

**LAND EAST OF SHIFNAL, SHROPSHIRE**

SHROPSHIRE LOCAL PLAN REVIEW – PREFERRED SITES  
LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL REPORT AND GREEN BELT APPRAISAL  
HARROW ESTATES  
SEPTEMBER 2019



TERENCE  
O'ROURKE

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## Executive Summary

### Landscape and visual

- In regards to the effects on landscape and visual amenity the moderate visual effects for all sites were generated by the residential receptors in the immediate vicinity of the sites or from Stanton Road next to or close to all sites.
- From all remaining receptors the effect of development on these sites will have only slight to negligible effects. In fact, while the visual splays indicated on figures 13-20 appear fairly large, with the exception of the receptors listed above, views of development on these sites from almost all publicly accessible locations will create only minor to very minor alterations to the composition of the views and in most cases will be barely discernible.
- With regards to character, the sites themselves have been assessed as having a moderate adverse degree of effects. This is to be expected given the extent and nature of the proposed development on what is presently agricultural fields. However, from the remaining character areas the effects from all sites was again slight or negligible.
- We therefore conclude that with careful consideration to siting, massing and landscape, all of these sites could be released from the Green Belt and developed with limited harm to the Shropshire Green Belt and its overall integrity and limited effects on both landscape character and visual amenity.
- The existing boundaries to almost all of the sites are made up of strong defensible boundaries such as roads, railways, woodland, and where some site existing boundaries are presently weak, there is scope on all sites to create new strong defensible boundaries through the creation of new woodland belts which will not appear uncharacteristic in the landscape.

### Green Belt

- In looking at the individual sites as sub areas of the LUC Green Belt assessments it has been concluded that that proposed housing site SHF032 would make no contribution for purpose 1, and would perform weakly for purposes 2, 3 and 4 and is considered that it would create low to moderate harm if released from the Green Belt.
- Proposed employment sites SHF018b and SHF018d do not contribute to purpose 1 and 4 and perform weakly for purpose 2 and weak to moderate for purpose 3. If released from the Green Belt it is considered they would create moderate harm.
- Alternative sites A and B do not contribute to purpose 1 and perform weakly for purpose 2 and 4, but moderately against purpose 3. If released from the Green Belt it is considered they also would create moderate harm.
- Overall, we consider that development on all these sites would form a logical extension to the north east of Shifnal.



## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This document forms Appendix 6 of the main submission made to the Shropshire Council's Local Plan Review – Preferred Sites Consultation, on behalf of Harrow Estates and their interest in promoting land parcels to the east of Shifnal, as part of the emerging Shifnal Place Area Plan.
- 1.2 The two sites that are currently indicated as proposed development sites in the Shropshire local plan review covering the period 2016-2036. These are the proposed housing site, SHF032 and the proposed employment sites, SHF018b and SHF018d.
- 1.3 Shropshire Council has identified six proposed sites to the south west of Shifnal for housing that are to be safeguarded for development beyond the planning period of 2036. These parcels are P17a, SHF017 north, SHF017 south, P16a, P15B west and SHF019. They have also identified parcels SHF018a and P14 to be safeguarded for employment to the south east of Shifnal beyond the plan period of 2036.
- 1.4 As alternatives to the safeguarded housing sites to the south west of Shifnal, Harrow Estates is promoting two further sites, sites A and B (SHF018c) also located to the south east of Shifnal. See figure 12.
- 1.5 This landscape and visual report has been prepared by Terence O'Rourke Ltd in support of a local plan review in order to guide the potential growth of Shifnal. The purpose of this report is to establish the baseline conditions in order to assess the potential effects of development on the key landscape character and visual amenity of the sites and their setting for all of the land promoted by Harrow Estates.
- 1.6 This report has been updated in September 2020 in response to the Regulation 18 Pre-submission draft local plan review and to take account of the new masterplan proposals (see figures 39 and 40).

### References and data sources

- 1.7 In preparing this report the published documents and plans set out in table 1.1 have been referred to.

