure 2C. Design of housing to retain rural settlement character
	Witney contained by Colwell Brook	Development extends beyond Colwell Brook boundary. Brook subsumed into urban form	Minor landscape buffer to Colwell Brook	Retain and reinforce landscape corridor along Colwell Brook as town feature. Allow for access link to Deer Park Road to connect Witney Park Farm Estate to the new development in order to better integrate the development into the existing settlement built form: see Figure 2C
H: West Witney Ridge	Western edge of Witney dominated by large scale employment buildings on high ground	Employment development could significantly increase the scale and mass of the employment area	Landscape treatment does little to mitigate this impact	The design of the proposed employment area should avoid any increase in the prominence of development on the higher ground. Careful analysis of existing building heights and potential impacts of proposed design solutions to be undertaken from the key views identified in Figure 1C

	Witney has already expanded beyond its characteristic form below the ridges around the valley slopes and floor	No further expansion along the ridge but some development on higher ground	X	Allow for 15m wide landscape corridor along northern boundary as in Figure 2C to mitigate the impact. See also above
	Western Witney dominated by large homogeneous housing estates	Risk that this pattern may be repeated although the site would be developed in character areas	Proposed linear corridors and large open space breaks up built form in part and creates soft southern edge	Create locally distinctive neighbourhood in keeping with the local landscape and settlement character; Avoid hard urban edge to west and south
Integrity of Curbridge	Distinctive rural character to Curbridge survives	Highway works will urbanise the north of Curbridge; No direct impact from housing	Insufficient protection to the character of the village	Provide landscape treatment to the south of the highway infrastructure
Integrity of Minster Lovell	Distinctive rural character to the Conservation Area; Charterville Allotments have distinctive long plots	No impact on Conservation Area; Integrity of Charterville Allotments would be protected by landscape buffer	X	X

Assessment of potential benefit of landscape mitigation and contribution to Green Infrastructure at Witney

At present the site contributes to the rural hinterland of West Witney but outside of the Colwell Brook landscape corridor has few landscape features of particular merit. The proposed creation of a large area of Green Infrastructure as part of the development has the potential to bring greater interest and diversity into the west Witney landscape setting. This could be further enhanced by extending the Colwell Brook landscape corridor and linking it to the wider landscape and providing wider wedges of Green Infrastructure on the edge of the development.

Conclusion and recommendations

The site lies within two AHLC character areas G and H. Development within both areas would be acceptable in landscape and visual terms subject to the landscape design objectives set out below. Part of the built form on the western edge of Witney however has a negative impact on both the rural landscape quality and the townscape character and although the local field pattern is largely intact, the immediate landscape and visual setting of Witney has been eroded by the visual prominence of the commercial buildings on the plateau and poor interface between the town and countryside along Downs Road. In contrast the commercial area off Range road and housing along Deer Park Road are contained by the Colwell Brook landscape corridor. The proposed level of development on this site provides an opportunity to enhance the town edge, integrate Colwell

Brook and its landscape setting in to the town fabric as a major area of green infrastructure and a well designed community with a high level of open space.

It is recommended from a landscape perspective that the West Witney option can be pursued further without any major revisions. Through careful balancing of housing density, whilst avoiding intrusive elements on higher ground, the number of potential dwellings may not need to be reduced in order to protect important landscape, visual and townscape features of the area.

- Colwell Brook landscape corridor to be conserved and enhanced as a major landscape feature incorporating the small copse on Downs Road. The Colwell Brook open space should be designed to an integral part of the town;
- Improved pedestrian, cycling and even minor vehicular access needed to avoid segregation for the site option from the adjacent built form;
- Downs Road to maintain its rural character for the most part, through retention of the existing wooded tree belt along the boundary of the site. This is particularly important in order to protect the context of rural views south from Downs Road;
- Final approach to the settlement at north end of Downs Road to be enhanced through good quality design to housing fronting onto Downs Road and tree planting;
- Site to be broken up by major planted open space links, where possible reflecting the landscape pattern and retaining existing vegetation. These would be an integral part of a character led approach to designed the new community;
- Protect the open small scale character of the landscape buffer between Witney and Curbridge south of the A40 and between the A40 and the proposed highway infrastructure on the one hand and the 'finger' of development in G down to Curbridge Road;
- Protect the separate identity and physical and visual separation of both Curbridge and Minster Lovell from intrusive development within the site option;
- Visual analysis of the potential visual impact of additional large scale or tall buildings to be undertaken to ensure that the existing visual intrusion from the commercial buildings is not increased in extent or prominence;
- Frontage development along Downs Road and Curbridge Road as shown in Figure 2C to be designed to enhance the quality and character of the approach to the town, having regard to the adjoining landscape character and key characteristics of the town;
- Protection and significant enhancement of the significant landscape features on the site; and
- Major contribution to the landscape and visual objectives for this area as set out in OWLS, WOLA and AHLC.

The potential area to be considered further is shown in Figure 2C.

14.3 Assessment of Land East of Witney (The East Witney Land Consortium)

Overview of proposals in relation to landscape and visual assessments

Three sites have been promoted to the east of Witney. Area A lies to the north of Oxford Hill and east of Jubilee Way and abuts the housing in Madley Park west of Jubilee Way. This area lies within the western lower slopes of D1: Madley Brook Valley Side. D1 is part of the open rolling vale landscape of the Eynsham Vale but close to Witney the landscape has a more enclosed character. This area is part of the Wychwood Project Area and has strong landscape and visual links with the slopes rising north and north-east of Witney. The AHLC Study identifies the area as of high sensitivity and importance overall (however see conclusions in Table 10.1). Area A is being promoted for business use.

Area B lies in the Cogges Triangle which lies between the A40 to the south-east, Oxford Hill to the north-east and Cogges Hill Road and the housing to the west and wraps around the Windrush Cemetery. The hamlet of High Cogges lies approximately 500m to the south-east. It is part of D2: Eastern Windrush / Madley Brook Valley Side which includes the Triangle and the land south of the A40 up to High Cogges. Like D1 the site is part of the open rolling vale landscape of the Eynsham Vale but close to Witney the landscape has a more enclosed character. Part of the area is within the Wychwood Project Area but the land north of the A40 is rather divorced from the wider landscape. The AHLC Study identifies this area as of high sensitivity and importance overall. Area B is being promoted for housing.

Area C lies on the eastern edge of the Lower Windrush Valley as it enters the south of the town. It is bounded by the A40 to the south, Stanton Harcourt Road to the east, housing to the north and the open valley floor to the west. It lies within F1: Central and South Witney: Valley Floor which extends northwards along the river east of the town centre and west of the historic core of Cogges, and southwards into the wider valley floor of the floodplain pasture and semi-enclosed flat vale farmland of the Lower Windrush. The area is enclosed by mature trees and hedgerows to the west but has strong landscape and visual links with the valley landscape both north and south of the A40. It also lies in the Windrush in Witney policy area in the draft Core Strategy (2011). The AHLC Study identifies this area as of high sensitivity and importance. The area is being promoted for housing.

The most recent submissions from the site promoter suggest that Areas B and C are currently being actively promoted, however for completeness this assessment considers all three options.

Key landscape, visual and townscape features of proposals

The illustrative Concept Plan for Area A shows the developable area in the north and centre west of the site which would provide 11ha of office space for high tech businesses on land below the 100m AOD contour. The remaining 12.3ha are shown as woodland planting, with a meadow in

the east and retention of existing planting along Jubilee Way as a landscape buffer. The development would front onto Jubilee Way south of this buffer. Access is off Jubilee Way. A site analysis has been undertaken but no landscape and visual assessment of the wider area.

The illustrative Concept Plan for Area B shows the developable area to the east of the existing housing and along Cogges Hill Road between the road and the Cemetery. This would cover 11ha mostly below the 95m AOD contour and provide for 350 dwellings. The remainder of the site is proposed as community woodland with buffer/screen planting along the A40 and Oxford Hill, grassland between the housing and the woodland with a narrow landscape corridor leading to Cogges Hill Road immediately south of the Cemetery. There is little landscape infrastructure to break up the built form.

The illustrative Concept Plan for Area C shows the developable area in two blocks south and west of existing housing and west of Stanton Harcourt Road. This would cover 3ha and provide for 105 houses. An attenuation pond and allotments are shown running northwards along the western boundary of the existing houses. The land to the west up to the river is included as hay meadow with the potential for amenity enhancement. South of the developable area is shown for two belts of buffer/screen planting with grassland (and potential for a Community Heating Scheme Plant).

