

ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT VOLUME 3: LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 This Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) ES Volume reports the outcome of the assessment of likely landscape and visual effects arising from the Proposed Development. The Outline Planning Application Site Boundary (the Site) is shown on **Figure 1 in Appendix A**. The focus is on the likely significant environmental effects arising on the regional / district, local and Site level landscape character; Site level topography, land use, tree and vegetation, building height and form, landscape feature and landscape character; and the predicted changes to the character and amenity of the range of visual receptors (as identified through a selection of a number of key representative views shown on **Figures 17 and 18 of Appendix A**) during the construction and operational phases.
- 1.1.2 This volume summarises the assessment methodology, describes the baseline conditions at the Site and in the surrounding area; identifies any additional mitigation measures adopted for the purposes of the assessment, over and above those embedded in the scheme; and describes the likely significant effects, together with the likely residual effects after these measures have been employed.
- 1.1.3 The LVIA is to be read in conjunction with the associated Figures and Photographs (including the key representative viewpoints) at **Appendix A**; the **LVIA methodology at Appendix B**; and the set of parameter plans which comprise: 2036/PL.01 Rev B - **Location Plan**; 2036/PL.02-01 – **Indicative Constraints Plan**; 2036/PL.02-02 **Indicative Opportunities and Parameters Plan**; 2036/PL.04 Rev L **Indicative Site Layout**; D2743.L101 –**Compensatory Tree Planting Plan**; and the **Design and Access Statement (DAS)** and in particular, the **Tree Planting Strategy Plan** within the DAS.

2.0 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

2.1 Scope of Assessment

- 2.1.1 This volume of the ES assesses the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development on the landscape and visual receptors and is to be read in conjunction with **Appendices A – plans and photos, B – LVIA Methodology** and the set of Parameter Plans which comprise: 2127/PL01 - **Location Plan**; 2127/PL02 – **Indicative Constraints Plan**; 2127/PL03 **Opportunities and Parameters Plan**; 2127/PL04 Rev K **Indicative Site Layout**; D2743 L.101– **Compensatory Tree Planting Plan**; **D2743_L103 Tree Species** and the **Design and Access Statement (DAS)**.
- 2.1.2 The chapter summarises the assessment methodology; the contextual baseline conditions; the current baseline conditions of the Site; the likely significant environmental effects; the additional mitigation or compensatory measures required to prevent, reduce or offset any significant adverse effects; the likely residual effects after these measures have been employed; and the cumulative effects associated with the Proposed Development in combination with other developments located within a 2km radius from the boundary of the Site.

2.2 Key Legislation, Policy and Guidance Considerations

- 2.2.1 The landscape and visual assessment has been undertaken within the context of relevant planning policies, guidance documents and legislative instruments. These are summarised below.

Legislation and Regulation

- 2.2.2 The applicable legislative framework is summarised as follows:

- European Landscape Convention (ELC, 2000);
- Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000;
- Section 89 of the CROW Act 2000 (as amended by the NERC Act 2006); and
- Section 62(2) of the Environment Act 1995.

Planning Policy

- 2.2.3 Planning policies relevant to the landscape and visual matters are set out below and have informed the scheme proposals. For an assessment against policy refer to the Planning Statement submitted with the application.

- The following policies of the latest amended National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021)¹
 - Section 2: Achieving sustainable development;

¹ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (DCLG) National Planning Policy Framework, July 2021

- Section 8: Promoting healthy and safe communities;
- Section 12: Achieving well-designed places;
- Section 14: Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change;
- Section 15: Conserving and enhancing natural environment;
- Section 16: Conserving and enhancing historic environment.
- The following policies of the Reading Borough Local Plan²:
 - Policy CC3: Adaptation to Climate Change;
 - Policy CC7: Design and the Public Realm;
 - Policy EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment;
 - Policy EN7: Local Green Space and Public Open Space;
 - Policy EN8: Undesignated Open Space;
 - Policy EN9: Provision of Open Space;
 - Policy EN10: Access to Open Space;
 - Policy EN12: Biodiversity and The Green Network;
 - Policy EN13: Major Landscape Features and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
 - Policy EN14: Trees, Hedges and Woodlands;
 - Policy H10: Private and Communal Outdoor Space;
 - Policy CA1b: Site for Development and Change of Use in Caversham and Emmer Green – Part of Reading Golf Course, Kidmore End Road.

2.2.4 Kidmore End Neighbourhood Plan area lies to the north of the Site, with the southern boundary of the plan area abutting the northern Site boundary. The following current draft policy of the Neighbourhood Development Plan 2011-2035, Submission Draft (Regulation 15) June 2021³ is relevant:

- Local Valued Landscape Policy (LPLV)

Technical Standards and Guidance

2.2.5 The following guidance documents have been used during the preparation of this LVIA:

² Reading Borough Local Plan, Adopted November 2019.

³ Kidmore End Neighbourhood Development Plan 2011-2035, Submission Draft (Regulation 15) June 2021

- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA) Third Edition, 2013⁴ and in particular, the second bullet point of para 5.37 has been considered within this assessment, which states that: *“the contribution to the landscape that the development may make in its own right, usually by virtue of good design, even if it is in contrast to the existing character”*;
- Visual Representation of Development Proposals, Technical guidance note 06/19, 17 September 2019⁵; and
- Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for Scotland and England, 2002⁶; and
- An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment.⁷

2.2.6 The following guidance documents have been used during the preparation of this LVIA:

- Reading Borough Local Development Framework, Revised Sustainable Design and Construction;⁸
- Reading Borough Local Development Framework, Sites and Detailed Policies Document;⁹
- Reading Borough Local Development Framework, Core Strategy;¹⁰
- Reading Open Space Strategy;¹¹
- Reading Borough Council, Tree Strategy for Reading;¹²
- Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan (2019 – 2024).¹³
- Chilterns Conservation Board – Position Statement: Development affecting the setting of the Chilterns AONB.¹⁴

⁴ Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA), 2013

⁵ Landscape Institute, Visual Representation of Development Proposals, LI Technical Guidance Note 06/19, 17 September 2019

⁶ Scottish Natural Heritage and the Countryside Agency, Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for Scotland and England, 2002.

⁷ Natural England, An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment, 2014.

⁸ Reading Borough Local Development Framework, Revised Sustainability Design and Construction, Supplementary Planning Document, Adopted 11th July 2011.

⁹ Reading Borough Local Development Framework, Sites and Detailed Policies Document, Adopted October 2012, with Alternation Adopted 27th January 2015.

¹⁰ Reading Borough Local Development Framework, Core Strategy, Adopted January 2008, with Alternation Adopted 27th January 2015.

¹¹ Reading Open Space Strategy, Reading Borough Council, March 2007.

¹² Reading Borough Council, Tree Strategy for Reading, Adopted June 2010.

¹³ Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2019 – 2024, Caring for Chilterns forever and for everyone, Chilterns Conservation Board.

¹⁴ Chilterns Conservation Board – Position Statement: Development affecting the setting of the Chilterns AONB, Adopted June 2011 (Rev 1)

2.2.7 In addition, this Volume has been prepared in accordance with the online National Planning Practice Guidance¹⁵, the Natural Environment. The relevant sections are as follows:

- Climate Change – Paragraph: 004 Reference ID: 6-004-20140612
- Design: process and tools - Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 26-001-20191001;
- Design: process and tools – Paragraph: 011 Reference ID: 26-011-2019100
- Natural Environment – Green Infrastructure: Paragraph: 004 Reference ID: 8-004-20190721
- Natural Environment – Green Infrastructure: Paragraph: 006 Reference ID: 8-006-20190721;
- Natural Environment – Green Infrastructure: Paragraph: 08 Reference ID: 8-008-20190721;
- Natural Environment – Green Infrastructure: Paragraph: 029 Reference ID: 8-029-20190721;
- Natural Environment – Green Infrastructure: Paragraph: 034 Reference ID: 8-034-20190721;
- Natural Environment - Landscape: Paragraph: 036 Reference ID: 8-036-20190721;
- Natural Environment - Landscape: Paragraph: 037 Reference ID: 8-037-20190721;
- Natural Environment - Landscape: Paragraph: 042 Reference ID: 8-042-20190721;
- Open space, sports and recreation facilities, public rights of way and local green space – Open space, sports and recreation facilities: Paragraph - 001 Reference ID: 37-001-20140306.

2.3 Assessment Methodology

2.3.1 A full methodology for this Landscape and Visual Assessment is provided at **Appendix B**. The assessment of landscape and visual impacts has been undertaken in accordance with GLVIA, 2013.¹⁶

Determination of Baseline

Desk Study

2.3.2 The overarching approach is to provide an integrated assessment of the landscape and visual receptors. A preliminary desk study was undertaken to establish the physical components of the local landscape and to identify the boundaries to the study area and therefore the broad Zone of Theoretical Visual Influence (ZTVI) associated with the Site.

¹⁵ DCLG (online) National Planning Practice Guidance Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>

¹⁶ Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3), third edition, published in collaboration with IEMA and came into force on 17 April 2013.

Ordnance Survey (OS) maps and digital data have been utilised to identify local features relating to topography, drainage patterns, land use, existing settlement patterns, building heights, movement corridors and any historic landscape features. In addition, aerial photography was used to supplement the OS information. This data informed the field survey by providing a basis for understanding the landscape features.

- 2.3.3 A review of the landscape related designations (including ecological and heritage designations which may influence the landscape character and the design approach); features of landscape importance; landscape character (at the national, county and borough levels); and the definitive Rights of Way network has been carried out.
- 2.3.4 Landscape planning policy objectives and design guidance, likely to influence the location or design of the proposal, and any special landscape values or attributes that may have justified the planning designations have been identified. The desk study has identified future trends and forces for landscape change where they may be important in relation to the proposed development.
- 2.3.5 During the desk-based assessment a series of key representative viewpoints were identified for verification in the field. The locations of these were discussed with the Landscape Officer of Reading Borough Council and recommendations and comment received have been included in this assessment.
- 2.3.6 The sources of baseline data include:
- Google and Bing maps for aerial photography;
 - Oblique aerial photography (including Google Streetview and Google Pro);
 - Natural England website (for national level landscape character);
 - West Berkshire Council website (for county level landscape character and definitive rights of way); and
 - magic.gov.uk (for ecological, heritage and access land designations).

Site Visits / Surveys

- 2.3.7 A landscape and visual survey of the baseline situation was initially undertaken in February and December 2019, January and March 2020 and then further updated in September 2021 to understand the Site and its immediate setting; the local topography; existing land uses; landscape / vegetation structure; characteristic landscape elements; the ZTVI; and to confirm the magnitude of visibility.
- 2.3.8 The photographic record and visual assessment therefore represent both the worst-case winter view and when trees were in full leaf in the summer. Photographs were taken at 1.4m height above ground with a Nikon DSLR camera with a 35mm lens (and a 2/3rds sensor) to achieve an equivalent 52.5mm focal length. The representative views contained in Appendix A and include the most recent photographs.
- 2.3.9 The visibility was good during the time of the Site visits.
- 2.3.10 The field study was then used to confirm the physical components and structure of the wider landscape of the study area and to verify the preliminary range of landscape

character areas identified in the desk study that immediately surrounds and makes up the Site.

Prediction Methodology

- 2.3.11 The value of the landscape and visual receptor has been assessed at the baseline stage. The susceptibility to the proposed change and therefore the sensitivity of each of the landscape and visual receptors has been attributed at the impact assessment stage. Again, refer to **Appendix B** for detail of the LVIA methodology and associated criteria tables. A summary of the key steps in the methodology for the LVIA are as follows:
- The landscape of the study area was analysed (through both desk-based and field survey work) and landscape and visual receptors identified.
 - The visual baseline was recorded in terms of the different groups of people who may experience views of the Proposed Development and the nature of their existing views, the character of that view and visual amenity.
 - Representative viewpoints were selected based on a range of views of the Site and the likelihood of significant effects.
 - Likely significant effects on landscape and visual resources were identified.
 - Each of the representative viewpoints have been assessed to determining the effects at the construction stage and the operational stage and then again considering the maturation of the proposed tree planting shown on drawing 2127/PL04 Rev K - **Indicative Site Layout**.
 - The significance of landscape and visual effects were judged with reference to the sensitivity of the resource / receptor (its value and susceptibility) and magnitude of effect (a combination of the scale / size of effect, geographical extent and duration / reversibility). The operational stage of the Proposed Development assesses the effects of the maximum parameters of the Proposed Development, as described in ES Volume 2, **Chapter 5: Proposed Development and Construction Overview** and in the Development Specification.
 - The cumulative effects are addressed in Cumulative Effect Section in the LVIA.

Limitations and Assumptions

- 2.3.12 The LVIA is based on the web-based information and published documents available at the time of the writing.
- 2.3.13 The LVIA shows and describes the baseline situation between December 2019 and March 2020 (and therefore the worst case winter season) and September 2021 (and therefore the best case summer season).
- 2.3.14 The assessment of effects is based on the **Indicative Opportunities and Parameter Plan** (drawing 2127/PL03); the **Indicative Site Layout** (drawing 2127/PL04 Rev K); and the **Compensatory Tree Planting Plan** (drawing no. D2743 L.101), the proposals contained in the **Design and Access Statement (DAS)** and building heights described in **ES Volume 2, Chapter 5: Proposed Development and Construction Overview**,

- 2.3.15 It is assumed that mitigation planting in the wider Reading Golf Course Site to the north, beyond the Application Site boundary can be implemented in the first planting season following permission. **Refer to Figure 19 in Appendix A / Drawing no. D2743 L.101– Compensatory Tree Planting Plan.**
- 2.3.16 The assessment of effects is based on the worst-case scenario throughout and often shows a range of effects with some considered in balance.
- 2.3.17 For the purposes of the assessment, an illustrative construction sequence plan has been considered (as shown in **Figure 5.3 in ES Volume 2, Chapter 5: Proposed Development and Construction Overview**). This will start with the area closest to the access point at the east of the Site on Kidmore End Road, then follow the proposed main access route from east to the west, with the small parcel to the south of the main entrance constructed the last and reserved as sales area during construction. It is anticipated that the Proposed Development will be constructed in one phase overall. Subject to planning approval, it is assumed that the construction work will commence in 2022 and complete in 2027.
- 2.3.18 A construction compound will be located in the central area of the Site, which will move to the north western corner upon completion of the construction of the main road through the Site. It is assumed that the contractor’s cabins will be stacked to a maximum of 2 cabins high and be visually recessive in colour (and as agreed through the Reserved Matters Application process).
- 2.3.19 The proposed compensatory block of new tree planting (refer to drawing D2743 L.101 and **Figure 19 in Appendix A**) in the wider Reading Golf Course to the north of the Site is assumed to be ranged between 0.6m to 1.8m high at day 1 and is predicted to achieve 4.8m to 6m high at year 15; street trees proposed as part of the **Indicative Site Layout** (Drawing 2127/PL04 Rev K) within the Site. The tree planting is assumed to be 5m high at day 1 (with a 2m clear canopy) and will achieve a height of 9.2m at year 15. An average growth of 300mm p/a after the first year of establishment (and assuming no growth in the first year), which is based on guidance set out by the Forestry Commission Research Centre
- 2.3.20 The assessment of visual effects on temporary construction workers has not been included, as they are not included in the baseline scenario.
- 2.3.21 The retention and protection of the existing network of boundary hedgerows and trees within the Site wherever possible. Refer to Arboricultural and Planning Integration Report for details.
- 2.3.22 The construction phase of the project will be lit for security and health and safety purposes; and the proposed development itself at the operational phase will be lit. The lighting is to be designed in accordance with best practice guidance and therefore to be as low as possible, directional into the Site and shielded with no backwards glare.

Consultation

- 2.3.23 A Key Representative Views and LVIA Methodology document was submitted to the Landscape Officer of Reading Borough Council on 27th February 2020. The responses relevant to this LVIA are set out in the **Table 1** on the following page:

Table 1 – Summary of Comments from the Officer and LVIA Response:

Officer's Comment	Consultant's response
<p>I do not accept the argument that two assessments carried out in winter is adequate for LVIA. They argue on p.6 that surveying in February and December 'represents the worst case winter view'. The counter argument is that the summer view has considerably more visual impact, and so assessing views only in winter understates the value of the visual contribution of the site to the wider landscape. Some of the 'low value' assessments from photographs might well be upgraded to medium at least if the trees were in full leaf and therefore more prominent.</p>	<p>The first assessment was initially carried out in February 2019 and was extended to include additional viewpoints in December 2019. Further survey work was also undertaken in March 2020 to address specific comments on viewpoint locations. There has been the opportunity to revisit the site assessment work during the summer months (September 2021) and the baseline therefore considers both the winter and summer seasons accordingly.</p> <p>Notwithstanding the above, it is best practice to assess the degree of openness of the Site for the collection of visual receptors in the winter months, where winter vegetation often allows more of the Site to be perceived, filtered through that vegetation, than where views of the Site are obscured by summer foliage. An LVIA assesses the impact of the change in the character and amenity of the current view as a result of the proposed development, not the impact of the whether vegetation is in leaf or not.</p> <p>In response to the point regarding 'low value', as set out in the LVIA methodology at Table 2 of Appendix B, the criteria used for assessing the value of a particular view. Low value is defined as: <i>Views from landscapes / viewpoints with no designation, not particularly important and with minimal or no cultural associations. This may include views from the rear elevation of residential properties.</i></p>

Table 1 – Summary of Comments from the Officer and LVIA Response (Continued):

Officer's Comment	Consultant's response
<p>It is an oversight, whether inadvertent or deliberate, not to create a photographic vantage point between locations 5 and 6. This is the Kidmore End Road frontage, providing arguably the most important views into the site. If the obscuring of the site is created by features within the site, like the club house or hedges which can be removed, then their obscuring effect cannot be used as an argument that the view is of 'low value', since the removal of the obstacle will improve the views, making them high value.</p>	<p>The intention of these viewpoints is to provide a representative view of the Site as seen from the road corridor, pavement and neighbouring properties (viewpoint 5); and then a more oblique view of the Site (viewpoint 6). Both these views have open views of the Site boundary vegetation (which is predominantly proposed to be retained); where the single storey club house is apparent over the boundary vegetation; and where the trees within the golf course beyond and where the extent of canopies is understood in the winter months. An additional viewpoint (5a) has been included in the LVIA and the location of viewpoint 5 modified to capture the Site entrance and full extent of the club house.</p> <p>The obscuring effect of existing features is not used in determining the value of the view, which is based on the criteria in Table 2 of the LVIA methodology. Low value is defined as: <i>Views from landscapes / viewpoints with no designation, not particularly important and with minimal or no cultural associations. This may include views from the rear elevation of residential properties.</i> We therefore disagree that these views are of high value.</p>
<p>Other views are noted as low value where, if houses were present on the proposed development site, those houses would be visible. In other words, the LVIA understates the value to the wider landscape of gaps/open sky in some of the views. It is very important that gaps are taken as seriously as features in the landscape. This point applies again and again across photographs presented as being of low value from all round the site.</p>	<p>The contribution that the Site makes to those views is described through the LVIA. .</p>
<p>Viewpoint 15 is irrelevant (the car park of the Emmer Green Youth and Community Centre). The relevant vantage point is from inside the community centre, which looks directly on to the golf course. It is possible to stand at that window and watch golfers walking past, so the view is open and unhindered and medium or high value, and not the low value obscured view one gets from the car park. Since this is the very site of the proposed health centre, it is extremely important that the assessment gets it right. It may well be enough to suggest that the health centre be relocated, as it will block one of the direct views into the site.</p>	<p>An updated view from the outside of the community centre is now included.</p>

Table 1 – Summary of Comments from the Officer and LVIA Response (Continued):

Officer's Comment	Consultant's response
Viewpoint 20 is another that is undervalued, as it looks directly into the golf course.	As above, regarding the assessment of value.
My assessment, having looked through this, is that it does not do justice to the visual importance of this particular green space in Emmer Green. If such a large and significant green space can come up with over 33 views that all are 'low value', one suspects that the assessment was not done properly.	The baseline assessment describes the contribution that the Site and its inherent landscape features make to the townscape in landscape and visual terms. In response to the point regarding 'low value', as previously set out, the LVIA methodology at Table 2 of Appendix B sets out clearly the criteria used for assessing the value of a particular view. Low value is defined as: <i>Views from landscapes / viewpoints with no designation, not particularly important and with minimal or no cultural associations. This may include views from the rear elevation of residential properties.</i> The judgement on value is therefore wholly different to the judgement on susceptibility to the proposed change, which when combined with value determines the sensitivity of that receptor.