Natural England, October 2014, An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment

Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, 2013, Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Assessment (3<sup>rd</sup> edition)

Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), February 2019, The National Planning Policy Framework

Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), Planning Practice Guidance <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>

Photography and Photomontage in Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Landscape Institute Advice Note 01/11

Shropshire Local Development Framework: Adopted Core Strategy Shropshire Council March 2011

Shropshire Council Site Allocations and Management of Development (SAMDev) Plan Adopted 17<sup>th</sup> December 2015

Natural England National Character Area Profile from [www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk)

The Shropshire Landscape Typology September 2006 Shropshire County Council

Shropshire Green Belt Assessment Final Report, September 2017, LUC

Shropshire Green Belt Assessment Final Review: Stage 2, November 2018, LUC

**Table 1.1: References and data sources**

## Methodology

- 1.8 The appraisal judges the potential effects of the proposed development on the landscape and visual receptors that have been identified. The degree of effect of a landscape or visual receptor is determined by consideration of the sensitivity of the landscape and visual receptors and the magnitude of change as a result of the proposals. Further details of the methodology used in the appraisal is set out in full in appendix A part 2 and in figures 1 to 6 at the end of this report. Details of the methodology used in the photographic survey are set out in appendix A part 3.

## The sites

- 1.9 The sites assessed in this study are indicated on figure 12. Proposed housing site SHF032 is located on Coppice Green Lane, north of Aston Court Mews and opposite Idsall School. Proposed employment sites SHF018b and SHF018d are located on arable fields either side of Upton Lane between the railway line and Stanton Road. The council's proposed safeguarded employment site presently occupies the arable fields and woodland to the south of Stanton Road, the east of Lamlodge Lane. Its southern boundary is formed by both Hillcrest Shifnal School and Shifnal Industrial Park. Its eastern boundary is presently a hedgerow bounding an arable field adjacent to proposed employment sites SHF018b and SHF018d.
- 1.10 Proposed alternative safeguarded site A wraps around Aston Coppice from its North western corner to the woodland edge adjacent to the M54, along Coppice Green Lane and along the edge of proposed housing site SHF032. Its southern boundary is the parkland associated with Aston Hall. Its western boundary is an undefined line within an arable field that forms the western boundary of site B. The northern boundary of site B is again undefined, but roughly aligns with an elevated ridge. Its eastern boundary is formed by Stanton Hill Wood, the southern boundary by Stanton Road and the southern section of its western boundary with the parkland associated with Aston Hall.

## The report

- 1.11 This report has been split into a series of sections. Sections 2 and 3 will establish the baseline conditions of the site and the surrounding study area. However, as the two alternative safeguarded sites A & B cannot come forward without housing site SHF032 and the employment sites SHF018b and SHF018d being developed, these two sites will be assessed first in terms of their effect on landscape character and visual amenity. These two proposed sites will form the future baseline.
- 1.12 The following section will then assess the effects on landscape character and visual amenity from development on the proposed alternative safeguarded sites A and B, assessed against the future baseline sites as if development has already been constructed on sites SHF032, SHF018b and SHF018d. We should note that

proposed safeguarded employment land within parcels SHF018A and P14, not within the client's ownership, will also be used as part of the future baseline.

- 1.13 The final stage of this report will include a review of Green Belt assessment for each of the four sites being promoted by Harrow Estates, namely SHF032, SHF018b and SHF018d and sites A and B. This will assess each site against the purposes of the Green Belt using the same methodology used in the council's Green Belt Assessment, however, the sites will be assessed as a sub-parcels of the Green Belt Assessment's larger parcels.
- 1.14 The structure of this report is summarised below:
- |      |   |
|------|---|
| 1.0  | Introduction  |
| 2.0  | Planning policies   |
| 3.0  | Landscape baseline  |
| 4.0  | Visibility of future baseline sites SHF032, SHF018b and SHF018d   |
| 5.0  | Predicted potential landscape and visual effects of future baseline sites   |
| 6.0  | Summary of future baseline effects  |
| 7.0  | Visibility of alternative safeguarded sites A and B   |
| 8.0  | Predicted potential landscape and visual effects of sites A and B against future baseline - (cumulative assessment) |
| 9.0  | Summary of effects  |
| 10.0 | Assessment of Green Belt.   |