Assessment of impact on key characteristics of the landscape

Table 14.3.1:

Area LA	Key landscape characteristics	Comment on Option	Comments on landscape mitigation	Action recommended
D1: North East Witney: Madley Brook Valley side (Area A: Land north of Oxford Hill)	Smoothly undulating undeveloped valley side; part of undeveloped ridge around Witney	Developable area occupies the valley side although it has been designed to follow the contours to some extent, especially in the south of the site	Siting below the 100m AOD partly reduces the landscape impact. In the south. The landscape mitigation is designed to reinforce the topography. This is less well articulated in the north of the site.	Witney largely retains the settlement pattern of development below the 95m AOD contour along its eastern boundary. Only a small part of the site option lies below this – See Figure 1D. However development of this isolated field would intrude into an undeveloped valley side all along the eastern flank of the town. Avoid development on this site

	Mix of arable and pasture in a medium scale field pattern	The site has smaller fields than to the north of the site. The current field pattern has been reflected in the layout of the site. Two and half of the fields are given to development.	Current agricultural pattern is lost. Provision for meadow may provide landscape enhancement. Extends built form into a continuous agricultural swathe on the east side of Witney, beyond the Jubilee Way barrier	Avoid loss of open arable and pasture east of Jubilee Way
	Strong species rich hedges and hedgerow trees	The development layout allows for retention of these existing landscape features	Proposed woodland planting would contain the eastern spread of the town and contribute to the local landscape	Loss of field boundaries would erode the rural landscape and be detrimental to the Wychwood Forest landscape
	Irregular old enclosure field pattern	This is an important characteristic of the site. The current field pattern has largely but not consistently been reflected in the layout of the site	Landscape structure has largely but not consistently reflected the field pattern	Loss of fields would erode the rural landscape and be detrimental to the Wychwood Forest landscape
	Open on higher ground	Development avoids higher ground.	X	X
	Landscape setting to Cogges Wood	The open landscape setting to Cogges Wood, a surviving part of the Wychwood Forest would be eroded.	The landscape proposals would not be able to mitigate the impact of development on Cogges Wood	Avoid any impact on the historic open landscape setting of Cogges Wood
	Part of the Wychwood Forest Project area	Loss of that part of the Wychwood Forest project closest to Witney	X	Avoid any adverse impact on the historic Wychwood Forest
D2: East Witney: Eastern Windrush/Madley Brook Valley Side (Area B: Cogges Triangle)	Undeveloped undulating valley side with prominent ridge	Development contained on lower slopes just above 95m AOD falling towards the town, avoiding prominent ridge	Woodland would reinforce the ridge	X
	Mainly agricultural with a Cemetery on higher ground	Loss of agricultural land forming a rural setting to the town. Open rural character of the Cemetery lost.	Open fields replaced by community woodland. Severs landscape connectivity with the Eynsham Vale	Remove development west of Cemetery. Retain open grassland with woodland in area of open space, reflecting the on site landscape pattern.

	Well maintained species rich hedges and hedgerow trees	Loss of field boundaries	Landscape feature lost	Incorporate existing hedgerows and trees into landscape framework of development and open space
	Irregular old enclosure field pattern	Loss of field pattern	Landscape mitigation does not respect existing landscape pattern	Incorporate field pattern into landscape framework of development and open space
	Medium scale	Medium scale of development but could be broken up	Medium scale landscape lost	Break up developable area with open space to create smaller blocks
	Generally open	Open landscape lost though built form on lower slopes.	Openness lost	Create views down open landscape corridors to mitigate loss of openness
F1: Central and south Witney: Valley Floor (Area C: Land west of Stanton Harcourt Road)	Flat valley floor and river terrace	A key characteristic of the Windrush Valley at Witney is the undeveloped valley floor below 80m AOD. Development proposed on valley floor below 80m AOD contours (adjacent development mainly between 80 and 95m AOD).	X	Avoid any changes to the topography and landform Extension of built form below 80m AOD to be confined to rounding off on higher ground as shown in Figure 2D
	River, ditches and floodplain	The development is partly within the floodplain but not adjacent to the river or any ditches.	Proposals to enhance amenity value of the floodplain but not specified	Development to avoid the floodplain. Any Sustainable Drainage System to be designed to be in keeping with the local wetland pattern
	Pasture and meadow	Majority of the pasture is lost	Small area of pasture is retained	Site to be largely retained as open grassland in accordance with Windrush in Witney Landscape Management Strategy
	Regular field pattern	Development contained within field pattern	Proposed planting follows a regular geometric pattern	Development should not extend over the whole of the fields identified in this site option despite the presence of strong boundaries to the fields
	Small to medium scale	Medium scale development	X	Very small scale development is more suited to this site
	Enclosed by trees	The site is partly contained by trees and partly by a more gappy mature hedgerow.	Both trees and hedgerows would be retained. Further tree screening to southern edge blocks views over the site	Maintain tree cover as landscape features of the Windrush Valley.

	Valley setting of Witney	Development erodes open valley setting	Additional unsympathetic planting introduced into the valley	Retain open character of valley setting and avoid further separation of the site from the rest of the valley
	Landscape setting to Cogges	Development separated from Cogges by existing development and the valley landscape	X	X
Landscape setting of High Cogges	Series of medium sized irregular fields either side of the A40; A40 and its tree planting form a strong feature separating Witney from the hamlet; High Cogges retains its rural character; landscape setting extends eastwards into the Eynsham Vale	Areas A and C would not impinge on High Cogges. The developable area within Area B should not significantly impinge on the landscape setting.	The proposed community woodland in Area B does not respect the local landscape character. Heavy screen planting should not be necessary.	The landscape scheme for Area B should be modified to respect the key characteristics of the landscape setting to the village and avoid complete landscape severance: for example use of small copses, species rich hedgerows with hedgerow trees and grassland. Ensure that a soft edge is provided to the built form

Assessment of visual impact on key views and visual qualities

Table 14.3.2:

Area LA	Key visual characteristics	Comment on Option	Comments on landscape mitigation	Action recommended
D1: North East Witney: Madley Brook Valley side (Area A: Land north of Oxford Hill)	High intervisibility with the north	The development will be visible from New Yatt and the Woodstock Road to the north	Landscape mitigation has little benefit	As D1 is visually a central part of the open landscape, avoid development east of Jubilee Way
	Good visual connections with Wychwood Uplands to the north	Views sweeping over the site are similar to the visual characteristics of views over the Wychwood Uplands	Woodland a positive visual feature	See above
	Hard edge to existing Madley Estate is now softening. This area is sited low in the landscape.	Development would extend the hard edge eastwards	Woodland a positive visual feature	Development would extend beyond the existing maturing vegetation either side of Jubilee Way, which defines the edge of east Witney
	Part of open backcloth to Witney	Loss of open backcloth. Lower slopes only developed	Visual benefit of meadow would not be perceived	Avoid any development which would erode this open backcloth -

	Long views across the area	These will be largely lost	X	Avoid any development which would break up the long views
D2: East Witney: Eastern Windrush/Madley Brook Valley Side (Area B: Cogges Triangle)	High intervisibility with the west and some with the east	Impact on views: from Cemetery across to St Mary's Church in particular	Community woodland would restrict views	Remove development west of Cemetery as shown in figure 2D. Retain open grassland with woodland designed to reflect the on site landscape pattern; retaining views westwards
	Views across the town to the west, to the centre of town and St Mary's Church, and down the lower Windrush valley	Impact on views from Cemetery in particular	Community woodland would restrict views	See above. Key vista to church and its landscape setting over fields to be retained
	Part of open backcloth to Witney	Limited loss of open backcloth. Lower slopes only developed	Open backcloth replaced by wooded backcloth	Develop lower slopes below 95m AOD only. Retain open grassland with small copses, reflecting the local landscape pattern
	Well defined tree lined edge to existing housing	Design could allow for retention of existing soft edge and create new one	No benefits at present	Careful landscape treatment to be applied to the edge of the developable area, integrating with the open space in the development and the communal area to the east
	Visual links with wider Eynsham Vale	No impact	Proposed buffer/screen planting and community woodland will sever views	Omit additional screening along A40 adjacent to the communal open space.
F1: Central and south Witney: Valley Floor (Area C: Land west of Stanton Harcourt Road)	High intervisibility along the valley. The site is partly screened along its western boundary and open to views from the south	Development would have a significant impact on views from the south, across the site to St Mary's Church and up the Windrush valley Development within the north field would be visible through and over the hedgerow	Additional screen planting further blocks views from the south	Remove development from line of sight from the south as shown in Figures 1D and 2D Any very small scale development within the north field to be unobtrusive without the need for additional screen planting
	Point of change from upper to lower Windrush Valley	Developable area is a key part of this transition	X	Development footprint reduced to 'read' with the adjacent built form and not intrude into the valley floor
	Cogges Church landmark	Impact on views to this landmark from the south	Loss of views to the church from the south	Development footprint substantially reduced to avoid damage to views to the church

