Officers' Meadow, Shenfield

Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment

On behalf of **Croudace Homes Ltd.**

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Registered Office: Buckingham Court Kingsmead Business Park, London Road, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, HP11 1JU
Office Address: The Stills, 1st Floor, 80 Turnmill Street, London EC1M 5QU
T: +44 (0)203 824 6600 E: London.uk@stantec.com

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	Name	Position	Signature	Date
Prepared by:	D Webster	Associate		24.08.23
Reviewed by:	D Webster	Associate		05.09.23
Approved by:	M Chard	Director		05.09.23
For and on behalf of Stantec UK Limited				

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1 Introduction

1.1 Stantec UK have been commissioned by Croudace Homes Ltd. to undertake a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) to accompany a detailed planning application for 344 units, including 35% affordable housing, safeguarded land for a 2FE primary school and early years facility, public open space and associated landscaping, drainage, and highways infrastructure ('the Proposed Development') at Officers' Meadow, Shenfield ('the Site'). In relation to its suitability for residential development, the Site forms part of the strategic allocation for residential-led mixed-use development: R03 Land North of Shenfield, Shenfield.

1.2 The aim of this LVIA is to assess the effects of changes to landscape features, landscape character, representative views, and visual amenity, resulting from the introduction of the Proposed Development within the Site and its landscape setting. The LVIA consists of the following stages which combine both desk-based study and detailed field work:

- Assessing the landscape character and quality of the Site and its context;
- Assessing the visibility of the Site from the surrounding areas and identifying the nature and quality of existing views;
- Identify opportunities and constraints to development on the Site, from a landscape and visual perspective; and
- Describing the predicted landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development at Day 1 following construction, and Year 15 following maturation of the proposed planting.

1.3 The LVIA process has been used to inform the design of mitigation included with the Proposed Development with the aim of avoiding or reducing adverse landscape and visual effects. The principal elements of the LVIA include:

- Analysis of the physical context of the Site;
- Summary of key planning policies and evidence base relevant to the Proposed Development;
- Appraisal of the landscape features and character of the Site and its surroundings;
- Consideration of the visual qualities of the Site and the wider landscape; and
- Assessment of the effects on landscape character and visual amenity likely to result from the Proposed Development.

1.4 The LVIA should be read in combination with the following plans and photographs:

- **Figure 1: Site Context Plan** c demonstrating the location of the Site in relation to areas of settlement, key areas of vegetation and landscape and cultural heritage designations within the Study Area;
- **Figure 2: Topography Plan** - demonstrating the topography of the Site to aid the understanding of the visual envelope of the Site and its situation within the wider landscape setting;
- **Figure 3: Site Appraisal Plan** - demonstrating key landscape and built features within the Site and the locations of the Site Appraisal Photographs;
- **Figure 4: Landscape Character Plan** - demonstrating the location and extent of character areas set out within published landscape character assessments;
- **Figure 5: Visual Appraisal Plan** - demonstrating the areas from which the Site is visible within the surrounding landscape and the locations of the Site Context Photographs;
- **Figure 6: Opportunities and Constraints Plan** - demonstrating the landscape and visual considerations informing the masterplan layout and strategic green infrastructure;
- **Figure 7: Landscape Strategy Plan** - demonstrating the overall approach to the strategic green infrastructure in different parts of the Proposed Development, by way of secondary mitigation;
- **Site Appraisal Photographs A** to **O** - illustrating the character of the different areas of the Site and the landscape features within it; and
- **Site Context Photographs 1** to **18** - illustrating key views towards the Site from the surrounding landscape and the role that the Site plays in those views.

1.5 The study area for this assessment broadly equates to the extents of the landscape shown on **Figure 1**. This plans also illustrates that following the allocation of the land relating to Policy R03 for residential-led mixed-use development, the entirety of this area has been released from the Green Belt.

1.6 The methodology used for the LVIA is drawn from the principles of good practice in Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition ('GLVIA3') and is set out in **Appendix A: LVIA Methodology**.

2 Site Context

Landscape Setting

2.1 As shown in **Figure 1**, the Site lies to the north of Shenfield, which is north-east of Brentwood, Essex; it is in the district of Brentwood Borough Council. The Site is approximately 21.32ha in size and broadly consists of six parcels of land.

2.2 The Site's setting is partly defined by the settlement of Shenfield to the south; however, its edge of settlement location means that it is also partly defined by the agricultural landscape to the north. Transport corridors are also notable features of the landscape setting, including the A12 to the north and Great Eastern Main Line railway to the south and east of the Site.

Site Location & Land Use

2.3 To the south and east of the site, the Great Eastern Main Line railway separates the Site from the 20th century residential estate that follows Woodland Avenue. To the east of the housing estate is the Hutton Industrial Estate. The village of Hutton lies to the south of the residential and industrial estates.

2.4 To the south-west of the Site is a further 20th century housing estate, with the dwellings to the north of Oliver Road lying adjacent to the R03 allocation boundary. The Site is separated from the residential area by Shenfield High School and associated playing fields (the latter are located within the R03 allocation boundary).

2.5 To the west and north, the Site is bounded by Chelmsford Road (A1023), which runs south-west to Shenfield and north-east to Mountnessing. Part of the Site lies adjacent to Chelmsford Road, however, much of the northern boundary is separated from the highway by a single line of dwellings. The dwellings front onto Chelmsford Road, so the Site is partly adjacent to rear garden boundaries to the north. Further to the north of the Site, the A12 separates the site from the wider agricultural landscape; a narrow strip of agricultural land (located within the R03 allocation boundary) separates Chelmsford Road from the A12. The Site lies adjacent to arable land (also within the R03 allocation boundary) and the railway line to the north-east.

Topography and Hydrology

2.6 With reference to **Figure 2**, the Site lies within an area of gently undulating low-lying land associated with the River Wid valley landscape, situated at approximately 60m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD), opening out towards the lowland marsh landscape to the east of the Site. The landform broadly rises to the south-east of the Site as a continuation of the lower reaches of a ridgeline that extends from the elevated settlement area of Brentwood towards the lower-lying valley landscape.

2.7 The main developed area of Shenfield, which lies to the south of the Site, straddles two of the ridgelines that descend from Brentwood towards the River Wid, between approximately 80 - 105m AOD. To the north-west of the Site, beyond the Canterbury Tye Spring that feeds the River Wid, the landscape (comprising undulating agricultural land and scattered farmsteads) rises gently towards Doddinghurst to an elevation of approximately 90m AOD. The settled area of Mountnessing lies to the north-east of the Site beyond the River Wid, at approximately 65-75m AOD.

2.8 The residential properties bordering the northern edge of the Site lie at the same elevation as the most elevated northern part of the Site and are at a similar elevation to Alexander Lane bordering the southern edge of the Site. To the south-east, within the settlement of Shenfield / Hutton, the landform rises to approximately 70m AOD.

Vegetation

2.9 The study area is lightly wooded, with vegetation typically limited to following transport corridors such as the A12 and Great Eastern Main Line. However, blocks of Ancient Woodland are distributed across the study area. The woodland is typically regular in shape, including Park and Home Woods to the north of the A12 and Hall Wood to the south.

2.10 As illustrated in **Figure 3**, the Site consists of six agricultural fields, typically in arable use, but lying fallow at the time of writing and predominantly featuring rough grassland/scrubland. The field patterns are generally medium-to-large with occasional canopy trees and/or gappy/low hedgerows. The hedgerows run through the Site, creating an irregular network of field boundaries.

2.11 The Site lies within a strong landscape framework. To the north and east is a narrow strip of Ancient Woodland, called Arnold's Wood, which extends beyond the Great Eastern Main Line railway to the south. To the south, the Site boundary follows the boundary of a block of wood pasture, which includes drains and a pond. Vegetation follows the line of the Great Eastern railway, including the northern railway embankment near to the Site's southern boundary.

2.12 The playing fields associated with Shenfield High School retain what would have been field boundaries and comprise hedgerow and canopy trees.

Public Rights of Way (PRoW)

2.13 Various PRoWs run across the landscape to the north of the A12, connecting settlements such as Pilgrims Hatch, Doddinghurst and Mountnessing. Three PRoWs cross the A12, including Brentwood 24, Brentwood 103, and Brentwood 88; the latter lies near to the Site's northern boundary, but was not evident on the site visit. To the south-west of the Site, the short Brentwood 26 links Chelmsford Road with Hall Lane, which crosses the A12.

2.14 A single PRoW traverses the Site. Brentwood 86 continues from Alexander Lane alongside the northern railway embankment to the south of the Site before turning northwards through the Site, to the west of Arnold's Wood and terminating at Chelmsford Road.

Designations

2.15 The Site is not covered by any national, regional, or local landscape designations. However, the Site and surrounding landscape does lie within the designated Green Belt, with the exception of the main built-up area of Shenfield (which is inset from the Green Belt).

2.16 As previously noted, Arnold's Wood, within the eastern part of the Site, is defined as an area of Ancient Woodland and as a Local Wildlife Site (LWS).

2.17 The Site is not within a conservation area, nor contains any scheduled monuments. There are a number of listed features within the vicinity of the Site. Those in closest proximity to the Site include:

- the Grade II listed milestone adjacent to the A1023 approximately 80m to the north-west;
- the Grade II listed Barn at Wynbarns Farm and The Rose Inn, approximately 330m and 420m to the south-west respectively;
- the Grade II listed Elm Cottage and Elm House, approximately 560m to the south-west;
- the Grade II listed Poplars Hall approximately 550m to the south;
- the cluster of Grade II listed buildings at Arnold's Farm, approximately 1km to the northeast;
- the Grade II listed Fitzwalters approximately 800m to the north; and
- the cluster of listed features within Mountnessing, approximately 1.2km to the north, including the Grade II* listed Mountnessing Windmill slightly further afield.

2.18 There are no Registered Park and Gardens within the immediate vicinity of the Site. The Grade II listed Weald Park lies approximately 4km to the west, and the Grade II* listed Thorndon Hall lies approximately 3km to the south, both of which lie beyond the settled areas of Brentwood and have no intervisibility with the Site.

3 Landscape Character

3.1 Landscape character is the combination of physical, perceptual, cultural, and historic features of a particular area which together create the unique and distinctive experiential qualities of a given landscape.

3.2 Landscape character assessment is a descriptive approach that seeks to identify and define the distinct character of landscapes that make up the country. This approach recognises the intrinsic value of all landscapes, not just 'special' landscapes, as contributing factors in people's quality of life, in accordance with the European Landscape Convention. It also ensures that account is taken of the different roles and character of different areas, in accordance with the NPPF Core Principles.

3.3 This section of the LVIA describes the characteristics and landscape management guidelines of Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) identified in published Landscape Character Assessments that are relevant to the Site and the study area. Only those LCAs considered to have the potential to experience appreciable effects as a result of the Proposed Development are included in this assessment.

3.4 The description and key characteristics of each LCA are used as a basis for evaluation in order to inform proposed mitigation of landscape and visual effects and to make judgements on the significance of those effects. The extent of published LCAs in the vicinity of the Site are illustrated at **Figure 4**, with relevant information summarised below.

National Landscape Character

National Character Area Profiles

3.5 As part of Natural England's responsibilities in delivering the Natural Environment White Paper, Biodiversity 2020 and the European Landscape Convention, Natural England has developed a series of National Character Area (NCA) profiles.

3.6 At a national level the Site is identified within **NCA 111: Northern Thames Basin**, which forms the rising land above the low-lying marshy landscape that adjoins the coast and estuaries to the north, east and south-east. The landform is varied and is traversed by a series of both broad and steep valleys. The pattern of woodlands is varied across the NCA and includes considerable areas of Ancient Woodland. Areas of wood pasture and pollarded veteran trees are commonplace. The field pattern is varied, with informal patterns reflective of the medieval colonisation of the heaths. Mixed farming is characteristic of the NCA, as is the prevalence of large urban areas surrounded by farmland and woodland. Market towns have expanded over time, as have the London suburbs and commuter settlements.