2.3.24 In summary, many of the Officer' comments relate to the assessment of view value, however, the judgements on value correlate with the criteria set out in Table 2 in **Appendix B - LVIA methodology**. This is different to judgements made on susceptibility (refer to the criteria in Table 5 of **Appendix B - LVIA methodology**) which considers the receptor type (static or transient). The sensitivity of the receptor(s) to the proposed change is then determined through the combination of value and susceptibility. This is then considered against the magnitude of effect to establish the significance of the effect. The assessment of value is therefore just one step of the assessment. The judgement of value takes account of planning designations, heritage assets and views experienced from locations identified in guidebooks and on maps (in accordance with GLVIA3 (para 6.37). They therefore do not relate to the degree of openness in the winter or summer. Furthermore, there are no protected views within this local townscape towards or across the Site, nor does the Site lie within a protected view cone to elevate value. Hence, many of the key representative views have been judged as being of low value.

2.3.25 An EIA Scoping Report was submitted to Reading Borough Council in 11th February 2020. A formal scoping opinion was received, dated 15th April 2020, with further statutory consultee responses provided on 17 April 2020. The responses relevant to this LVIA are set out in the table below:

Table 2 – Summary of Comments and Response from Scoping Report Feedbacks

Body / Organisations	Summary of Comment	Location within the ES where comments are addressed
Reading Borough Council	Inclusion of spring / summer view to consider the value of the visual contribution of the site to the wider landscape.	Both winter and summer views are included.

**Table 2 – Summary of Comments and Response from Scoping Report Feedbacks
 (Continued)**

Body / Organisations	Summary of Comment	Location within the ES where comments are addressed
Reading Borough Council	Inclusion of the assessment of light pollution as part of the LVIA.	This is addressed in the baseline and impact assessment and cross referenced to the Lighting Assessment report (by Stantec) as submitted with the application.
Reading Borough Council	Inclusion of additional viewpoint between 5 and 6.	An additional viewpoint (5a) has been included in the LVIA Appendix A and the location of viewpoint 5 modified to capture the Site entrance and full extent of the club house.
Natural England	Effects on the Chilterns AONB, its purpose, considering the management plan.	The baseline has assessed the interrelationship of the Site with the AONB. The closest boundary is approximately 1km away. Several viewpoints have been considered in relation to the setting to the AONB (viewpoints 28 and 29). The assessment concludes that the Site does not perform a role in the landscape setting to the AONB.
Natural England	Assessment of visual effects on surrounding area and physical effects on landscape.	This is covered in the assessment of effects section.
Natural England	Inclusion of local landscape character maps together with management plans and strategies.	Published landscape character assessments, including those at the local district level are included in the baseline assessment. A description of the Site character and perceptual qualities is included in the baseline assessment.
Natural England	Supports the publication of GLVIA.	The LVIA methodology is provided at Appendix B and is based on GLVIA.
Natural England	Consideration of character and distinctiveness of the area.	Included in the baseline character and impact assessment section.
Natural England	Detail measures taken to ensure building design will be of high standard, alternatives and justification.	The application is in outline and therefore the building design will be subject to the Reserved Matters Application, however, the assessment considers that the scheme will reflect the characteristics of the local area and that the aspiration is for a high standard of design. In terms of alternatives and justification, this is considered at Chapter 4 .
Natural England	Inclusion of cumulative impact assessment	Addressed in cumulative effects section.
Natural England	Inclusion of reference to National Character Areas.	Included in baseline and impact assessment sections.

**Table 2 – Summary of Comments and Response from Scoping Report Feedbacks
 (Continued)**

Body / Organisations	Summary of Comment	Location within the ES where comments are addressed
Natural England	Incorporation of measures to access the countryside and reference to Green Infrastructure strategies, where appropriate.	The description of the proposed development is set out in Chapter 5: Proposed Development and Construction Overview . Reference to Green Infrastructure Policy included in baseline assessment (specifically EN12).
Natural England	Impacts on access land, public open land and rights of way.	There are no areas of access land within the study area. A description of the existing public rights of way are included in the baseline assessment. Effects on public open space and rights of way is covered in the assessment of effects section.

2.4 Baseline Assessment and Identification of Key Receptors

Landscape Related Designations

- 2.4.1 The landscape, ecological and heritage designations and features, relevant to the study area, are shown on **Figure 2 – Landscape Designation Map and Figure 3 - Reading Borough Council Local Plan Proposed Map, Appendix A**.
- 2.4.2 With the exception of the Area of Tree Preservation Order covering the entire Site, a small linear portion at the northern edge of the Site which is identified as Local Wildlife Site / Local Nature Reserve in the current Local Plan (and which is connected to the wider areas through a network of green links through the residential areas), there are no other landscape related designations that cover the Site. The Site is not designated as open space, nor is it publicly accessible. Under the Local Plan Policy EN12 a Green Link is proposed north and south and east to west across the Site. In relation to NPPF Paragraph 174a (which deals with valued landscape “*in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan*”) due to the lack of landscape designation even at the local scale, whilst having some value as private, recreational green space on the settlement edge, is nevertheless at the bottom of the value scale.
- 2.4.3 Local Plan Policy EN13 relating to Major Landscape Features are identified beyond the Site to the north, adjacent to Crawshay Drive. However, this relates to a relatively small area comprising dense woodland. In addition, Clayfield Copse Local Nature Reserve is located to the east; with areas of Ancient Woodland and Replanted Woodland present in the landscape to the north (namely Cucumber Wood) within the wider golf course.
- 2.4.4 There are a number of landscape designations present in the wider study area beyond the Site. The Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) lies approximately 1km to the north and 2km to the west. At the time of writing, it is acknowledged that there are proposals to extend the boundary of the AONB. However the location of this extension is not known at this point and is anticipated to be subject to public consultation. The Historic Park and Garden of Caversham Park lies to the south-east, beyond the intervening built form; and Surley Row Conservation Area lies to the south, again, beyond the intervening

built form. The Site does not form a role in the setting to these landscape related designations.

- 2.4.5 There are a series of Listed Buildings scattered throughout the townscape of the study area and include Old Grove House (Grade II*) and The Barn (Grade II) at Highdown Hill Road which are the closest to the Site.
- 2.4.6 At the local level, a Local Valued Landscape (LPLV) abuts the northern Site boundary. This policy applies to the land itself rather than its setting.

Landscape Assessment

- 2.4.7 The wider Site contextual landscape receptors and elements, providing the immediate and wider landscape setting to the Site are shown in **Figure 8 – Contextual Landscape Elements** and Photographs contained in **Appendix A**.

Overview of the contextual landscape

Contextual Topographic Setting (Refer to Figure 7)

- 2.4.8 The topography of the study area broadly rises south to north with major ridgelines towards the north-west and north-east but undulates west to east as a result of a series of often dry valleys which flow north to south through the study area, connecting with the River Thames to the south.
- 2.4.9 The south of the study area is influenced by the valley floor associated with River Thames which flows to the eastwards around Caversham at approximately 35m AOD. The valley extends northward through the centre of Caversham, passes Hemdean Bottom, Highdown Bottom and woods.
- 2.4.10 Major ridgelines run through the settlements at Kidmore End (north-west of the study area) and Binfield Heath (north-east of the study area) at approximately 100m AOD.
- 2.4.11 The settlement of Emmer Green immediately adjacent to the Site predominantly sits on a relatively flat plateau landscape, with dry valley floors wrapping around the north, west and south.
- 2.4.12 The landscape value of this receptor is judged to be **high - medium**.

Contextual Land Cover Setting (Refer to Figure 6)

- 2.4.13 The land cover of the local area is broadly split with that to the north being mixed farmland (including arable, pasture and equestrian uses) and that to the south being settled.
- 2.4.14 The land cover to the north of the study area is predominantly pastureland, with arable farming largely restricted to the upper extents of the gently sloping hillsides and interspersed with occasional paddocks. Large blocks of woodland intersperse the landscape, connecting to treebelts, copses and hedgerows which mark field boundaries.
- 2.4.15 Reading and Caversham are settled in the south of the study area, with often dense built form and small pocket green open spaces.
- 2.4.16 The immediate setting to the Site is residential to the east, south and west; with the wider golf course to the north.

2.4.17 Golf courses are typically located on the northern settlement fringes including Reading and Mapledurham Golf Courses. Both of these are private course with no public access.

2.4.18 The landscape value of this receptor is judged to range between **high - low**.

Woodland and Vegetation Pattern (Refer to Figure 6)

2.4.19 The mosaic of woodland and farmland is characteristic of the landscape in the north of the study area, with blocks of woodland, linear treebelts and hedgerows defining field boundaries. Small, often linear groups of trees are located within the golf courses and with individual and clusters of trees associated with local village greens.

2.4.20 To the north of the study area towards the Chilterns, the woodland is often ancient semi-natural, including ancient beech woodland and that dominated by ash and oak. The extensive woodland cover provides a strong sense of enclosure, shelter and coherence to the landscape in the north of the study area.

2.4.21 In general, the field pattern within the study area is characterised by a range of small to large fields which are enclosed by both woodland and hedges. Hedges are often tall and overgrown and more visually prominent in the less wooded areas.

2.4.22 The landscape value of this receptor is judged to be **high - medium**.

Public Rights of Way (Refer to Figure 9)

2.4.23 A network of Public Rights of Way, including Footpaths and Cycle routes cross the study area connecting the townscape with the countryside. Refer to **Figure 9** – Plan showing Public Rights of Way. Those in close proximity to the Site include Footpath 47 and 22 to the east of the Site; Footpath 266/12/10, Sustran Cycle Path No. 5 and Bridleway 266/17/10 to the west; Restricted Bridleway 266/26/20 to the north-east; and Chiltern Way 266/11/10 to the north.

2.4.24 The Chiltern Way (266/11/10), long distance circular walking route, crosses the study area from the west to the north-east and often following the southern edge of the Chilterns AONB.

2.4.25 The landscape value of this receptor is judged to be **high - medium**.

Open Spaces in the Study Area (Refer to Figure 8)

2.4.26 Open space within the study area is focused around Caversham Park (Registered Park and Garden) which is a privately owned Victorian Listed Building set within approximately 38 hectares of ground, situated to the south-east of the study area. Caversham Park and Caversham Park House are key heritage and landscape features in the townscape. Reading Cemetery is located to the immediate south of Caversham Park.

2.4.27 Mapledurham Golf Course and Caversham Heath Golf Course are located respectively to the east and west of A4074 within South Oxfordshire along the administrative boundary of the borough. Both Mapledurham and Caversham Heath Golf Course are restricted to member use only.

- 2.4.28 Clayfield Copse Recreation Ground is a large green space framed by Clayfield Copse and Blackhouse Wood Ancient Woodland, with Clayfield Copse designated as Local Nature Reserve.
- 2.4.29 Emmer Green Common is an area of open space to the south of the Site and is surrounded by built form. The common mainly comprises of equipped play feature with open field abutting the Grove Road allotments. The Common is protected from development under Local Plan policy EN7.
- 2.4.30 The Site is not identified as a designated open space.
- 2.4.31 The landscape value of this receptor is judged to range between **high - medium**.

Contextual Settlement Pattern (Refer to Figure 8)

- 2.4.32 Small, linear villages and hamlets are present in the rural landscape to the north of the study area. They are rural in character and often located along the ridgelines and connected to the main settled areas by a series of local roads or green lanes.
- 2.4.33 The settled fringes of Reading have grown organically along the road corridors and extend both along the ridgelines, along the valley sides and into the valley bottoms. The settlement edge is not uniform and has developed around green spaces. It is predominantly residential in use (interspersed with schools and local amenities). The settlement is suburban in form and character, where rear gardens often back on to adjacent landscape. The water tower to the east of Peppard Road is a built landmark in the local landscape and in views from the north.
- 2.4.34 Emmer Green is within the settlement of Reading and is sub-urban in character.
- 2.4.35 The Site lies behind rows of residential dwellings (where the principal elevations are predominantly towards the road corridors and with rear gardens backing on to the Site), a retirement home, a local surgery, a school and community buildings.
- 2.4.36 The landscape value of this receptor is judged to be **high - low**.

Building Heights and Urban Grain

- 2.4.37 Most residential buildings within the study area are modest in size and domestic in scale, typically one to two storey with high roof pitches. Three storey buildings are present along Peppard Road associated with the parade of shops and within the vicinity of the Site. A three storey gable ended building, which sits taller than the adjacent two storey dwellings, also exists on Kidmore End Road to the south of the Site. ; within the Emmer Green area, dwellings are comprised of a mix of traditional brick houses and recently modernised town houses. Caversham Park House (Grade II Listed) is the most notable built form within the study area due to its shape and historic characters and it's three storeys in height with basement.
- 2.4.38 Emmer Green Primary School to the south of the Site comprises of one and two storey terraced buildings with relatively large footprints.
- 2.4.39 Retirement homes at Lyefield Court to the south of the Site predominantly comprises of two and a half storey dwellings with pitched roofs.

- 2.4.40 The Listed Building of Caversham Park is three storey, but greater in height in comparison with modern equivalents. It forms a key feature of the local townscape.
- 2.4.41 The urban structure is broadly determined by the historic street pattern and the topography of the valleys and River Thames. The intensity of the urban development gradually decreases from Reading Railway Station. However, unlike other suburban parts of Reading, the urban grain to the north of Reading does not extend beyond the borough boundary into South Oxfordshire District.
- 2.4.42 The landscape value of this receptor is judged to be **high** (relative to Caversham Park House) and **low** (relative to the rest of the built form).

Movement Corridors within the Study Area

- 2.4.43 A4074 and A4155 cross the west and the south of the study area. The A roads connect Reading town centre with Wallingford and Henley-on-Thames beyond the study area.
- 2.4.44 The settlements are connected to Reading Town Centre with a series of residential roads, namely Kidmore End Road, Peppard Road, Gravel Hill and Caversham Park Road.
- 2.4.45 The River Thames in the southern section of the study area forms another movement corridor and is often used by boats, principally for leisure purposes.
- 2.4.46 The landscape value of this receptor is judged to be **low**.

Contextual Skyline

- 2.4.47 The study area is situated in an undulating network of dry valleys and ridgelines. The skyline is formed by either built form in close proximity to the settlement edges, or by trees.
- 2.4.48 Caversham Park House is a dominant feature on the skyline within the townscape with its large scale and form and its commanding position on a ridge line, but it is not evident from the Site.
- 2.4.49 The landscape value of this receptor is judged to be **medium - low**.

Historic and Cultural Landscape of the Study Area

- 2.4.50 Listed Buildings are scattered across the study area, with clusters around North Reading Badminton Club, Caversham Park, Hampstead Farm, the fringe of Chilterns AONB and within the settled areas of Reading and Emmer Green.
- 2.4.51 The key Conservation Area is focused on the Caversham settlement area to the south of the study area; Caversham Park is a Registered Park and Garden and the Caversham Park House itself is Grade II Listed; Caversham was a separate settlement on the north banks of the Thames River within Oxfordshire, it only became part of the Reading Borough in 1911. Many of its road names such as Prospect Street, South Street and Queen's Road are the evidence of its history. Emmer Green is a small suburb featuring a numbers of chalk mines, before becoming subsumed within the wider urban area of Reading. Reading itself, is a large, historic market town in Berkshire dated from the 8th century and was an important trading and ecclesiastical centre in the medieval period. During the English Civil War, the medieval town was seriously affected, with a major siege

and loss of trade. The 18th century saw the beginning of a major iron works in the town and the growth of the brewing trade for which Reading was to become famous. The 19th century saw the coming of the Great Western Railway and the development of the town's brewing, baking and seed growing businesses. During that period, the town grew rapidly as a manufacturing centre.

2.4.52 Refer to **Volume 2, Chapter 12: Archaeology and Built Heritage** and **Volume 4, Appendix H: Desk-based Assessment and Heritage Statement**.

2.4.53 The landscape value of this receptor is judged to be **high - medium**.

Table 3: Summary of Contextual Landscape Receptor and Value

Landscape Receptor	Value
Contextual Topographic Setting	Medium
Contextual Land cover Setting	High - Low
Woodland and Vegetation Pattern	High - Medium
Public Rights of Way	High - Medium
Open Space in the Study Area	High - Medium
Contextual Settlement Pattern	High - Low
Building Heights and Urban Grain	High - Low
Movement corridor within the Study Area	Low
Contextual Skyline	Medium - Low
Historic and Cultural Landscape of the Study Area	High - Medium

Landscape Character Context

Introduction

2.4.54 The term 'landscape' commonly refers to the view or appearance of the land as perceived by people. Landscape applies to any natural, rural, urban, peri-urban areas, in land water and seascape areas.

2.4.55 Landscape character is the combination of both natural / physical, cultural / social and perceptual / aesthetic influences, which give rise to a distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse and which define the 'sense of place'. The landscape is not therefore simply a visual phenomenon.

2.4.56 The following sections set out the landscape character framework of the study area from the national and regional level through to county scale based upon existing character assessments undertaken by Natural England, Berkshire and South Oxfordshire Councils. No district level assessment for Reading is available.

National Level Landscape Character (Refer to Figure 10)

2.4.57 Natural England has divided the landscape characters of England into 159 distinct natural areas which provide environmental information and guidance in decision making for the public.

2.4.58 The Site lies within Character Area 110 – Chilterns, refer to Figure 10. The key characteristics pertinent to the study area as described as:

- *“A mixture of arable, grassland and woodland and the numerous commons reflects the dominance of Grade 3 agricultural land. Ancient woodland has remained on extensive clay-with-flint deposits, while very steep slopes are rarely cultivated. There are, however, not inconsiderable areas of Grade 1 and 2 land that are associated with lower-lying areas and river valleys;*
- *Pre-18th-century fields defined by ancient, often sinuous hedged boundaries are scattered throughout, including co-axial fields. Parliamentary enclosure fields are limited. Large modern fields, usually with ancient boundaries, cover the better agricultural land, most notably in the north-east;*
- *Remnants of various historic land use types can combine rich and diverse habitats and archaeology. Many key places are publicly accessible, including Registered Parks and Gardens, historic downland and common land. Traditional flood plain landscapes and orchards are the most restricted in extent. Historic routeways, hedged boundaries and watercourses provide connectivity;*
- *Extensive rights of way, commons, open access downland, woodland and some parklands provide access to the countryside. The Thames Path, the Ridgeway...are high-profile recreation routes; locally promoted routes include the Chilterns Cycleway. Private leisure land uses, including golf courses and horse paddocks, are common near urban centres.”*

2.4.59 Refer to **Figure 10 – Extract from National Landscape Character Area Map, Natural England 2014.**

2.4.60 The statements of Environmental Opportunities pertinent to the Site are identified as below:

2.4.61 *“SEO 1: Manage the wooded landscape, the woodlands (including internationally important Chilterns beechwoods), hedgerows, commons and parklands with the aims of conserving and enhancing biodiversity and the historic landscape and its significant features; maximising the potential for recreation; and securing sustainable production of biomass and timber.”*

2.4.62 To facilitate the above, the following opportunities most relevant to the study area and the future development of the Site have been identified as:

- *“Consider ecological designations for parklands, orchards and hedgerows in particular. Consider Tree Preservation Orders in relation to ‘landmark’ and veteran trees;*
- *Maintaining woodland on ancient woodland sites and conserving ancient hedgerow boundaries. Conserve ancient trees and veteran trees, planting or identifying nearby successors in order to secure the deadwood resource and associated biodiversity in the long term. Continue restoration of Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites;*
- *Conserving the diverse arrangements and particular species compositions of wooded features in designed landscapes, incorporating native and exotic species in avenues, groves, belts, shrubberies and so on. Carry out historic landscape character assessments and devise management plans to inform conservation efforts. Ensure that succession planting respects the original planting and seeks to maintain the*

historical continuity and sense of place. Target Registered Parks and Gardens, particularly those 'at risk', but also consider parklands of local importance and 'landmark trees'.