	Hard urban edge in area	Creates new hard edge	Buffer planting emphasises the form of the development in the southern field	Create landscape buffer zone as shown in Figure 2D in keeping with the local valley landscape character to soften existing housing and any small extension
Visual setting of High Cogges	There is little intervisibility between the hamlet and Witney at present. The farm buildings at High Cogges are visible from Area B	Visual erosion of the landscape between the two settlements could be avoided in the development of Area B	Proposed planting to area B will block views out to the hamlet and its landscape setting	Ensure that built form of the development in Area B does not break the A40 tree line horizon. Allow for views between the communal open space and High Cogges

Assessment of contribution to local townscape and settlement pattern

Table14.3.3

Area LA	Key settlement characteristics	Comment on Option	Comments on landscape mitigation	Action recommended
D1: North East Witney: Madley Brook Valley side (Area A: Land north of Oxford Hill)	Existing strong edge along Jubilee Way and semi-rural character of this road	Extends town beyond this edge which is beginning to mature and create attractive edge to the town. Development fronting onto Jubilee Way will urbanise this road further	Landscape buffers help to soften urban edge but only in part	Avoid development eastwards beyond Jubilee Way
	Part of the manor of Cogges	Relationship with Cogges Manor has already been severed by modern development. No view of the church or manor	X	X
	Oxford Hill is an important semi-rural approach to Witney. Perception of open countryside to the north of this gateway	Development sufficiently away from Oxford Hill to avoid changes to the character of the road and approach to Witney	Woodland contributes to rural approach to Witney	X

	Development in east largely below the 95m AOD contour	Development footprint extends beyond the 95m AOD contour.	X	East Witney retains the settlement pattern of development below the 95m AOD contour. Only a small part of the site lies below this – See Figure 1D. However development of this isolated field would intrude into an undeveloped valley side all along the eastern flank of the town. Avoid development on this site
	Contrasting settlement pattern at Witney: one of a number of riverside towns set historically on a landform island on lower slopes above the alluvial floodplain; recently spreading up onto more exposed wolds	Risk of further erosion of traditional settlement pattern at Witney	X	See above
D2: East Witney: Eastern Windrush/Madley Brook Valley Side (Area B: Cogges Triangle)	Part of the manor of Cogges which is still perceived through visual links	Development could sever visual links. Layout does not respect surviving field pattern	Layout does not respect surviving field pattern	Respect historic connection with Cogges Manor by reflecting surviving field pattern and views and vistas to the church and its setting
	Soft edge to existing modern housing	Development creates hard edge	No landscape benefit	Create new soft edge through careful landscape treatment to the edge of the developable area, integrating with the open space in the development and the communal area to the east
	Site provides transition landscape between Windrush valley and open vale landscapes on edge of town	Development does not respect this transition role	Landscape treatment is not sympathetic to the this role	Design whole site to create transition from built form to an open landscape with wooded copses
	Separate identity of High Cogges	Development is contained on lower slopes but the height of the built form may be an issue	Proposed buffer/screening reinforces visual separation	Retain existing tree buffer along A40 – break up linear form with minor additional tree planting
F1: Central and south Witney: Valley	Part of the manor meadows	Loss of part of the manor open lands	Landscape treatment is designed to screen development not respect manor lands	Development to be confined to very small areas – see Figure 2D

Floor (Area C: Land west of Stanton Harcourt Road)	Local modern development close to valley floor	Extends the adverse impact of modern development	Development style landscaping	Extent of modern development on the edge of the valley to be limited – see Figure 2D. Design of the development to be in keeping with the adjacent housing and create a well designed approach into Witney along the Stanton Harcourt Road also in keeping with the rural landscape character and key townscape characteristics
	Impact of A40	X	X	Landscape buffer to be linked into existing planting along A40
	Open meadow river valley a key feature of the settlement	Loss of part of this key feature of the town	Screen planting erodes valley	A small area of development as shown in Figure 2D could avoid erosion of the valley floor
Integrity of High Cogges	High Cogges retains its rural character and at present has a strong sense of place uninfluenced by Witney or even the A40.	The developable area of Area B should avoid impact on the settlement character but great care should taken in the design of the Shores Green Slip Road roundabout	X	Asses impact of Shores Green Slip road on High Cogges.

Assessment of potential benefit of landscape mitigation and contribution to Green Infrastructure at Witney

At present Area A makes a major contribution to the eastern rural landscape setting of Witney. The provision of new woodland would meet the objectives identified in WOLA and AHLC. However, the meadow is isolated and makes no contribution to the Green Infrastructure of the town. These features do not mitigate the harm from the proposed development.

Area B also contributes to the rural setting of Witney and has a surviving visual relationship with Cogges and the St Mary’s Church. New woodland would meet the objectives of WOLA and AHLC but the extent and form of the community woodland is not in keeping with the landscape character. However a combination of woodland and open space would contribute to the Witney’s Green Infrastructure and maintain the landscape and visual setting of High Cogges, the eastern approach to Witney and the Cemetery, which is of particular value in maintaining a sense of calm and tranquillity.

Area C as whole makes an important contribution to the Windrush Valley. The proposed planting is not in keeping with the valley landscape character and the use of screen planting is not appropriate.

Conclusion and recommendations

The site lies within three AHLC character areas D1, D2 and F1. Development within D2 would be acceptable in landscape and visual terms subject to the landscape design objectives set out below. Development within D1 would damage the landscape and visual character of the Wychwood Forest and the eastern landscape setting of Witney and is not recommended. Development within F1 could potentially result in significant damage to the Windrush Valley and key views across it. Provided key features are protected, and a sympathetic landscape buffer treatment to the urban edge is included, a small amount of development may be accommodated.

It is recommended from a landscape perspective that the East Witney option could be pursued further, subject to major revisions to the extent of development and to the layout, governed by protection of the key landscape assets of this area and a comprehensive Green Infrastructure masterplan prepared for the sites. The number of potential dwellings will however need to be reduced in order to protect important landscape, visual and townscape features of the area.

- The open river valley landscape, as defined in the Windrush in Witney, must be protected from urban expansion and visual intrusion. If Area C is to be pursued further detailed studies should be carried out and must demonstrate that the area shown in Figure 2D can be developed without harm;
- All landscape treatment and landscape buffers must be designed to be in keeping with the local landscape character;
- Any frontage development to Stanton Harcourt Road should be designed to create an attractive gateway to the town and reflect the locally distinctive character around Cogges;
- Development should be contained below the 95m AOD and above the 80m AOD contours;
- Existing views from the Cemetery, and down Cogges Hill Road from the town approach along Oxford Hill must be protected;
- The landscape setting of East Witney which takes in the swathe of Wychwood Forest countryside from New Yatt down to Oxford Hill must be protected from urban expansion and visual intrusion;
- Protection and enhancement of the significant landscape features on the site;
- Major contribution to the landscape and visual objectives for this area as set out in OWLS, WOLA and AHLC;
- Detailed design of each vehicular access and its the landscape setting and of the existing road corridor should reflect the different character of each approach to Witney with particular attention to retaining the character of Cogges Hill Road and Stanton Court Road; and

- Design and layout of the development should avoid uniformity and reflect the small scale more enclosed series of distinctive spaces in a well treed historic pattern.

The potential area to be considered further is shown in Figure 2D.