3.7 The key characteristics of NCA 111 are summarised below:

- *"The landform is varied with a wide plateau divided by river valleys...*
- *Characteristic of the area is a layer of thick clay producing heavy, acidic soils, resulting in retention of considerable areas of ancient woodland.*
- *A diverse landscape with a series of broad valleys containing the major rivers Ver, Colne and Lea…*
- *The pattern of woodlands is varied across the area and includes considerable ancient semi-natural woodland…*
- *The field pattern is very varied across the basin reflecting historical activity…*
- *Mixed farming, with arable land predominating in the Hertfordshire plateaux, parts of the London Clay lowlands and Essex heathlands.*
- *The diverse range of semi-natural habitats include ancient woodland, lowland heath and floodplain grazing marsh and provide important habitats for a wide range of species including great crested newt, water vole, dormouse, and otter.*
- *…Market towns have expanded over time as have the London suburbs and commuter settlements..."*

3.8 The following Statements of Environmental Opportunity for NCA Profile 111: Northern Thames Basin, of relevance to the Site are provided:

- *"SEO 1: Manage rivers and river valleys to protect and improve water quality and help to alleviate flooding in the downstream urban areas, while also helping to improve aquifer recharge and provide a sufficient store of water to meet future need, especially with predicted climatic changes. Conserve the riparian landscapes and habitats, for their recreational and educational amenity for their internationally significant ecological value…;*
- *SEO 3: Protect and appropriately manage the historic environment for its contribution to local character and sense of identity and as a framework for habitat restoration and sustainable development, ensuring high design standards (particularly in the London Green Belt) which respect the open and built character of the Thames Basin. Enhance and increase access between rural and urban areas through good green infrastructure links to allow local communities recreational, health and wellbeing benefits; and*

- *SEO4: Manage and expand the significant areas of broadleaf woodland and wood pasture, and increase tree cover within urban areas, for the green infrastructure links and important habitats that they provide, for the sense of tranquillity they bring, their ability to screen urban influences and their role in reducing heat island effect and sequestering and storing carbon."*

3.9 The key characteristics and SEOs provide useful background and context to the character of the wider area and the overarching aims for management of the landscape. However, due to the extensive area of the NCA in relation to the Site, and the wide range of landscape characteristics found within it, it is considered highly unlikely that the Proposed Development has the potential to result in appreciable effects on the character of the NCA as a whole.

Local Landscape Character

Brentwood Landscape Character Assessment

3.10 The Site lies within the **F10: Heybridge Wooded Farmland** Landscape Character Area (LCA), the key characteristics of the LCA are:

- *"Mature, undulating wooded farmland lining the B1002 road and railway corridor.*
- *Mixture of medium to largescale predominantly arable fields with mature treed field boundaries.*
- *Single mature trees and vegetation-lined ditches.*
- *Strong linear settlement pattern though the centre of the area, becoming more scattered at distance from the road/railway corridor.*
- *Landmark halls and churches.*
- *Narrow, often tree-lined rural lanes."*

3.11 Overall character is described and those sections relevant to the Site and study area are included below:

> *"This character area extends from the southern urban edge of Brentwood in the north, to the relatively straight road corridor of the A127 in the south… Areas of woodland provide a sense of enclosure and frame views to surrounding wooded horizons. Despite the popularity of the area as a recreation resource, proximity to Brentwood urban area in the north, the A128 road corridor to the east and the A127 road corridor in the south, there is a strong sense of tranquillity within pockets of the character area…"*

3.12 Visual characteristics are described and those relevant to the Site and study area are included below:

- *"Open views to urban edges of Brentwood, Mountnessing and Ingatestone.*
- *Views to wooded horizons both within the area and within adjacent Landscape Character Areas."*

3.13 Ecological features are described as:

- *"This Character Area is dominated by widespread arable agriculture with scattered woodland. The area contains 13 SINCs comprised of unimproved grassland, scrub and ancient and semi-natural woodland habitats, plus 9 ancient woodlands south of Ingatestone."*

3.14 Key planning and land management issues pertinent to the Site are described as:

- *"Noise and visual intrusion associated with the B1002 and A12 roads and main railway corridor.*
- *Potential visually intrusive expansion of the urban edges of Brentwood, Mountnessing and Ingatestone.*
- *Pressure of increased traffic on rural and minor lanes."*

3.15 Proposed landscape strategy objectives are described as:

- *"Conserve - seek to protect and enhance positive features that are essential in contributing to local distinctiveness and sense of place through effective planning and positive land management measures.*
- *Enhance - seek to improve the integrity of the landscape, and reinforce its character, by introducing new and/or enhanced elements where distinctive features or characteristics are absent."*

3.16 Suggested landscape planning guidelines, pertinent to the Site are described as:

- *"Conserve the mostly rural character of the area.*
- *Ensure that any appropriate new development responds to historic settlement pattern and uses materials, which are appropriate to local landscape character. Such development should be well integrated with the surrounding landscape.*

- *Maintain views to landmark churches and halls and also to wooded horizons.*
- *Seek measures to screen visually intrusive urban edges around Brentwood, Mountnessing and Ingatestone."*

Published Landscape Character Receptors

3.17 On the basis of a comprehensive review of published landscape character assessments and analysis of the landscape character of the Site and its context, the following LCAs have been identified against which effects resulting from the Proposed Development have been assessed.

3.18 An assessment of the receptor's value, susceptibility, and resultant sensitivity to development of the type proposed has also been set out below. There are often subtle differences between and within individual LCAs that result in variations in both actual and perceived quality, condition, value, and susceptibility to change. In addition to this, boundaries between LCAs do not always follow recognised landscape features such as rivers, settlement edges, roads, or field boundaries. In these cases, the boundaries between LCAs are transitional, where there is a gradual change in landscape at the national and regional and district level.

NCA 111: Northern Thames Basin

3.19 The large scale NCA 111 is considered to have a **Medium** value as it contains no World Heritage Sites, National Parks or AONB, other than a small portion of the southern extent of the Dedham Vale AONB in the north of Essex. It contains 2no. National Nature Reserves, and 6no. Ramsar sites (all in Essex). All of the Ramsar sites are also Special Areas of Conservation, and some are also Special Protection Areas. The NCA has 72no. Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

3.20 This NCA is considered to have a **Low** susceptibility to the type of change proposed due to the presence of existing landscape detractors such as the communication corridors that carry roads (such as the M25, M11, M1 A1/A1(M) A10, A12 and A127) and railways (notably the West Coast Main Line, East Coast Main Line, Midlands Main Line and Great Eastern Main Line). New settlements and settlement expansion are a highly characteristic component of this NCA, such that the type of change proposed would be in keeping with the existing landscape and settlement pattern. On balance the NCA is considered to have a **Low** sensitivity to change.

Heybridge Wooded Farmland LCA

3.21 This LCA does not encompass any areas designated for landscape value or scenic beauty. It contains areas of Ancient Woodland as well as features listed on the Priority Habitat Inventory,

such as 'Deciduous Woodland'. It exhibits some cultural associations due to the presence of heritage features, particularly listed buildings. Whilst the sense of tranquillity or remoteness is limited due to the influence of extensive areas of settlement to the immediate west, the presence of a well-connected network of short distance local PRoW indicates a level of recreational value. Overall, the LCA is considered to have **Medium** value.

3.22 The LCA has a strong relationship with the adjacent existing settlements at Brentwood and Shenfield, as well as the transport corridors of the A12, A129 and the Great Eastern Main Line railway. The LCA includes agricultural land use in the form of the many farmsteads, and recreational uses including the Centurion Club golf course. The sense of openness varies, with the gently sloping landform and woodland blocks to the north of Shenfield providing moderate containment of the Site. There is a high potential for the incorporation of landscape mitigation as set out in the LCA management guidelines, and since the Proposed Development would be located within the existing landscape pattern, the LCA is judged to have **Medium** susceptibility to development of the type proposed. The combination of the above value and susceptibility is judged to result in a **Medium** overall sensitivity to development of the type proposed.

Table 1: Summary of Sensitivity of Published Landscape Receptors

Receptor	Value	Susceptibility	Sensitivity
NCA 111: Northern Thames Basin	Medium	Low	**Low**
Heybridge Wooded Farmland LCA	Medium	Medium	**Medium**

4 Landscape Planning Policy

4.1 The relevant policies in relation to the Site and the Proposed Development are summarised below.

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

4.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) outlines that *"the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development"*, which is defined as *"meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"*.

4.3 The NPPF also clarifies that planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF is a material consideration in planning decisions.

> *"The NPPF states that the planning system has three overarching objectives: economic, social, and environmental. The environmental objective is described as follows: "to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy."*

4.4 Paragraph 9 of the NPPF also notes that the objectives should be delivered through the planning process but recognises that planning policies and decisions should *"take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area"*.

4.5 Paragraph 38 relates to decision making and states:

> *"Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social, and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible."*

4.6 Section 11 is concerned with making effective use of land, with Paragraph 119 stating:

"Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions…"

4.7 Paragraph 120 states that planning policies and decisions should:

a) *"encourage multiple benefits from both urban and rural land, including through mixed use schemes and taking opportunities to achieve net environmental gains – such as developments that would enable new habitat creation or improve public access to the countryside;*

b) *recognise that some undeveloped land can perform many functions, such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, cooling/shading, carbon storage or food production…"*

4.8 Paragraph 124 states that planning policies and decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land by taking account of:

d) *"…the desirability of maintaining an area's prevailing character and setting (including residential gardens), or of promoting regeneration and change; and*

e) *the importance of securing well-designed, attractive, and healthy places."*

4.9 Paragraphs 126-136 focus on achieving well-designed places and promote good design of the built environment. This approach is enshrined in Paragraph 130, which states:

"Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

a) *will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*

b) *are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout, and appropriate and effective landscaping;*

c) *are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);*

d) *establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming, and distinctive places to live, work and visit;*

e) *optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and*

f) *create places that are safe, inclusive, and accessible and which promote health and well- being with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience."*

4.10 Paragraph 131 states:

"Trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that new streets are tree-lined, that opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments (such as parks and community orchards), that appropriate measures are in place to secure the long-term maintenance of newly planted trees, and that existing trees are retained wherever possible. Applicants and local planning authorities should work with highways officers and tree officers to ensure that the right trees are planted in the right places, and solutions are found that are compatible with highways standards and the needs of different users."

4.11 Paragraph 134 states:

"Development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes. Conversely, significant weight should be given to:

a) *development which reflects local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes; and/or*

b) *outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings…"*

4.12 Chapter 13 is dedicated to issues of protecting the Green Belt, with Paragraph 137 stating that *"…the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open…"* and that *"…the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence"*.

4.13 Paragraph 138 subsequently sets out the following five purposes of the Green Belt:

a) *"To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;*

b) *To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;*

c) *To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;*

d) *To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and*

e) *To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land."*

4.14 Paragraph 139 states that:

"The general extent of Green Belts across the country is already established. New Green Belts should only be established in exceptional circumstances, for example when planning for larger scale development such as new settlements or major urban extensions. Any proposals for new Green Belts should be set out in strategic policies, which should:

a) *demonstrate why normal planning and development management policies would not be adequate;*

b) *set out whether any major changes in circumstances have made the adoption of this exceptional measure necessary;*

c) *show what the consequences of the proposal would be for sustainable development;*

d) *demonstrate the necessity for the Green Belt and its consistency with strategic policies for adjoining areas; and*

e) *show how the Green Belt would meet the other objectives of the Framework."*

4.15 This is continued into paragraph 142 which states:

"When drawing up or reviewing Green Belt boundaries, the need to promote sustainable patterns of development should be taken into account. Strategic policy-making authorities should consider the consequences for sustainable development of channelling development towards urban areas inside the Green Belt boundary, towards towns and villages inset within the Green Belt or towards locations beyond the outer Green Belt boundary. Where it has been concluded that it is necessary to

release Green Belt land for development, plans should give first consideration to land which has been previously developed and/or is well-served by public transport. They should also set out ways in which the impact of removing land from the Green Belt can be offset through compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of remaining Green Belt land."

4.16 The Site is part of the wider allocation for residential-led mixed-use development: R03 Land North of Shenfield, Shenfield. This LVIA therefore assumes that the principle of releasing this land from the Green Belt has been established within the adopted Local Plan.

4.17 Section 15 relates to the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment, with Paragraph 174 setting out that planning policies and decisions should look to achieve the above by *"protecting and enhancing valued landscapes"* and *"recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services"*.

4.18 Section 16 relates to conservation and enhancement of the historic environment, with a requirement for new development to take into the account the importance of historic features.

Planning Practice Guidance (2016 onwards)

4.19 To support the policies of the NPPF, the Government has produced Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) covering a number of topics.