- 2.4.63 *“SEO 4: Enhance local distinctiveness and create or enhance green infrastructure within existing settlements and through new development, particularly in relation to the urban fringe and growth areas such as Luton. Ensure that communities can enjoy good access to the countryside.”*
- 2.4.64 To facilitate the above, the following opportunities most relevant to the study area and the future development of the Site have been identified as:
- *“Designing and locating development to maintain landscape character and enhance green infrastructure provision across the NCA, drawing on best practice as undertaken by, for example, the Chilterns AONB... Adapt or remove existing development where to do so would significantly strengthen landscape character, enhance views and address barriers to natural processes and public access to the countryside.*
 - *Seeking to conserve the setting of the two AONB landscapes outside of their boundaries when undertaking development and land management, working across planning authority boundaries as necessary;*
 - *Addressing deficits in greenspace and access links, integrating the public transport and cycle network and creating new or improved multi-user routes and green spaces working across administrative boundaries as necessary;*
 - *Establishing improved and new green infrastructure that supports natural processes through securing resilient ecological networks and functioning flood plains. Identify major barriers to significant ecological processes and seek to restore better ecological function working across administrative boundaries as necessary.”*
- 2.4.65 The landscape value of the national landscape character is judged to be **medium** overall.
- [County Level Landscape Character \(Refer to Figure 11-13\)](#)
- 2.4.66 The West Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment was prepared by LUC in 2019. It replaces the Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment 2003.
- 2.4.67 However, the Site sits within the Neighbouring Local Authority (Reading), consequently it was not included in the assessment.
- 2.4.68 Refer to **Figure 13 - West Berkshire in Context**.
- 2.4.69 The landscape of the study area to the north displays some of the characteristics of the **Landscape Character Area 10 – Chilterns Plateau with Valley** in the South Oxfordshire Landscape Character Assessment undertaken by Lepus Consulting in 2017. Refer to **Figure 11 - South Oxfordshire Landscape Character Map**. The key characteristics in relation to the study area are:
- *“Extensive areas of Ancient Woodland;*
 - *Sparsely settled with small villages and hamlets. The village of Sonning Common comprises the largest settlement;*

- *Narrow lanes and tall hedgerows;*
- *Comparatively open fields contained within a strong structure of woods, hedgerows or trees to form a loose mosaic;*
- *Strong structure of woods and hedgerows generally provides visual containment and results in moderate to low inter-visibility;*
- *Generally rural and unspoilt character but with some ‘suburbanising’ influences within rural settlements and along main roads (e.g. A4074, A4130), and localised intrusion of built development and power lines (e.g. around Sonning Common and Caversham);*
- *Typical golf course landscapes of greens, fairways, roughs and bunkers, with associated buildings and car parking.”*

2.4.70 The Study Area, and the Site itself, also displays some of the characteristics of the Semi-enclosed Dip Slope and Amenity Landscape Character Types (LCT) which inform LCA Area 10 (refer to **Figure 12 – Character Types of Chilterns Plateau with Valleys**). The key characteristics of these LCT’s pertinent to the local area are described as:

- *“Comparatively open fields contained within a strong structure of woods, hedgerows or trees to form a loose mosaic;*
- *Strong structure of woods and hedgerows generally provides visual containment and results in moderate to low inter-visibility;*
- *Generally rural and unspoilt character but with some ‘suburbanising’ influences within rural settlements and along main roads (e.g. A4074, A4130), and localised intrusion of built development and power lines (e.g. around Sonning Common and Caversham);*
- *Typical golf course landscapes of greens, fairways, roughs and bunkers, with associated buildings and car parking;*
- *Intensively managed and somewhat sub urban character and*
- *Rural, often well-wooded setting with moderate to low inter-visibility.”*

2.4.71 The assessment has also provided the following key recommendations to protect, conserve, enhance and restore the landscape quality of South Oxfordshire:

- *“Promote environmentally-sensitive maintenance of hedgerows;*
- *Minimise the visual impact of intrusive land uses at the fringes of towns and villages with the judicious planting of tree and shrub species characteristic of the area. This will help to screen the development and integrate it more successfully with its surrounding countryside;*
- *There are a number of ancient semi-natural woodlands distributed throughout the landscape type and the priority must be to ensure that all these sites are in favourable condition and management and*

- *Promote small-scale planting of deciduous woodland blocks using locally characteristic species such as crack willow, oak and ash.”*

2.4.72 The value of this receptor is judged to range between **high - medium**.

Local Landscape Character (Refer to Figure 14)

- 2.4.73 At the county level, the Site lies within the Urban Area of Reading and consequently was not assessed further by the County Council.
- 2.4.74 The land use can be broadly split north and south, with that to the north being mixed farmland as described in the South Oxfordshire District Council’s 2017 assessment, and the south being settled in irregular urban grids.
- 2.4.75 The landform undulates with a series of dry valleys flowing north to south and east to west; and where the skyline is either formed by built form in the proximity to the settlement edge, or by trees.
- 2.4.76 Ancient Woodlands (with Cucumber Ancient Woodlands within the wider Golf Course area to the north of the Site), hedgerows and tree field boundaries, sit adjacent to the urban edge. Caversham Park (Registered Park and Gardens) and the number of Listed Buildings sit as distinct elements within the urban area and contribute to the study area’s sense of place but have limited influence on the Site and its immediate setting itself.
- 2.4.77 Main roads, schools and other community buildings form the main sources of activity within the settlement edge of the study area. More tranquil areas are situated further north and away from these sources, whilst some intermittent noise is noticeable from local traffic on narrow country lanes.
- 2.4.78 To supplement the lack of a borough scale character assessment, a local level landscape character assessment relating to the immediate contextual environment to the Site has been carried out. Townscape areas often contain a range of building types reflecting the evolution of the urban area. Refer to Table 4 below sets out the key characteristics and potential landscape opportunities, management guidelines and landscape value. The location of the character areas is shown on **Figure 14** in **Appendix A of this Volume**.

Table 4: Summary of Landscape Character Receptor and Value

Landscape Character Area	Key Characteristics	Landscape Opportunities and Management Guidelines	Landscape Value
Emmer Green Residential	<p>Predominantly two storey, with pitched roofs.</p> <p>Detached, semi-detached and terraces.</p> <p>Occasional three storey apartment buildings.</p> <p>Range of building styles and materials.</p> <p>Rear garden areas are often well treed.</p> <p>Organic layout.</p> <p>Occasional street trees.</p> <p>Often the greening of the street is provided by the garden boundary treatments of hedgerows and trees beyond the public domain.</p> <p>Parking often within property curtilage.</p> <p>A domestic scale townscape, with varied materials and boundary treatments.</p>	<p>Opportunities for street tree planting.</p>	<p>Low</p>

Table 4: Summary of Landscape Character Receptor and Value (Continued)

Landscape Character Area	Key Characteristics	Landscape Opportunities and Management Guidelines	Landscape Value
Emmer Green Apartments	<p>Retirement home.</p> <p>Apartment buildings.</p> <p>Individual properties.</p> <p>Parking courts and garages.</p> <p>Range of communal or private garden spaces.</p>	<p>None identified.</p>	<p>Low</p>
Emmer Green Community Hub	<p>Predominantly large-scale educational buildings, 1-2 storey.</p> <p>Predominantly flat roofs.</p> <p>Surface level car parking.</p> <p>Hard surfaced games courts.</p> <p>Grass sports pitches and associated grounds.</p> <p>Area includes community spaces such as St Barnabas Church and community buildings.</p>	<p>None identified.</p>	<p>Low</p>

Landscape Character Area	Key Characteristics	Landscape Opportunities and Management Guidelines	Landscape Value
	Set within a vegetated edge, or set behind small scale buildings and therefore visual influence is limited to the immediate local area.		
Milestone Centre Commercial	Parade of shops and associated car parking area. Informal green space, performing primarily a visual amenity role. Organic layout to trees.	Intersperse parking with trees. Additional trees to green space. Reduction / co-ordination of street furniture clutter.	Low
Emmer Green Open Space	Recreational green space, including traditional equipped play area. Allotments. Informal open space. Boundary hedgerows. Trees limited to edges. Small scale single storey building.	Additional trees to supplement the boundary planting, whilst maintaining a degree of natural surveillance.	Medium
Reading Golf Course	Contains Cucumber Wood Ancient Woodland. Valley floor and valley side topography. A man-made and manicured landscape, comprising amenity sports grass, reflecting the function of the Golf Course. The natural profile has been modified to accommodate the tees and bunkers. Mature trees set out in both linear arrangements and groups define the greens and are scattered through the Golf Course and on the Site boundaries.	Opportunity for new woodland planting to improve biodiversity.	Medium

2.4.79 The value attributed to the tiers of landscape character are summarised in the table below:

Table 5: Summary of Landscape Character Receptor and Value

Landscape Receptor	Value
National	Medium
County	High - Medium
Local	Medium - Low

Night-time Character

- 2.4.80 A lux level Lighting Assessment has been carried out and is described in the Lighting Assessment Report, submitted with the application.
- 2.4.81 In terms of the night-time character, the Site and the landscape of the Golf Course beyond are predominantly dark due to its current use. The only source of existing artificial lighting within the Site relates to the wall mounted lamps on the Clubhouse and the adjacent Green Keeper’s house, located to the south-east corner of the Site. The car park was lit by bollard lightings. Therefore, lighting within the Site is limited to the eastern edge, relative to the lit streetscene of Kidmore End Road.
- 2.4.82 Lighting influences on the Site from the surrounding environment include the following:
- External amenity lighting from the neighbouring dwellings on Brooklyn Drive, Kidmore End Road, Eric Avenue and Highdown Hill Road;
 - LED street lighting along Kidmore End Road;
 - LED street light along Grove Road;
 - Security lighting associated with Emmer Green school to the south; and
 - Security, motion activated lighting associated with the storage barn in Cucumber Wood.
- 2.4.83 Overall therefore, whilst the night-time character of the Site is predominantly dark, it is influenced by the lighting in the surrounding townscape to the east, south and west; and the dark landscape of the Golf Course to the north.
- 2.4.84 The landscape value of this receptor is judged to be **medium**.

Description of Site Landscape (Refer to Figure 14)

Introduction

- 2.4.85 The Site is bound to the north by the wider area of Reading Golf Course (within the administrative area of South Oxfordshire District Council); Kidmore End Road, with dwellings on Chalgrove Way and beyond to the east; Emmer Green Primary School together with the retirement home on Lyefield Court and Emmer Green Play Fields to the south; and dwellings along Eric Avenue and Highdown Hill Road to the west.
- 2.4.86 A series of representative photos which illustrate the prevailing Site conditions in both winter and summer and the contextual townscape and landscape are included in Appendix A.
- 2.4.87 There are no landscape designations that cover the Site. The Chilterns AONB lies approximately 1km to the north.

Site Topography

- 2.4.88 The Site lies on the same plateau as Emmer Green. Whilst the natural topography of the Site appears to be broadly flat, it slopes gently in a north-westerly direction from approximately 84m AOD at Kidmore End Road towards the head of a minor valley on the northern edge of the Site. This valley falls to approximately 74m AOD at the Sites northern most corner.
- 2.4.89 The natural topography of the Site has been modified in places to provide level surfaces at the teeing ground. In addition to the teeing ground, a number of bunker depressions are also present and where the spoil has been used around them, resulting in a series of uncharacteristic hummocks across the natural profile.
- 2.4.90 The landscape value of this receptor is judged to be **medium**.

Site Land Cover

- 2.4.91 The Site comprises the designed southern section of the 18 hole Reading Golf Club and contains a series of treebelts and tall hedges which broadly follow the contours and the Site perimeter, allowing the greens to be set in between a framework of trees (trees within the Site are covered by a group of TPO). The single storey Club House lies to the east of the Golf Course. A two storey building sits to the immediate adjacent to the club house, with its ground floor used as golf storage facilities with the upper floor used as accommodation for the Green Keeper. The L- shape car park sits along the eastern edge of the Site parallel to Kidmore End Road and leads to the informal track along the north eastern boundary.
- 2.4.92 The eastern portion of the Site has been allocated for residential development as per policy CA1b. Therefore, the size of the current green space would have been reduced and with the eastern section of the Site comprising residential built form and amenity green space.
- 2.4.93 The landscape value of this receptor is judged to be **medium** overall.

Trees and Vegetation Pattern

- 2.4.94 Some areas of the boundaries are vegetated and comprise clipped, intermittent hedgerows and treebelts, while some are open to residential gardens, with unobstructed views looking over the greens. Trees within the Site are all covered by Tree Protection Order. Recently planted trees with plastic protectors are visible towards the eastern edges of the Site. A number of memorial trees have been planted across the golf course by the members.
- 2.4.95 The Arboricultural and Planning Integration Report was produced by Abotrack Systems Ltd on the November 2021 for the Site. It assesses the existing trees based on their condition, quality and value in order to inform the removal or retention of trees and identify design constraints and opportunities for the new development. In total there are 320 surveyed trees or groups of trees on or by the perimeters of the Site. Of these 11 are category 'A' (high quality), which are predominantly native oak species and scots pine; 119 trees or groups are classified as 'B' (moderate quality); 174 trees or groups of trees are 'C' (low quality) and 16 are 'U' (unsuitable for retention quality). They are assessed in accordance with BS:5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction. Species include Wild Cherry, Common Ash, Silver Birch, Rowan, Whitebeam, Holly, Spruce, Common Hawthorn etc. All of the trees within the Site are covered by a Group TPO.
- 2.4.96 The trees within the Site and on the Site boundaries are apparent in the local townscape both in the winter and summer months. Consistent with the local area, where trees often sit behind and between the built form, setting the built form into a well treed landscape. The tiers of vegetation along the eastern edge of the Site are apparent from Kidmore End Road.
- 2.4.97 The landscape value of this receptor is judged to be **high**.

Movement Corridors and Public Rights of Way

- 2.4.98 The main Site access is off a typical residential road - Kidmore End Road, which runs from south to north.
- 2.4.99 There are no Public Rights of Way within the Site, however, an informal track skirts around the eastern edge of the Site and heads north towards Cucumber Wood.
- 2.4.100 The landscape value of this receptor is judged to be **low**.

Building Height and Form

- 2.4.101 Built form is limited to the eastern edge of the Site adjacent to the Site entrance and overlooking the fairways. The single storey Club House and the two-storey building which includes the Green Keepers accommodation, store and simulator are both formed of red brick.
- 2.4.102 The landscape value of this receptor is judged to be **low**.

Landscape Features of the Site

2.4.103 The key landscape features comprise of the treebelts and individual trees throughout the Site, and a small area to the northern boundary designated as an Area of Biodiversity Interest in the Local Plan. There are no significant detracting features within the Site.

2.4.104 The landscape value of this receptor is judged to be **high**.

Site Level Landscape Character and Experiential / Perceptual Qualities

2.4.105 The golf course forms a manicured landscape between and on the settlement edge and therefore creates a transitional, fringe landscape, with a strong contrast between the rural field patterns beyond to the north and the suburban domestic scale edge to the south.

2.4.106 In terms of its contribution to the townscape, whilst this part of the wider Golf Course provides finger of green into the townscape from the landscape to the north, due to the combination of surrounding built form, intervening layers of vegetation and boundary vegetation, the perception of this green finger is limited to a localised geographic area around the Site itself.

2.4.107 The Site is readily influenced by the existing predominantly residential and domestic scale settlement edges to the east, south and west. Buildings in close proximity to the Site are predominantly one to two storey height, with pitched roofs and comprise a range of building styles and materials.

2.4.108 The key characteristics of the Golf Course are summarised as follows:

- Built form and hard surfacing is limited to the eastern edge of the Site, adjacent to the main entrance off Kidmore End Road;
- A man-made and manicured landscape, comprising amenity sports grass, reflecting the function of the Golf Course. The Golf Course was designed by James Braid, a Scottish professional golfer and a renowned golf course architect.
- The natural landform is relatively flat but slopes downwards to the north. The natural profile has been modified to accommodate the tees and bunkers;
- Mature trees set out in both linear arrangements and groups define the greens and are scattered through the Golf Course and on the Site boundaries, characteristic of golf courses and
- Intermittent hedge boundaries;
- Visually a well contained landscape both in the winter and summer months due to the combination of built form and vegetation.

2.4.109 In terms of Landscape Opportunities and Management Guidelines, these are considered to include the following:

- Opportunities to improve the biodiversity interest across the Site;
- Continued management of the existing tree stock, including the memorial trees.

2.4.110 The Chiltern AONB lies approximately 1km north from the Site. However, the Site does not share the following special qualities of the AONB (as defined in the AONB management plan):

- Panoramic views;
- Chalk grassland, chalk streams and chalk escarpment;
- Farmland, common land and parkland and woodland (including ancient);
- Woodland;
- An extensive and diverse archaeological landscape;
- Industrial heritage, distinctive buildings and stately homes; and
- National trails, ancient route ways and sunken lanes.

2.4.111 Furthermore, the Site is separated from the AONB by the wider golf course and intervening agricultural land.

2.4.112 The Site contains hedgerows and trees which are included as one of the special qualities; and that it is relatively tranquil with dark skies in some areas of the Site. Equally, the Site lies adjacent to the existing settlement edge which contains dwellings, a school and community buildings, so therefore lies on the edge of the lit built environment. Therefore, the Site does not perform a role in the setting to the AONB.

2.4.113 The value of the Site landscape character is judged to be **medium** overall.

Conclusion of the Baseline Landscape

2.4.114 Due to the combination of topography, vegetation and built form, the Site does not perform a significant or contributory physical role in the setting of the Chilterns AONB or Historic Park and Garden of Caversham Park.

2.4.115 The Site is readily influenced by the existing surrounding built form and is not accessible by the general public, except for paid members. It is a manicured landscape on the settlement fringe and is distinctly different from the rural landscape beyond.

2.4.116 The eastern section of the golf course is allocated for residential development. As such, the future baseline of the Site would change from that of a golf course to that of residential development and open space. It is currently a private golf course. It is not designated as a local green space. It is therefore at the lower end of the value scale, especially considering its settlement edge location.

2.4.117 The Site landscape receptors and value are summarised in the table below:

Table 6: Summary of the Site Landscape Receptor and Value

Landscape Receptor	Value
Topography	Medium
Land cover	Medium
Trees and Vegetation Pattern	High
Movement Corridor and Public Rights of Way	Low
Building Height and Form	Low
Landscape Features	High
Landscape Character	Medium

Baseline Visual Assessment

Introduction

- 2.4.118 The extent to which the Site is visible from the surrounding landscape is based on grading of degrees of visibility. It is determined from a visual inspection of the Site and its context from publicly accessible vantage points, including roads, Public Rights of Way, areas of open space and adjacent to residential properties (including Listed Buildings).
- 2.4.119 Seasonal change in existing evergreen and deciduous plant material will affect the available views. Typically, views will be different through the seasons with a greater sense of enclosure in the summer months when deciduous trees are in leaf.
- 2.4.120 Representative viewpoints were identified which are considered to be of particular significance in terms of providing a range of views of the Site and where the Proposed Development would have the potential to affect the character and amenity of the view experienced, based on the methodology set out in **Appendix B**.
- 2.4.121 These viewpoints have been agreed with the with the officers prior to preparing the LVIA and covering all the visual receptors in the local area, including residential (including those within Listed Buildings), community facilities, transient receptors using road corridors, transient receptors using the public rights of way, public open space users and those within the designated landscape.
- 2.4.122 Local views are those within 1.5km radius of the Site (as shown in **Figure 15** in **Appendix A** and comprise 27 key representative viewpoints, both winter and summer views). Distant views are those between 1.0 and 2.5km radius from the Site (as shown in **Figure 18** and comprise of 7 key representative viewpoints 28-33).
- 2.4.123 The Site does not lie within a protected viewing corridor identified in planning policy. Furthermore, none of the surrounding dwellings are orientated specifically over the Golf Course.
- 2.4.124 With the exception of the northern edge of the Site, views out of the Site are predominantly limited to the immediate environs due to the combination of surrounding built form and vegetation. However, the visual assessment as set out on the following pages reveals that views looking back from the wider landscape to the north, the Site is not discerned due to the intervening layers of vegetation.

Views from Residential Receptors

- 2.4.125 Open views of part of the Site occur from those residential receptors immediately adjacent to the Site entrance at Kidmore End Road. These views from the east are predominantly open (the Golf Club sits within the context of residential built form of Emmer Green either side) with clipped hedgerows and mature trees both within and on the Site boundary, with the Club House and neighbouring building (which includes the Green Keepers accommodation, store and simulator) are evident over and between the boundary vegetation in the winter views, and filter through the vegetation in the summer views. Open views across the Site occur during winter from the rear elevations of properties on Brooklyn Drive over and between intervening vegetation and fencing. However, views of the Site are less open during summer due to the trees being in leaf. Similarly, to the immediate south of the Site, residential receptors experience partial views of the Site (the ground plane and the existing trees during winter; the boundary vegetation and the tree canopies in the summer) through the intervening vegetation gaps outside the Site and intermittent fences (namely for those residents of Lyefield Court). Views from the immediate west comprise open views of part of the ground plane and trees within the Site beyond the intervening garden vegetation during the winter season but limited to the Site boundary vegetation during the summer season. These views are from the rear elevations of the dwellings only. The character and amenity of these views therefore relates predominantly to the man-made amenity greens and associated tree structure which is often filtered through or over intervening vegetation.
- 2.4.126 The trees within the Site are apparent (although not necessarily recognisable as being set within the Golf Course) from the adjacent road network through the gaps between dwellings (namely residents at Highdown Hill Road, Eric Avenue and Gorselands).
- 2.4.127 The character and amenity of these views are demonstrated through the representative external viewpoints 4, 5, 5a, 6, 18 and 19. In the summer months, the views are more verdant, and often filter some of the built form in the immediate contexts. However, the overall character and amenity of these views are not altered between the seasons.
- 2.4.128 Views from the residential receptors to the north of the Site (and adjacent to the Chilterns AONB) are truncated by the combination of topography and intervening layers of vegetation. Refer to viewpoint 22, 23 and 24.
- 2.4.129 Views from Old Grove House (Grade II* Listed) and The Barn (Grade II Listed) at Highdown Hill Road to the Site are predicted to be truncated by the layers of vegetation and the existing intervening dwellings. Refer to viewpoint 16.
- 2.4.130 The combination of built form and vegetation means that often only part of the Site is visible, or trees within the Site are discernible, and therefore not as a whole. The views of the Site often are influenced by the existing built form and the manicured landscape.
- 2.4.131 The value of the views is judged to be **medium** (from the Listed Buildings and limited number of other residential dwellings) and **low** (the rest of the residential receptors). Views from the adjacent residential properties are not protected or designated, nor from a listed building or a valued landscape, therefore, the value of these views is generally **low**.