### **Fieldwork**

- 1.15 The sites and surrounding area were visited during July 2019 and again in August 2020 to obtain familiarity with the landscape and to perform a landscape appraisal and photographic report. Field studies and desk-based studies of photographs, map information, character assessments and statutory and emerging planning policy documents have enabled the recording of landscape elements such as topography, land use, development, vegetation and other features. This has allowed an evaluation of the existing landscape features and characteristics, the way the landscape is experienced and the value of the landscape and visual resources in and around the site. An analysis of any possible effects resulting from the potential proposals was undertaken in consideration of these baseline characteristics.

### **Zone of theoretical visibility**

- 1.16 Zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV) mapping has been used to define the study area. A preliminary computerised zone of theoretical visibility was created using specialist computer software using a 2m grid provided by Bluesky producing a digital surface model (DSM), to establish the potential extent of visibility, as illustrated in figures 13 to 20. This plan illustrates the extent to which the preliminary proposals or any part of proposed development may potentially be visible from the surrounding area based on the existing topographic features, including buildings and vegetation. For the purpose of this appraisal broad parameters have been assumed in terms of building heights and these will be reviewed further as part of refining the proposals informed by ongoing landscape

and visual assessment work. As part of the work undertaken to date the extent of development and associated green infrastructure have been largely defined and the key features captured in the overarching master plan (figure 37). The zones of theoretical visibility (ZTV) for the proposals were produced based on the potential development areas on the overarching master plan, with a height of 10m used to represent both shed heights within the employment zones and two-storey housing development. The ZTV defines the area within which the potential proposed development may have an influence or effect on visual amenity (see figures 13 to 20).

## 2.0 Planning policy framework

- 2.1 The key planning documents applicable to the study area are, on the national scale, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG).
- 2.2 At a local level, Shropshire Council is preparing a partial review of the Local Plan covering the period 2016-2036. The current development plan documents are the Core Strategy DPD adopted February 2011 and the Site Allocations and Management of Development Adopted Plan, adopted December 2015. The designations and policies relevant to this report are illustrated on figure 8.

### **National planning policy and guidance**

- 2.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the government's planning policies for England, the following of which are relevant to the landscape and visual appraisal:

#### *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) February 2019*

##### *Making effective use of land*

- Paragraph 117 – planning policies and decisions promoting effective use of land
- Paragraph 118 – list of considerations for planning policies and decisions.

##### *Achieving appropriate densities*

- Paragraph 122 – list of considerations for supporting development
- Paragraph 123 – making optimal use of the potential of each site.

##### *Achieving well-designed places*

- Paragraph 124 – the requirement for good design
- Paragraph 127 – list of considerations for developments.

##### *Conserving and enhancing the natural environment*

- Paragraph 170 – list of planning policies and decisions that contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment
- Paragraph 171 – allocating land with the least environmental or amenity value
- Paragraph 172 – consideration of applications in or near protected environments.

##### *Conserving and enhancing the historic environment*

- Paragraph 184 – importance of the historic environment
- Paragraph 185 – consideration of a strategy for the conservation of the historic environment
- Paragraph 189, 190 and 192 – proposals affecting heritage assets

- Paragraphs 193, 194, 195, 196 and 197 – considering potential impacts.

#### *Protecting green belt land*

- Paragraph 133 – the fundamental aim of the green belt
- Paragraph 134 – purposes of green belt
- Paragraph 141 – enhancing the beneficial use of green belt
- Paragraph 143 – inappropriate development
- Paragraph 144 – very special circumstances
- Paragraph 145 – exceptions to inappropriate development
- Paragraph 146 – further exceptions to inappropriate development.