4.20 Under the topic of 'Design: process and tools' and sub-heading of 'Planning for well-designed places' (paragraph: 001) the PPG states that *"significant weight should be given to: a) development which reflects local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes…"*. This section of the PPG also introduces the National Design Guide which sets out the 10no. characteristics of good design.

4.21 Under the topic of 'Natural environment' sub-heading of 'Green infrastructure' (paragraph: 005) focuses on how natural capital can provide a range of benefits to communities including, "*enhanced wellbeing, outdoor recreation and access, enhanced biodiversity and landscapes, food and energy production, urban cooling, and the management of flood risk"*.

4.22 Under the sub-heading of 'Landscape', paragraph 037 supports the use of Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment to *"demonstrate the likely effects of a proposed development on the landscape"*. The PPG also makes reference to Natural England's guidance on undertaking landscape character assessment *"to complement Natural England's National Character Area Profiles"*.

Local Policy

Brentwood Local Plan 2016-2033

4.23 The recently adopted Brentwood Local Plan 2016-2033 now forms part of the statutory development plan, superseding the Brentwood Replacement Local Plan, August 2005 (Saved Policies, August 2008). The polices that are considered relevant to the Site and the Proposed Development are set out below.

4.24 Strategic Policy MG02: Green Belt, states:

C. *"…The Council will seek to enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt to provide or improve access to it; to provide or enhance opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity, and biodiversity and; to improve damaged and derelict land. Development proposals in or adjacent to the Green Belt (including those the subject of allocations in this plan) will be expected to include measures to achieve these objectives so far as it is possible and appropriate.*

D. *For site allocations which are being released from the Green Belt, development proposals should set out ways in which the impact of removing land from the Green Belt are to be offset through compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of the remaining Green Belt land."*

4.25 Strategic Policy NE01: Protecting and Enhancing the Natural Environment, states:

1. *"The Council will require development proposals to use natural resources prudently and protect and enhance the quality of the natural environment. All proposals should, wherever possible, incorporate measures to secure a net gain in biodiversity, protect and enhance the network of habitats, species, and sites (both statutory and non-statutory) and avoid negative impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity. Compensatory measures will only be considered if it is not possible fully to mitigate any impacts."*

4.26 Strategic Policy NE02: Green and Blue Infrastructure, states:

1. *"Brentwood's network of green and blue infrastructure (GBI) will be protected, enhanced, and managed to provide a multi-functional, high quality open space resource, capable of delivering opportunities for recreation, health and wellbeing, ecological connectivity, biodiversity net-gain as well as wider ecosystem services for climate change adaptation.*

2. *New development is expected, where possible and appropriate, to maximise opportunities to enhance or restore existing GBI provision and/or create new provision on site that connects to the wider GBI network. Its design and management should also respect and enhance the character and distinctiveness of the local area.*

3. *Developments on sites containing or are adjacent to a water course or water body (Blue Infrastructure) are required to ensure there is no adverse impact on the functioning or water quality of the Blue Infrastructure. Proposals that maximise opportunities to enhance or restore Blue Infrastructure and incorporate these features into the public realm of the development will be supported. An adequate undeveloped buffer zone should be applied as necessary to mitigate flood risk, in line with Policy NE09 and/or support sustainable drainage, in line with Policy BE05.*

4. *Proposals should provide appropriate specification and maintenance plans for the proposed green and blue infrastructure throughout the life of the development."*

4.27 Strategic Policy NE03: Trees, Woodlands, Hedgerows, states:

1. *"Development proposals that would result in the deterioration or loss of irreplaceable ancient woodland and ancient and veteran trees will not be permitted other than in wholly exceptional circumstances and only if the proposals include a suitable compensation strategy. Applicants will need to demonstrate the efficacy of the strategy by reference to the value of the habitats that will be lost or harmed and provide an appropriate implementation and maintenance programme to underpin the strategy the performance of which will be subject of a condition and/or planning obligation, as appropriate.*

2. *In all other cases, proposals should, so far as possible and practicable, seek to retain existing trees, woodlands and hedgerows where they make a positive contribution to the local landscape and/or biodiversity or which have significant amenity value. Wherever possible and appropriate, landscaping schemes should take account of and incorporate these existing features in the scheme and where any loss is unavoidable, incorporate measures to compensate for their loss."*

4.28 Strategic Policy NE05: Open Space and Recreational Facilities, states:

1. *"All open spaces, including the designated Urban Open Spaces, as identified will be protected and where necessary enhanced to ensure access to a network of*

high-quality provision and opportunities for sport, play and recreation within the borough…

2. *New development is required to maximise opportunities to incorporate new publicly accessible, high-quality and multi-functional open space… that will serve the new and existing community, through improved connections, biodiversity net-gain and high-quality sport, play and recreational amenities.*

3. *The amount and type of provision required will be determined according to the Council's identified needs, as set out in its Open Space and Play Pitch Strategy, and adopted open space standards…*

5. *Proposals for the inclusion or enhancement of supporting and ancillary uses and facilities on open space, such as sport, play and other supporting recreational provision, should meet the following criteria:*

   a) *the proposed facilities help improve the quality of the open space and promote inclusive access to a wide range of users and recreational interests;*

   b) *are demonstrably ancillary to the use of open space and its primary function, e.g. play/sports fields;*

   c) *help to contribute to both the character and amenity of the area and are appropriate and proportionate to the function and nature of the open space."*

4.29 Strategic Policy NE07: Protecting land for Gardens, states:

"Proposals for development on sites that form part of an existing garden or group of gardens will only be permitted where:

   a) *sufficient garden space and space around existing dwellings is retained, especially where these spaces and any trees are worthy of retention due to their contribution to the character of the area and their importance for biodiversity;*

   b) *the form, height and layout of the proposed development is appropriate to the surrounding pattern of development and the character of the area;*

   c) *the amenity and privacy of neighbouring, existing and new residents are protected; and*

   d) *provision is made for adequate amenity space, vehicular access arrangements and parking spaces for the proposed and existing properties.*

4.30 Policy R03: Land North of Shenfield relates directly to the Site and requires the following:

"Land north of Shenfield, known as Officer's Meadow and surrounding land is allocated for residential-led mixed-use development.

1. Amount and Type of Development

Development should provide:

a) around 825 new homes;

b) around 2.1 hectares of land for a co-located primary school and early years and childcare nursery;

c) around 60 bed residential care home or an appropriate mix of specialist accommodation to meet identified needs, in accordance with policy HP04;

d) 5% self-build and custom build across the entire allocation area; and

e) around 2ha of land for employment purposes which may include light industrial, offices, research, and development (within class E) or other sui generis employment uses which are compatible with the residential development.

2. Development Principles

Development should:

a) be accompanied by a comprehensive masterplan and phasing strategy to inform detailed proposals as they come forward;

b) be of a design quality and layout that reflects its key gateway location, particularly on land near to Junction 12, A12;

c) provide vehicular access via Chelmsford Road (A1023) and Alexander Lane;

d) allow if possible for the diversion of Alexander Lane to create a quiet lane for pedestrians and cyclists, with the provision for new and improved route through the development site linking to Chelmsford Road;

e) enhance walking, cycling and public transport services with Shenfield station and local services and facilities in the wider area, including Brentwood Town Centre;

f) provide well-connected internal road layouts which allow for good accessibility;

g) provide new multi-functional green infrastructure including public open space in accordance with Policies NE02 and NE05;

h) maintain and enhance Public Rights of Way within the site and to the wider area;

i) protect and where appropriate enhance the Local Wildlife Site (Arnold's Wood).

j) provide for appropriate landscaping and buffers along sensitive boundaries adjoining the A12 and railway line.

k) maintain the same amount of existing playing field provision on site…; and

l) be designed to ensure a coherent functional relationship with the existing development, which should be well integrated into the layout of the overall masterplan.

5 Site Appraisal

5.1 The Site and the surrounding environment were visited in March 2022, with **Site Appraisal Photographs (SAP) A - O** illustrating the existing character of the Site. The locations from which the SAPs were taken are shown on **Figure 4**.

5.2 A landscape appraisal has been undertaken to ascertain the existing character of the Site. This is achieved through recording and analysing the existing landscape features and characteristics, the way the landscape is experienced, and the value or importance of the landscape and visual resources in the vicinity of the Site. The elements of the landscape that contribute to landscape character include the built and natural form, the pattern of features, detailing, scale, planting, land use and human perception. In this regard, landscape character is derived as a result of the perception of, and action and interaction of, natural and human factors.

5.3 The Site is approximately 21.32ha in size and broadly consists of six parcels of land, predominantly comprising rough grassland/scrubland as illustrated in **Figure 4**. The landform across the Site forms a localised valley; falling from the south-western edge with Alexander Lane at approximately 65m AOD, with the bottom of the valley, at approximately 57m AOD, is identified by a drain that crosses the Site from Chelmsford Road on a north-western to south-eastern alignment. The landform then rises again to the north-eastern corner of the Site at approximately 64m AOD.

5.4 The southern part of the Site, adjacent to Alexander Lane, consists of a single field which is enclosed by mature field boundaries. The central part of the Site, which includes the permissive access way consists of a broadly rectangular field divided by a small drain connecting with the Canterbury Tye Spring the other side of the A12 that feeds the River Wid; however this watercourse was not overtly visible within the Site. There is also a small copse of woodland on the western edge of the central part of the Site, adjacent to Chelmsford Road. The northern part of the Site consists of an open large-scale field with a tract of Ancient Woodland on the eastern edge. This Ancient Woodland is part of Arnold's Wood, which extends to the east of the Site, either side of the Great Eastern Main Line railway. Also within the northern part of the Site are two linear belts of mature trees, which in combination with the Ancient Woodland enclose the eastern edge of the Site.

5.5 PRoW 'Brentwood 86' traverses the eastern part of the Site and lies adjacent to the Ancient Woodland, connecting the residential properties lining the A1023 Chelmsford Road with the main developed area of Shenfield.

5.6 Site Appraisal Photographs A – O demonstrate that there is limited intervisibility with the wider area. Notably, the dense woodland within and adjoining the east of the Site provides substantial containment, as does the mature vegetation within the rear gardens of the ribbon development along the A1023. Vegetation cover is more sporadic along the western and southern boundaries of the Site, thereby providing a visual link to Shenfield High School, its associated playing fields, and passing traffic along the A1023.

5.7 Despite its predominant agricultural land use, the Site does not display the typical characteristics of the surrounding countryside due to the urban influences, including audible intrusion from the surrounding land uses which include:

- residential properties, outbuildings and boundary treatments associated with the ribbon development along the A1023;
- overhead line equipment and masts associated with the railway line;
- lighting columns and signage associated with the A1023; and
- built form associated with Shenfield High School.

5.8 On the basis of the Site Appraisal, the following landscape features have been identified as receptors for the assessment of effects arising from the Proposed Development, including an assessment of their value, susceptibility, and resultant sensitivity to development of the type proposed.

Agricultural Fields

5.9 The open fields are not designated and are common features in the wider landscape, and they exhibit only limited scenic qualities as their openness can only be perceived from very limited locations within the local landscape, including from Chelmsford Road, Alexander Lane, and residential properties immediately adjacent to the Site. This landscape feature makes a moderate positive contribution to the character of the landscape. On this basis, the value of the feature is considered to be **Medium**.

5.10 This landscape feature does not have the capacity to accommodate development of the type proposed without fundamental or permanent alterations to the feature as a whole. Agricultural fields therefore have a **High** susceptibility to development of the type proposed.

5.11 On the basis of the above, the receptor is judged to have a **Medium High** overall sensitivity.

Native Hedgerow

5.12 The hedgerows on the Site are neither designated nor rare and are unlikely to have any wider recognition of value. To an extent they are also poorly maintained, with frequent gaps particularly along the Chelmsford Road boundary and internal field boundaries. On this basis they are considered to have **Low** value.

5.13 In general hedgerows are considered to have high potential for retention and enhancement as part of development of the type proposed, and are readily replaced, resulting in **Low** susceptibility.

5.14 In combination, these factors give rise to a **Low** sensitivity.

Canopy Trees (inc. Ancient Woodland)

5.15 Some trees within the Site are the subject of a Tree Preservation Order. In addition, Ancient Woodland is located at the eastern boundary. These trees exhibit scenic qualities by virtue of their maturity. The Preliminary Tree Survey (by SJA Trees) identifies several of the individual trees and the Ancient Woodland that forms part of Arnold's Wood (W1) as Category A (high quality), and a large number of individual trees and the copse adjoining the A1023 (W3) as Category B (moderate quality). The eastern boundary of the Site is boundary by the Ancient Woodland of Arnold's Wood. Canopy trees are therefore considered to have a **High** value.