Views from Receptors from Community Facilities and Schools

- 2.4.132 Views from the range of receptors at Emmer Green Youth & Community Centre and Emmer Green Primary School to the south of the Site experience open views of part of the Site boundary vegetation, where the existing vegetation within the Site is apparent as part of the vegetated edge to the school; and where the green finger of the Golf Course landscape in the townscape is apparent. Refer to internal viewpoint S5 and external viewpoint 15. In the summer months, the views are more verdant and are anticipated to limit views into the Site or limits the openness of the Site; but would not significantly alter the character and amenity.
- 2.4.133 Views from St Barnabas Church are predicted to be truncated by the intervening built form. Refer to viewpoint 14.
- 2.4.134 The value of the views is judged to be **low**.

Views from Transient Receptors Using Road Corridors

- 2.4.135 Open views of the Site, including the boundary vegetation, the Clubhouse and the rear gate entrance occur during winter from the range of receptors on Kidmore End Road, in the context of the residential street scene, when passing the Site. Views during the summer season are more verdant and often the Site boundary vegetation limits the degree of visibility into the Site and its immediate built contexts. Once past the Site, views rapidly diminish due to the combination of intervening vegetation and built form. The trees within the Site may be apparent, but not readily identifiable as being those within the Site. Refer to viewpoint 5, 5a and 6.
- 2.4.136 Views from residential lanes, namely Brooklyn Drive, Eric Avenue and Gorselands are predominately partial with the trees of the Site apparent in between the gaps of the dwellings and the tree canopies apparent over the roofs. The character and amenity of these views is that of a residential streetscene, set against an intermittent treed setting. Refer to viewpoint 8, 10, 18 and 19.
- 2.4.137 Similarly, views of mature tree canopies visible above the two-three storey dwellings and the gaps in between occur from Peppard Road / Kidmore End junction. Views of the Site from Grove Road are partial and again comprise of tree canopies filter between the dwellings in the context of the mixed residential and / or commercial street scene. Refer to viewpoint 1, 2, 3 and 13. The amenity of the views are influenced by the existing built form and the tree planting within a relatively urban setting.
- 2.4.138 With the exception of partial views of the Site, with tree canopies rising above the one storey height dwelling at the northern end of Highdown Hill Road, views from both St Barnabas Road and Highdown Hill Road are truncated by the existing built form and the layers of vegetation. Refer to viewpoint 14, 16, 17, 20 and 21.
- 2.4.139 However, views of the ground plane of the Site is often obscured by the intervening built form and garden vegetation. In the summer months, the views would be more verdant and are anticipated to limit views into the Site but would not significantly alter the character and amenity.
- 2.4.140 The value of the views is judged to be **low**.

Views from Transient Receptors Using the Rights of Way Network

- 2.4.141 Views of the Site are limited from the Sustran Cycle Path No. 5 due to the orientation of the dwellings and the intervening built form (to the immediate east, south and west of the Site) and the layers of vegetation. Receptors experience intermittent views of the Site, primarily through understanding the relationship of the route with the Site and its trees, through the gaps between dwellings at the north western tip of the Site boundary. Refer to viewpoint 17 and 21. In the summer months, the views are more verdant and are anticipated to limit views into the Site or obscured by the vegetation in the foreground outside the Site. The character and amenity of the views are not altered.
- 2.4.142 Views of the Site from the network of Public Rights of Way in the landscape beyond the Site are all truncated by either built form, topography or vegetation, or a combination. Refer to viewpoints 16, 20, 23 and 24
- 2.4.143 The value of the views is judged to be **low**.

Views from Receptors Within Public Open Space

- 2.4.144 Partial views of the tree canopies within the Site occur through the gaps between dwellings from Emmer Green Playing Fields to the south of the Site. The character and amenity of the view is informed by the residential built form setting. Views of the ground plane of the Site is however obscured by the intervening built form. Refer to viewpoint 3 and 12. In the summer months, the views are more verdant and are limit views into the Site but do not significantly alter the character and amenity.
- 2.4.145 Views from the Grove Road Allotments are predominantly truncated by the layers of vegetation and treebelts beyond the Site. Refer to viewpoint 13. There would be no change to this view in the summer months.
- 2.4.146 The value of the views is judged to be **medium**.

Views from Within Designated Landscape

- 2.4.147 Views of the Site from the edges of the AONB and the intervening landscape are obscured in both the winter and summer months.. Refer to viewpoint 22, 23 and 24. Due to the combination of built form, topography and vegetation, both within and beyond the Site and the wider Golf Course the Site does not perform a role in the setting to the AONB in the visual terms.
- 2.4.148 Views from Caversham Park (Registered Park and Garden) are predicted to be truncated by the built form in the context of the mixed residential and commercial townscape. Refer to viewpoint 1.
- 2.4.149 The value of the views is judged to be **high**.

Conclusion of Baseline Key Receptors

- 2.4.150 Open views of the Site and its associated vegetation are predominantly limited to residential receptors to the immediate east, south and west and which edge the Site, i.e. the Site is enclosed by built form on three sides. Open and partial views predominantly of the trees within the Site occur from the immediate road corridors such as Kidmore End Road, Brooklyn Drive, Eric Avenue, with many of the residential receptors backing on to the Site. These views predominantly comprise of that of the Golf Course set in the context of residential built form, filtered through vegetation and woodland backdrop to the north.

The presence of green space beyond the existing built form is perceived by those receptors in the immediate local environs to the Site. In the summer months, the views are more verdant, therefore, the degree of openness is reduced, but the character and amenity of these views are remain unaltered. Those receptors that experience views of the Site are therefore limited to a small geographic area.

- 2.4.151 Views beyond the immediate area, including distant views, are obscured and truncated by either built form and vegetation, or the undulating landform and the layers of vegetation. The character and amenity of the view is influenced by the existing built form and managed landscape and associated planting.
- 2.4.152 Views of the northern edge of the Site from the wider SODC have been included in the visual assessment, including the AONB, from public vantage points, where views are limited by the combination of topography, built form and vegetation. There are no direct views into the northern edge of the Site from public vantage points or any dwellings with views specifically designed to focus on this northern boundary.
- 2.4.153 **Table 7** below summarised the landscape values from the baseline visual receptors:

Table 7: Summary of the Baseline Visual Receptor

Landscape Receptors	Value
Views from Residential Receptors	Medium - Low
Views from Receptors at their Community Facilities and Schools	Low
Views from Transient Receptors Using Road Corridors	Low
Views from Transient Receptors Using the Rights of Way Network	Low
Views from Public Open Space	Medium
Views from Within Designated Landscape	High

2.5 Identification and Description of Changes Likely to Generate Effect

- 2.5.1 The author of this LVIA have been fully engaged in the design evolution of the project working closely with the Architects and the client team. The location of the development parcels and the design parameters have been driven by the combination of planning policy and the quality of the existing tree network. . The overarching landscape design principal therefore seeks to reduce, minimise or compensate for the potential landscape and visual effects, whilst also addressing the recommendations from the landscape character assessments wherever possible.
- 2.5.2 The key features and elements that are to be retained and protected (in accordance with BS5837:2012 within the Site throughout construction and operation stages are as follows:
 - The boundary trees, hedgerows and shrub planting wherever possible;
 - All of the Category A grade trees, the majority of the Category B grade trees, approximately half of the Category C grade trees and some of the Category U grade trees;
 - The broad topographic profile, which is predominantly flat, but slopes down gently to the northern section; and

- The four memorial trees specifically identified during the Public Consultation to be retained and relocated.

2.5.3 An area of compensatory tree planting is proposed to the west of Cucumber Wood (refer to **Figure 19** in **Appendix A**).

2.5.4 The key elements considered in this landscape and visual impact assessment during the construction and operational phases are as follows:

Construction Phase

- The establishment of the contractor's compound, which, for the purposes of this assessment is considered to be temporary located in the centre of the Site, then shift to be located at the northern tip of the Site as construction progresses.
- The construction of the access road from Kidmore End Road leading into the Site; the creation of the main entrance gateway; and the formation of the internal estate roads.
- The graduated change of land use from private amenity and manicured golf course with associated trees, to that of a construction site with emerging 2 – 3 storey built form and open space.
- The movement of plant machinery around the Site (including the use of cranes).
- The removal of topsoil, alongside earthworks and re-profiling to create development platforms and the attenuation basins.
- Any imported and stockpile of materials on Site.
- The construction of infrastructure within the proposed development parcels.
- The provision of utilities, including lighting, water supply and any other temporary facilities.
- The measures for the temporary protection of existing features (such as vegetation and trees) and any temporary screening (such as hoarding lines).
- The construction sequence on Site (which for the purposes of this assessment is assumed to commence in the eastern entrance then westward).
- The protection and retention of all of the Category A grade trees, the majority of the Category B grade trees, approximately half of the Category C grade trees and some of the Category U grade trees.
- The early implementation of woodland tree planting in the wider Golf Course to mitigate the trees lost due to development (refer to **Figure 19 – Compensatory Tree Planting Plan in Appendix A**).
- The sequential implementation of the tree planting across the Site as development progresses.

Operational Phase

- The continued retention of the boundary trees, shrub and hedgerow planting which comprises the existing high-quality tree network (as set out under the construction phase).
- The replacement of the paid members only golf course to a well-integrated community living, with public accessible open space, which is inclusive and sensitively designed.
- The associated green infrastructure, which includes the opportunities for planting 196no. new trees within Reading administrative boundary and up to 1000no. new native trees in the form of new woodland block in the wider Golf Course. Despite the woodland planting being off-site, the benefits of tree planting do not stop at borough boundary and therefore can be of benefit to the Borough accordingly. This will also contribute to the existing landscape setting of Reading.
- Building heights of predominantly two storeys, with occasional two and a half storeys and three storeys in some locations.
- The provision of 3.89ha of public open space throughout the Site, which allows the opportunity for play, park and gardens, natural and semi-natural green space and which delivers the Green Link as required by Policies EN9 and EN12 through the continuous tree planting along the centre of the Site, together with the attenuation ponds, swales and bio-rich grass planting to provide wildlife values and a connection with the wider areas.
- The introduction of Sustainable Drainage System to the north-eastern, north-western edge and the central area of the Site, which can form part of the open space network.
- Through the network of green infrastructure and the use of a native plant palette can provide opportunities to improve biodiversity interest across the Site, as identified in the Site level landscape character assessment.
- Creating a positive development interface with the landscape to the north.
- All proposed trees are entirely within the public realm. Larger tree species are located within the central spine road, which will be maintained and managed accordingly by an estate management plan to ensure their successful establishment and longevity.
- All proposed trees are minimum 5m away from the centre of the stem to the edge of any building structures. All tree positions are carefully considered relative to NHBC chapter 4.2 and in relation to the anticipated shading from the particular species anticipated at maturity.
- New tree planting is proposed along the northern edge of the Site to provide a degree of separation between the proposed development and the wider golf course to the north.

2.6 Assessment of Likely Significant Effect

Construction Phase

Embedded Mitigation Measures

- 2.6.1 At the time of preparing this assessment, the construction programme is expected to be starting from 2022 and completed in 2027, subject to planning approval. The Site will be constructed in one phase, broadly from the east to the north-west direction following the proposed main access road. The contractors' compound is expected to be located in the centre of the Site temporary, then relocate to the northern tip as construction progresses. All of the measures described in section 2.5 are embedded within the scheme. However, the height and colour of the contractor's cabins and compounds are to be agreed with Reading Borough Council to minimise landscape and visual impacts wherever possible at the outset; and therefore, to be as visually recessive as possible.
- 2.6.2 Lighting and ecology mitigation measures are included in the **ES Chapter 11: Ecology and Nature Conservation**.

Anticipated Landscape Effects

Contextual Landscape Elements

- 2.6.3 A description of the contextual landscape beyond the Site boundary is provided in the baseline assessment to explain how the Site sits in its landscape context. The baseline therefore describes the contextual topographic setting, land cover setting, woodland and vegetation pattern, public rights of way, open space, contextual settlement pattern, building heights and urban grain, movement corridors, contextual skyline and historic and cultural landscape of the study area.
- 2.6.4 During the construction stage, there will be no change to the majority of the elements and features present beyond the Site in the wider area, as no off-site work are proposed that would significantly change any of these elements at this stage of the works. Effects on the contextual landscape elements described previously (with the exception of land cover setting and woodland and vegetation pattern) will therefore be of **neutral** at this stage and are not considered further.
- 2.6.5 There are two activities associated with the construction stage including soil preparation and installation of any irrigation pipe networks associated with the creation of the new woodland tree planting to the north of the Site; and the implementation of the new woodland planting to the west of Cucumber Wood. It is anticipated to result in a small change to the contextual land cover setting and woodland and vegetation pattern.
- 2.6.6 The value of the contextual land cover setting and the woodland and vegetation pattern receptors within the study area is judged to range between **high and low**; the susceptibility to the proposed change is **low**; therefore, the sensitivity of this receptor is – **medium** overall. The magnitude of change is considered to be **minor- moderate**, due to the scale and there is no significant change to the characteristic landscape elements. Effects are therefore predicted to be direct, short term, temporary (but see the commencement of a permanent change when the vegetation matures) of **minor adverse significance** overall relative to the localised earthworks, but where the general

topographic profile will be maintained overall, and of **minor beneficial significance** relative to the potential for early implementation of tree planting outside the Site boundary.

- 2.6.7 There are no mitigation measures proposed or required for this element of the scheme.
- 2.6.8 Overall, the construction stage itself will result in a change in land use and woodland and vegetation pattern in a small part of the study area.
- 2.6.9 There will be highway improvement works along Kidmore End Road to facilitate the development. Details of the work is unknown at this stage but may relate to the widening of road corridors and removal of verges. The value of this receptor is judged to be **low**, the susceptibility is **low**; therefore the sensitivity is **low**. The magnitude of change is considered to be **minor** (due to the work is likely to only involve a small part of the Kidmore End Road), the effects are therefore predicted to be direct, short-term, temporary (but see the commencement of a permanent change) which could be at worst of **minor adverse significance**.

National Level Landscape Character

- 2.6.10 At this level, the Site lies wholly within the National Landscape Character Area 110 - Chilterns. The value of this receptor area as a whole is judged to be **medium** overall; the susceptibility to the proposed change is **low**; therefore, the sensitivity of this receptor is **low - negligible**. The magnitude of change is considered to be **negligible**, as the construction stage relates to a very small parcel of the LCA and readily influenced by the existing settlement to the east, south and west.
- 2.6.11 The construction stage is likely to be direct, temporary and short-term. The effect is predicted to be of **negligible** significance on the wider character area overall. The construction stage will see the commencement of a change from a private amenity green to that comprising the construction activities and the associated emerging built form.
- 2.6.12 The Statements of Environmental Opportunity at the national level pertinent to the Site are set out in the baseline assessment. The following mitigation measures have been considered throughout the design process to address these strategies as follows:
- SEO1: Woodland and hedgerow management in national level. The proposed development responds to this through the management and protection measures to the existing boundary hedgerow and the trees within the Site which are set out in Arboricultural and Planning Integration Report, in particular veteran trees.;
 - SEO4: Enhancing local distinctiveness and green infrastructure. The proposed development responds to this through the retention of the broad green infrastructure, i.e. the majority of the trees and hedgerow throughout the Site and Site perimeters are protected from the construction activities.

Effects on County Level Landscape Character

- 2.6.13 As described in the landscape character chapter section earlier, at the Berkshire County Level, the Site sits within the Neighbouring Local Authority (Reading), and hence was not included in the assessment. Therefore, the construction phase would not alter that assessment. The surrounding study area lies within the Landscape Character Area 10 – Chilterns Plateau with Valleys in South Oxfordshire. The value of the receptor area as a whole is judged to range between **high to medium**; the susceptibility to change is **low**;

therefore, the sensitivity of this receptor is **medium to low**. The magnitude of change is considered to be **minor**, where the construction stage will not significantly alter the landscape elements, key characteristic features and perceptual qualities at the County scale.

- 2.6.14 Effects are predicted to be both in-direct and direct, temporary (but see the commencement of a permanent change) and short-term, as a result of the range of construction activities occurring to facilitate the emerging built form and the mitigation woodland tree planting in the wider Golf Course. The effect will range between **minor adverse** associated with the construction works and **minor beneficial significance** on the character area as a whole and considering the implementation of the new woodland.
- 2.6.15 The recommendations to protect, conserve, enhance and restore the landscape quality as identified in the County level landscape character assessment relates to the land outside of the area identified as the 'Urban Area of Reading' and therefore the Site. However, these recommendations can be taken forward into the Site considering their inter-relationship. Therefore, during the construction stage, the following embedded measures have been considered throughout the design process to address these strategies as follows:
- Hedgerow maintenance: The Site boundary hedgerow will be protected during construction, the measures are set out in the Arboricultural and Planning Integration Report;
 - Minimising visual impact of development on town fringes through vegetation: Views of the Site from the surrounding countryside are limited due to the combination of intervening topography and vegetation. During the latter stages of construction, further boundary planting will be implemented to supplement the existing retained vegetation and to filter views for those localised receptors; Promoting small scale planting: during the latter stages of construction, tree planting across the Site will be implemented, together with the early implementation of the compensatory native tree planting in the form of a woodland block to the north of the Site, west of Cucumber Wood, in the wider Golf Course area.

Effects on Local Level Landscape Character

- 2.6.16 The value of the local landscape character areas around the Site are judged to be **medium to low**; the susceptibility to the proposed change is **medium**, where the Site forms part of the setting to these character areas; therefore, the sensitivity of this receptor is **medium to low**. The magnitude of change is considered to be **minor**, where the construction stage will not significantly alter the landscape elements, key characteristic features of these character areas, but will alter the background setting.
- 2.6.17 Effects are predicted to be in-direct, temporary (but see the commencement of a permanent change) and short-term, as a result of the range of construction activities occurring to facilitate the emerging built form. The effect will be **minor adverse** on part of the setting to the surrounding character areas and **minor beneficial** significance on the wider golf course area considering the implementation of the new woodland.

Night-time Character and Lighting

- 2.6.18 The demolition of the Clubhouse and the building associated with the Green Keeper's accommodation will result in permanent removing of the key source of lighting of the existing Site.
- 2.6.19 During the construction stage, it is anticipated that there will be an increase to the intensity of lighting within the Site. The potential on-site lighting (often tend to be mobile and focus on providing the widest cover of light from the fewest possible units, in order to minimise the maintenance and installations) can result in glare, light intrusion and sky glow.
- 2.6.20 Some dwellings might be occupied during the construction of the remaining part of the Site, therefore, there will be an increase on residential amenity light which will become permanent over the course of the construction period.
- 2.6.21 The value of the night-time character at the Site level is considered to be **medium**. The magnitude of change is considered to be **moderate** at this stage. This is likely to be a direct, temporary, becoming permanent (towards the end of the construction stage). The long-term effect is judged to be **moderate adverse** significance on the current perceived night-time landscape of the Golf Course.
- 2.6.22 The principal contractor(s) will ensure that, suitable control mechanisms are identified to minimise nuisance / disturbance associated with temporary construction lighting as a secondary measure. As these are not known at this stage, the worst-case scenario is set out above.

Site Landscape Elements

- 2.6.23 The following paragraphs describe the effects on each individual landscape elements which contribute to the character of the Site, comprising Site topography, land cover, tree and vegetation and Site landscape feature, movement corridors and Public Rights of Way, building height and form.

Site Topography

- 2.6.24 The site enabling and construction stage will see the sequential removal of topsoil to create the development platforms; the excavation of material associated with the implementation of the below ground and above ground sustainable urban drainage system; and the associated stockpiling of materials. However, the overall topographic profile in principle remains the same during the construction cycle.
- 2.6.25 The value of the landscape receptor is considered to be **low**; the susceptibility to the proposed change is **medium**; therefore, the sensitivity of this receptor is **medium to low**. The effects are likely to be direct, temporary and short-term on the existing topographic profile of the Site. The magnitude of change is considered to be **minor**, the effects are therefore judged to be of **minor adverse significance** overall.
- 2.6.26 With the exception of best practice in terms of storing material (keeping stockpile levels as low as possible to maintain their aerobic conditions and to minimise their visual impact) there are no additional mitigation measures proposed at this stage.