#### *National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)*

2.4 The National Planning Practice Guidance is a web-based resource that supports the NPPF and contains government guidance, the following of which are relevant to the landscape and visual appraisal:

- Paragraph 001 Ref ID: 8-001-20140306 – Landscape character
- Paragraph 007 Ref ID: 26-007-20140306 – Promoting local character
- Paragraph 009 Ref ID: 26-009-20140306 – Promoting network of green spaces
- Paragraph 003 Ref ID: 18a-003-20140306 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment
- Paragraph 030 Ref ID: 8-030-20160211, revised 11.02.2016 – Requiring good design.

#### **Local policy**

2.5 The sites are located to the east of Shifnal, within Shropshire Council. The local plan documents consist of the Core Strategy DPD adopted February 2011 and the Site Allocations and Management of Development Adopted Plan, adopted December 2015 and the Shifnal Neighbourhood Plan, adopted December 2016. A partial review of the local plan is currently underway.

#### *Shropshire Core Strategy*

2.6 Shropshire Council adopted the Core Strategy for development in February 2011. It is supported by a local plan policies map and supporting documents. The key landscape related policies are the following:

- Core Strategy policy CS5 – Countryside and Green Belt
- Core Strategy policy CS17 – Environmental Networks.

#### *Shropshire Site Allocations and Management of Development Adopted Plan (SAMDev Adopted Plan)*

2.7 The key landscape related policies within the SAMDev Adopted Plan are the following:

- Policy MD2 – Sustainable Design
- Policy MD6 – Green Belt and Safeguarded Land
- Policy MD7a – Managing Housing Development in the Countryside
- Policy MD12 – Natural Environment
- Policy S15 – Shifnal.

*Shifnal Neighbourhood Plan 2014-2026*

2.8 The Shifnal Neighbourhood Plan was adopted by Shropshire County Council after a referendum in December 2016. The key landscape related policies are the following:

- Green Belt and the Shifnal Settlement Boundary
- Character and conservation

***Regulation 18 Pre-submission draft of the Shropshire Local Plan***

2.9 In addition to the adopted development plan for Shropshire, Shropshire Council are also consulting on the Regulation 18 Pre-submission draft of the Shropshire Local Plan (3<sup>rd</sup> August to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020). The key draft landscape related policies contained within the Pre-submission draft have accordingly been identified as follows:

- Draft Policy SP4 – Sustainable Development
- Draft Policy SP9 – Managing Development in the Countryside
- Draft Policy DP13 – The Natural Environment
- Draft Policy DP15 – Green Infrastructure
- Draft Policy DP16 – Open Space
- Draft Policy DP17 – Landscaping of New Development
- Draft Policy DP18 – Landscape and Visual Amenity
- Draft Policy DP22 – Flood Risk
- Draft Policy DP23 – Sustainable Drainage Systems
- Draft Policy DP25 – Green Belt and Safeguarded Land
- Draft Policy S15 – Shifnal Place Plan Area

2.10 Representations have been made on behalf of Ruckley Estate and Harrow Estates to the draft policies contained in the Regulation 18 Pre-submission draft of the Shropshire Local Plan. These representations should be read alongside this appraisal.

## 3.0 Landscape baseline

### Landscape character

#### *National landscape character areas*

3.1 The national character assessment provides a description of the landscape character of the area at its broadest level in the Natural England National Character Area Profile. The sites and surrounding landscape are within the National Character Area 66, Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau as illustrated on figure 9. The description of the landscape of the character area includes the following characteristics:

- *“Extensive sandstone plateau in the core and east of the NCA underpins an undulating landscape with tree-lined ridges; this contrasts with the irregular topography and steep, wooded gorges of the Severn Valley in the west.*
- *Plateau underlain by Permian and Triassic sandstones and conglomerate from the Sherwood Sandstone Group forming an important aquifer. Silurian limestones and Carboniferous Coal Measures of the Coalbrookdale and Wyre Forest coalfields in the west provide the source of mineral wealth which fuelled the Industrial Revolution.*
- *Permian and Triassic sandstones erode to free-draining, slightly acid mineral soils which historically supported extensive heathland and grassland. In contrast, marls and sandstones associated with Coal Measures erode to clayey (argillic) brown earth soils.*
- *The plateau is drained by the rivers Worfe and Stour and fast-flowing streams in small wooded, steep-sided streamside dells, locally known as dingles.*
- *The main river is the fast-flowing Severn, flowing north to south in the west of the NCA, often through steep, wooded gorges, the largest being the Ironbridge Gorge.*
- *Interlocking blocks of mixed woodland and old orchards provide a well-wooded landscape and conifer plantations combine with parklands to give an estate character. Wyre Forest is part of one of the largest ancient lowland oak woods in England*
- *Large, open arable fields with a weak hedgerow pattern on the plateau contrast with mixed arable and pasture land with smaller, irregular-shaped fields bounded by hedgerows with hedgerow oaks in the west.*
- *Characteristic lowland heathland associated with acid grassland and woodland supports nationally important populations of flora and fauna, notably butterflies including the pearl-bordered fritillary.*
- *Post-industrial sites, disused coal mines and mineral quarries are important habitats around Telford and urban areas in the Black Country and are becoming increasingly important because of their dwindling number.*
- *Rich and important heritage assets have led to World Heritage status for Coalbrookdale and Ironbridge, the birthplace of the Industrial Revolution.*



- *Traditional buildings constructed of brick vary in colour. The local Kidderminster and Bromsgrove Sandstone features extensively. Its characteristic red colouration provides local distinctiveness to many towns and villages and estate boundary walls.*
- *The Stour and Severn valleys contain frequent villages and there are a number of attractive historic towns, for example Bridgnorth and Bewdley with cores of Georgian and earlier buildings; there are fine individual examples of timber-framed buildings in Kinver, Bewdley and Bridgnorth.*
- *There is a coalfield remnant landscape along the Severn Valley. Important manmade features include the Roman road Watling Street,*
- *the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal, the M54 and the railway line that links the urban areas of Birmingham and the Black Country in the east with Shrewsbury in the neighbouring NCA in the west."*

#### **Local landscape character areas**

- 3.2 In 2006 Shropshire County Council produced a landscape character assessment entitled The Shropshire Landscape Typology. This report identifies 27 different landscape types within the county. The sites lie mainly within the Sandstone Estate lands although the eastern edge of sites A and B lie within the Estate Farmlands. The proposed safeguarded land for development beyond 2036 SHF018b and SHF018d lies to the south east of the sites and mainly within the Estate Farmlands with only the north western part within the Sandstone Estate lands. The surrounding study area includes the Enclosed Lowland Heaths and the Incised Sandstone Valley landscape character types. These landscape types are illustrated on figure 10.
- 3.3 The baseline study has established that the following landscape character areas and associated landscape resources may be affected by any proposed development:
- The sites
    - Proposed housing site SHF032
    - Proposed employment sites SHF018b and SHF018d
    - Proposed alternative safeguarded site A
    - Proposed alternative safeguarded site B
  - Sandstone Estate lands
  - Estate Farmlands
  - Enclosed Lowland Heaths
  - Incised Sandstone Valley
  - The urban area of Shifnal.
- 3.4 ZTV analysis and field studies have been carried out to determine which landscape character types will be physically or perceptually affected by any proposed development. Only character types that lie within the ZTV and have an intervisibility with the sites will be considered.
- 3.5 The potential effects of development proposals on these character areas will be assessed within the predicted effects on landscape character section later in this

report. A description of the relevant baseline landscape character areas is provided in the following paragraphs.

