

6.0 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND VISUAL RESOURCES: SUPPLEMENTARY CHAPTER

6.1 INTRODUCTION

6.1.1 This supplementary Chapter provides a response to the additional information that has been requested by Blaby District Council and addresses the following:-

- Relevant Saved Policies of the Blaby District Local Plan, 1999
- Cumulative effects of the lighting (night time) effects of the Project, other committed (determined, but not yet completed) and recently completed developments in the Junction 21 (M1) area, specifically at Grove Park; Meridian Business Park; Thorpe Astley; the Audi garage (Narborough Road South); Sainsbury's (Grove Park Triangle); Next car park, Oak Spinney Park (Ratby Lane); residential schemes adjacent to Beggar's Lane and St John's, Enderby; and Glenfield Park.
- Any implications arising in relation to landscape and visual effects from the changes described at Chapter 2: Development Proposals and shown on the Parameters Plans. An updated Visual Effects Table is included at Appendix 6A.
- In support of the technical details for the proposed M1 and M69 bridges, submitted as part of this Further Information Document (refer to the Transport Assessment A), visual representations and illustrative cross sections of the motorway bridges are included at Appendix 6B.

6.2 POLICY CONTEXT

Blaby District Local Plan, 1999

- 6.2.1 **Saved Policy C2 – Other Development in the Countryside** states that, “...*planning permission will not be granted for built development, or other development which would have a significantly adverse effect on the appearance of the landscape...*”
- 6.2.2 Policy C2 does, however, recognise that some new development will be needed within the countryside. Providing criteria are met, small scale employment and leisure development are exceptions to this policy.
- 6.2.3 **Saved Policy C3 – Green Wedges** states that, “*Planning permission will be granted for development for agriculture, recreation, forestry, transport routes and mineral uses (including dwellings essential for those needs) provided that it is sited, designed and landscaped in a manner which does not damage the open and undeveloped character of the green wedge and that criteria of Policy C2 are met.*”
- 6.2.4 It goes on to state that, “The District Council, in co-operation with other interested parties, will seek to improve the character of the Green Wedges.”
- 6.2.5 Other policy relating to green wedges is outlined below.
- 6.2.6 Paragraph 4.2.18 of the East Midlands Regional Plan identifies the strategic planning function played by green wedges, noting that the Local Development Framework process will review existing green wedges as well as opportunities for creating new green wedges associated with new development.

- 6.2.7 Policy 3 of the Blaby District Council Local Development Framework Core Strategy Submission Version identifies land west of the M1 at Lubbesthorpe as a mixed use SUE containing, “...green space provision including play and open space and strategic green infrastructure, including a new green wedge(s)...”
- 6.2.8 Policy 15 identifies the role played by green wedges as strategic gaps between settlements. It recognises there is opportunity to explore the creation of new green wedges as part of the SUE.
- 6.2.9 It is important to note that at the Inquiry into the Blaby District Local Plan the Inspector recommended that land north of Leicester Lane be omitted from the green wedge designation. However, the District Council chose not to act on the Inspector’s recommendation and reviewed the green wedge boundary to include the triangle of land north of Leicester Lane.
- 6.2.10 Refer to Chapter 3: Planning Policy for a more detailed summary of the current local planning policy position in relation to landscape and Green Infrastructure.

6.3 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE AND MITIGATION

- 6.3.1 Enderby parkland is no longer proposed to be publicly accessible. It is proposed that the western field, currently used for arable crops, will revert to pasture and the former avenue of trees will be reinstated within the park. The tree avenue will provide some mitigation of the potential visual effects of the new employment development upon Enderby Hall.
- 6.3.2 It is not considered that these changes will have any negative effect upon the overall Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity Strategy for the Project.

6.4 ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS

Landscape Effects

Landscape Character Area 2 - Plateau

- 6.4.1 Following minor design changes the local centre (LC1) is no longer proposed on the site of Old Warren Farm, although the traditional red brick farm buildings will be retained and integrated within the new residential development.

Landscape Character Area 3 – North-East Slopes

- 6.4.2 Allotment gardens are proposed in the north of the area. The minor design changes result in the proposed built development comprising of housing, a secondary school, a district centre and a new gateway employment site at the eastern edge of the application site, close to the M1 crossing. The district centre is proposed to be sited to the north and west of existing woodland block W1; The Arrington.

Landscape Character Area 11 – Enderby Hall and Parkland

- 6.4.3 As above, Enderby parkland will not be made accessible for public use and will remain in agricultural use. The western field compartment will become pasture which, along with the reinstatement of the former tree avenue, will increase the biodiversity of the character area as

well as its visual amenity for residents of Enderby Hall, users of bridleway W118 and future occupants of the SES.

- 6.4.4 The changes described above do not affect the overall level of effect upon landscape character as identified at Chapter 6: Landscape Character and Visual Resources of the submitted ES.

Visual Effects (refer to Appendix 6A)

Public Rights of Way

Footpath W3a: Within the North-East of the Application Site (Viewpoints 7, 8, 9, 16)

- 6.4.5 The minor design changes result in the visible parts of the Project comprising of residential development and the district centre.

Footpath W7: Within the North of the Application Site (Viewpoints 11, 12, 13, 37)

- 6.4.6 The uppermost parts of residential development will be visible above the landscaping proposed along the built development edge. Oblique views of the local centre (LC1) and primary school (PS1) are also likely to occur (Viewpoint 37).
- 6.4.7 The changes to the principal visible parts of the Project described above do not affect the overall level of effect upon the visual resource as identified at Chapter 6: Landscape Character and Visual Resources of the submitted ES.

Cumulative Effects

- 6.4.8 Cumulative night time effects involving the proposed development identified above and as indicated at Figure 16 within the supplementary Transport Assessment are not considered to be significant due to their urban location and proximity to both Leicester City and the M1. While some of the smaller schemes are in relatively close proximity to the Project, the Glenfield Park site is located some distance away to the north-east.
- 6.4.9 The committed development is located at urban edges within existing well established industrial, residential and commercial development areas which are visually prominent after dark and easily assimilated within their context in terms of their associated lighting. Furthermore, each site is visually separated from one another by existing built development, some of which is large scale. The substantial landscaped earth bund proposed along the length of the motorway's western edge, as part of the Project, will also provide significant visual and physical separation between the Project and the developments identified above, mitigating potential night time effects and therefore also any potential cumulative effects.

6.5 STATEMENT OF EFFECTS

- 6.5.1 The changes to the Project identified at Chapter 2: Development Proposals and shown on the revised Parameters Plans do not affect the conclusions reached in the Environmental Statement.

- 6.5.2 Whilst the SES encroaches marginally into the green wedge, we do not consider the area affected to fulfil a strategic role. This role is satisfied by adjacent parklands and open fields which will remain as green wedge. Consequently the proposed green infrastructure associated with the Project will bring substantial benefits to the local area and far outweigh the limited loss of green wedge.
- 6.5.3 Overall, there will be a range of beneficial effects upon the local landscape character and visual resource arising from the Project which affords a high quality built development set within a substantial framework of Green Infrastructure. The GI provides a variety of new wildlife habitats and ecological features throughout the development and existing habitats will be enhanced and reinforced as appropriate thus achieving a net gain in biodiversity in the long term. Conservation needs will be balanced with recreational needs of the future communities of Lubbesthorpe, as well as existing communities that surround the site, to create a rich, diverse landscape and, above all, an environment that can thrive.