Site Land Cover

- 2.6.27 For the Site land cover, there will be a change to the land use of private amenity greens to that containing the construction activities and the emerging built form. The value of this

landscape receptor is considered to be **medium**; the susceptibility to change is **high**; therefore, the sensitivity of this receptor is of **medium - high**; The magnitude of change is **major**. There will be a direct, temporary effect, but see the commencement of a permanent change and long-term effects as a result of the loss of the existing private amenity green at the construction phase. These effects will be of **major adverse significance** on this Site level landscape resource.

Tree and Vegetation Pattern and Site Landscape Features

- 2.6.28 In terms of tree and vegetation pattern, the construction stage will see the retention and protection of the majority of the high quality trees throughout the Site; the construction activities associated with tree removal and memorial tree relocations; and the retention and protection of the Site boundary vegetation.
- 2.6.29 Of the total 320 trees and tree groups identified in the tree survey, in order to facilitate the development, a total of 112no. of trees are proposed to be removed. This equates to 35% of the total tree stock. All of the category A grade trees are proposed to be retained. The removals comprise 24 of the 119 category 'B' (moderate quality) trees, 79 of the 174 category 'C' (low quality) trees and 9 of the 16 category 'U' (unsuitable for retention quality). Refer to Arboricultural and Planning Integration Report. However, the **Indicative Site Layout** provides the opportunity to sequentially plant approximately 112 trees within the Site, wholly within the public realm areas (at the latter stages of the construction phase) in addition to the planting of at least 1000 trees as a new compensatory woodland block (refer to **Figure 19**) to the west of Cucumber Wood in the wider Golf Course area to the north.
- 2.6.30 The value of this landscape receptor is considered to be **high**; the susceptibility to the proposed change is **high**; therefore, the sensitivity of this receptor is of **high**. The magnitude of change is **major** on the tree and vegetation stock proposed for removal only. There is likely to be a direct, temporary and long-term effects on the vegetation pattern of the Site. Considering the majority of the tree removals relate to category C and U grade trees, but are covered by a blanket TPO, the initial effects will be **major-moderate adverse significance** as a landscape feature, considering their TPO status and on the tree stock as a whole across the Site. However, 28% of the tree removals relates to Category C and U grade trees, where their quality is declining. A sequential 1.75 for 1 replacement of trees (both large and medium sized tree species) can be accommodated within the proposed scheme within the areas of Green Infrastructure and wholly within the areas of public realm as the construction phase progress east to west. Whilst the size and stature of the replacement trees will not be the same as those removed, the tree planting provides the opportunity to improve the existing tree stock, the effects of which will be fully realised at the operational stage. Effects will therefore remain as **major adverse significance** on the stock to be removed, but **moderate adverse significance** on the overall features at this stage. Considering the proposed off-site new woodland planting, there would be an increase in tree stock locally, albeit not of the same height and majority and off-site, resulting in an overall **minor beneficial** effect on tree stock at this stage.
- 2.6.31 At this stage, no additional mitigation measures are proposed over and above those described above.

Movement Corridors and Public Rights of Way

- 2.6.32 There is no publicly accessible movement corridors and Public Rights of Way within the Site. However, there will be a small portion of highway improvement work on Kidmore End Road leading into the Site. There will be potential traffic control or diversion during the construction stage, but the highway improvement work will emerge to and form part of the permanent infrastructure.
- 2.6.33 There might be potential construction activities adjacent to the Site also associated with implementation of the new Site entrance.
- 2.6.34 The value of this receptor is judged to be **low**. The susceptibility of change is **low**; therefore, the sensitivity is considered to be **low to negligible**; the magnitude of change is **minor** (highway improvement work outside the Site) considering that an alternative temporary vehicular route or controlled traffic in place. The effects are likely to be direct, temporary, short-term and to be **minor – negligible adverse significance** overall.
- 2.6.35** There is no additional mitigation measure at this stage.

Building Height and Form

- 2.6.36 During the construction stage, there will be demolition activities associated with the removal of the one to two storey height Club House and the adjacent two storey height Green Keeper accommodation. There is no other existing built form within the Site, however, there will be emerging built form throughout the Site during the construction phase, with predominantly two storey height and occasionally two and a half storey height emerging in some less visually sensitive locations.
- 2.6.37 The landscape value of this receptor is judged to be **low**; the susceptibility to change is **high**; therefore, the sensitivity of this receptor is **medium**; the magnitude of change is **major**. There will be a direct, temporary effect (which will see the commencement of a permanent change), short-term in nature. These effects will be **moderate – major beneficial significance** (for the building demolition) initially and **moderate – major adverse significance** (for the emerging built form, extending built form further north than currently on site). However, consider that the eastern portion of the Site has already been allocated for development in the Local Plan, effects arise from the extension of emerging built form further north are anticipated to be less significant if based on the future baseline.
- 2.6.38 There is no additional mitigation measure at this stage.

Effects on Site Level Landscape Character

- 2.6.39 The construction phase will see the sequential change across the Site from the Golf Course to that of a construction Site. In terms of the Landscape Opportunities and Management Guidelines identified in the baseline assessment, these relate to the management of tree stock, which at this stage relates to the retention and protection of the existing trees to be retained; and improving biodiversity across the Site, which will be delivered at the operational stage. The landscape value of this receptor area is judged to be **medium**; the susceptibility of change is **high**; therefore, the sensitivity of this receptor is **medium-high**. The magnitude of change is considered to be **major**.
- 2.6.40 Effects are predicted to be direct, temporary (but see the commencement of a permanent change) and short-term, as a result of the range of construction activities occurring to facilitate the emerging built form and the additional woodland tree planting in the wider

Golf Course area. The effect will be **major adverse** on the existing character of the Site and where the Landscape Opportunities and Management Guidelines are not wholly achieved at this stage. However, as the eastern portion of the Site has already been allocated for development in the Local Plan, the construction works arise from the proposals effectively only affect half of the Site. Therefore, the effects are anticipated to be less significance if based on the future baseline.

- 2.6.41 Overall, the construction stage itself will result in a change of land use, settlement pattern, tree and vegetation pattern.
- 2.6.42 There are no mitigation measures proposed for this element of the scheme.

Anticipated Visual Effects

- 2.6.43 Whilst a description of the character and amenity of the representative views is included in the baseline assessment, in terms of assessment of effects, where views of the Site are obscured these have been discounted from the impact assessment. Therefore, whilst elements such as cranes may be visible over intervening trees, effects are not considered to be significant. The following key presentative viewpoints are therefore not taken forward for consideration in the impact assessment: 7, 9, 11, 13, 14, 16, 20- 26 (local viewpoints) and 28- 33 (distant viewpoints).
- 2.6.44 The visual assessment considers the period from the initial site enabling works throughout construction. It also considers the potential for the implementation of advance tree planting in the wider Golf Course area to the north. The construction sequence of the Site is anticipated to start from the eastern entrance on Kidmore End Road moving westward.

Residential Receptors (Including views from the Listed Buildings)

- 2.6.45 Views of the Site are predominantly limited to the immediate residential receptors, namely dwellings from Kidmore End Road, Chalgrove Way, Brooklyn Drive, Eric Avenue, Lyefield Court and Gorselands. These views are often open views of part of the Site where there are views of the boundary vegetation and internal tree structure during winter seasons, visible as part of the residential context and where views are often and filtered through the Site boundary vegetation. In the summer seasons, views of the internal Site are often restricted due to the mature trees across the Site. The range of Site activities, including the site enabling work to establish the site compound; the implementation of site hoardings; stripping of topsoil; and the progression of the enabling works and construction activities will be readily discerned from this collection of receptors beyond the boundary vegetation to be retained.
- 2.6.46 The character and amenity of these close proximity views would change from that across the predominantly manicured golf course to that of a construction site with the associated vehicle movements, cranes and activities; often filtered through the retained boundary vegetation and working around the internal mature tree structure to be retained.
- 2.6.47 Views of the Site construction activities from the rest of the residential receptors are predicted to be predominantly obscured due to the intervening vegetation and built form. Cranes may be evident as construction proceed over and between the intervening built form and vegetation.

- 2.6.48 Solid construction hoardings are proposed around the Site at this stage to minimise the visual effects associated with the construction activities, contractor's compound and associated movements and whilst limiting views of the activities for the local receptors, will essentially close off the current views at the lower level.
- 2.6.49 The value of the view experienced by the residential receptors is judged to be **low** (for the immediate residential receptors, as the views from the Listed Buildings are truncated, hence not accounted for), the susceptibility to change is **high** (due to the close proximity and local views); therefore, the sensitivity of this group is **medium**. The magnitude of change is considered to be **major** (to those receptors in the close proximity and local to the Site, in the worst-case scenario) and **minor** (to those within the local contexts). The amenity and character of the views over the greens of the golf course will change to include the initial site set up work and then the construction activities seeing the proposed built form emerge. These activities will be perceived in the close proximity views identified, where the Site forms a significant part of the view and includes views from front or rear elevations.
- 2.6.50 Effects arising throughout the construction phase overall are likely to be direct, temporary (albeit that this will see the commencement of a permanent change) and short-term. The effects will be **major – moderate adverse significance** for the immediate local receptors with views across the Site and **moderate – minor adverse significance** for those in the wider local area where views of the Site are perceived as a small part of the local townscape.

Views from Receptors from Community Facilities and Schools

- 2.6.51 Refer to local representative viewpoint 15.
- 2.6.52 In the winter seasons, open views of part of the site enabling works, the range of construction activities, including establishing the site compound, and the implementation of site hoarding, together with the emerging built form will be discerned from those receptors working and visiting in the Emmer Green Youth and Community Centre and Emmer Green Primary School. However, during the summer seasons, views looking into the Site are limited due to the mature Site boundary treebelt, albeit the tall construction elements, such as the cranes, are anticipated to continue to be discernible.
- 2.6.53 The views of the construction activities of the Site from St Barnabas Church are expected to be truncated by the adjacent built form.
- 2.6.54 The value of the view experienced by this group is judged to be **low**; the susceptibility to change is **medium** (due to the close proximity and intervening nature of the retained vegetation); therefore, the sensitivity of this group ranges between **medium - low**. The magnitude of change is considered to be **major - moderate**. Effects arising throughout the construction phase overall are likely to be direct, temporary and short term. The effects are predicted to range from **moderate – minor adverse significance**.
- 2.6.55 The proposed mitigation measures are the implementation of solid construction hoardings around the Site which would minimise the visual effects associated with the construction activities. It would minimise views of the operations occurring at ground level and including, to a degree, the movement of construction vehicles. For the receptors identified in this group, namely Emmer Green Youth and Community Centre and Emmer Green Primary School, the mitigation measures whilst reducing the visibility of the construction

operations, the construction works would still be perceived by these receptors with the hoardings in place.

Views from Transient Receptors Using Road Corridors

- 2.6.56 Refer to representative viewpoint 5, 5a, 6, 8, 10, 14- 21.
- 2.6.57 The most significant effects will occur on those range of receptors travelling along Kidmore End Road and Chalgrove Way approaching Kidmore End Road. The site enabling works (including the demolition of the club house and Green Keepers accommodation, together with the removal of the car park), the range of construction activities, the movement of vehicles, including establishing the site compound, and the implementation of the site hoarding, alongside the emerging built form will be discerned over the retained boundary vegetation. The construction activities will be temporary and will see the emerging built form forming part of the characteristic residential elevation along Kidmore End Road. The views are transient and often rapidly change due to the intervening built form and the layers of vegetation associated within and beyond the Site.
- 2.6.58 Views from the road corridors to the west (Brooklyn Drive, Eric Avenue and Gorselands) and the south (approaching Kidmore End Road from Peppard Road and Grove Road) would still comprise the boundary vegetation and tree canopies. However, the temporary construction element such as cranes, are likely to be discernible in these views, but forming a small element to the view in between, or rising above, the intervening built form and the Site boundary vegetation. Similarly, the emerging built form will form part of the construction views and filtering through the boundary vegetation.
- 2.6.59 The work associated with the site enabling works and the construction activities are not predicted to be readily evident by the transient receptors with distant views of the Site due to the undulating landform and the layers of vegetation. Throughout the lifespan of the construction, elements such as cranes are likely to be visible as a small part of the wider panorama of Emmer Green settlement.
- 2.6.60 The value of the view experienced by this group of receptors is judged to be **low**; the susceptibility to change **low**; and the sensitivity of this group of receptors therefore is also **low**. The magnitude of change is considered to be range between **moderate** (from Kidmore End Road) to **minor** (The residential roads to the immediate south and west). The character and amenity of the view will change to that initially associated with the site enabling works; a construction site with its associated activities and the emergence of a new built form from east to west but forming part of the residential settlement in Emmer Green. These changes would be perceived in the range of local views only. The most significant effects will occur on those transient receptors from Kidmore End Road and Chalgrove Road approaching Kidmore End Road. The effect is predicted to be direct, temporary (albeit seeing the commencement of a permanent change), short term and of **moderate to minor adverse** significance.
- 2.6.61 The proposed mitigation measures are the implementation of solid construction hoardings around the Site at this stage which would minimise the visual effects associated with the construction activities, in particular views from Kidmore End Road. It would minimise views of the operations occurring at ground level and including, to a degree, the construction vehicles.

Views from Transient Receptor Using Public Rights of Way

- 2.6.62 Views of the construction phase and associated operations are predicted to be predominantly obscured from the adjacent Public Rights of Way network, i.e. Sustran Cycle Route 5 adjacent to the north-western tip of the Site. Refer to viewpoint 21- 26 (local) and 30, 31 and 32 (distant).
- 2.6.63 However, the tall construction element such as cranes, are likely to be discernible in some of these views (in particularly during the winter seasons), but forming a small element to the view in between, or rising above, the intervening built form and the Site boundary vegetation.
- 2.6.64 Throughout the lifespan of the construction, elements such as cranes within the Site are likely to be visible as a small part of the wider panorama of the well treed landscape.
- 2.6.65 The value of the views experienced by this group of receptors is judged to be **low**; the susceptibility to change is ranged from **low** (due to the intervening vegetation); therefore, the sensitivity of this group of receptors is **low**. The magnitude of change is considered to be **minor** (due to that there is no Public Rights of Ways abutting the immediate Site environs or passing through the Site, views of the construction activities are limited during the winter seasons, and mostly truncated during the summer seasons). The character and amenity of the view will change to potentially include taller construction elements rising above the Site boundary vegetation. However, these operations will be visible set within the existing landscape framework and the built form. Overall, the effects are likely to be direct, temporary, short-term and are judged to be at worst of **minor adverse significance**.
- 2.6.66 The introduction of solid hoardings will not significantly change the significance of effect on this group of receptors. There are no additional mitigation measures proposed at this stage.

Views from Receptors Within Public Open Space

- 2.6.67 Refer to representative viewpoint 3 and 12.
- 2.6.68 The site enabling works on ground level are predicted to be truncated by the existing intervening built form, while the temporary construction elements, such as the cranes, are predicted to be discerned through the intermittent boundary vegetation of along the south-west Site perimeters and, or rising above the tree canopies, in views from the Emmer Green Playing Fields to the south of the Site at Kidmore End Road and Grove Road.
- 2.6.69 Similarly, construction work at ground level are predicted to be truncated in views from the Grove Road Allotments. However, as in most of the construction activities, taller construction elements, such as the cranes are anticipated to be discerned filtering through the boundary vegetation or rising above the tree canopies.
- 2.6.70 The value of the views experienced by this group of receptors is judged to be **medium**; the susceptibility to the proposed change is **medium**; therefore, the sensitivity is **medium**. The magnitude of change is considered to be **minor** (due to the visibility). Effects will be direct, temporary, short-term and of **moderate - minor adverse significance**.
- 2.6.71 The introduction of solid hoardings will not significantly change the significance of effect on this group of receptors.

Views from Transient Receptor within Designated Landscapes

2.6.72 Views of the construction activities are predicated to be truncated in views from Caversham Park (Registered Park and Garden) to the south-east and from the southern edge of the Chilterns AONB to the north. Effects are therefore predicted to be **neutral**.

Operational Phase

Embedded Mitigation Measures

2.6.73 The mitigation measures have been embedded into the **Indicative Site Layout**, drawing no. 2127/PL.04 Rev L (**Figure 5.1 in ES Volume 2, Chapter 5: Proposed Development and Construction Overview**) and the **Compensatory Tree Planting Plan**, drawing no. D2743 L.101 (Refer to **Figure 19, Appendix A**). All of the measures described in section 2.5 are embedded within the scheme. The key measures are summarised as follows:

- The continued retention of the boundary trees, shrub and hedgerow planting which comprises the existing high-quality tree network (as set out under the construction phase).
- The associated green infrastructure (which allows the opportunities for planting 196no. new trees wholly within the public realm as shown on the Drawing L103 Tree Species Plan, and the compensatory woodland tree planting, comprising up to 1000 new native trees in the wider Golf Course and providing a landscape benefit in the local environs).
- Building heights of predominantly two storeys, with occasional two and a half storeys and three storeys in some locations.
- The provision of public open space throughout the Site, which allows the opportunity for play, park and gardens, natural and semi-natural green space and which delivers the Green Link, as required by Policies EN9 and EN12.
- The introduction of Sustainable Drainage System to the north-eastern, north-western edge and the centre of the Site, which can form part of the open space network. (Noted that SuDs are not counted towards the public open space quantum);
- Through the network of green infrastructure and the use of a native plant palette can provide opportunities to improve biodiversity interest across the Site, as identified in the Site level landscape character assessment.
- Creating a positive development interface with the landscape to the north. (Note the land to the north of the Site is privately owned, as such, no specific landscape mitigation measures were identified along this edge, other than individual tree planting along the northern Site boundary to provide a treed framework between the proposed built form and the golf course beyond).

Anticipated Landscape Effects

Contextual Landscape Elements

2.6.74 A description of the contextual landscape beyond the Site boundary is provided in the baseline assessment to explain how the Site sits in its landscape context. The baseline therefore describes the contextual topographic setting, land cover setting, woodland and vegetation pattern, public rights of way, open space, contextual settlement pattern,

building heights and urban grain, movement corridors, contextual skyline and historic and cultural landscape of the study area.

- 2.6.75 The operational stage will see the implementation of the proposed development parcels, open space and the tree planting within the Site, in character with the existing settlement pattern. The proposals are predominantly two storey dwellings, with two and a half storey to three storey dwellings in some locations of the Site.
- 2.6.76 The illustrative masterplan and the DAS show the location of the proposed new woodland planting to the north of the Site in the wider Golf Course area, linking with the existing Cucumber Wood Ancient Woodland, which provides a positive relationship between the proposed development and the existing wider landscape. This will alter the Woodland and Vegetation Pattern and the Land Cover. The assessment of effects relative to this have been set out at the construction stage and will remain as **minor beneficial** significance.
- 2.6.77 At the operational stage, will see the highway improvement of part of the Kidmore End Road to the immediate east of the Site to accommodate the new development. This change will alter the movement corridor in the study area. The landscape value of this receptor is judged to be **low**, the susceptibility is **low**; therefore the sensitivity is **low**. The magnitude of change is considered to be **minor**, the effects will be direct, permanent and long-term of **minor beneficial significance**.
- 2.6.78 With the completion of the built form on the Site, the setting to the contextual settlement pattern will change. However, the proposed development will form part of the characteristic Reading urban fringe.
- 2.6.79 The completion of the proposed development, including the advance mitigation planting to the north, will see a change to a small part of the contextual land use of the area, replacing part of the golf course with new tree planting.
- 2.6.80 The value of the contextual land cover, settlement pattern, woodland and vegetation pattern, movement corridor is judged to range between **high to low**. The susceptibility to the proposed change is **low**; therefore, the sensitivity of the receptor is **medium**. The magnitude of change is predicted to be **minor**, for the contextual land cover, woodland and vegetation pattern. The effects are likely to be indirect and direct, permanent, long-term and **minor beneficial** significance, which specifically relates to the delivery of new woodland planting. Effects on the Site level landscape receptors is set out in later sections.
- 2.6.81 With the exception as described above, there will be no change to the remaining landscape elements and features present beyond the Site in the wider area (namely topographic settings, movement corridors public rights of way, contextual skyline, building heights and urban grain and historic and cultural landscape of the study area). Effects on these contextual landscape elements will therefore be of **neutral** at this stage.
- 2.6.82 No additional mitigation measures are identified for these contextual receptors.