### *The sites*

#### *Site A*

- 3.6 Site A lies predominantly in the Sandstone Estatelands with the northern extent of its area within the Estate Farmlands. This site wraps around Aston Coppice from its north western corner to the woodland edge adjacent to the M54. The western boundary follows the hedgerow bounding Coppice Green Lane and then along the western edge of a tree belt, across an open arable field to the north western corner of the access road in Aston Court Mews. Its southern boundary is the parkland associated with Aston Hall, marked by a small number of trees and low scrub. Its western boundary is an undefined line within an arable field that forms the western boundary of Site B. The remaining length of its northern boundary is Aston Coppice.
- 3.7 The topography of Site A ranges from approximately 117m AOD in the north of the site to approximately 93m AOD in the south of the site.
- 3.8 Tree cover mainly exists in a small area on the western boundary of the site. A linear coverage of dense woodland stretches along the western boundary for approximately 300m. The rest of the site consists of mainly arable land with the odd mature tree.
- 3.9 There is a single public right of way / bridleway, (PROW number 0141 UN1/1) within the site which runs along northern section of Site A adjacent to the M54 for approximately 220 linear metres and then runs for 40m south before exiting onto Coppice Green Lane.
- 3.10 There are no landscape, ecological or heritage designations within the site. However, the arable fields that make up site A were originally part of the parkland to the grade II\* Aston Hall and as such should be considered in terms of the setting of Aston Hall in providing the rural context that assists in understanding the significance of Aston Hall as a country house located within a parkland estate.
- 3.11 The M54 is in very close proximity and can be heard clearly from within the northern half of the site.
- 3.12 The sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements identified for the site are:
- *The dense linear woodland on the western boundary*
  - *Open arable fields*
  - *Traffic from the M54 clearly audible from the northern half of the site*
  - *Parkland and country house visible*

#### *Site B*

- 3.13 Site B lies to the east of Site A and north of Stanton Road which is also National Cycle Route 81. It also lies predominantly within the Sandstone Estatelands with

its northern extent within the Estate Farmlands. The eastern boundary follows the alignment of the western edge of Stanton Hill Wood from the Stanton Road to the north western corner of the wood where the northern boundary continues from this point westward, through an arable field, to meet the eastern boundary of Site A. The western boundary of Site B follows the same alignment as the eastern boundary of Site A, which is an undefined line through an arable field before running along the eastern boundary the parkland associated with Aston Hall. Its southern boundary runs along Stanton Road which is lined for approximately 300 linear metres until Waterworks Cottages by a 1.5m high stone wall associated with Aston Hall. Beyond this point the road edge is bounded by a 1.8m high hedgerow.

- 3.14 The topography within Site B ranges from 115m AOD in the north to approximately 97m AOD in the south.
- 3.15 There is no tree or vegetation cover within the site which is mainly arable land.
- 3.16 There are no public rights of way within the site.
- 3.17 There are no landscape, ecological or heritage designations within the site. However, the arable fields that make up site A were originally part of the parkland to the grade ii\* Aston Hall and as such should be considered in terms of the setting of Aston Hall in providing the rural context that assists in understanding the significance of Aston Hall as a country house located within a parkland estate.
- 3.18 The sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements identified for the site are:
  - Medium to large scale, open landscape
  - Medium to large scale agricultural fields
  - Parkland and country house visible

#### *Site SHF032*

- 3.19 Site SHF032 forms a small parcel of land located on Coppice Green Lane, north of the access road to Aston Court Mews and opposite Idsall School. It lies within the Sandstone Estate lands character area. The northern section of its eastern boundary is formed by a thick belt of woodland. It then runs across an arable field on an undefined line for approximately 120m to the north western corner of Aston Court Mews before following the Aston Court Mews access road around to Coppice Green Lane that forms its western boundary.
- 3.20 Topography of the site has an approximately level change of approximately 10m from north to south. The north end is approximately 90m AOD and the southern end of the site is approximately 90m AOD.
- 3.21 A tall 1.8m high hedge runs along the entire western boundary, with a tall mature woodland belt forming part of the north eastern boundary. Scattered trees and scrub are located around the northern and western edge of Aston Court Mews. The site itself is in arable use.
- 3.22 There are no public rights of way within the site, however the Shifnal P3 Circular Walk runs along Coppice Green Lane to the western boundary of the site.