14.4 Evaluation of development options and possible combinations

The above analysis shows that none of the sites can be developed, as they are currently promoted, without some harm to acknowledged landscape, visual or settlement attributes and without being contrary to current emerging policy. It is however recommended that all three options, West, North and East Witney are able to contribute to West Oxfordshire's housing needs to a greater or lesser degree provided the potential area for development is pulled away from the most sensitive landscapes. Development on all of the sites must also be accompanied by a substantial enhancement of the local landscape to strengthen the landscape edge of the town and reinstate the traditional landscape pattern in the urban-rural transitional zone. It is therefore recommended that West Witney remains the preferred option although a small reduction in the developable area would help protect the wider landscape and enhance the key local landscape, visual and settlement features. It is recommended that the development areas in North Witney and East Witney Cogges Triangle (Area B) are reduced from that being promoted; that development in East Witney off Stanton Harcourt Road (Area C) is considerably reduced; and that the East Witney off Jubilee Way site option (Area A) is not pursued further. Figures 2B to 2D illustrate potential sites to be further investigated.

Option: West Witney

On the basis of the above landscape, visual and settlement analysis West Witney remains the preferred option to accommodate 1000 dwellings. Although there are no over-riding constraints to development of the site, a number of recommendations have been made to mitigate harm to the wider landscape and key landscape features and avoid further harm to the western edge of Witney.

Option: North Witney

This report concludes that, provided a substantive landscape transition zone is retained next to Hailey/Poffley End as shown in Figure 2B, this option could be developed on a smaller scale as an extension to the existing built form. The landscape character is already influenced by the existing urban edge and the site could be partly developed without harm to the wider landscape. A number of recommendations seek to protect and improve the urban edge and local landscape features.

Option: East Witney

The three sites within the East Witney option are all subject to varying degrees of landscape, visual and settlement constraints and it is recommended that only Area B be pursued as a strategic site, albeit with a reduced footprint. Area C may have the potential to provide a small number of houses. Again a number of recommendations seek to protect and improve the valley and Wychwood landscapes and local landscape features.

Cumulative effects and phasing

All of the site options are fairly discrete, separated by the town, with little intervisibility except in the case of North Witney and East Witney Areas A and B. With the proposed amendments to Area B and the control of the height of development in West Witney, intervisibility with North Witney should be avoidable. However, even the reduced levels of development will have some damaging effect on the local landscape until such time that the landscape mitigation matures. Phasing of development at Witney is therefore particularly important to avoid the creation of further encirclement by extensive new estates with immature landscape settings.

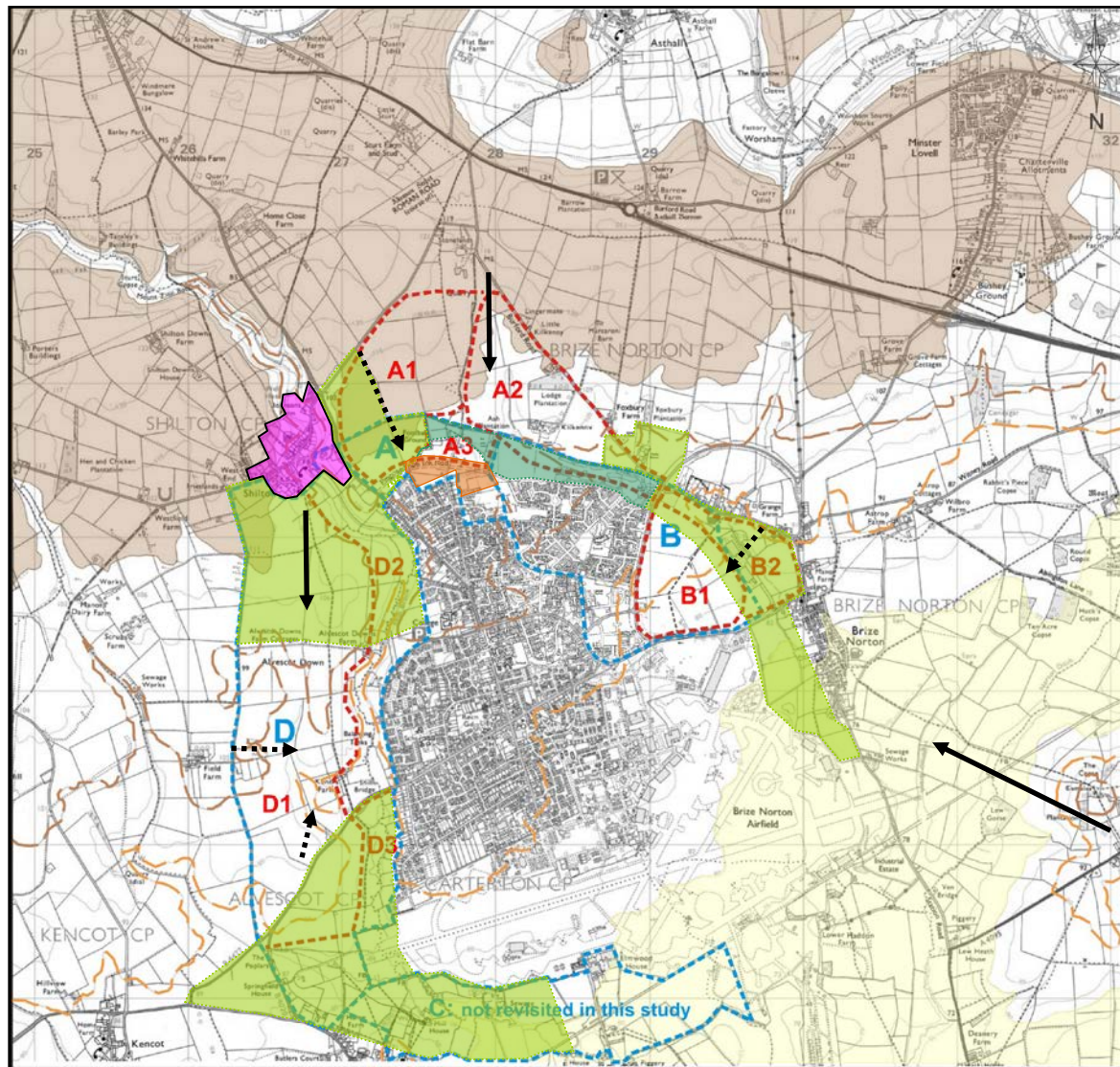
The character led approach, promoted by West Witney, is commended as a means to create local distinctiveness and variety within the estates. This approach should be informed by a thorough understanding of the town wide and local landscape, visual and settlement characteristics. This approach should in turn inform phasing of the individual developments.

15. Summary of Recommendations: Witney

Site	Location	Promoter	Submission housing no.s	AHLC Character Area Witney	Key constraints to development	Recommendations	Recommended action as shown in Figures 2B to D	Estimated housing capacity **
North Witney	North of Witney	North Witney Consortium	1500	C3 and C4	High sensitivity of the landscape Need to protect the landscape setting of the villages and scattered farmsteads Need to protect the open valley landscape and its continuity with the valley northwards Protection of the separate identity of Hailey/Poffley End	Reduce area to avoid development within small landscape fields which are important survivors of the settled ancient pastures around the settlements	Consider smaller area on the southern part of the site whilst retaining proposed Green Infrastructure to the existing edge of the town	750-850
West Witney		Persimmon Homes, Bovis Homes and Sovereign Land	1000	G and H	Need to create sensitive landscape/townscape interface with the adjoining open countryside Enhancement of the Colwell Brook landscape corridor and provision of substantial green infrastructure Visual impact of development on higher ground	Slightly reduce area to accommodate enhancement of green infrastructure Visual assessment of the impact of proposed height of development on higher ground	Consider minor amendments to development area Enhance Colwell Brook landscape corridor	1000

East Witney		The East Witney Land Consortium	450	D1 and D2; F1 for employment area	The high sensitivity and integrity of the Wychwood Forest area and Windrush valley The visual and landscape sensitivity of land above the 95m AOD contour to development Protection of view to St Mary's church and upland over the Windrush Valley Protection of the separate identity of High Cogges	Omit development from Area A Reduce development in Area B to avoid ground above 95m AOD and visual intrusion into key views Significantly reduce development in Area C to avoid floodplain and contain the urban edge	Consider development within reduced areas of Areas B and C Area C is limited to rounding off the existing urban edge and allowing frontage development onto Stanton Harcourt Road to the limit of the existing built form	250-300
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** Estimated numbers are based on reduced site area, open space requirements and potential range of housing density. Final numbers will depend on more detailed assessments, housing needs, and requirements for Green Infrastructure and an appropriate built form for each area in keeping with the local character.