Effects on National Level Landscape Character

- 2.6.83 At the national level, the Site lies wholly within the National Landscape Character Area 110 - Chilterns. The value of this receptor area as a whole is judged to be **medium** overall; the susceptibility to the proposed change is **low**; therefore, the sensitivity of this

receptor is **low - negligible**. The magnitude of change is considered to be **negligible**, as the operational stage relates to a very small parcel of the LCA and readily influenced by the existing settlement to the east, south and west.

- 2.6.84 The effect from operational stage is likely to be direct, permanent and long-term. The effect is predicted to be of **negligible significance** on the wider character area overall. The operational stage will see the change from a private amenity green to that comprising the predominantly two storey height built form, new public open space and additional woodland and trees to the north of the Site in the wider Golf Course area.
- 2.6.85 The Statements of Environmental Objectives from the National level pertinent to the Site are set out in the baseline assessment. The following mitigation measures have been considered throughout the design process to address these strategies as follows:
- SEO1: Woodland and hedgerow management in national level - management and protection measures to the existing boundary hedgerow, the existing and proposed trees are set out in Arboricultural and Planning Integration Report, in particular the veteran trees; and
 - SEO4: Enhancing local distinctiveness and green infrastructure – the broad green infrastructure, i.e. the majority of the trees and hedgerow throughout the Site and Site perimeters are retained in the development. In the operational stage, will see the implementation of new trees and vegetation to enhance the green infrastructure.
- 2.6.86 No additional mitigation measures identified at this stage.

Effects on County Level Landscape Character

- 2.6.87 As described in the landscape character chapter section earlier, at the County Level, the Site sits within the Neighbouring Local Authority (Reading) and hence was not included in the assessment.
- 2.6.88 The landscape to the north of the study area lies within the Landscape Character Area 10 – Chilterns Plateau with Valleys in South Oxfordshire. The recommendations can be taken forward into the Site considering their inter-relationship. Effects are predicted to be indirect, permanent and long-term, but ultimately will not alter the relationship of built form up to the edges of this character area. Effects are therefore predicted to be **negligible** as a result of the proposed development; and considering the compensatory woodland tree planting in the wider Golf Course, effects will be direct, permanent, long term and of **minor beneficial significance**.
- 2.6.89 During the operational stage, the following mitigation measures have been considered throughout the design process to address these strategies as follows:
- Hedgerow maintenance: The Site boundary hedgerow will be retained and managed throughout the lifespan of the development, the measures are set out in the Arboricultural and Planning Integration Report;
 - Minimising visual impact of development on town fringes through vegetation: Views of the Site from the surrounding countryside are limited due to the combination of intervening topography and vegetation. During the latter stages of construction, further boundary planting will be implemented to supplement the existing retained vegetation and to filter views for those localised receptors.

- Promoting small scale planting: this includes the completion of the tree planting across the Site, and the establishment of the compensatory native tree planting to the north of the Site in the form of a new woodland, west of Cucumber Wood, in the wider Golf Course area. No additional mitigation measures identified at this stage.

Effects on Local Level Landscape Character

- 2.6.90 The value of the local landscape character areas around the Site are judged to be **medium to low**; the susceptibility to the proposed change is **medium**, where the Site forms part of the setting to these character areas; therefore, the sensitivity of these receptors is **medium to low**. The magnitude of change is considered to be **minor**, where the operational stage will not significantly alter the landscape elements, key characteristic features of these character areas, but will alter the background setting from one of green space to that of residential built form, set within a treed landscape structure and open space.
- 2.6.91 Effects are predicted to be in-direct, permanent and long-term. The effect will be **minor adverse** on the setting to the surrounding character areas and will continue to be **minor beneficial** significance on the wider golf course area considering the implementation of the new woodland.

Night-time Character and Lighting

- 2.6.92 It is anticipated that the proposed development parcels would be lit and that these will alter the night-time character of the Site.
- 2.6.93 The introduction of permanent lighting associated with the proposed development is likely to increase the level of light spill and glare currently presented from the residential areas to the north-east, east and the west.
- 2.6.94 Whilst the details of the proposed lighting are subject to detailed design, at this outline stage, it is considered that the lighting will be designed in line with relevant best practice guidance, including the Institute of Lighting Professional (ILP) 'Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light' and ICE (1997) 126: Guidelines for minimising Sky Glow, therefore lighting has to be minimised and kept at a low level as much as possible, without affecting safety and security.
- 2.6.95 The main sources of lighting are considered to be related to:
- Residential built environment and the Medical Centre, often equipped with amenity lighting to the dwellings and external security lighting along driveways,
 - Public access, often equipped with amenity lighting, such as bollard or solar studs along footpaths, street columns along main access road to meet the Highway Standards;
 - Public Open Space, required lighting installations to reduce the fear of crime and ensure health and safety of the use of the space; these will be designed accordance to BS5489-1:2013.
- 2.6.96 The value of the night-time character is considered to be **medium**, due to the pre-exist influence from the residential edge to the east, south and west, Kidmore End Road and other residential roads. The susceptibility to change is **major**. Therefore, the sensitivity of

this receptor is **medium- high**. The magnitude of change is considered to be **major**; there is likely a direct, permanent, long-term localised effect of **major adverse significance**.

- 2.6.97 Additional mitigation measure is proposed to that continuation of monitoring and maintenance of the lighting to ensure that lighting intensity of the Site does not increase.

Site Landscape Elements

- 2.6.98 The following paragraphs describe the effects on each individual landscape elements which contribute to the character of the Site, comprising Site topography, land cover, tree and vegetation, movement corridors, building height and form, landscape features.

Site Topography

- 2.6.99 Effects on the topography of the Site will have commenced at the construction phase and will see the infilling of areas that have received the underground sustainable drainage system, with levels feathered into existing landform and the excavation for the attenuation basins and swales formation in the north-east, north-west corner and the centre of the Site. No further works are proposed at the operational phase. The broad Site topographic profile will therefore remain unchanged at the operational stage, i.e. remain broadly flat at approximately 84m AOD and gently slopes down to the northern section of the Site to approximately 74m AOD.
- 2.6.100 As no further changes are predicted at the operational phase, effects on topography are predicted to be **negligible**.
- 2.6.101 No additional mitigation measures are identified for this receptor.

Site Land Cover

- 2.6.102 At the end of the construction stage, the planting in the wider Golf Course area and within the Site shown in the **Indicative Site Layout** and DAS will have been implemented as advanced planting. The proposed planting in the Green Link creates a connection between the Site and the surrounding landscape will have been implemented at the operational phase. The proposals also seek to reinforce and bolster the existing hedgerows along the Site boundaries and create green buffer to minimise the inter-visibility between the Site and the immediate dwellings through the introduction of a mixture of evergreen and deciduous species.
- 2.6.103 In terms of the **Indicative Site Layout**, approximately 3.89ha of open space are proposed within the Site, including 0.16ha equipped play in the centre of the development; with the remainder forming parks and gardens, amenity green space and natural and semi-natural green space (in accordance with policy). A further 0.50ha for Sustainable Urban Drainage System is proposed to the north, north-west and the centre of the Site, which is not counted for public open space provision. In addition, the residential layout includes incidental green space which can accommodate planting within the public realms.
- 2.6.104 In the operational stage, the existing Club House, the neighbouring building (containing the Green Keeper's accommodation, store and simulator) together with the Greens will be replaced with open space and built form.
- 2.6.105 The value of this landscape receptor is considered to be **medium**; the susceptibility to change is **high**; therefore, the sensitivity of this receptor is of **medium to high**. The

magnitude of change is **major** across the whole Site. There is likely to be direct, permanent, long-term and the effect will be of **moderate adverse significance** considering the loss of private amenity space to new homes and infrastructure, and **moderate beneficial significance** considering the loss of non-publicly accessible green fields to new publicly accessible green space and tree planting and the delivery of the green links through the Site.

Tree Vegetation Pattern and Site Landscape Features

- 2.6.106 In the operational stage, will see in addition to the proposed woodland tree planting to the north of the Site (implemented at the construction phase in the wider Golf Course area) and the implementation of individual trees within the proposed public realm across the Site.
- 2.6.107 The landscape section of the DAS includes an outline of the future maintenance and management regimes to ensure the long-term establishment of the new planting. Further mitigation measures relate to the preparation of a Site Wide Landscape and Ecological Management Plan as part of any Reserved Matters Application, to ensure that this vision is delivered, and that the existing vegetation can be positively managed.
- 2.6.108 The value of this landscape receptor is considered to be **high**; the susceptibility to the proposed change is **high**; therefore, the sensitivity of this receptor is of **high**. The magnitude of change is **moderate** on tree proposals. There is likely to be direct, permanent and albeit long-term effects on the vegetation pattern across the Site. The most significant effects will have occurred at the construction phase with the removal of the existing tree stock, albeit the majority of which is categorised as C and some U grade. The operation phase will see the completion of tree planting, whilst not providing a replacement in size and stature initially, effects on site will over time reduce to **neutral**, maintaining the overall level of tree stock within Site and overall will result in a **moderate beneficial significance**, considering the 1.75 to 1 replacement ratio and the off-site proposed woodland planting.
- 2.6.109 No additional mitigation measures are identified for this receptor.

Movement Corridors and Public Rights of Way

- 2.6.110 At the operational stage, the proposals will see the improvement of part of Kidmore End Road leading into the Site. The Site will be accessible by the public through network of roads and informal paths within the public realm.
- 2.6.111 The value of this receptor is **low**; the susceptibility of change is **low**; therefore the sensitivity if the receptor is **low**. The magnitude of change is considered to be **moderate**. There will be direct, permanent, long-term and **moderate beneficial significance** effects on the network of movement corridors present across the Site and introduction of public access through the Site.
- 2.6.112 No additional mitigation measures are identified for this receptor.

Building Height and Form

- 2.6.113 The operational stage will see the replacement of the existing built form with a new Site entrance and new domestic scale built form.
- 2.6.114 The landscape value of this receptor is judged to be **low**; the susceptibility to change is **high**; therefore, the sensitivity of this receptor is **medium**; the magnitude of change is **major**. There will be a direct, permanent and long-term effect due to the replacement of built form. In their place, there will be new built form (predominantly two storey height and domestic in scale and mass). Built form will extend further north and west, comprising predominantly two storey, but with feature three storey buildings, reflecting the scale and mass of built form in the surrounding townscape. The effect of this change on Site will be of **moderate – major beneficial significance**. This outcome is due to the fact of direct resource replacement, but also that new built form will reflect the scale and mass of the surrounding townscape.

Effects on Site Level Landscape Character

- 2.6.115 The operational stage will see the wholesale replacement of the predominantly manicured golf course character with high-quality and locally characteristic residential built form and open space set around the retained network of trees. In terms of the Landscape Opportunities and Management Guidelines identified in the baseline assessment, these identify the management of tree stock, which relates to both the existing trees and the proposed replacement trees; and improving biodiversity across the Site through the creation of a green infrastructure network and the use of native planting. The landscape value of this receptor area is judged to be **medium**; the susceptibility of change is **high**; therefore, the sensitivity of this receptor is **medium-high**. The magnitude of change is considered to be **major**.
- 2.6.116 Effects are predicted to be direct, permanent and long-term, as a result of the range of changes occurring from the development, the effect will be **moderate adverse** significance (relative to the loss of some of the private amenity green space to new homes and highway infrastructure) and **moderate beneficial** significance (relative to the change of the private amenity green space to publicly accessible open space which can accommodate the replacement planting, thus maintaining the linear tree characteristics of the Site).
- 2.6.117 There are no mitigation measures proposed for this element of the scheme.

Anticipated Visual Effects

- 2.6.118 Whilst a description of the character and amenity of the representative views is included in the baseline assessment, in terms of assessment of effects, where views of the Site are generally obscured, these have been discounted from the impact assessment. Therefore, the following key presentative viewpoints are not taken forward for consideration in the impact assessment: 7, 9, 11, 13, 14, 16, 20- 26 (local viewpoints) and 28-, 33 (distant viewpoints).
- 2.6.119 The dwellings on Site are predominantly two storeys houses with pitched roofs, with occasionally two and a half - three storey dwellings located in some areas, predominantly in the eastern section of the Site.
- 2.6.120 No additional mitigation measures are identified for the visual receptors.

Residential Receptors (Including views from the Listed Buildings)

- 2.6.121 For those dwellings that abutting or fronting the Site at Kidmore End Road, Chalgrove Way, Brooklyn Drive, Eric Avenue and Lyefield Court, there would ultimately be a significant change to the character and amenity of the view from the predominantly manicured golf course greens and mature trees to that of a new built form (increasing the height of existing built form in the eastern edge of the Site) associated open space and both mature and new trees, filtering through the existing tree framework. For those receptors to the east off Brooklyn Drive, the proposed dwellings will be set back from the Site boundary by green space and new trees. The proposed internal tree planting will become evident as it matures and set within the areas of public open space network, filtering views of the proposed built form.
- 2.6.122 The value of the view experienced by the residential receptors is judged to be **low** (for the immediate residential receptors, as the views from the Listed Buildings are truncated, hence not accounted for), the susceptibility to change is **high** (due to the close proximity and local views and where the character and amenity of the view is over a recreational green space); therefore, the sensitivity of this group is **medium**. The magnitude of change is considered to range from **major** (to those receptors in the close proximity) and **minor** (local to the Site). The amenity and character of the views will change to include the proposed built form and the open space.
- 2.6.123 Effects arising throughout the operational phase overall are likely to be direct, permanent and long-term. The effects will be **moderate - major adverse significance** (relative to the proposed built form). These effects will occur to those receptors immediately adjacent to the Site. Effects on the visual receptors in the wider local area will diminish to **moderate – minor adverse significance**, where the Site forms a small part of the wider townscape. These effects will also moderate over time as the replacement planting become established and the buildings mature.
- 2.6.124 It is predicted that there will be no change to the character and amenity of the view from the visual receptors within the Listed Buildings.

Views from Receptors at Community Facilities and Schools

- 2.6.125 Refer to local representative viewpoint 15.
- 2.6.126 Open views of part of the built form and the proposed vegetation will be discerned from those receptors working and visiting in the Emmer Green Youth and Community Centre and Emmer Green Primary School. However, the development will be seen as part of the urban fringe of Reading settlement, set within the retained treed framework.
- 2.6.127 The views of the Site built form from St Barnabas Church are expected to be truncated by the intervening built form associated with the school.
- 2.6.128 The value of the view experienced by this group is judged to be **low**; the susceptibility to change is **medium** (due to the close proximity and local views); therefore, the sensitivity of this group ranged between **medium - low**. The magnitude of change is considered to be **moderate** where the Site forms part of the backdrop to the area. Effects arising throughout the operational phase overall are likely to be direct, permanent and long term and of **moderate adverse significance**.

Views from Transient Receptors Using Road Corridors

- 2.6.129 Refer to representative viewpoint 5, 5a, 6, 8, 10, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20 and 21.
- 2.6.130 The nature of the views from this collection of receptors is transient and where views often rapidly change due to the nature of the intervening vegetation to the north and built form present to the east, south and the west of the Site.
- 2.6.131 The most significant change to the character and amenity of the view will be for those receptors travelling from Kidmore End Road. Views of the proposed dwellings are expected to become more apparent on approaching the Site, in particular, during the winter seasons, set in the context of the retained boundary vegetation and the residential nature of the existing street scene. However, the proposed additional planting to the Site alongside the existing retained vegetation will, in time, filter these views of the proposed development from this route.
- 2.6.132 Views from the road corridors to the west (Brooklyn Drive, Eric Avenue and Gorselands) and the south (approaching Kidmore End Road from Peppard Road and Grove Road) will still predominantly comprise of the Site boundary vegetation filtering through the gaps of the existing built form. However, in some locations, it is predicated that the new built form will be discerned but filtered through the intermittent vegetation or between gaps in the residential built form.
- 2.6.133 The character and amenity of the transient receptors from the rest of the local road network will not alter significantly, due to the intervening built form and the layers of intervening vegetation along the Site boundaries and beyond.
- 2.6.134 The value of the views experienced by this group of receptors is judged to be **low**. The susceptibility to change is **low**; therefore, the sensitivity is **low**. The magnitude of change is considered to be **moderate** (due to the close proximity of the views). There is likely to be direct, permanent, long-term and are judged to be **moderate adverse significance** and **minor adverse significance** over time as the additional planting between the built form and Kidmore End Road matures.

Transient Receptor Using Public Rights of Way

- 2.6.135 Views of the proposed Site built forms are predicted to be truncated from the adjacent Public Rights of Way. Refer to viewpoint 21- 26 (local) and 30, 31 and 32 (distant).
- 2.6.136 The value of the views experienced by this group of receptors is judged to be **low**. The susceptibility to change is **low** (due to the low inter-visibility); therefore, the sensitivity is considered to be **low**. The magnitude of change is considered to be **negligible** (due to that most of the development are anticipated to be truncated by the existing vegetation pattern), therefore, the effects are predicted to be **negligible** overall.

Views from Receptors Using Public Open Space

- 2.6.137 Refer to representative Viewpoint 3 and 12.
- 2.6.138 In operational stage, the proposed built form will be discerned in the Emmer Green Play Field, from the gaps in between the built forms and filtering through the retained Site boundary vegetation. The built form will be in character with the surrounding residential context, which will be predominantly two storey height with pitched roofs. The proposed

built form is anticipated to be less discernible during the summer seasons due to the mature Site boundary vegetation.

- 2.6.139 Views from Grove Road Allotments are predicated to be truncated by the intervening vegetation and the adjacent built form.
- 2.6.140 The value of the views experienced by this group of receptors is judged to be **medium**; the susceptibility to the proposed change is **low**; therefore, the sensitivity is **medium-low**. The magnitude of change is considered to be **minor** (due to the inter-visibility). Effects will be direct, permanent, long-term and of **minor adverse significance** at worst, considering the existing residential context to these areas of open space.

Views from Receptors within Designated Landscapes

- 2.6.141 Views of the scheme proposals at the operational stage are predicated to be truncated in views from Caversham Park (Registered Park and Garden) and from the southern edge of the Chilterns AONB (refer to viewpoints 28 and 29). Effects therefore on the receptors in these landscapes is predicted to be **neutral**.

2.7 Scope for Additional Mitigation Measures

- 2.7.1 Primary mitigation measures have been included and are embedded into the scheme proposals. These are set out in para 2.6 Embedded Mitigation Measures. Additional mitigations measures are set out in the section below.

Potential Additional Mitigation Measures in Construction Stage

- 2.7.2 Secondary mitigation measures are to be secured through planning conditions have been identified throughout the assessment process and typically include the following:
- Type of security hoarding around the Site, with the detail of whether these are coloured or decorative to be agreed through planning application.
 - The detail of any lighting across the Site.
 - Careful consideration should be given to the control of temporary artificial lighting around working areas within the proposed development and limited construction lighting and / or perimeter security lighting, particularly in the vicinity of existing properties and Cucumber Wood Ancient Woodland.
 - Advanced notice / prior notifications of work that would require construction lighting in close proximity to the identified receptors.
 - Establishment of protocols / controls for internal light spill from temporary construction compounds.
 - The Site will be registered with the Considerate Constructors Scheme.

Potential Additional Mitigation Measures in Operational Stage

- 2.7.3 As this outline planning application stage, all landscape and visual mitigation measures have been incorporated into the design process of the **Indicative Site Layout, Parameter Plans** and DAS. However, other measures can be additional and implemented during the Reserved Matters Application process, these include:

- The evolution of a high-quality residential scheme that reflect local characteristics;
- All exterior elevational treatments to building facades, the use of materials, hard surface landscape materials and street furniture should be aligned with the local characteristics colour tone; and where the building colour palette is to be muted within the surrounding contextual landscape and settlement edge;
- Maintenance guidelines relative to the areas of public open space post completion / during operation are set out in the DAS and include the general operations on Site; the semi-mature / advanced nursery stocks and standard tree establishment; and shrub / grass maintenance; and
- The potential for any advanced planting is to be agreed through the Reserved Matters Application process.
- The careful specification of lighting to be as low as possible, inward facing, directional, minimise upward light spill and backwards glare. Care will be taken to minimise light spill and glare from any lighting installations by ensuring the correct luminaire is selected and installed correctly, in line with good practice guidelines of signage and lighting. All temporary and permanent lighting installations will be designed to best practice guidance.

Likely Effectiveness of Additional Mitigation Measures

- 2.7.4 With the additional mitigation measures in place during the Reserved Matters Application process, the key change will occur on the range of visual receptors.
- 2.7.5 Residential receptors in both the local, immediately surrounding context will see new homes. Whilst this will represent a transition from a recreational landscape character (a private golf course) to a domestic one, the homes set into the landscape will in themselves be of high quality and characteristic of the area and will be set within the retained mature tree structure.
- 2.7.6 For transient road receptors, due to the nature of these views, the additional mitigation measures are likely to reduce the impact of the Proposed Development as it will be muted in a way that is consistent with the surrounding context. The proposed built form will be viewed as part of the residential elevation in Emmer Green, which is high quality and of local character, and filtering through the matured vegetation.
- 2.7.7 The additional mitigation measures will have minimal effects on receptors using the community facilities and schools, namely Emmer Green Youth and Community Centre and Emmer Green Primary School due to the limited intervisibility. The Proposed Development will be viewed as part of the Emmer Green settlement, which will be filtered through the retained Site boundary vegetation.