5.16 The majority of the existing trees would be retained as part of the proposed development, but inevitably the proposals require the removal of some existing trees. In particular, trees removal would be required to create the main access from the A1023 in accordance with relevant highway safety standards. Whilst a small number of individual trees would also require removal, the majority are retained to create a mature landscape structure within which to set the Proposed Development. Where mature trees are removed, their replacement would take considerable time. A 15m Ancient Woodland buffer will be established along the eastern boundary. On this basis, the susceptibility of this receptor to the proposed development is judged to be **High**.

5.17 The overall sensitivity of the receptor is considered to be **High**.

Waterbodies

5.18 The existing waterbodies of the Site comprise a small number of ditches that reflect the historic field pattern. The ditches are not designated, and the majority of the ditches are likely to be required for informal agricultural land drainage. A substantial parts of the Site identified for the provision of new open space, the frontage to Chelmsford Road, and the main Site access are located within the extents of Flood Zone 3. Nonetheless, the value of the existing waterbodies is judged to be **Low**.

5.19 This receptor is likely to be incorporated/integrated with the proposed SuDS system, hence there is potential for some retention as part of development of the type proposed. However, the ditches will largely be replaced and/or enhanced and therefore considered to have a **Medium** susceptibility to the type of development proposed.

5.20 The overall sensitivity of the receptor is considered to be **Medium**.

The Character of the Site and its Immediate Vicinity

5.21 The character of the Site is in large part defined by its relationship to the eastern settlement edge of Shenfield which overlooks part of the Site. There are some positive perceptual aspects, particularly with respect to partial views towards the woodland to the east. However, only the eastern section of the Site is publicly accessible, and as such it makes a limited contribution to recreation. There is little evidence of ecological, geological, geomorphological, or physiographic interest within the Site. No clear evidence of archaeological, historical, or cultural interest has been identified. The condition of the landscape is generally considered to be good, but little distinctiveness. There are no known associations with notable people, events, or arts. The perception of remoteness and tranquillity experienced within the Site is limited due to its rural-urban fringe location, and proximity to the Great Eastern Main Line railway. The function of this land is largely arable, with some rough pasture to the south-west near Alexander Lane. On this basis, the receptor is deemed to have **Medium** value.

5.22 The Site and its immediate context sit within an urban fringe landscape with an existing relationship to the settlement edge. The Site is well contained by existing vegetation along the field boundaries, the eastern boundary in particular, providing enclosure in many places and a landscape structure with a good capacity to accommodate the type of development proposed with moderate consequences upon the overall integrity of the Site and its surroundings. Overall, the Site and its immediate vicinity is judged to have a **Medium** susceptibility.

5.23 On this basis, the sensitivity of the Site and its immediate vicinity is considered to be **Medium**.

Table 2: Summary of Landscape Receptor Sensitivity

Receptor	Value	Susceptibility	Sensitivity
Agricultural Fields	Medium	High	**Medium High**
Field Boundaries	Low	Low	**Low**
Canopy Trees (inc. Ancient Woodland)	High	High	**High**
Waterbodies	Low	Medium	**Medium**
The Character of the Site	Medium	Medium	**Medium**

6 Visual Appraisal

6.1 The visual context of the Site is illustrated by **Site Context Photographs (SCP) 1-18**, the locations of which are identified on **Figure 5**. The Site lies between the edge of Shenfield and development at Chelmsford Road, with well-defined boundaries provided by the gardens of residential properties, to the north and west; the railway line and woodland to the east and playing fields and Alexander Lane to the south. The Site is visually enclosed within its immediate setting, benefitting from the combination of existing vegetation and development on or immediately adjoining these boundaries, with the exception of a short section of the western and southern boundaries, where the Site is open to Alexander Lane and Chelmsford Road, as shown in **SCP 2** and **SCP 6** respectively.

6.2 Longer distance views from the north, towards the Site, are screened by extensive intervening woodland between the Site and the A12; with intervening vegetation and rising landform restricting views from the majority of locations to the north and west of the Site, as indicated by **SCP 8**, **SCP 9**, **SCP 10**, **SCP 16**, **SCP 17**, and **SCP 18**.

6.3 Views from the east and north-east are generally curtailed by the woodland along the eastern boundary and by the woodland that aligns the railway line within the east of the study area, as shown in **SCP 11**, **SCP 12**, **SCP 13**, **SCP 14**, and **SCP 15**.

6.4 Views from western edge of the Site indicate how the landscape in this area is more open, with more limited vegetation cover. As a result, there are open and partial views across the western part of the Site through breaks in the boundary vegetation. However, these views are seen in the context of views of Chelmsford Road and the residential properties that front onto the road, as illustrated by **SCP 5** and **SCP 6**.

6.5 **SCP 7** indicates that from the elevated location of the road bridge at Hall Lane that crosses the A12 in the wider landscape, views towards the Site are truncated by the intervening vegetation and built form.

6.6 Views from the landscape and townscape to the south of the Site are limited due to the prominence of built form and the existing settlement edge. **SCP 3** and **SCP 4** illustrate glimpsed and partial views towards the Site's southern boundary vegetation from Alexander Lane and the adjacent playing fields. The trees and vegetation along the southern boundary filter and truncate wider views of the Site from the immediate south. **SCP 2** indicates glimpsed open views into the Site from the gap in vegetation on Alexander Lane. From this location there are open views of the southern section of the Site, with internal field boundary hedgerows and trees truncating wider views of the Site.

6.7 In addition to the close-range open, filtered, and glimpsed views from the immediate south and west, there are a variety of close-range views into the Site from PRoW 'Brentwood 86' as it aligns with the eastern and north-eastern Site boundaries. Generally views from the east are limited to those from this footpath at the Site's immediate boundary, as shown in **SCP 1**.

6.8 Overlooking views are also available from residential properties located to the immediate north that front onto Chelmsford Road.

6.9 Nonetheless, due to a combination of vegetation, containing settlement pattern and gently undulating topography, the visual envelope of the Site is restricted to the immediate landscape in which it is located, with glimpses available from very limited locations to the south and west.

Visual Receptors

6.10 On the basis of the visual appraisal, a series of visual receptors have been selected against which the effects of the Proposed Development on visual amenity have been assessed. Visual receptors, together with their susceptibility, value of views, and resultant overall sensitivity of receptor to development of the type proposed are set out below:

Residents on Chelmsford Road - **SCP 6**

6.11 Views are from residential locations that are not designated and have minimal cultural associations, however the views overlooking the agricultural fields and associated trees and woodland are likely to be valued at a local level. Overall, their value is considered to be **Medium**. Receptors are people at their place of residence who have a **High** susceptibility to the type of development proposed. On balance, their sensitivity is judged to be **Medium High**.

Users of Chelmsford Road - **SCP 5** & **SCP 6**

6.12 Views are from a carriageway that is not designated and has minimal cultural associations, with a resultant **Low** value. Receptors in this location are people travelling along a main road who have a **Low** susceptibility to the type of development proposed. On this basis, their overall sensitivity is considered to be **Low**.

Users of Alexander Lane - **SCP 2** & **SCP 4**

6.13 Views are from a narrow lane that is not designated and has minimal cultural associations, with a resultant **Low** value. Receptors in this location are people travelling along a country lane who have a **Medium** susceptibility to the type of development proposed. On this basis, their overall sensitivity is considered to be **Medium Low**. It should be noted that the development proposals would lead to the stopping-up of this lane.

Pedestrians on PRoW 'Brentwood 86' - **SCP 1**

6.14 Views are from a location that is not designated and has minimal cultural associations; therefore the value is considered to be **Medium**. Receptors are people using a PRoW who have a **High** susceptibility to development of the type proposed, resulting in an overall **Medium High** sensitivity.

Users of the Recreation Ground (on Alexander Lane) – **SCP 3**

6.15 Views are from a location that is not designated and has minimal cultural associations; therefore the value is considered to be **Low**. Receptors are people using public open space who have a **Low** susceptibility to development of the type proposed, resulting in an overall **Low** sensitivity.

6.16 Students / Teachers at Shenfield High School - **SCP 4**

6.17 Views are from a location that is not designated and has minimal cultural associations; therefore the value is considered to be **Low**. Receptors are people engaged in study / work / sport, who have a **Low** susceptibility to development of the type proposed, resulting in an overall **Low** sensitivity.

Table 3: Summary of Visual Receptor Sensitivity

Receptor	Value	Susceptibility	Sensitivity
Residents on Chelmsford Road	Medium	High	**Medium High**
Users of Chelmsford Road	Low	Low	**Low**
Users of Alexander Lane	Low	Medium	**Medium Low**
Pedestrians on PRoW 'Brentwood 86'	Medium	High	**Medium High**
Users of the Recreation Ground	Low	Low	**Low**
Students / Teachers at Shenfield H.S.	Low	Low	**Low**

7 Development Proposals

7.1 The Proposed Development is described as follows:

> *"Hybrid planning application for 344 units including 35% affordable housing, safeguarded land for a 2FE primary school and early years facility, public open space and associated landscaping, drainage and highways infrastructure."*

7.2 The design of the Proposed Development is set out in the Design and Access Statement (DAS) which includes a number of illustrative plans, drawings, and images to demonstrate the nature of the proposals, this document will form part of the planning submission. The DAS also includes detailed layout plans for the Proposed Development, incorporating primary mitigation approaches ('mitigation by design').

Site Opportunities and Constraints

7.3 Based on the robust landscape baseline analysis, including the site and context appraisals, visual appraisal, and reviews of policy and published landscape character assessment and guidance, several opportunities and constraints have been identified.

Opportunities

7.4 Opportunities for residential development include:

- The Site is not covered by any landscape designations;
- There is an existing vegetation framework bordering and enclosing the Site, which in combination with bowl-shaped landform and orientation of the Site, results in a limited visual envelope;
- The Site does not exhibit any rare landscape features; and
- Development of the Site offers the potential to consolidate the existing settlement pattern.

Constraints

7.5 Constraints to residential development include:

- Development should be offset from the existing boundary vegetation structure in response to Root Protection Areas (the extent of which should be determined by an arboricultural survey), including the Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) that are enforced within the Site;

- An area of Ancient Woodland is within the Site, as well as an area of Flood Zone, meaning that these areas are not suitable for development, albeit there is the potential to incorporate areas of publicly accessible open space;
- A PRoW runs through the Site, which although limiting the developable area provides the opportunity to introduce ecological corridors, open space and green infrastructure linkages, as well as enhancing the recreational resource and connectivity value of the Site; and
- Development in the more elevated parts of the Site would potentially break the wooded skyline, and accordingly it is recommended that layers of structural planting are introduced to aid the screening and softening of views, while overall building heights are limited in these areas.

Design Strategy

7.6 A series of design considerations have been identified through the baseline analysis. Primary landscape mitigation measures have been included in the Proposed Development with the aim of reducing or avoiding adverse effects on landscape character and visual amenity. These are illustrated on **Figure 6**, and include the following measures:

- A landscape-led approach to the siting of the proposed built form, scale, and massing, based on an iterative design process and informed by an analysis of the landscape and visual baseline;
- Ensure that the introduced built forms contribute positively to the sense of place and local distinctiveness by using materials that reflect or complement the local vernacular and exhibit a high quality of design;
- The height and siting of built forms within the Site requires careful consideration, in particular, the use of higher ground for development. Development should be planned so as to avoid roofscapes from breaking the wooded skyline, thereby maintaining views of wooded horizons;
- Provide a green corridor along the existing alignment of the PRoW, responding positively to the visual amenity interests of users of this PRoW and breaking up the perceived scale and extent of the introduced built forms;
- Retain and enhance the existing vegetation within the Site where possible, in particular the area of Ancient Woodland at Arnold's Wood in the eastern part of the Site;

- Provide cycle and pedestrian links to connect with the wider PRoW network and areas of settlement;
- Provide Green Infrastructure links through the Site to break up the perceived scale and extent of built form to assimilate the introduced built form into the landscape, reflecting the historic field pattern and responding to the underlying landform;
- Soften the edge of the development by providing a dense vegetation buffer along the A1023 Chelmsford Road in order to provide a robust, defensible, and soft development edge; and
- Incorporate SuDS within the lower-lying part of the Site, resulting in publicly accessible open green space and habitat creation.