KEY








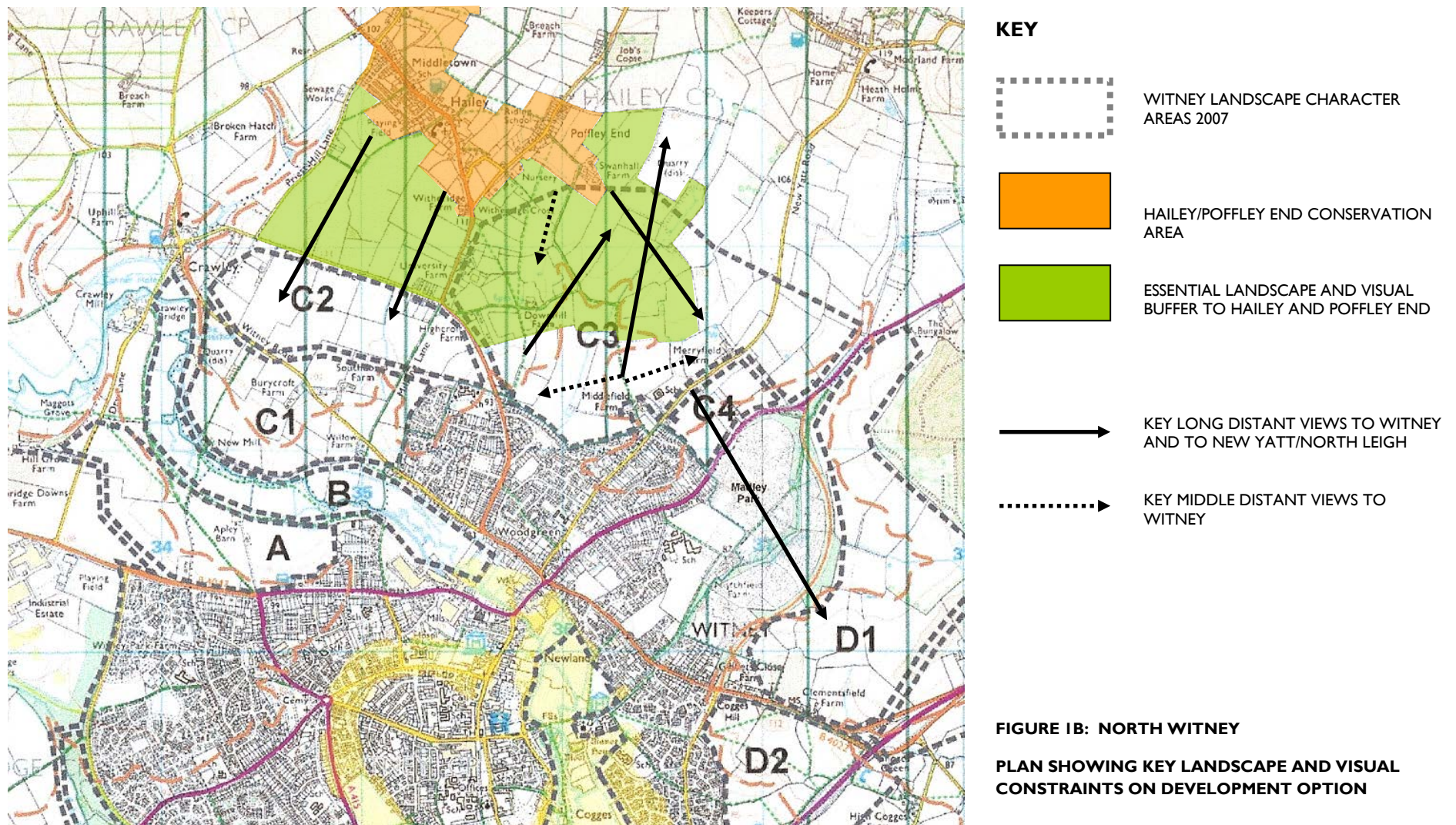
-  CARTERTON LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT AREAS 2009
-  SHILTON CONSERVATION AREA
-  LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL BUFFERS TO SHILTON, BRIZE NORTON AND ALVESCOT
-  EXISTING NORTHERN RECREATIONAL/LANDSCAPE BUFFER
-  INDICATIVE KEY LONG DISTANT VIEWS TO CARTERTON
-  KEY MIDDLE DISTANT VIEWS TO CARTERTON
-  EXISTING ADOPTED LOCAL PLAN ALLOCATION, PERMISSION GRANTED SUBJECT TO S.106

FIGURE 1A: CARTERTON

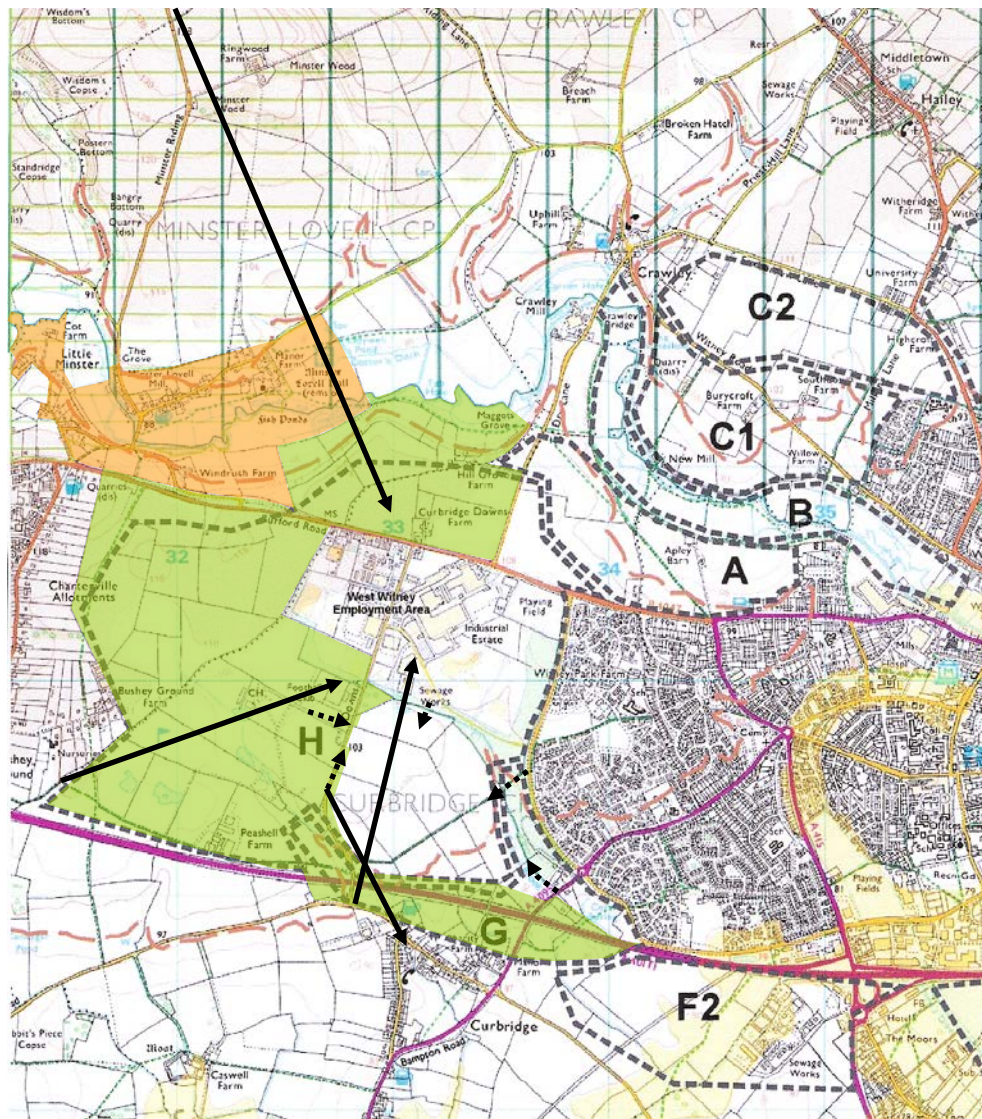
PLAN SHOWING KEY LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL CONSTRAINTS ON DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS

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**WEST OXFORDSHIRE DRAFT LOCAL PLAN: REVIEW OF LANDSCAPE SUBMISSIONS: CARTERTON AND NORTH WITNEY
FINAL OCTOBER 2012**



KEY



WITNEY LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS 2007



MINSTER LOVELL CONSERVATION AREA



ESSENTIAL LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL BUFFER TO MINSTER LOVELL AND CURBRIDGE



KEY LONG AND MEDIUM DISTANT VIEWS TO WEST WITNEY AND THE SITE



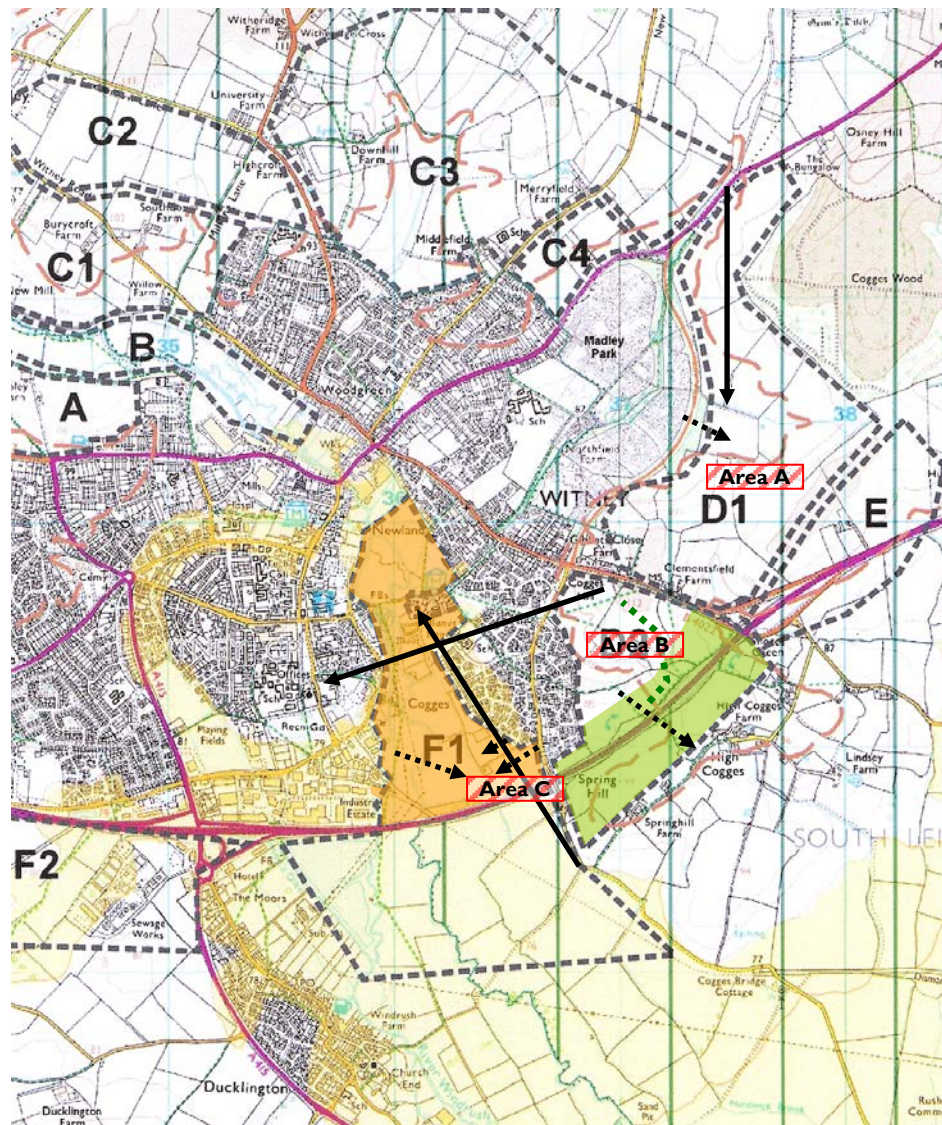
KEY CLOSE VIEWS TO SITE

FIGURE 1C: WEST WITNEY

PLAN SHOWING KEY LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL CONSTRAINTS ON DEVELOPMENT OPTION

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WEST OXFORDSHIRE DRAFT LOCAL PLAN: REVIEW OF LANDSCAPE SUBMISSIONS: CARTERTON AND NORTH WITNEY
 FINAL OCTOBER 2012



KEY



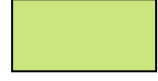





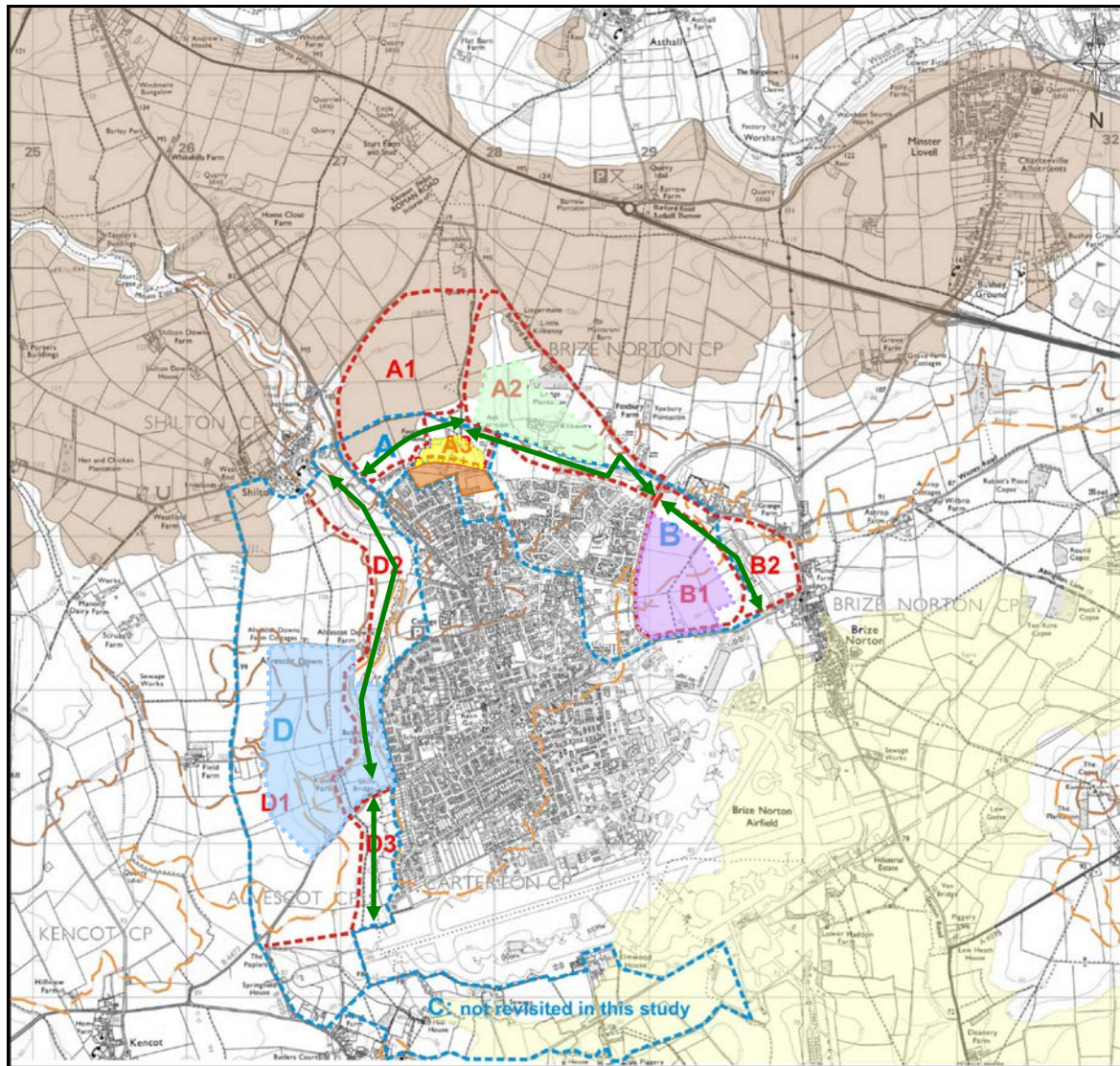
-  WITNEY LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS 2007
-  WINDRUSH IN WITNEY POLICY AREA
-  ESSENTIAL LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL BUFFER TO HIGH COGGES
-  SHALLOW RIDGE AROSS D2
-  LAND BELOW 80M AOD
-  KEY MEDIUM DISTANT VIEWS TO EAST WITNEY AND TO THE SITES
-  KEY CLOSE VIEWS TO AND FROM THE SITES
-  **Area A** LOCATION OF THREE POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT SITE OPTIONS