2.8 Residual Effects

- 2.8.1 With the additional mitigation measures in place, the following residual effects would occur:

Construction Effects

- 2.8.2 The residual effects for contextual landscape elements (contextual topographic setting, land cover setting, woodland and vegetation pattern, public rights of way, open space, settlement pattern, building heights and urban grain, movement corridors, contextual skyline and historic and cultural landscape of the study area) are predicted to remain unchanged taking into account of the additional measures.
- 2.8.3 In terms of the national level landscape character, the effects will remain as **negligible**.
- 2.8.4 For county level landscape character, the additional mitigation measures will have limited effects on the impact, therefore the effects will remain **minor adverse** associated with the construction works and **minor beneficial significance** considering the implementation of the new woodland planting to the north of the Site.
- 2.8.5 Effects on the surrounding local landscape character areas are predicted to remain as **minor adverse significance**, but **minor beneficial significance** on the wider golf course area considering the implementation of new woodland to the north of the Site.
- 2.8.6 Effects on night-time character are predicted to remain as **moderate adverse** significance.
- 2.8.7 Similarly, the effects on Site level landscape character will remain as **major adverse**
- 2.8.8 The changes to effects on Site level elements, including Site topography, land cover, tree and vegetation and Site landscape feature, movement corridors and Public Rights of Way, building height and form, are considered to be minimum, therefore, the significance would remain unchanged.
- 2.8.9 Although the residual effects for the landscape receptors of construction stage are likely to remain as assessed earlier, the additional measures would improve effects on some of the visual local receptors, such as the residential, receptors using the community facilities and schools, transient users and receptors using the public open space in local level. However, these effects are minimum, hence the significance would remain unchanged.

Operational Effects

Contextual Elements

- 2.8.10 Similar to construction phase, the contextual elements (contextual topographic setting, land cover setting, woodland and vegetation pattern, public rights of way, open space, settlement pattern, building heights and urban grain, movement corridors, contextual skyline and historic and cultural landscape of the study area) are predicted to remain unchanged in the operational stage.

National and County Level Landscape Character

- 2.8.11 The additional mitigation measures will have minimal effects on the National level landscape character, therefore the effects will remain **negligible**. For the county level, with the additional mitigation measure in place, i.e. characteristic built form and materials palette, the introduction of open space in the previously not publicly accessible etc, the proposed development through these good design principles, however, effects will remain of **minor beneficial significance** as a whole.

Local Level Landscape Character

- 2.8.9 The effects of the embedded mitigation measures will not alter the significance of effects at the operational stage. Effects on the setting to the surrounding landscape character areas is therefore predicted to remain as **minor adverse**. Effects on the character of the wider golf course are predicted to remain as **minor beneficial**.

Night-time Character

- 2.8.9 The character of the Site will change from that of a primarily dark landscape, influenced by the surrounding lit settlement edges, to that of a lit residential environment. Effects are therefore predicted to remain as **major adverse**.

Site Landscape Elements and Character

- 2.8.12 The additional mitigation measures will have limited effects on the Site landscape elements, i.e. Site topography, land cover, tree and vegetation and Site landscape feature, movement corridors and Public Rights of Way and building height and form, therefore, the effects will remain unchanged.

Residential Receptors (Including views from the Listed Buildings)

- 2.8.13 With the mitigation measures in place, the proposed built form will form part of the Emmer Green residential settlement and align with the characteristics of the local built form. Therefore, the effects are predicted to reduce to **moderate adverse significance** relative to the immediate contexts, whereby the new built form, set amongst (and in placed beyond) the retained tree structure, whilst of high quality, will in places, replace views of members-only recreational green space, and **minor adverse significance** in the wider contexts.

Views from Receptors from Community Facilities and Schools

- 2.8.14 Similarly, due to the close proximity of the Emmer Green Youth & Community Centre and the Emmer Green Primary School, the additional mitigation measure will provide the

opportunities for the effects to be reduced from **moderate** to **minor adverse significance**.

Views from Transient Receptors Using Road Corridors

2.8.15 The additional mitigation measures would enable the Site to form as part of the residential elevation along the key road corridors. The design will be muted with the surrounding built form. The effects are predicted to **moderate to minor adverse significance**.

Transient Receptor Using Public Rights of Way

2.8.16 Due to the locations and proximity of the Public Rights of Way, the additional mitigation measures will have limited effects in this group of receptors. Therefore, the effects will remain **negligible**.

Views from Receptors Using Public Open Spaces

2.8.17 Consider the mitigation measures, effects are considered to remain **minor adverse significance** at worst, considering the existing residential context to these areas of open spaces.

2.8.18 **Table 8** provides a summary of the residual effects resulting from the Proposed Development after effective implementation of the embedded and additional mitigation measures proposed above, **where effects are greater than minor**.

2.8.19 Furthermore, in the summer months, considering the seasonality of the vegetation, whilst effects would remain unaltered, the extent what would be visible would marginally reduce.

Table 8: Significant Residual Effects of the Site

Phase	Resource or Receptor affected	Effects / Significance	Residual Effect After Applying the Mitigation Measure
Construction	Night-time Character	Temporary Moderate adverse	Temporary Moderate adverse
	Site Land Cover	Temporary Major adverse	Temporary Major adverse
	Site Tree and Vegetation Pattern	Temporary Major – Moderate adverse	Temporary Major – Moderate adverse
	Landscape Features	Temporary– Moderate adverse	Temporary Moderate adverse

Table 8: Significant Residual Effects of the Site (Continued)

Phase	Resource or Receptor affected	Effects / Significance	Residual Effect After Applying the Mitigation Measure
	Building Height and Form	Temporary Moderate - major beneficial (demolition);	Temporary Moderate - major beneficial (demolition);
		Moderate - major adverse (emerging built form)	Moderate - major adverse (emerging built form)
	Site Landscape Character	Temporary Major adverse	Temporary Major adverse
	Views from Residential Receptors	Temporary Major - moderate adverse (immediate context);	Temporary Major - moderate adverse (immediate context);
		Temporary moderate – minor adverse (local area)	Temporary moderate – minor adverse (local area)
	Views from Community Facilities and Schools	Temporary Moderate – minor adverse	Temporary Moderate – minor adverse
	Views from Road Corridors	Temporary Moderate – minor adverse	Temporary Moderate – minor adverse
Views from Public Open Space	Temporary Moderate – minor adverse	Temporary Moderate – minor adverse	
Operation	Night-time Character	Major adverse	Major adverse
	Site Land Cover	Moderate adverse (loss of green amenity space)	Moderate adverse (loss of green amenity space)
		Moderate beneficial (changing the private amenity space to public open space and planting)	Moderate beneficial (changing the private amenity space to public open space and planting)
	Site Tree and Vegetation Pattern and Landscape Feature	Neutral – Moderate beneficial	Neutral – Moderate beneficial
	Movement Corridors and Public Rights of Way	Moderate beneficial	Moderate beneficial
	Building Height and Form	Major - moderate beneficial	Major - moderate beneficial
Site Landscape Character	Moderate adverse (loss of green amenity space)	Moderate adverse – Moderate beneficial	
	Moderate beneficial (provision of public open space and planting)		

	Views from Residential Receptors	Moderate – major adverse to the immediate setting Moderate – minor adverse to the wider setting	Moderate adverse to the immediate setting Minor adverse to the wider setting
	Views from Community Facilities and Schools	Moderate adverse	Minor adverse
	Views from Road Corridor	Moderate – minor adverse	Minor adverse

2.9 Cumulative Effects

2.9.1 The cumulative effects in this chapter have given considerations on the following schemes:

- SEE, Vastern Road, Reading: involving demolition of a number of structures on the site and the erection of a new residential scheme (up to 210 units), with a max height of 11 storeys (up to 36m above ground level) including a new north south pedestrian link, connecting Christchurch Bridge to Vastern Road towards the station as well as drainage infrastructure and landscaping.
- Broad Street Mall, Broad Street, Reading: Construction of three residential buildings (Use Class C3) ranging in height from 5 to 22 storeys above Broad Street Mall (Site E to provide up to 50 units, Site B to provide up to 134 Units and Site A to provide up to 164 units) and provision of a podium level amenity area. Construction of a 16 storey building on South Court comprising ground and first floor retail (Use Class A1/A2/A3) and residential over upper floors (Use Class C3, Site C to provide up to 98 units). Creation of ground floor retail units (Use Class A1/A3/A4) fronting Dusseldorf Way and ground floor retail (Use Class A1/A2/A3).
- 199-203 Henley Road and land to the Rear of 205-207 Henley Road, Caversham, Reading: Demolition of 199-203 Henley Road and erection of part four, part three and part two storey 82 units residential care home building (C2 use class) with associated external structures, access from Henley Road, car parking and landscaping.
- St Martin's Centre, Caversham, Reading: Erection of new and extended retail floorspace, new restaurants, new leisure floorspace, residential apartments, car parking works and all other associated landscaping, surfacing, public realm and shopfront improvements.

2.9.2 The cumulative schemes listed above are located to the south of the Site within the urban settlement of Reading and Caversham. There is no inter-visibility between the Proposed Development, the visual receptors identified in this assessment and the cumulative schemes. Therefore, the cumulative visual effects are not considered further.

Cumulative Landscape Effects During Construction Phase

2.9.3 Due to the unknown nature of some of the cumulative schemes construction phasing, the construction activities will broadly affect the contextual landscape elements, including contextual topographic setting, land cover setting, contextual settlement pattern, woodland and vegetation pattern, building height and urban grain, movement corridors, contextual skyline. The effects will be direct, temporary (but seeing the commencement of a permanent change), short and long-term effect of **minor adverse significance**.

2.9.4 It is predicted to be unlikely that impacts on other contextual elements identified in this assessment, including Public Rights of Way, open spaces in the study area, contextual skyline and historic and cultural landscape will occur from the cumulative schemes, therefore, the effects are predicted to be **neutral**.

2.9.5 Cumulative effects on national, county level landscape character will be **minor adverse significance** due to the construction activities. Impacts to the Site context and Local level

landscape will be limited due to the distance and no inter-visibility between the Proposed Development and the cumulative schemes, therefore, the effects will be **negligible**.

Night-time Character

- 2.9.6 There is likely to be a cumulative increase in lighting intensity during the construction phase as a result of all the schemes potentially. Effects on night-time character are predicted to be **minor adverse** overall, considering being located within the townscape environment.

Site Landscape Elements

- 2.9.7 Due to the distance of the cumulative sites, the effects to the Site landscape elements are predicted to be **neutral**.

Visual Receptors

- 2.9.8 Due to the combination of intervening topography, built form and vegetation, there will be no change to the character and amenity of the visual receptors included in this assessment relative to the Site. For those transient receptors, the range of construction operations occurring on each of the cumulative sites would be apparent as part of the in combination and serial vision experience of moving through the townscape.

Cumulative Landscape Effects During Operation Phase

Contextual Topographic Setting

- 2.9.9 The broad topography of the cumulative schemes remains the same given the nature of the developments. Effects on the contextual topography will be direct, permanent and long-term effect of **minor adverse significance**.

Contextual Land Cover Setting

- 2.9.10 The cumulative schemes involve construction activities to change the existing car parking, warehouse facilities and residential plots to high quality residential and retirement homes, within the urban area. Effects on the contextual land cover setting will be direct, permanent and long-term effect of **moderate beneficial significance**.

Woodland and Vegetation Pattern

- 2.9.11 The landscape proposals from the majority of the cumulative schemes comprise of tree planting and vegetation to create landscape frameworks to the existing industrial lands. The effects will be direct, permanent and **minor beneficial significance**.

Public Rights of Way

- 2.9.12 There is no alteration to the existing Public Rights of Way from the cumulative proposals. Therefore, the effects will be **neutral**.

Open Spaces in the Study Area

- 2.9.13 Similarly, there is no alteration to the existing open space network and no creation of new public open space from the cumulative proposals (some schemes are in early stage,

landscape proposal might be changed). Therefore, effects are predicted to be at worst **neutral**.

Contextual Settlement Pattern

- 2.9.14 The cumulative schemes will alter slightly the settlement pattern in Reading and Caversham (the density will increase). However, the areas are readily influenced by the urban development, the changes to the contextual settlement pattern will be limited. However, the effects on the settings of the contextual settlement pattern raised will be **minor beneficial significance**.

Building Heights and Urban Grain

- 2.9.15 The cumulative schemes proposed both high-rise residential blocks and domestic scale retirement homes, albeit within the dense urban areas. The effects will be direct, temporary, short-term and **moderate beneficial significance** (relative to changing the existing car parking, warehouse facilities and residential plots to high quality residential and retirement homes, within the urban area).

Contextual Skyline

- 2.9.16 Due to the tall building proposals from the cumulative schemes, the skyline will change. However, it is expected that will sit within the urban character of central Reading. The effects will be direct, permanent, long-term of **minor adverse significance**.

Historic and Cultural Landscape of the Study Area

- 2.9.17 The cumulative schemes will not alter the historic and cultural landscape of the study area, therefore, the effects will be **neutral**.

National, County and Local Level Landscape Character

- 2.9.18 National Character Area 110 – Chilterns: would remain consolidated to the same part of NCA 110 as the proposed development, and as such the effects to NCA 110 would remain **negligible**.
- 2.9.19 For the County level landscape character, the cumulative developments lie outside the West Berkshire landscape character assessment area. Therefore, effects would be **neutral**.
- 2.9.20 For the Local level landscape character as assessed for the Site, there would be no perceived change to the setting to these character areas. Effects therefore would be **neutral**.

Night-time Character

- 2.9.21 There is likely to be a cumulative increase in lighting intensity as a result of all the schemes potentially. Effects on night-time character are predicted to be **minor adverse** overall, considering being located within the townscape environment.

Site Landscape Elements

- 2.9.22 Due to the distance of the cumulative sites, the effects to the Site landscape elements are predicted to be **neutral**.

Visual Receptors

- 2.9.23 Due to the combination of intervening topography, built form and vegetation, there will be no change to the character and amenity of the visual receptors included in this assessment relative to the Site. However, for those transient receptors, the cumulative sites would be apparent as part of the in-combination and serial vision experience of moving through the varied built form of Readings townscape.

2.10 Summary and Conclusions

- 2.10.1 The landscape and visual impact assessment have been prepared in accordance with the LVIA methodology contained in **Appendix B** relative to the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3) by the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013).
- 2.10.2 Key representative viewpoints and the LVIA methodology was submitted in February 2020 relative to the previous submitted scheme. The key comments from the Officer relate to the assessment of view value. A formal response has been provided to Reading Borough Council, with a summary of the response listed in **Table 1** in this LVIA.
- 2.10.3 A Scoping report was submitted to Reading Borough Council in 11th February 2020, a formal scoping opinion was received dated 15th April 2020. In general, the opinion requested the inclusion of spring and summer views, which has now been included in this report; a night-time character assessment; inclusion of an additional viewpoint; the consideration of the setting to the AONB; the assessment of visual effects arising from the physical changes; inclusion of local level landscape character assessment; consideration of detailed measures and alternatives; inclusion of a cumulative impact assessment; inclusion of National Character Areas; access measures and reference to Green Infrastructure; effects on access land, public open land and rights of way. These comments have been addressed throughout the LVIA
- 2.10.4 The Site lies within the administrative boundary of Reading Borough Council, with the northern edge of the Site abutting South Oxfordshire District Council Boundary.
- 2.10.5 With the exception of that Tree Protection Orders (TPOs) covering the entire Site, there are no landscape designations that cover the Site. The Site is classified as open space under Local Plan policy EN8, however, it is not publicly accessible. Furthermore, it does not lie within a designated viewing corridor. A small linear portion at the northern edge of the Site is identified as Local Wildlife Site or Local Nature Reserve in the current Local Plan and connected to the wider areas through a network of green links.
- 2.10.6 Under the Emerging Local Plan Policy (EN13), a Major Landscape Feature is identified to the north of and beyond the Site adjacent to Crawshay Drive. It comprises a wooded area on the settlement edge.
- 2.10.7 There are a number of landscape designations present in the wider study area. The Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) lies approximately 1km to the north and 2km to the west; the Historic Park and Garden of Caversham Park lies to the south-east, with Surley Row Conservation Area to the south, both beyond intervening built form; Clayfield Copse Local Nature Reserve is located to the east; areas of Ancient Woodland and Replanted Woodland are present in the landscape to the north, west and east.

- 2.10.8 Due to the combination of built form, topography and vegetation, both within and beyond the Site and the wider Golf Course the Site does not perform a role in the setting to the AO, nor the Site displays any Chiltern AONB characteristics.
- 2.10.9 In terms of heritage assets, there are a series of Listed Buildings scattered throughout the landscape and townscape within the study area and beyond to the west. Old Grove House (Grade II*) and The Barn (Grade II) at Highdown Hill Road are the closest to the Site.
- 2.10.10 The Site itself is currently used as private Golf Course and only accessibly by paid members. Its east, south and western edge is readily influenced by the existing settlements, with boundary vegetation around the majority of the Site perimeters. The northern edge of the Site is abutting the wider Golf Course, facing Cucumber Wood Ancient Woodland in the distance.
- 2.10.11 Also, the eastern portion of the Site is allocated for development under policy CA1b. Therefore, the future baseline would change.
- 2.10.12 The Site lies entirely within the National Character Area 110 – Chilterns.
- 2.10.13 In terms of County level, the Site lies outside the West Berkshire assessment areas, hence it was not assessed. However, it shares some of the characters of LCA 10 – Chilterns Plateau with Valley in the South Oxfordshire Landscape Character Assessment. The key characters are described as follows:
- *“Extensive areas of Ancient Woodland;*
 - *Sparsely settled with small villages and hamlets. The village of Sonning Common comprises the largest settlement;*
 - *Narrow lanes and tall hedgerows;*
 - *Comparatively open fields contained within a strong structure of woods, hedgerows or trees to form a loose mosaic;*
 - *Strong structure of woods and hedgerows generally provides visual containment and results in moderate to low inter-visibility;*
 - *Generally rural and unspoilt character but with some ‘suburbanising’ influences within rural settlements and along main roads (e.g. A4074, A4130), and localised intrusion of built development and power lines (e.g. around Sonning Common and Caversham);*
 - *Typical golf course landscapes of greens, fairways, roughs and bunkers, with associated buildings and car parking.”*
- 2.10.14 Consistent with the County level assessment, at the local level, the Site is surrounded by a number of townscape character areas, including the predominantly two storey area of Emmer Green Residential; the two storey Emmer Green Apartments; Emmer Green Community Hub (which includes schools and community buildings); the Milestone Centre Commercial area; Emmer Green Open Space; and Reading Golf Course.
- 2.10.15 At the Site level, the characteristic elements of a golf course inform the Site character – the linear arrangement of trees (which range in size and canopy spread) the relatively

uniform topography, fairways, bunkers and tees, with built form located adjacent to Kidmore End Road.

- 2.10.16 Due to the combination of topography, vegetation, but primarily built form, views of the Site are limited to those in close proximity to the Site, namely relative to residential receptors which abut the Site boundaries; transient receptors which pass the Site on Kidmore End Road; and those receptors at work at school, visiting the community facilities; or the public open space at Emmer Green Playing Fields.
- 2.10.17 The Proposed Development will deliver the following management objectives:
- Hedgerow maintenance: the Site boundary hedgerows will be retained and managed throughout the development, the measures are set out in the Arboricultural and Planning Integration Report;
 - Minimising visual impact of development through the careful retention of existing tree stock: the operational stage will see replacement tree planting within the public realm, setting the built form into a new tree structure;
 - Promoting native planting: wherever suitable, native deciduous tree species are proposed throughout the Site, such as English Oak, Field Maple, Silver Birch and Wild Service Tree. Refer to the DAS for planting proposals.
- 2.10.18 In terms of the Site context and Site level landscape character, the key characters of the Golf Course are summarised as follows:
- A predominantly man-made landscape reflecting the function of the Golf Course;
 - The natural landform is relatively flat at the south and undulating at the north of the Reading Golf Club, but it has been modified to accommodate the tees and bunkers;
 - Sits in between the residential dwellings predominantly two storey height with pitched roofs;
 - Amenity sports grass through most of the Golf Course surface area;
 - The main access of the Site is via Kidmore End Road;
 - Mature trees set out in linear arrangements and scattered through the Golf Course; and
 - Intermittent hedge boundaries.
- 2.10.19 Overall, the Site is that of a predominantly manicured golf course set on urban fringes between predominantly residential built form. It is characterised by its established network of fairways, bunkers, greens, tees separated by trees (lines and individuals) and associated street furniture (such as benches and litter bins) set adjacent to the immediate settlement edge with tall hedges apparent along part of the Site perimeter. The Site is perceived as a predominantly manicured landscape within the settlement edge, serving the private users. The eastern portion of the Site is allocated for development under policy CA1b, the golf course would eventually comprise urban development.
- 2.10.20 At the construction phase, effects on most of the contextual landscape receptors will predominantly be **neutral**, with effects on land cover setting, woodland and vegetation

pattern and movement corridor ranging between **minor adverse significance** (relative to the construction work) and **minor beneficial significance** (relative to early implementation of woodland planting). Effects on the night-time character are predicted to result in a **moderate adverse** effect.