7.7 The nature and scale of the Proposed Development is set out within the DAS which respond to the key development principles set out in the landscape and visual opportunities and constraints analysis above.

Secondary Mitigation

7.8 To assist in the integration of built form into the landscape, by way of secondary mitigation, to be secured through a suitably worded condition, a strategic landscape design approach for the Proposed Development has been considered. This strategy focuses on both the retention and reinforcement of a locally characteristic structural vegetation framework for the proposed built form, as well as a series of spaces that enhance sense of place at the settlement edge, notably in terms of a nature space in the eastern part of the Site.

7.9 The aforementioned principles for landscape mitigation and enhancement have been included within a comprehensive landscape strategy that reflects the requirements of the Essex Design Guide, as illustrated at **Figure 7**. The landscape strategy is considered to have the potential to lead to substantial benefits in terms of landscape features, character, and biodiversity.

8 Assessment of Effects

8.1 This section sets out the anticipated landscape and visual effects resulting from the Proposed Development as illustrated within the DAS and DC, considering effects at **Day 1**, and **Year 15** (residual effects). The assessment of residual effects takes into account the substantive establishment of the planting proposals. Tree and woodland planting is anticipated to grow at a rate of approximately 1m every 3 years, whilst it is assumed that reinforced and proposed hedgerows around the Site will have reached full maturity and a height of 2 - 3m.

8.2 Landscape and visual effects are related subject areas but assessed separately. Landscape effects derive from changes in the natural and built environments which may give rise to changes in their fabric, character, and quality and how these are experienced. Visual effects relate to the changes that arise in the composition of available views as a result of a development proposal (please refer to **Appendix A**).

8.3 Effects on landscape character, value, and visual amenity can arise from many causes, for example, perceived changes to:

- the scale, grain, and pattern of the landscape, for example by alien or engineered landform or out of context planting or changes to land cover;
- deterioration or erosion of the rural landscape by the urbanising effects of traffic, hard surfacing, structures and built development, lighting and signs and associated loss of tranquillity; and
- views or loss of views between surrounding locations and the Proposed Development.

Construction Effects

8.4 It is acknowledged that the construction phase will result in a number of alterations to the existing landscape character and visual amenity through the addition of plant, machinery, and construction traffic movements in the landscape together with groundworks and construction of the Proposed Development and landscape implementation operations. In this regard the effects that will occur during construction will typically be adverse in nature and fluctuating in intensity due to the different operations occurring on the Site.

8.5 Landscape and visual impacts during construction will occur at various times throughout the build programme across the Appeal Site and would be particularly evident within the open character of the agricultural field. The delivery and phasing of the scheme is described at Pages 72 & 73 of the MDPD, indicating a five-phase construction programme with the last phase of residential development predicted to start in Q1 of 2029. The first phase, predicted to

start in Q2 of 2024 includes the realignment of Chelmsford Road, the main entrance, the residential area near the proposed School Plaza, and the central parkland. The assessment acknowledges the phased delivery of the scheme over several years, where the construction effects are considered temporary and delivered as one continuous phase.

8.6 The school will be delivered at some stage beyond 2029, however no design details are currently available and the effects resulting from the delivery of the school are therefore **not** considered within this assessment.

8.7 Typical issues and activities that would be likely to affect landscape and visual amenity include:

- Site clearance works, including loss of vegetation;
- Site access and haul routes, including vehicle movements to, from and across the site;
- Excavation, cut and fill and disposal areas;
- Materials stockpiles;
- Dust generation;
- Staging areas;
- Building construction works;
- Fixed and mobile construction equipment and plant;
- Lighting of construction works;
- Installation of utilities, including water, drainage, power, and lighting;
- Temporary parking and on-site accommodation and working areas;
- Presence of construction workers;
- Potential road and footway closures during construction;
- Site hoardings; and
- Protection of existing features such as adjacent woodland and trees.

8.8 Construction effects on the landscape would be of limited duration, although the changes to the landscape would be regarded as irreversible.

Landscape Effects

8.9 Landscape value is defined by GLVIA3 as being:

> *"The relative value that is attached to different landscapes by society. A landscape may be valued by different stakeholders for a whole variety of different reasons".*

8.10 Whilst the NPPF does not define 'valued landscapes', it is acknowledged and established by case law, that value is not merely something that is designated either by statute, such as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, or non-statutory process. The Site is not considered to be a 'valued landscape' in and of itself, it is not considered to demonstrate any particular 'intrinsic' value. To better assess the landscape value of the Site and its surroundings, the assessment follows recent guidance set out in TGN 02/21 issued by the Landscape Institute.

8.11 Landscape susceptibility is defined by GLVIA3 as:

> *"The ability of a defined landscape or visual receptors to accommodate the specific Proposed Development without undue negative consequences."*

8.12 Landscape effects are considered in terms of:

- Sensitivity of the receptor made up of judgements about:
  - the value attached to the receptor; and
  - the susceptibility of the receptor to the type of change arising from the specific proposals;
- Magnitude of the effect made up of judgements about:
  - the size and scale of the effect, for example is there a complete loss of a particular element of the landscape or a minor change;
  - the geographical extent of the area that would be affected; and
  - the duration of the effect and its reversibility.

8.13 A description of the assessed sensitivities and magnitudes of change, along with a final conclusions on significance of landscape effect can be found below.

National Character Effects

8.14 The baseline assessment determined that NCA 111: Northern Thames Basin has a **Medium** value, with a **Low** susceptibility to the type of development proposed. Overall, the NCA is judged to have a **Medium Low** sensitivity to the Proposed Development.

8.15 **Construction**: The construction phase would introduce temporary structures and construction equipment, amounting to a direct change to an area of existing agricultural land use. However, given the scale and extent of this activity in relation to the extent of the NCA, there would only be a very slight change to the existing receptor, affecting a limited area. Further mitigation measures, such as the use of solid hoardings and the restricted movement of stockpiles, will not noticeably reduce the limited deterioration of this landscape receptor. On this basis, the magnitude of change is judged to be **Very Small**, leading to a **Negligible** adverse significance of effect.

8.16 **Day 1**: Upon completion, the Proposed Development will result in a change of the existing land use and the introduction of new built form, however the scale and extent of change is considered to be very localised in relation to the extent of the wider NCA. The completed scheme will be perceived as an extension of the eastern settlement edge of Shenfield, in land that is well-contained by Chelmsford Road and the railway line, which together form part of the existing settlement pattern. The additional residential development will cause a very slight change given the large scale of the NCA and will represent the expansion of an existing settlement, with the capacity to absorb growth within the existing landscape structure and to deliver further accessible greenspace. Overall, the magnitude of change is judged to be **Very Small**, resulting a **Negligible** adverse significance of effect.

8.17 **Year 15**: Over time, the adverse effects of the expansion of an existing settlement would be partly mitigated by the delivery of the proposed open spaces, as well as by the comprehensive tree planting strategy across the Site. These steps are considered to reflect the environmental opportunities for the NCA, improving access between rural and urban areas through good green infrastructure links and expanding the tree coverage within the Site, serving to enhance the local landscape character. The magnitude of change remains **Very Small**; however the beneficial effects slightly outweigh the negatives, resulting an overall **Negligible** beneficial significance of effect.

Local Character Effects

8.18 The baseline assessment determined that F10 Heybridge Wooded Farmland has a **Medium** value and a **Medium** susceptibility to the type of development proposed. On this basis, the LCA is judged to have a **Medium** sensitivity to the Proposed Development.

8.19 **Construction**: The construction phase would introduce direct changes to the existing agricultural land within a peripheral part of the LCA, that is tightly bounded by the Chelmsford Road and the railway line. This results in the loss of some open space characteristic of the LCA, which is limited to an area which is closely connected to the existing settlement edge of Shenfield, and strongly influenced by the settlement edge character. Given the existing context of the Site and the scale and extent of this activity in relation to the extent of the LCA, this would result in a very slight change to the receptor. Further mitigation measures, such as the use of solid hoardings and the restricted movement of stockpiles, will not noticeably reduce the limited deterioration of this landscape receptor. On this basis, the magnitude of change is judged to be **Small**, leading to a **Minor** adverse significance of effect.

8.20 **Day 1**: Upon completion, the coherent layout of the Proposed Development will respond positively to the existing landform, vegetation, and landscape character of the Site. In particular, the new residential development within the Site, together with a comprehensive landscape strategy will respect and enhance the existing landscape and settlement pattern. The introduction of new homes will cause a permanent loss of a relatively small area of the LCA's productive arable land, however it will also introduce substantial tree planting and accessible green space, as well as reinforcing the existing Site boundaries to create a coherent and recognisable settlement edge. Whilst the proposals will be permanent and irreversible, they represent only a very slight change to the existing landscape receptor and will affect a very limited area relative to the size of the LCA with no overall benefit or deterioration of the LCA. It follows that the magnitude of change is **Very Small**, resulting a **Negligible** adverse significance of effect.

8.21 **Year 15**: Over time, the comprehensive landscape strategy proposed for the Site will have established by Year 15, introducing a new central area of parkland, creating a robust and tree-lined boundary with Chelmsford Road, and the planting of a large number trees throughout the Site. The proposals deliver a strong sense of place, where the various publicly accessible spaces are linked by the proposed high-quality green infrastructure. These open spaces will provide a sensitive transition between development and the wider landscape, resulting overall in a very slight improvement of the LCA, not uncharacteristic with its existing qualities. The magnitude of change remains **Very Small** however the beneficial effects slightly outweigh the negatives, resulting an overall **Negligible** beneficial significance of effect.

Effects on Landscape Features: Agricultural Fields

8.22 The baseline assessment determined that the Agricultural Fields have a **Medium** value and a **High** susceptibility to the type of development proposed, leading to a **Medium High** sensitivity to the Proposed Development.

8.23 **Construction**: All of the existing agricultural fields will be lost in order to accommodate the construction of built form, transport infrastructure, and new public realm. The areas proposed for the amenity open space will be subject to activities related to planting, landscaping, and the earthworks required for the creation of the SuDS attenuation basins. The implementation of further mitigation measures during the construction phase, whilst beneficial, will not perceptibly reduce the pronounced change to this landscape receptor or affect the overall significance of effect. Overall, the magnitude of change is judged to be **Large**, resulting a **Major** adverse significance of effect.

8.24 **Day 1**: the existing agricultural fields will be subject to a pronounced and irreversible change from open arable use to residential development, such that the overall integrity of much of this landscape feature will be lost. It is considered that the proposed level changes can be accommodated without undue disturbance to the underlying topography of the fields. The layout will create open spaces including new planting, green infrastructure and enhancement of existing boundary vegetation, and these improvements will begin to have a positive effect upon completion. Whilst the fields will no longer be agricultural in nature, their biodiversity and landscape value will have begun to improve as a result of the early delivery of the landscape strategy. This will meaningfully mitigate the adverse effects. On this basis, the magnitude of change is judged to reduce to **Medium**, leading to a **Moderate** adverse significance of effect.

8.25 **Year 15**: the comprehensive landscape strategy will have become established by Year 15, resulting in substantial landscape and biodiversity improvements to this landscape receptor. The change to this receptor will remain pronounced and irreversible, however, the positive effects resulting from the landscape enhancements will provide mitigation that will reduce the adverse effects considerably. The magnitude of effect therefore reduces further to **Small**, resulting in a **Minor** adverse significance of effect.

Effects on Landscape Features: Field Boundaries

8.26 The baseline assessment determined that the Native Hedgerows have a **Low** value and a **Low** susceptibility to the type of development proposed, leading to a **Low** sensitivity to the Proposed Development.

8.27 **Construction**: The majority of the existing field boundaries will be retained and protected, with a very small proportion to be removed for construction purposes and to allow for access into the Site from Chelmsford Road and Alexander Lane. Within the Site, field boundaries are retained where possible, in particular those in the vicinity of the proposed parkland. In this area, a minimum 10m buffer from the centre line of each boundary hedgerow is proposed for their protection, and this protection will be in accordance with BS5837:2012 such that there will be minimal disruption to the retained hedgerows during construction. Overall, the magnitude of change is judged to be **Small**, resulting a **Minor** adverse significance of effect.