FIGURE ID: EAST WITNEY

PLAN SHOWING KEY LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL CONSTRAINTS ON DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS

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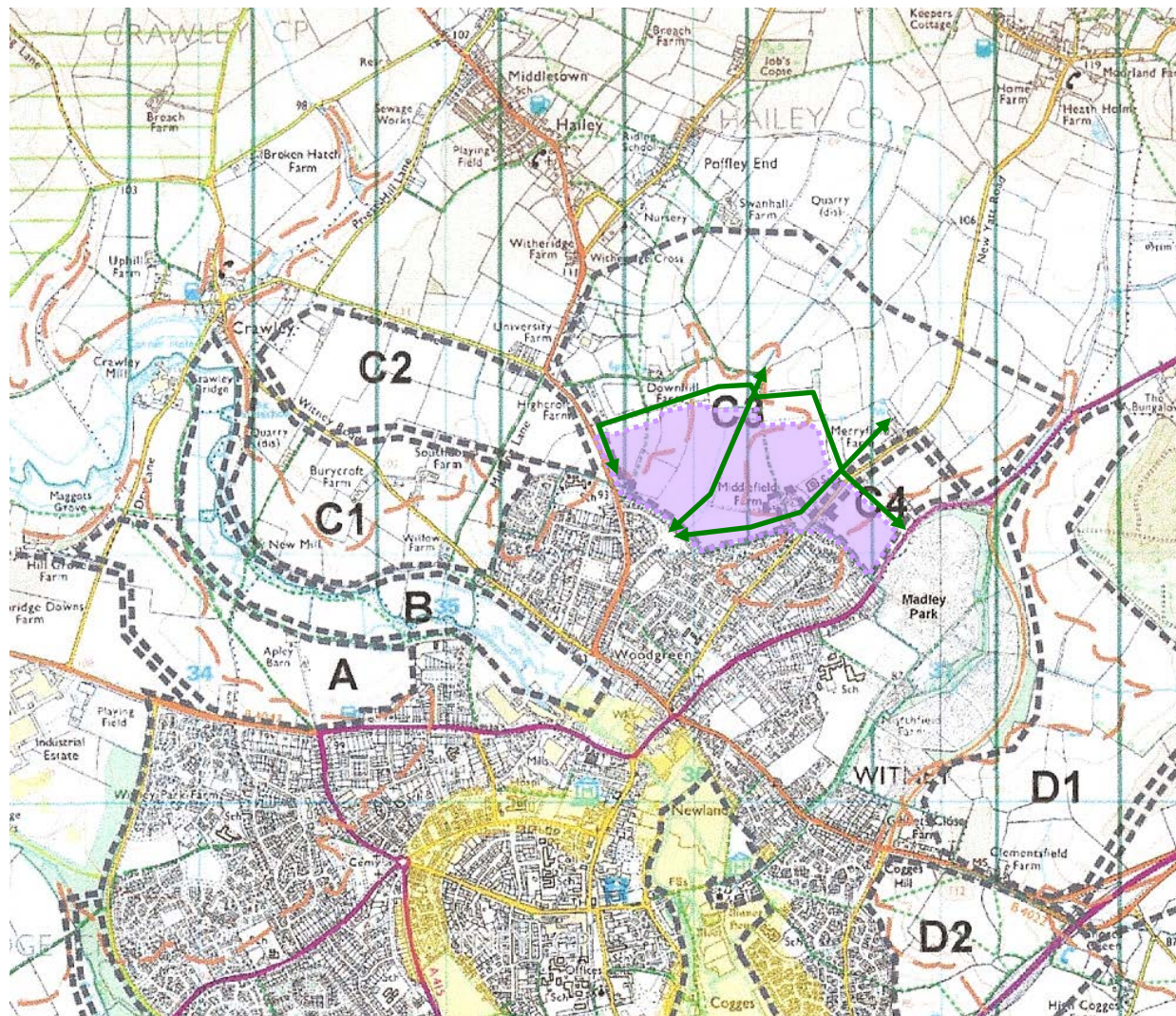
-  DEVELOPMENT OPTION A: EAST
-  DEVELOPMENT OPTION B: WEST
-  DEVELOPMENT OPTION C: KILKENNY FARM
-  DEVELOPMENT OPTION D: NORTH
-  EXISTING ADOPTED LOCAL PLAN ALLOCATION, PERMISSION GRANTED SUBJECT TO S.106
-  EXISTING AND RECOMMENDED URBAN-RURAL LANDSCAPED TRANSITION ZONES

NOTES:

1. See full report for explanatory notes and recommendations
2. Development options A and D have the lowest landscape and visual sensitivity
3. Development options C and D should not be developed concurrently
4. Development option B has a moderate/high landscape and visual sensitivity and is the least preferred option; but would offer design opportunities whilst avoiding the higher limestone plateau
5. Urban-rural landscaped transition zones to be designed to retain the separate identity of settlements; to retain field pattern important to the character of the settlements; provide for open space; meet local recreational needs; and conserve and enhance biodiversity. Land beyond these areas to remain under agriculture
6. The design, siting and layout of any development and the landscape buffers should respect and, where possible, enhance the intrinsic character, quality and distinctive features of the local landscape of the area

FIGURE 2A: CARTERTON

PLAN SHOWING REDUCED DEVELOPMENT OPTION AREAS WITH POTENTIAL FOR DEVELOPMENT



KEY



DEVELOPMENT OPTION NORTH WITNEY



EXISTING AND RECOMMENDED URBAN-RURAL LANDSCAPED TRANSITION ZONES AND OPEN SPACE

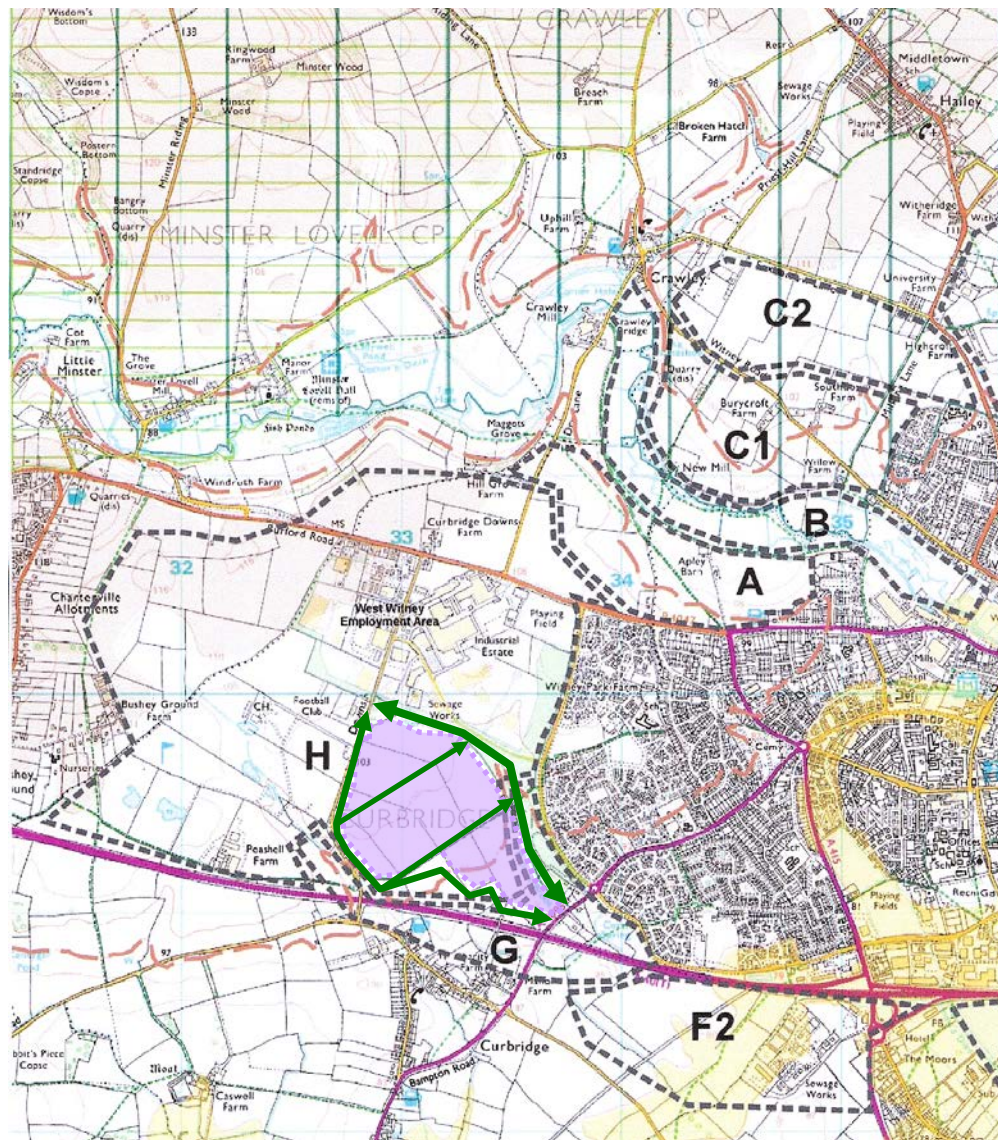
NOTES:

1. See full report for explanatory notes and recommendations
2. Contain all development below 100m AOD contour
3. Development area has a predominantly high landscape and visual sensitivity, but overall, some expansion of Witney to the north would offer landscape and townscape opportunities whilst avoiding the upper settled ancient pastures of the wolds
4. Urban-rural open grassland/wooded landscaped transition zones to be designed to retain the separate identity of settlements; to retain field pattern important to the character of the settlements; provide for open space; meet local recreational needs; and conserve and enhance biodiversity. Land beyond these areas to remain under agriculture
5. The design, siting and layout of any development and the landscape infrastructure should respect and, where possible, enhance the intrinsic character, quality and distinctive features of the local landscape of the area

FIGURE 2B: NORTH WITNEY

PLAN SHOWING REDUCED DEVELOPMENT OPTION AREA WITH POTENTIAL FOR DEVELOPMENT

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KEY



DEVELOPMENT OPTION WEST WITNEY



EXISTING AND RECOMMENDED URBAN-RURAL LANDSCAPED TRANSITION ZONES AND OPEN SPACE

NOTES:

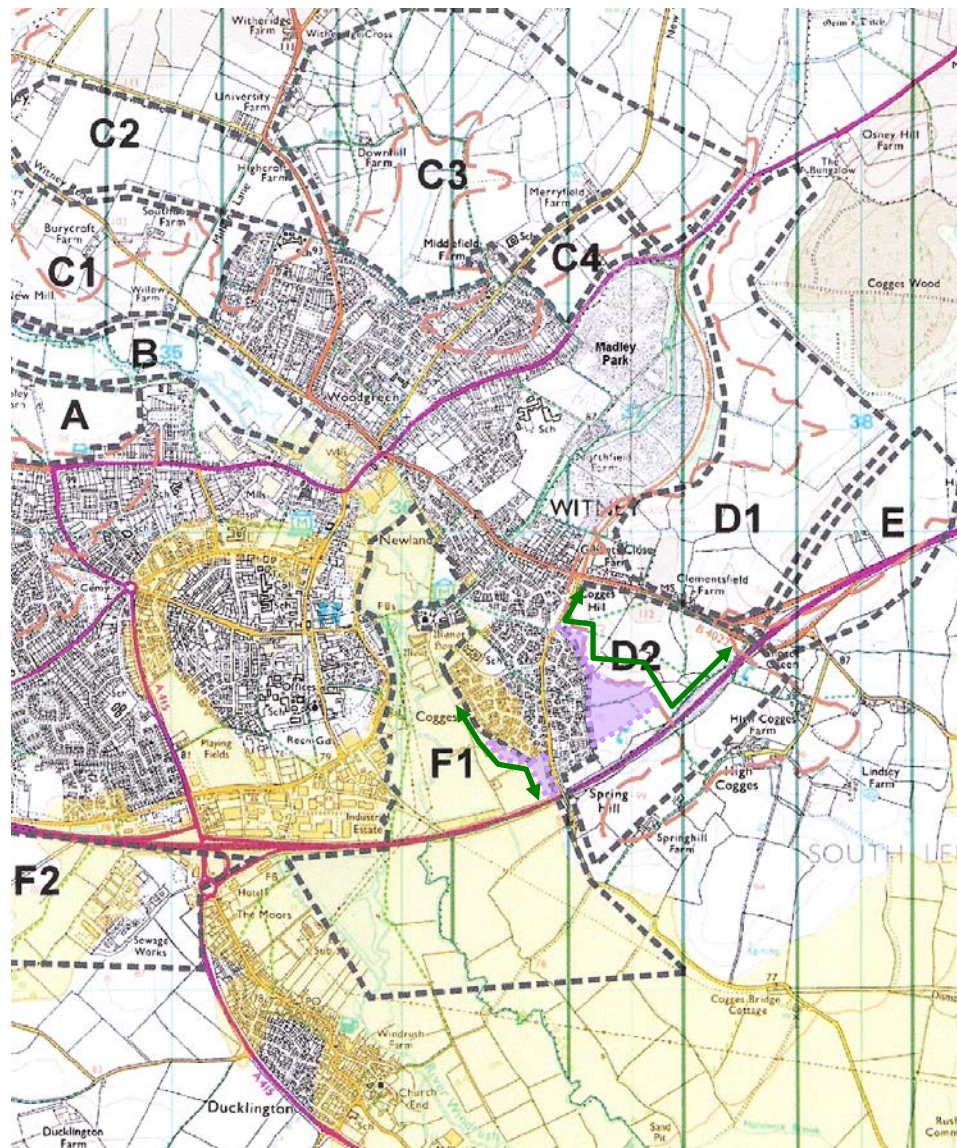
1. See full report for explanatory notes and recommendations
2. Height of development on land above 100m to be controlled to avoid increasing the visual impact of the employment area
3. Development area has a predominantly moderate landscape and visual sensitivity, but overall, expansion of Witney to the west would offer landscape and townscape opportunities whilst avoiding the upper settled ancient pastures of the wolds and the lower Windrush valley floor
4. Urban-rural open grassland/wooded landscaped transition zones to be designed to retain the separate identity of settlements; to retain field pattern important to the character of the settlements; provide for open space; meet local recreational needs; and conserve and enhance biodiversity. Land beyond these areas to remain under agriculture
5. The design, siting and layout of any development and the landscape infrastructure should respect and, where possible, enhance the intrinsic character, quality and distinctive features of the local landscape of the area

FIGURE 2C: WEST WITNEY

PLAN SHOWING REDUCED DEVELOPMENT OPTION AREA WITH POTENTIAL FOR DEVELOPMENT

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WEST OXFORDSHIRE DRAFT LOCAL PLAN: REVIEW OF LANDSCAPE SUBMISSIONS: CARTERTON AND WITNEY
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KEY



DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS EAST WITNEY



EXISTING AND RECOMMENDED URBAN-RURAL LANDSCAPED TRANSITION ZONES AND OPEN SPACE

NOTES:

1. See full report for explanatory notes and recommendations
2. Contain all development below 95m AOD contour as shown in D2.
3. Restrict development in F1 to rounding off of existing development and frontage along Standon Harcourt Road
4. Height of development to be controlled to avoid visual impact on wider landscape
5. Development area has a predominantly high landscape and visual sensitivity, but overall, some expansion of Witney to the east could be accommodated whilst avoiding the upper settled ancient pastures of the wolds and the lower Windrush valley floor
6. Urban-rural open grassland/wooded landscaped transition zones to be designed to retain the separate identity of settlements; to retain field pattern important to the character of the settlements; provide for open space; meet local recreational needs; and conserve and enhance biodiversity. Land beyond these areas to remain under agriculture
7. The design, siting and layout of any development and the landscape infrastructure should respect and, where possible, enhance the intrinsic character, quality and distinctive features of the local landscape of the area

FIGURE 2D: EAST WITNEY

PLAN SHOWING REDUCED DEVELOPMENT OPTION AREAS WITH POTENTIAL FOR DEVELOPMENT

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