- 2.10.21 Effects on national level landscape character will be **negligible**; effects on County and Local level character would be **minor adverse**; with **minor beneficial** effects occurring on character relative to the woodland tree planting outside the Site;
- 2.10.22 Effects on the Site landscape receptors will range from **major adverse** on land cover, **major to moderate adverse significance** on tree vegetation pattern and Site landscape features, relative to the loss of tree stock – comprising a small number of category B trees, but predominantly of category C and some U grade trees; and **minor beneficial** relative to off-site planting; **minor adverse** on topography, movement corridors and Public Rights of Way; and **moderate to major beneficial significance** relative to building demolition; and **moderate to major adverse** relative to construction of built form westwards; and with effects on site character are predicted to be **major adverse**; and **moderate adverse** on night-time character.
- 2.10.23 At construction stage, the residual effects for the contextual landscape elements, landscape characters in national, county and Site level, the Site elements and visual receptors are predicated to remain unchanged by the proposed mitigation measures.
- 2.10.24 At the operational phase, effects on the contextual landscape receptors will be **minor beneficial significance** relative to mitigation woodland tree planting and highway improvements
- 2.10.25 Effects on national level landscape character will **negligible**; effects on county level landscape character will be **minor beneficial significance**; effects on local level landscape character will be both **minor adverse** relative to the site proposals and **minor beneficial** relative to the off-site tree planting works. The change to the night-time character is predicted to result in a **major adverse** effect.
- 2.10.26 For the Site landscape receptors effects at this stage will be **negligible** on the overall site topography; **moderate adverse to moderate beneficial** on site landcover; **neutral** initially on tree stock, vegetation pattern and site landscape features, considering the 1.75 to 1 replacement of trees and that this tree stock is likely to be implemented at a smaller scale on day 1. The effects on tree stock within the Site will diminish over time to **moderate beneficial**. Effects arising from the implementation of the woodland planting to the north of the Site have been considered in the assessment of effects on the contextual landscape. **Moderate beneficial** effects are predicted on movement corridors and Public Rights of way, considering the opening up of public movement across the Site; **moderate to major beneficial** on built form, considering the delivery of high-quality housing that reflects local character; and **moderate adverse** on Site character considering the removal of private amenity green space, but also **moderate beneficial** on Site character considering the retention of green space to form open space, considering the replacement tree planting and the implementation of a high quality scheme which reflects local character. .
- 2.10.27 The residual landscape effects in operational stage will predominantly remain unchanged.

- 2.10.28 A series of visual receptors, at a range of distances to the Site were identified as part of the baseline assessment. These included residential receptors, receptors from community facilities and schools, transient receptors using roads, transient receptors using public rights of way, receptors using public open space and within designated landscape. The representative views were undertaken during both the winter and summer seasons, and were recorded in views from the opened, partial and truncated. Those receptors in the immediate Site context have the most open views of the Site elements (albeit the openness is limited by the vegetation during the summer seasons), with views and the perception of the Site diminishing with distance. Views at distance are predominantly truncated.
- 2.10.29 A range of visual effects are predicated to occur as a result of the proposed physical changes to the Site. At the Construction Phase effects are predicted to be **major to moderate adverse significance**, on those receptors in close proximity to the Site where the change in the character and amenity of the view will be readily perceived; and **moderate to minor adverse** for those receptors where the Site forms part of the wider townscape. For those receptors at community facilities and schools, effects at this stage are predicted to be **moderate to minor adverse**. Effects on those transient receptors where views of the Site are experienced as part of a journey through the townscape and settlement fringes, or where construction elements may be apparent above the skyline from Public Rights of Way, effects are predicted to be **moderate to minor adverse**, from Kidmore End Road and Chalgrove Road approaching Kidmore End Road. Effects on those receptors using the public open space are predicted to be **moderate to minor adverse**, at worst. Effects on receptors within or travelling through the AONB are predicted to be **neutral**.
- 2.10.30 At the operational phase, visual effects will range from **major to minor adverse significance**. Effects are predicted to be **major to moderate adverse** significance, on those receptors in close proximity to the Site where the change in the character and amenity of the view will be readily perceived; and **moderate to minor adverse** for those receptors where the Site forms part of the wider townscape. For those receptors at community facilities and schools, effects at this stage are predicted to be **moderate adverse**. Effects on those transient receptors where views of the Site are experienced as part of a journey through the townscape and settlement fringes are predicted to be **moderate adverse** but **minor adverse** when planting matures. For those transient receptors using the Public Rights of Way, effects are predicted to be **negligible**. Effects on those receptors using the public open space are predicted to be **minor adverse**, at worst. Effects on receptors within or travelling through the AONB are predicted to be **neutral**. These effects will moderate over time and as the replacement planting establishes and the built form weathers.
- 2.10.31 Additional Mitigation measures have been incorporated into the design process of the masterplan. For construction phase, guidelines on contractor's compounds, lighting, hoardings, material storage are set out in this volume **Section 2.7** and in the **Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan** submitted with this Application.
- 2.10.32 The residual effects for all receptors during construction remain unchanged with the application of these additional mitigation measures.
- 2.10.33 Additional mitigation measure in operational phase listed in this section can be implemented during the Reserved Matters Application process. The residual effects are

described in detail in this volume in **section 2.8**. Whilst some additional mitigation measures have been outlined, the residual effects for the majority of the receptors remain unchanged from those described above, with the exception that effects for the residential receptors at the immediate context will reduce to moderate adverse, and minor adverse for wider context receptors; views from the community facilities and school area reducing to minor adverse.

- 2.10.34 **Section 2.3** in this LVIA sets out the limitations and assumptions relative to the LVIA during the construction and operational phase of the project.
- 2.10.35 Four schemes are included in the cumulative effect assessment in **section 2.9**. These schemes are located to the south of the Site within the urban settlement of Reading and Caversham, there is no intervisibility into the Proposed Development. Therefore, the cumulative visual effects will not be assessed in this LVIA.
- 2.10.36 During the construction stage, the cumulative effects for the contextual elements will range between **neutral** to **minor adverse significance**. For operational stage, the cumulative effects will range between **minor adverse significance** to **moderate beneficial significance**. Effects on visual receptors identified in this assessment are considered to be **neutral**.
- 2.10.37 Whilst this LVIA has set out the predicted and worst case landscape and visual effects, this is also to be viewed against the context of this predominantly man-made, manicured landscape, which flanked by residential built form. Whilst providing a settlement fringe green landscape, it is not a pristine rural landscape.
- 2.10.38 The eastern portion of the Site is allocated for development under policy CA1b for development, the future baseline will comprise new built form and part of the private amenity green space.
- 2.10.39 There is no intervisibility between the Site and the Chiltern AONB. In terms of the shared qualities and features of the AONB, the Site does not display the following special qualities of the AONB (as defined in the AONB management plan):
- Panoramic views;
 - Chalk grassland, chalk streams and chalk escarpment;
 - Farmland, common land and parkland and woodland (including ancient);
 - Woodland;
 - An extensive and diverse archaeological landscape;
 - Industrial heritage, distinctive buildings and stately homes; and
 - National trails, ancient route ways and sunken lanes.
- 2.10.40 The Site contains hedgerows and trees which are included as one of the special qualities and it is relatively tranquil. However, equally, the site does lie adjacent to the existing settlement edge which contains dwellings, a school and community buildings, so is on the edge of the lit built environment. Therefore, the Site does not perform a specific role to the AONB.

- 2.10.41 Furthermore, as with the development of any green site, adverse effects will occur which can be moderated through detailed design, using building styles and materials that reflect local characteristic and distinctiveness.
- 2.10.42 **Table 9** summarises the topic effects resulting from the Proposed Development.

Table 9 Summary of residual effects for the proposed development

Receptor/ Affected Group	Value or Sensitivity of Receptor	Activity or Impact	Embedded Design Mitigation	Magnitude/ Spatial Extent/ Duration/ Likelihood of Occurrence	Significance of Effect	Additional Mitigation	Residual Magnitude of Impact	Significance of Residual Effect
Construction								
Contextual Landscape	High-Low	Implementation of irrigation pipework and tree planting off-site	Compensatory Tree Planting Plan	Minor-moderate/ Local / Temporary / Likely	Minor adverse for earthworks and highway improvement works Minor beneficial for Advanced tree planting	/	Minor- moderate/ Local / Temporary / Likely	Minor adverse For earthworks and highway improvement works Minor beneficial for advanced tree planting
National Level Landscape Character	Medium	Small change in landscape character at the national designation level (Chilterns)	/	Negligible / National / Temporary / Likely	Negligible	/	Negligible / National / Temporary / Likely	Negligible
County Level Landscape Character	High-Medium	Small change in landscape character at the county level	Compensatory Tree Planting Plan	Minor / County / Temporary / Likely	Minor adverse for construction Minor beneficial for tree planting	/	Minor / County / Temporary / Likely	Minor adverse for construction Minor beneficial for tree planting
Local level landscape character	Medium - Low	Change in landscape setting to character areas	Compensatory Tree Planting Plan	Minor / Local / Temporary / Likely	Minor adverse for construction Minor beneficial for tree planting	/	Minor / Site / Temporary / Likely	Minor adverse for construction Minor beneficial for tree planting
Night-time character	Medium	Increase in intensity of lighting within the Site	/	Moderate / Site / Temporary / Likely	Moderate Adverse	/	Moderate / Site / Temporary / Likely	Moderate Adverse

Site topography	Medium	Change in Site topography	/	Minor / Site / Permanent / Likely	Minor adverse	/	Minor / Site / Permanent / Likely	Minor adverse
Site land cover	Medium	Change in Site land cover	/	Major - Moderate / Site / Permanent / Likely	Major adverse	/	Moderate / Site / Permanent / Likely	Major adverse
Trees and vegetation pattern and Site Landscape Features	High	Removal of trees	Tree planting	Major-moderate / Local / Temporary / Likely	Major-moderate adverse	None	Major-moderate / Local / Temporary / Likely	Major-moderate adverse
Movement corridors and Public Rights of Way	Low	Formation of new access and minor changes to width of local roads off-site	/	Minor / Local / Temporary / Likely	Minor adverse – negligible	N/A	Minor / Local / Temporary / Likely	Minor adverse – negligible
Building height and form in the area	Low	Demolition of existing buildings on site and creation of emerging built form	/	Moderate- major / Local / Temporary / Likely	Moderate-major beneficial for demolition of clubhouse Moderate – major adverse for emerging built form	/	Moderate-major / Local / Temporary / Likely	Moderate-major beneficial for demolition of clubhouse Moderate – major adverse for emerging built form
Site character	Medium	Change in recreational green space character to construction site	/	Major / Site / Temporary / Likely	Major adverse	/	Major / Site / Temporary / Likely	Major adverse
Views from local residential receptors	Medium-Low	Change in character and amenity of view, limited to localised geographic area	/	Major-minor / Local / Temporary / Likely	Major – moderate adverse for immediate receptors Moderate - minor adverse	/	Major-minor / Local / Temporary / Likely	Major – moderate adverse for immediate receptors Moderate - minor adverse

					(wider area)			(wider area)
Views from community facilities and schools	Low	Change in character and amenity of the view from Emmer Green Primary School and Emmer Green Youth and Community Centre	/	Moderate-minor / Local / Temporary / Likely	Moderate-minor adverse	/	Moderate-minor / Local / Temporary / Likely	Moderate-minor adverse
Views from local roads	Low	Introduction of construction activities to the views from roads close to the Site including Kidmore End Road	/	Minor / Local / Temporary / Likely	Moderate – minor adverse	/	Minor / Local / Temporary / Likely	Moderate – minor adverse
Views from public rights of way	Low	Introduction of construction activities to the view	/	Minor / Local / Temporary / Likely	Minor adverse	/	Minor / Local / Temporary / Likely	Minor adverse
Views from open spaces	Medium	Change in the character and amenity of the background to the townscape view	/	Moderate – minor / Local / Temporary / Likely	Moderate- minor adverse	/	Moderate – minor / Local / Temporary / Likely	Moderate- minor adverse
Operation								
Contextual landscape	High-Low	Completion of new woodland planting area	Compensatory Tree Planting Plan	Minor / Local / Permanent / Likely	Minor beneficial for woodland planting	Material palette characteristic of local area Landscape maintenance guidelines	Minor / Local / Permanent / Likely	Minor beneficial for woodland planting

National level landscape character	Medium	Small change in landscape character at the national designation level (Chilterns)	Indicative Site Layout Compensatory Tree Planting Plan	Negligible / National / Permanent / Likely	Negligible	Material palette characteristic of local area Landscape maintenance guidelines	Negligible / National / Permanent / Likely	Negligible
County level landscape character	High-Medium	Small change in landscape character at the county designation level, but remains within urban area characterisation	Indicative Site Layout Compensatory Tree Planting Plan	Minor / County / Permanent / Likely	Negligible from development Minor beneficial when considering tree planting, otherwise negligible	Material palette characteristic of local area Landscape maintenance guidelines	Minor / County / Permanent / Likely	Negligible from development Minor beneficial when considering tree planting, otherwise negligible
Local level landscape character	Medium - Low	Change in landscape character setting	Indicative Site Layout Compensatory Tree Planting Plan	Minor/ Local / Permanent / Likely	Minor adverse due to change in setting Minor beneficial due to woodland planting	Material palette characteristic of local area Landscape maintenance guidelines	Minor/ Site / Permanent / Likely	Minor adverse Due to change in setting Minor beneficial due to woodland planting
Night-time character	Medium	Increase of lighting intensity across the Site	Best practice and British Standards	Major / Site / Permanent / Likely	Major adverse	Lighting strategy	Major / Site / Permanent / Likely	Major adverse
Site topography	Medium	Change in site topography	Indicative Site Layout	Negligible / Site / Permanent / Likely	Negligible	None	Negligible / Site / Permanent / Likely	Negligible
Site land cover	Medium	Change in Site land cover to built form and open space	Indicative Site Layout	Moderate / Site/ Permanent / Likely	Moderate adverse on loss of private amenity space to new homes Moderate beneficial on public open space provision	Material palette characteristic of local area Landscape maintenance guidelines	Moderate / Site/ Permanent / Likely	Moderate adverse on loss of private amenity space to new homes Moderate beneficial on public open space provision

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Tree and vegetation pattern and Site landscape features	High	Change to the current tree stock	Indicative Site Layout	Moderate – Neutral / Site / Permanent / Likely	Moderate beneficial on replacement of trees	Material palette characteristic of local area Landscape maintenance guidelines	Moderate Neutral / Site / Permanent / Likely	Moderate beneficial on replacement of trees
Movement corridors and public rights of way	Low	Increase of public access and public footpaths within the Site	Indicative Site Layout	Moderate / Site / Permanent / Likely	Moderate beneficial	None	Moderate / Site / Permanent / Likely	Moderate beneficial
Building height and form	Low	Appropriateness of building height and form characteristic of local area	Indicative Site Layout	Moderate-major / Site / Permanent / Likely	Moderate-major beneficial	None	Moderate-major / Site / Permanent / Likely	Moderate-major beneficial
Site character	Medium	Wholesale change from recreational green space, to new built form and open space	Indicative Site Layout	Moderate / Site / Permanent / Likely	Moderate adverse – Moderate beneficial	Material palette characteristic of local area	Moderate / Site / Permanent / Likely	Moderate adverse – Moderate beneficial
Views from residential receptors	Medium-low	Change in character and amenity of view	Indicative Site Layout	Moderate-major / Local / Permanent / Likely	Moderate-major adverse on immediate receptors Moderate – minor adverse on wider receptors	Material palette characteristic of local area Landscape maintenance guidelines	Moderate-major / Local / Permanent / Likely	Moderate – adverse on immediate receptors Minor adverse on wider receptors
Views from education and community facilities	Low	Change in character and amenity of the view from Emmer Green Primary School and Emmer Green Youth and Community Centre	Indicative Site Layout	Moderate / Local / Permanent / Likely	Moderate adverse	Material palette characteristic of local area Landscape maintenance guidelines	Moderate / Local / Permanent / Likely	Minor adverse

Views from road corridors	Low	Change in character and amenity of the transient view close to the Site, primarily Kidmore End Road	Indicative Site Layout	Moderate / Local / Permanent / Likely	Moderate adverse Minor adverse once planting matures.	Material palette characteristic of local area Landscape maintenance guidelines	Moderate / Local / Permanent / Likely	Moderate - minor adverse
Views from Public Rights of Way	Low	Views from footpaths and cycleways near the Site	Indicative Site Layout	Negligible / Local / Permanent / Likely	Negligible	None	Negligible / Local / Permanent / Likely	Negligible
Views from open spaces	Medium	Increase in intensity of built form from Emmer Green Playing Field	Indicative Site Layout	Minor / Local / Permanent / Likely	Minor Adverse	None	Minor / Local / Permanent / Likely	Minor Adverse
Views from designated landscapes	High	Change in character and amenity of the view from AONB and Caversham Park and Gardens	Indicative Site Layout	No effect	None	None	No effect	None
Cumulative effects – Construction								
Contextual environment	High-Low	Cumulative effects on the wider landscape of Reading and Caversham	None	Minor / Local / Temporary / Likely	Minor adverse	None	Minor / Local / Temporary / Likely	Minor adverse
Contextual Public Rights of Way, open spaces, historic and cultural landscape	High-Low	None	None	No effect	None	None	No effect	None
National and county level landscape character	High - Medium	Change in landscape character	Illustrative landscape	Negligible / National / County / Temporary / Likely	Minor	None	Negligible / National / County / Temporary / Likely	Minor adverse

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Local level landscape character	Medium	Limited impacts due to the distance and no inter-visibility between the Proposed Development and the cumulative schemes	None	Negligible / Local / Temporary / Likely	Negligible	None	Negligible / Local / Temporary / Likely	Negligible
Night-time character	Medium	Changes to intensity of lighting	Best practice and British Standards	Minor / Local / Temporary	Minor adverse	Lighting strategy	Minor / Local / Temporary	Minor adverse
Site elements and character	High - Low	None	None	None	None	None	None	None

Visual receptors	Medium - Low	Changes to character and amenity of the view assessed relative to the Site	None	None	None	None	None	None
Cumulative effects – Operational								
Topographic setting	Medium	Cumulative effects on the wider contextual topographic setting to Reading and Caversham	None	Minor / Local / Permanent / Likely	Minor adverse	None	Minor / Local / Permanent / Likely	Minor adverse
Landcover setting; building heights and urban grain	High-Low	Cumulative effects on the wider contextual landcover setting to Reading and Caversham	None	Moderate / Local / Permanent / Likely	Moderate beneficial	None	Moderate / Local / Permanent / Likely	Moderate beneficial
Woodland and vegetation pattern; settlement pattern	High-Low	Cumulative effects on the wider woodland and vegetation pattern setting to Reading and Caversham	None	Minor / Local / Permanent / Likely	Minor beneficial	None	Minor / Local / Permanent / Likely	Minor beneficial
Public Rights of Way; Open Spaces; Historic and Cultural Landscape	High - Medium	No changes predicted to existing routes	None	None	None	None	None	None
Contextual Skyline	Medium - Low	Changes to skyline due to introduce taller buildings	None	Moderate / Local / Permanent / Likely	Minor adverse	None	Moderate / Local / Permanent / Likely	Minor adverse
National Level Landscape Character	Medium	Change in landscape character	None	Negligible / National / Permanent / Likely	Negligible	None	Negligible / National / Permanent / Likely	Negligible

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County level landscape character	High- Medium	Changes to existing townscape character	None	None	None	None	None	None
Local level landscape character	Medium - Low	Cumulative schemes are outside of the LCA assessed in this LVIA	None	None	None	None	None	None
Night-time character	Medium	Changes to intensity of lighting	None	Minor / Local / Temporary	Minor adverse	None	Minor / Local / Temporary	Minor adverse
Site elements and character	High - Low	None	None	None	None	None	None	None
Visual Receptors	High - Low	Changes to character and amenity of the view relative to the receptors assessed for the Site	None	None	None	None	None	None