8.28 **Day 1**: the existing field boundaries will be gapped-up and reinforced as part of the landscape strategy to delivery amenity open space and natural/semi-natural green space around the Site perimeter. Whilst the contribution of new planting to the overall value of the receptor is considered to be limited at Year 1, there would still be a measurable improvement due to the extent of proposed planting and the rate at which this type of planting establishes. The magnitude of change remains **Small**; however the beneficial effects outweigh the negatives, resulting an overall **Minor** beneficial significance of effect.

8.29 **Year 15**: following the successful restoration and reinforcement of the existing gappy field boundaries around the perimeter of the Site, there will be a marked improvement to the overall structure, cohesiveness, and overall quality of the receptor. As a result, this receptor would be subject to a noticeable improvement. The magnitude of effect therefore increases to **Medium**, leading to a **Moderate** beneficial significance of effect.

Effects on Landscape Features: Canopy Trees (inc. Ancient Woodland)

8.30 The baseline assessment determined that the receptor 'Canopy Trees' had a **High** value and a **High** susceptibility to the type of development proposed, leading to a **High** sensitivity to the Proposed Development.

8.31 **Construction**: the majority of the existing trees are to be retained and protected, with a limited number of trees removed along Chelmsford Road to allow for the road realignment and introduction of the roundabout. Offsetting the proposed built form and other development away from the trees to be retained will diminish the adverse effects of construction activities. In particular, the veteran tree and other mature specimen trees / tree belts within the Site should be protected in accordance with BS5837:2012 to minimise adverse effects. The Ancient Woodland will be protected by a 15m buffer with Heras fencing. Overall, the magnitude of change is considered to be **Medium**, resulting a **Moderate** adverse significance of effect.

8.32 **Day 1**: the proposed tree planting strategy introduces a substantial number of new native / non-native trees, including street trees, garden trees, and additional trees within the proposed amenity open spaces and natural/semi-natural green space. Through the early delivery of these open spaces and the ongoing maintenance of the existing vegetation, the overall quantity and condition of trees and woodland within the Site will be perceptibly improved upon completion. This will meaningfully mitigate the adverse effects. On this basis, the magnitude of change is judged to reduce to **Small**, leading to a **Minor** beneficial significance of effect.

8.33 **Year 15**: the Proposed Development has been sensitively designed to reduce both the immediate and long-term impact on existing canopy trees. The proposals for tree planting represent an increase in the quantity native species across the Site. This approach is considered to be sympathetic with the surrounding area, thereby contributing positively to local

character. The increased extent and quality of this landscape resource throughout the Site will result in a noticeable improvement of the existing landscape resource by Year 15 once these trees have matured and established. Enhanced management and maintenance of existing canopy trees will also lead to positive effects. The magnitude of effect therefore increases to **Medium**, resulting in a **Moderate** beneficial significance of effect.

Effects on Landscape Features: Waterbodies

8.34 The baseline assessment determined that the receptor 'Waterbodies' had a **Low** value and a **Medium** susceptibility to the type of development proposed, resulting in a **Medium** sensitivity to the Proposed Development.

8.35 **Construction**: The drainage ditch that passes through the proposed parkland will be retained as a focal point within this new open space but culverted to allow the proposed main spine road to cross this feature. The remaining ditches will be interrupted by the development proposals and will be incorporated within the proposed SuDS system where possible. A number of new attenuation basin will be introduced as part of this drainage system, with two of these waterbodies designed to hold permanent standing water. To minimise potential disturbance to the retained drainage ditch within the parkland, temporary fencing should be erected, and material stockpiles sited away from the features so as to prevent surface water run-off and leaching. The drainage ditch passing the Veteran tree will be retained within the veteran tree buffer, and potentially connected with the SuDS system to maintain flow (further to arboricultural advice). Overall, the magnitude of change is judged to be **Small**, resulting a **Minor** adverse significance of effect.

8.36 **Day 1**: The Proposed Development includes additional wetland features within the landscape, and these will provide a distinctive sense of place, structural diversity, and important biodiversity value upon completion of the development. Importantly, two of the attenuation basins will be designed to hold standing water to provide a wider variety of habitat types. The existing ditch that is identified as a flood hazard has been incorporated within the proposed parkland. The introduction of new attenuation features is determined to provide a limited improvement to the existing landscape resource. On this basis, the magnitude of change is judged to reduce to **Small**, leading to a **Minor** beneficial significance of effect.

8.37 **Year 15**: over time the proposed wetland features and their associated native wetland meadow, marginal and aquatic planting will have become fully established habitats, and as such their biodiversity and landscape value will result in a noticeable improvement to the existing landscape resource. The magnitude of effect is judged to increase to **Medium**, resulting in a **Moderate** beneficial significance of effect.

Effects on the Character of the Site

8.38 The baseline assessment determined that the character of the Site had a **Medium** value and susceptibility to the type of development proposed, resulting in a **Medium** sensitivity to the Proposed Development.

8.39 **Construction**: equipment and activity associated with the construction phase will cause a pronounced change to the existing character of the Site and its immediate surroundings, and this will take place over an area that represents the entirety of the receptor. The further mitigation measures proposed for this phase, such as the use of solid hoardings and the restricted movement of stockpiles, will have a positive effect on the character of the Site's immediate surroundings, but less so on the character of the Site itself. Therefore, they will not noticeably reduce the pronounced change to this landscape receptor or affect the overall significance of effect. On this basis, the magnitude of effect is considered to be **Large**, resulting in a **Major** adverse significance of effect.

8.40 **Day 1**: the Proposed Development will result in a noticeable increase in built form on the Site upon completion, reducing the sense of openness, however this will be experienced from a limited number of locations within the local landscape. The proposals will introduce new habitat areas and generate an overall increase in biodiversity value, including a new landscape edge to Chelmsford Road and a substantial area of centrally located parkland. The existing drainage ditches will be incorporated within a site wide SuDS scheme, creating additional opportunities for habitat creation. This will meaningfully mitigate the adverse effects. The existing public footpath passing through the Site will be retained (although subject to a minor detour) and integrated within an improved network of pedestrian and cycle routes that connect with the wider PRoW network. The eastward expansion of the settlement edge of Shenfield is considered to be well-contained and in keeping with the existing settlement pattern. On this basis, the magnitude of change will reduce to **Medium**, resulting in a **Moderate** adverse significance of effect.

8.41 **Year 15**: over the intervening time period, the landscape mitigation strategy will result in the introduction and maturation of positive characteristic features throughout the Site. The adverse effect resulting from the loss of agricultural land and openness, to be replaced by residential development, will be mitigated by the reinforcement and improvement of the landscape features that contribute to the Site's character, responding to the published landscape guidance and policy. This will result in improvements to the ecological and landscape functionality of the Site and its immediate surroundings. On balance, the magnitude of effect will reduce further to **Small**, leading to a **Minor** adverse significance of effect.

Visual Effects

8.42 The assessment of visual effects considers the impact that the Proposed Development will have on the visual amenity of the visual receptors at the identified key views. The locations of the key views are illustrated at **Figure 5**. These are not intended to be an exhaustive list of the visual impacts that will arise, but rather are intended to be representative of the viewing experience in the vicinity of the Site and surrounding area.

8.43 The selected viewpoint locations have been guided by the Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) modelling that underlies the visual appraisal plan. The ZTV illustrates the maximum potential visual envelope of the Proposed Development, in other words the widest area in the surrounding landscape from where the proposed data halls may be visible. The ZTV covers a wide geographic area, spanning multiple administrative areas, and does not account for existing features, other than woodland blocks (assumed 12m height) and existing buildings, as derived from OS Mapping. Field surveys were carried out to verify the findings of this desk-based modelling, such that an appropriate but proportionate assessment could be carried out in accordance with best practice guidance.

8.44 The locations of the representative viewpoints were presented to the Landscape Officer at Brentwood Borough Council as part of pre-application discussions, with the intention to agree the location of viewpoints to be assessed and the requirement for any specific type of visualisation. No additional viewpoints or visualisation requirements were requested.

8.45 The overall significance of visual effects can be described as a consideration of:

- Sensitivity of the visual receptor (viewer) made up of judgements about:
  - the susceptibility to change of the receptor; and
  - the value attached to views
- Magnitude of visual effect:
  - for example, if there is a complete loss of a particular element or only a minor change, together with a consideration of extent and permanence.

8.46 Visual susceptibility to change depends upon receptor occupation or activity and the extent to which attention focuses on views and visual amenity. GLVIA3 advises that it is common for users of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) whose attention is mainly focussed on the landscape, and for residents of properties exposed to views of the Site, to have a higher susceptibility.

8.47 Following extensive fieldwork, a number of potential viewpoints have been scoped out of this assessment on the basis that there is no intervisibility between the receptor and the Site given the intervening woodland and built form, namely: **SCP 7**, **SCP 8**, **SCP 9**, **SCP 10**, **SCP 11**, **SCP 12**, **SCP13**, **SCP 14**, **SCP 15**, **SCP 16**, **SCP 17**, **SCP 18**, **SCP 19**, and **SCP 20**.

8.48 This scoping exercise demonstrates that available views are limited to receptors in the immediate vicinity of the Site.

Residents on Chelmsford Road – **SCP 5** & **SCP 6**

8.49 The visual baseline determined that the value of these views will be **Medium**, however the receptors are people at their place of residence who will have a **High** susceptibility to the type of development proposed. On balance, their sensitivity is judged to be **Medium High**.

8.50 **SCP 5** & **SCP 6** are representative views looking from Chelmsford Road across the agricultural fields that comprise the Site. Whilst no private residences have been visited as part of this assessment, this view is considered to reflect an approximation of potential views from residential properties that adjoin the Site along its northern boundary. It should be noted that these properties tend to face onto Chelmsford Road and have long back gardens that often feature substantial mature vegetation at the boundary with the Site. It is understood that there has been a limited degree of scrub clearance within the Site to identify and secure the Site extents. To assess the effects on residents resulting from the Proposed Development in greater detail, a Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA) will be required. It should be noted that the part of the Site closest to these residences has been reserved for the future construction of the school, which may come forward at a later stage. The north-eastern part of the Site will back directly onto existing gardens. On the basis of the above, it is considered that most residents will have only screened and filtered views into the Site from first floor windows, and only the taller plant, construction and external/security lighting would be visible through the boundary vegetation from the ground floor windows.

8.51 **Construction**: as noted above, most residential receptors are assumed to have screened and filtered views through the boundary vegetation and towards the existing agricultural fields. The receptors will be able to appreciate the installation of hoardings along the northern boundary to secure the Site. Where views towards the Site are available, receptors will have partial views, filtered by vegetation, of the equipment, materials, and activity associated with the construction phase. Where available, the change in view will be pronounced as would be expected with the development of a greenfield location. The implementation of further mitigation measures during the construction phase, whilst beneficial, will not reduce the pronounced change experienced by these visual receptors or affect the overall significance of effect. Taking a worst case and precautionary approach, the magnitude of effect is judged to be **Large**, which results in a **Major** adverse significance of effect. This effect is only likely to be

applicable to receptors living at those dwellings with an unobscured view into the Site, and where development directly adjoins their property. In many cases, the significance of effect is predicted to be lower, in the range **Minor** to **Moderate** adverse, where the change will be barely perceptible to limited, given the distances between the receptor and the residential development and the density of the intervening vegetation.

8.52 **Day 1 (Winter)**: where available, the change in the view experienced by some of these receptors will remain pronounced, although the construction elements will have been replaced by the built form of a high-quality development and the emerging landscape strategy, partially mitigating the adverse effects. Whilst the reserved school area will create a buffer of open space between some existing dwellings and the Proposed Development, some receptors will experience a pronounced loss in openness. Again, taking a worst case and precautionary approach, the magnitude of effect remains **Large**, which results in a **Major** adverse significance of effect. This effect is only likely to be applicable to receptors living at those dwellings with an unobscured view into the Site, and where development directly adjoins their property. In many cases, the significance of effect is predicted to be lower, in the range **Minor** to **Moderate** adverse, where the change will be barely perceptible to limited, given the distances between the receptor and the residential development and the density of the intervening vegetation.

8.53 **Year 15 (Summer)**: over time the new planting proposed as part of the landscape strategy will have matured and established, further integrating the built form into the landscape. Views will be increasingly screened and filtered by the vegetation along the northern boundary, where the Site adjoins these properties. No mitigation planting is proposed within the reserved school area. Within the Site, the proposed street tree planting will have further established to create an attractive new avenues and homezones. Nonetheless, where available, the change in views will remain noticeable to existing residents. The worst-case magnitude of effect will reduce to **Medium**, realising a **Moderate** adverse significance of effect. As previously noted, many receptors will experience a lower significance of effects that takes the level of effect below the significance threshold.

Users of Chelmsford Road - **SCP 5** & **SCP 6**

8.54 The visual baseline determined that the value of these views will be **Low**, where the receptors are pedestrians, cyclists and motorists using Chelmsford Road who will typically have a **Low** susceptibility to the type of development proposed. On this basis, their overall sensitivity is considered to be **Low**.

8.55 **SCP 5** & **SCP 6** are representative views looking from Chelmsford Road across the agricultural fields that comprise the Site. The viewpoints are located at either end of a gap of approximately 230m in length between No. 165 and No. 167 Chelmsford Road, where there is

a break in the linear development that follows the southern side of the carriageway. This break in built form affords partial and filtered views into the Site. **SCP 5** is located slightly to the north of a small woodland block adjacent to No. 165 and is representative of the screening afforded by the existing roadside vegetation along the majority of this part of Chelmsford Road. **SCP 6** is located near the new Atallon Homes development adjacent to No. 167 Chelmsford Road and benefits from a gap in the existing roadside vegetation at a point close to the proposed main entrance.

8.56 **Construction**: the principle effects will arise from the removal of some of the roadside vegetation from the gap between No. 165 and No. 167 Chelmsford Road to allow for the realignment of the carriageway and the introduction of the roundabout. In particular, two Horse Chestnut and an English Oak (all Cat. B trees) will be removed from a central area within this gap, and several Cat C. trees will be felled close to the Atallon development. This will create more open views into the Site from the carriageway until the Site hoardings are installed. Once in place they will screen views of the majority of the Site, with only the taller plant, construction activity, and external/security lighting visible above the hoardings. The proposals will cause a pronounced change to views towards the Site along this part of Chelmsford Road, with a loss of features that will substantially alter the composition of the view. Whilst these changes indicate a larger magnitude of change, the short duration that receptors will be able to perceive the changes reduces the magnitude to **Medium**. On this basis, the overall significance of effect is considered to be **Moderate** adverse.

8.57 **Day 1 (Winter)**: the proposals will deliver a completely new frontage to the Proposed Development between No. 165 and No. 167 Chelmsford Road, with a new tree and shrub planting in accordance with the landscape strategy described within the DAS. Receptors will be able to see the proposed 3-storey apartment block on the eastern side of the main entrance, that has been designed to perform a gateway role at the roundabout, increasing legibility at this point on Chelmsford Road. The new boundary planting will create framed views looking over the new central parkland towards the denser development near the School Plaza at the heart of the scheme. Views into the new parkland will include the NEAP that will be located in a central part of this open space, slightly to the west of the main entrance. The proposals will cause a noticeable change to views on this part of Chelmsford Road, as the introduction of new homes will fundamentally change the character of the Site. However, the introduction of the new boundary planting and parkland mitigates these effects, and when considered alongside the short duration in which receptors will be able to witness the changes, reduces the magnitude of change to **Small**. Overall, the significance of effect is considered to be **Minor** adverse.

8.58 **Year 15 (Summer)**: the new planting proposed as part of the landscape strategy will have matured and established, further integrating the built form into the landscape. The majority of

views from Chelmsford Road will be heavily filtered by the intervening vegetation along the northern boundary, but the framed views across the central parkland will be more defined. The planting at the entrance of the development will anchor the gateway apartment building, softening the main access from Chelmsford Road. The street tree planting along this main spine road will also have matured to create an avenue approach into the heart of the settlement. The beneficial effects arising from the establishment of the landscape strategy will outweigh the adverse effects resulting from the introduction of new built form and infrastructure, creating a well-considered and attractive setting to this settlement edge expansion. The overall magnitude of effect remains **Small**, resulting in a **Minor** beneficial significance of effect.

Users of Alexander Lane - **SCP 2** & **SCP 4**

8.59 The visual baseline determined that the value of these views will be **Low**, where the receptors are pedestrians, cyclists and motorists using Alexander Lane who will typically have a **Medium** susceptibility to the type of development proposed. On this basis, their overall sensitivity is considered to be **Medium Low**.

8.60 **SCP 2** & **SCP 4** are representative views from Alexander Lane that is not designated and has minimal cultural associations. This lane will be stopped-up to motorised traffic and replaced with a 3.5m width shared pedestrian / cycle route. **SCP 2** is located at the southern end of Alexander Lane, looking through a gated field access, and onwards towards the Site. The gates provide access to the land that is proposed for development by Stonebond Properties. The south-western corner of the Site is indicated by the post and wire fencing at the mid-point of the view, with scrubby vegetation beyond. The open agricultural fields within the Site can be seen in the midground of the view, with the well-treed northern boundary (adjoining the back gardens of properties on Chelmsford Road) creating the horizon line. The existing roadside vegetation on Alexander Lane is evident to the left and right of the view. **SCP 4** is located at the gated entrance to the playing fields to the north of Alexander Lane and Shenfield High School. The gates dominate the view and the boundary vegetation at the perimeter of the playing fields screens views towards the Site. The gates and security fencing will be retained with a new vehicular turning point created, to allow the stopping-up of Alexander Lane, to the south-east of this view.

8.61 **Construction**: the assessment assumes that Alexander Lane will be stopped-up at Q1 of 2028 (the commencement of Phase 3), such that all receptors will be prevented from using the lane until the completion of that phase. Upon completion, the lane will be reopened as a shared pedestrian cycle route, with additional planting to reinforce the existing roadside vegetation. On this basis, receptors are considered to be users of the lane up to the road closure near the gated access to the playing fields. Receptors will clearly perceive this road

closure and hoardings at the southern end of Alexander Lane near the gated access to the Recreation Ground. Construction activity, plant, and external security lighting may be visible beyond the hoardings resulting in a limited change to available views, which do not materially alter the composition of the view, recognising that the closure of Alexander Lane will limit the general availability of views. Vehicle movements relating to the construction activity may route along Alexander Lane, but this is to be confirmed. Overall, the magnitude of effect is judged to be **Small** to reflect the fact that the majority of views from Alexander Lane will not be available given the road closure, which results in a **Minor** adverse significance of effect.

8.62 **Day 1 (Winter)**: receptors at the southern end of Alexander Lane will see a noticeable change to the character of this part of the lane. New high-quality homes will face onto the lane, which are illustrated within the DAS and described as having a very particular character and style to reflect the gateway nature of this part of the scheme. The buildings will be up to 3-storeys in height, with gabled features and facades of brick and timber weatherboarding in a dark colour. The new dwellings will be setback from the carriageway, with generous front gardens, and the existing trees and other vegetation will be retained where possible. As noted above, the lane will be stopped-up, such that it will continue into the Proposed Development via the secondary access, and the previous route of Alexander Lane will continue as a shared pedestrian / cycle route. The existing roadside vegetation will be enhanced with new tree and shrub planting along this route. At the northern end of the lane, a vehicular turning head will be introduced near the gated access to the playing fields. The closure of Alexander Lane will also bring benefits by reducing the number vehicle movements, using the lane as a short cut to/from Chelmsford Road. These changes are considered to enhance the existing character of Alexander Lane, with an associated improvement to views along the lane and into the scheme. The magnitude of effect is considered **Medium**, which results in a **Minor** beneficial significance of effect.

8.63 **Year 15 (Summer)**: the proposed planting will continue to mature and establish over the intervening years, anchoring and embedding the dwellings along Alexander Lane. The shared pedestrian / cycle route along the Alexander Lane will also have developed into an attractive and welcoming linear open space. Views into the development will witness the street tree planting along the main spine road leading towards the heart of the scheme. The magnitude of effect is considered **Large**, given the pronounced improvement to the existing view, and a **Moderate** beneficial significance of effect.

Pedestrians on PRoW 'Brentwood 86' - **SCP 1**

8.64 The visual baseline determined that the value of these views will be **Medium**, where the receptors are pedestrians using the PRoW who will have a **High** susceptibility to development of the type proposed, resulting in an overall **Medium High** sensitivity.

8.65 **SCP 1** is a representative view looking north-east from PRoW 'Brentwood 86' over the land controlled by Stonebond Properties towards the Site. The mature trees on the south-western boundary of the Site are clearly visible at the centre of the view. The footpath can be seen to the right of the view, heading north east between the well-treed railway embankment and a small woodland under the control of Anglia Water. The footpath then emerges at the south-western corner of a small field to the south-east of the Site. The footpath crosses this field on a diagonal north-eastern bearing towards the Ancient Woodland that forms the Site's eastern boundary. The footpath then continues northwards along the eastern edge of the field to the north-east of the Site and the Ancient Woodland, where it emerges at Chelmsford Road next to a car repair workshop (Shenfield Auto Services).

8.66 **Construction**: the footpath is likely to be closed at various stages during the construction phase, as the south-eastern field will be developed at Phase 2 (Q1 2027) and the north-eastern field will be developed at Phase 2 (Q1 2029). The footpath will be diverted slightly to accommodate the introduction of new dwellings in the south-eastern field, ultimately following the route of a shared surface access route to the new dwellings. No diversion is required within the north-eastern field, but the footpath will benefit from an upgrade to surface finish, which is currently unfinished. On this basis, construction effects are only likely to be visible from this footpath up to Q1 2027 and will not be visible from the footpath until the footpath is reopened following the completion of Phase 4. Construction within the south-western field is not expected to start until Phase 3 (Q1 2028), so will not have commenced whilst the footpath remains operational. Taking a precautionary approach, the magnitude of effect is judged to be **Medium** to reflect the fact that screened and filtered views of the Phase 1 construction activity will be noticeable from the footpath during this phase, particularly where the footpath passes through the agricultural fields to the east, but views will not be available during the latter phases of construction. This results in a **Moderate** adverse significance of effect.

8.67 **Day 1 (Winter)**: the footpath is likely to be reopened only after the completion of Phase 4 at which point residential development will be completed. Receptors will see a pronounced change to the existing views, with the agricultural fields replaced with new built form. The proposed development has been carefully designed to respond to its existing setting, and the existing landscape frame work will be retained. Views from the diverted footpath in the south-eastern field will be along a new shared pedestrian/cycle route that passes to the west of an existing belt of mature trees, where the new dwellings are well-contained within the compartment created by the structural vegetation. The footpath continues north passing through the east-west spur of mature oaks, then following the perimeter of development to the north-east of the Site. Views will be of high-quality architecture that responds to the local vernacular, with streetscape characterised by substantial new tree planting. The (ancient) woodland edge setting of the footpath remains, and the footpath exits the development over a new timber boardwalk that adds beneficially to the visual amenity. Whilst the change to the

view will be pronounced, there is substantial mitigation in the form of high quality, context sensitive design, and the retention of important landscape features. Enhancements to the footpath surfacing and the introduction of the boardwalk. Overall, the magnitude of effect is judged to be **Medium**, resulting in a **Moderate** adverse significance of effect.

8.68 **Year 15 (Summer)**: the new planting proposed as part of the landscape strategy will have matured and established, further integrating the built form into the landscape. The planting along the footpath will have matured to form an attractive green corridor passing through the eastern part of the scheme, linking with the other open spaces and tree lined streets. The change in view will be limited resulting in a **Small** magnitude of effect and a **Minor** adverse significance of effect.

Users of the Recreation Ground (on Alexander Lane) – **SCP 3**

8.69 The visual baseline determined that the value of these views will be **Low**, where the receptors are people using the open space for recreational/sports purposes, who will have a **Low** susceptibility to development of the type proposed, resulting in an overall **Low** sensitivity.

8.70 **SCP 3**: the view demonstrates that the recreation ground is extremely well-contained by the existing boundary vegetation. Views towards the Site are screened by this vegetation. Alexander Lane is also largely screened from view.

8.71 **Construction**: construction activity will not be perceptible from the recreation ground until commencement of work within the south-western part of the Site, currently predicted to be Phase 3 (Q1 2028). At this stage, the closure of Alexander Lane and construction activities at the south-western corner of the Site will be visible upon arrival at the recreation ground. Once within the recreation ground, views of the hoardings, construction traffic, and other activities will be barely perceptible. The existing vegetation that contains the recreation ground will not be affected by the construction activities. On this basis, the magnitude of effect is judged to be **Very Small**, leading to a **Negligible** adverse significance of effect.

8.72 **Day 1 (Winter)**: upon completion, users of the arriving at the recreation ground will witness a noticeable change to the character of this part of Alexander Lane. New high-quality homes will face onto the lane, which are illustrated within the DAS and described as having a "Lanes" character. Improvements to Alexander Lane will improve access to the recreation ground when approaching from the north. Once inside the recreation ground, the new scheme will not be perceptible. On this basis, the magnitude of effect is judged to be **Small**, leading to a **Minor** beneficial significance of effect.

8.73 **Year 15 (Summer)**: the proposed planting will continue to mature and establish over the intervening years, anchoring and embedding the dwellings along Alexander Lane. The shared

pedestrian / cycle route along the Alexander Lane will also have developed into an attractive and welcoming linear open space. Nonetheless, user of the recreation ground will only perceive these changes when arriving at the grounds, and the changes will not be perceptible from within on account of the retained boundary vegetation. The magnitude of effect remains **Small**, resulting in a **Minor** beneficial significance of effect.

8.74 Students / Teachers at Shenfield High School - **SCP 4**

8.75 The visual baseline determined that the value of these views will be **Low**, where the receptors are people engaged in study/work/sport, who will have a **Low** susceptibility to development of the type proposed, resulting in an overall **Low** sensitivity.

8.76 **SCP 4**: demonstrates that views from Alexander Lane, in the vicinity of the Shenfield High School, towards the Site are screened and filtered by existing vegetation at the perimeter of the playing fields. Construction activity at the Atallon Homes development adjacent to No. 167 Chelmsford Road is visible above the gated access to the plying fields, which suggests that filtered views of the Phase 1 development within the Site will also be available.

8.77 **Construction**: filtered views of construction activity relating to the realignment of Chelmsford Road and first phase of residential development will be available across the playing fields. Tree removal to facilitate the realignment of Chelmsford Road will potentially create new views into the Site. The closure of Alexander Lane will also be a noticeable change to the composition of the view. On this basis, the magnitude of effect is judged to be **Medium**, leading to a **Minor** adverse significance of effect.

8.78 **Day 1 (Winter)**: upon completion, views of the construction elements will have been replaced by views of the proposed high-quality residential dwellings near the entrance to the Proposed Development. The built form will be partially screened by the new tree planting along the main spine road and benefit from the substantial landscape buffer created by central parkland, that will serve to soften the appearance of the new buildings. The existing boundary vegetation will be gapped-up to further screen views into the Site, and the stopping-up of Alexander Lane will result in beneficial effects. On balance, the change to the view will remain noticeable, resulting in a **Medium** magnitude of effect. There remains a **Minor** adverse significance of effect.

8.79 **Year 15 (Summer)**: the proposed planting will continue to mature and establish over the intervening years, anchoring and embedding the new dwellings within the Site. The shared pedestrian / cycle route along the Alexander Lane will also have developed into an attractive and welcoming linear open space. The change to the view will be limited, resulting in a **Small** magnitude of effect and an overall **Negligible** adverse significance of effect.

Summary

8.80 A summary of the predicted landscape and visual effects can be found below:

Table 4: Summary of Landscape & Visual Effects

Receptor	Sensitivity	Day 1	Year 15
Landscape Effects			
Agricultural Fields	Medium High	**Moderate** adverse	**Minor** adverse
Field Boundaries	Low	**Minor** beneficial	**Moderate** beneficial
Canopy Trees	High	**Minor** beneficial	**Moderate** beneficial
Waterbodies	Medium	**Minor** beneficial	**Moderate** beneficial
The Character of the Site	Medium	**Moderate** adverse	**Minor** adverse
Local Landscape Character	Medium	**Neg.** adverse	**Neg.** beneficial
National Landscape Character	Medium Low	**Neg.** adverse	**Neg.** beneficial
Visual Effects			
Residents on Chelmsford Road	Medium High	**Major** adverse	**Moderate** adverse
Users of Chelmsford Road	Low	**Minor** adverse	**Minor** beneficial
Users of Alexander Lane	Low	**Minor** beneficial	**Moderate** beneficial
Pedestrians on PRoW 'Brentwood 86'	Medium	**Moderate** adverse	**Minor** adverse
Users of the Recreation Ground	Low	**Minor** beneficial	**Minor** beneficial
Students / Teachers at Shenfield H.S.	Low	**Minor** adverse	**Neg.** adverse

9 Conclusions

9.1 The Site lies to the north of Shenfield, which lies to the north-east of Brentwood in Essex; it is in the district of Brentwood Borough Council. The study area is lightly wooded, with vegetation typically limited to following transport corridors such as the A12 and Great Eastern Main Line. However, blocks of Ancient Woodland are distributed across the study area. The Site itself lies within a strong landscape framework.

9.2 A single PRoW traverses the Site. PRoW 'Brentwood 86' runs alongside the northern railway embankment to the south of the Site before turning northwards through the Site, to the west of the Arnold's Wood and terminating at Chelmsford Road.

9.3 The Site is not covered by any national, regional, or local landscape designations. The Site and remainder of strategic allocation R03 have been released from the Green Belt.

9.4 Relevant planning policy focuses on good design, visual amenity and character as well as maintaining the Green Belt, managing woodlands and provision of landscaping and natural features in development. Policies for floodlighting and conservation and enhancement of the historic environment are also set out, as are SuDS and Green and Blue Infrastructure.

9.5 The Site is 21.32ha in size and broadly consists of 6no. parcels of land, predominantly comprising agricultural land. The southern part of the Site, adjacent to Alexander Lane, consists of a single field which is enclosed by mature field boundaries. The central part of the Site, which includes the permissive access way, consists of a broadly rectangular field divided by a small drain connecting with the Canterbury Tye Spring. The northern part of the Site consists of an open, large-scale, field with a tract of Ancient Woodland on the eastern edge.

9.6 The character of the Site is influenced by its proximity to urban form and influences, including audible intrusion from the surrounding land uses, which include:

- Residential properties, outbuildings and boundary treatments associated with the ribbon development along the A1023;
- Overhead line equipment and mast associated with the railway line;
- Lighting columns and signage associated with the A1023; and
- Built forms associated with Shenfield High School.

9.7 In terms of visibility, the Site has a largely localised visual envelope. Orientation, nature of the landform within and adjoining the Site as well as its siting within the lower-lying landscape

ensures that it is largely well contained by a combination of vegetation cover and built form. These features typically obscure long-distance views.

9.8 The proposals benefit from the retention of the majority of the existing structural vegetation throughout the Site to integrate the new built form sensitively and sympathetically into its setting. New structural planting is introduced to further break-up the perceived scale of the introduced built form.

9.9 The comprehensive landscape masterplan that supports this hybrid planning application includes a number of design interventions that reflect the opportunities and constraints identified during the baseline analysis, as illustrated by **Figure 6**.

Landscape Effects

9.10 At the national and local level the proposals will result in a **Negligible** adverse significance of effect during the construction phase and at **Day 1** upon completion. Following the maturation of the proposed planting, the enhancements to the setting and character of the Site will result in a **Negligible** beneficial significance of effect.

9.11 The impact on agricultural fields is judged to be **Major** adverse during the construction phase, reducing to **Moderate** adverse upon completion. The comprehensive landscape strategy will have become established by **Year 15**, resulting in substantial landscape and biodiversity improvements to this landscape receptor and an overall **Minor** adverse significance of effect.

9.12 The receptor canopy trees, including Ancient Woodland, is judged to have a **High** sensitivity to the type of development proposed. The retention of the majority of boundary and internal trees, with the exception of those trees to be felled to allow for the realignment of Chelmsford Road, and the protection of Arnold's Wood with a 15m buffer limits the harm resulting during the construction phase. Following the planting of a substantial number of trees throughout the Site, the enhancements to the landscape character of the Site will result in **Minor** beneficial effects at **Day 1**, increasing to **Moderate** beneficial effects at **Year 15**.

9.13 The construction effects on the overall character of the Site will inevitably be of **Major** adverse significance, given the greenfield nature of the Site. The proposals will result in a noticeable increase in built form on the Site, reducing the sense of openness, however this will be experienced from a limited number of locations within the local landscape. The scheme will also introduce new habitat areas and generate an overall increase in biodiversity value, including a new landscape edge to Chelmsford Road and a substantial area of new parkland. The existing drainage ditches will be incorporated within a site wide SuDS scheme, creating additional opportunities for habitat creation. This will meaningfully mitigate the adverse effects whilst also introducing landscape enhancements. The existing public footpath passing through

the Site will be retained (although subject to a minor detour) and integrated within an improved network of pedestrian and cycle routes that connect with the wider PRoW network. The eastward expansion of the settlement edge of Shenfield is considered to be well-contained and in keeping with the existing settlement pattern. Overall, the **Day 1** significance of effect is considered to reduce to **Moderate** adverse. By **Year 15**, the landscape strategy will result in the introduction and maturation of a wide range of positive characteristic features throughout the Site, further reducing significance of effect to **Minor** adverse.

Visual Effects

9.14 Following extensive fieldwork, a number of potential viewpoints have been scoped out of this assessment on the basis that there is no intervisibility between the receptor and the Site given the intervening woodland and built form, namely: **SCP 7**, **SCP 8**, **SCP 9**, **SCP 10**, **SCP 11**, **SCP 12**, **SCP13**, **SCP 14**, **SCP 15**, **SCP 16**, **SCP 17**, **SCP 18**, **SCP 19**, and **SCP 20**. This scoping exercise demonstrates that available views are limited to receptors in the immediate vicinity of the Site.

9.15 During the construction phase, some residents on Chelmsford Road who have existing views into the Site, will have relatively open views of the construction activity. Taking a worst case and precautionary approach, the magnitude of effect is judged to be **Large**, which results in a **Major** adverse significance of effect. However, this effect is only likely to be applicable to those receptors living at dwellings with an unobscured view into the Site, and where development directly adjoins their property. In most cases, the significance of effect is predicted to be lower, in the range **Minor** to **Moderate** adverse, where the change will be barely perceptible to limited, given the distances between the receptor and the residential development, and the density of the intervening vegetation.

9.16 Following completion, the change in the view experienced by some of these receptors will remain pronounced, with the construction elements replaced by the built form of a high-quality development. Again, taking a worst case and precautionary approach, the magnitude of effect remains **Large**, which results in a **Major** adverse significance of effect. In most cases, the significance of effect is predicted to be lower, in the range **Minor** to **Moderate** adverse, where the change will be barely perceptible to limited.

9.17 Over time the new planting proposed as part of the landscape strategy will have matured and established, further integrating the built form into the landscape. Views will be increasingly screened and filtered by the vegetation along the northern boundary, where the Site adjoins these properties. The worst-case significance of effect will reduce to **Moderate** adverse, however most receptors will experience a lower significance of effects that takes the level of effect below the significance threshold.

9.18 Users of PRoW 'Brentwood 86' are unlikely to witness construction effects as the footpath will be closed for the majority of the construction phase. Once reopened, receptors will see a pronounced change to the existing views, with the agricultural fields replaced with new built form. There is substantial mitigation in the form of high quality, context sensitive design, and the retention of important landscape features. Enhancements include upgrades to the footpath surfacing and the introduction of a boardwalk. Overall, the significance of effect is judged to be **Moderate** adverse at **Day 1**, reducing to **Minor** adverse at **Year 15** following the maturation of the landscape proposals.

9.19 Beneficial effects are predicted for users of Chelmsford Road and Alexander Lane following the maturation of the proposed landscape proposals. Chelmsford Road will benefit from new tree and shrub planting that will frame views over the proposed central parkland, whilst Alexander Lane will be stopped-up to deliver a new pedestrian/cycle route.

9.20 No significant effects are predicted for users of the Recreation Ground, or for students and teachers at Shenfield High School.

9.21 Overall, the Site is considered to provide ample opportunity for residential development of the scale proposed from a landscape and visual perspective, given the extent of enclosure provided by the existing vegetation framework bordering the Site; the proximity to, and influence of, the existing built form. The introduced built form will form part of a logical and coherent extension that is in keeping with the existing settlement morphology pattern, weaving together ribbon development at Chelmsford Road and the settlement edge at Alexander Lane.