3.23 There are no landscape, ecological or heritage designations within the site. However, the setting of the grade II listed ancillary buildings to Aston Hall consisting of barns, byre and haycroft all of which were converted into 18 private residential dwellings will influence this parcel of land.

3.24 Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements identified for the site are:

- Medium to large scale, open landscape
- Medium to large scale agricultural fields
- Parkland and country house visible

#### ***Site SHF018b and Site SHF018d***

3.25 Sites SHF018b and SHF018d lie to the east of Shifnal, south of site B and Stanton Road. The western boundary of the site follows the alignment of the field boundary directly west of Upton Lane and north east of Shifnal Industrial Estate. The southern boundary follows the northern alignment of the railway line. The eastern boundary follows the eastern field boundary of the field north east of the intersection of Upton Lane and the railway line, and continues north on the same alignment through the north eastern field and then follows the western edge of the watercourse west of Stanton. The northern boundary follows the alignment of Stanton Road/ National Cycle Route 81.

3.26 The topography of this site rises from the north east at approximately 85m AOD, to the south west at approximately 95m AOD.

3.27 Tree cover is very sparse and mainly exists along existing field boundaries.

3.28 Upton Lane runs through the centre of the site in a north south alignment and connects to Stanton Road/ National Cycle Route 81 and the A464 at Upton in the south.

3.29 There are no public rights of way within the site however the National Cycle Route 81 runs to the north of the site and Upton Lane is locally designated as the Sabrina Way Long Distance Walk.

3.30 There are no landscape, ecological or heritage designations within the site.

3.31 Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements identified for the site are:

- Hedgerow and isolated trees
- Medium to large scale fields
- Views and sounds from Shifnal Industrial Estate
- Sound and view of trains to the south of the sites

#### ***Sandstone Estatelands***

3.32 The Sandstone Estatelands character area surrounds the majority of urban settlement of Shifnal town. The eastern boundary of the character area, starting from the south of Shifnal town follows the alignment of contours north eastwards, between 90m AOD and 100m AOD until Stanton Hill Wood, where it changes direction north westward following the alignment between the 100m AOD and

110m AOD contours up to the access into Drayton Lodge. From the access into Drayton Lodge, the boundary follows the B4379 northward to the northern access of Shifnal Golf Club and then follows the access roads until reaching the 110m AOD contour. The western boundary then follows the alignment of contours between 100m AOD and 110m AOD southwards until crossing the Wesley Brook where it follows the alignment between 90m AOD and 100m AOD.

- 3.33 Topography of the Sandstone Estatelands generally falls inwards to the urban settlement of Shifnal from 110m AOD at some points to approximately 80m AOD.
- 3.34 Tree and vegetation cover is confined to hedgerow and roadside verges. While some veteran trees exist within parklands they are sparse. Dense vegetation also exists around Wesley Brook where it flows into Shifnal town from the north west. Vegetation also surrounds the railway line near Shifnal town. Scattered patches of dense woodland exist in the east of the character area along Coppice Green Lane, to the south of the newly constructed Linwood Estate and north and east of Hillcrest Shifnal School as well as north of the A464 near Revell's Rough. Further belts of woodland exist to the north of Shifnal around Haughton Hall Hotel, to the east of the B4379, to the north and south of the M54 and the woodland edge of Shifnal Golf Club.
- 3.35 Landuse is predominantly medium to large scale agricultural fields with regular field patterns. Shifnal Industrial Estate is in the east of the character area. Residential properties are sparsely scattered throughout the character area along with a number of country houses set within parkland.
- 3.36 Main transport routes running through the character area include the M54 and B4379 in the north, A464 in the south east and the A4169 in the south west.
- 3.37 There are a number of public rights of way within the character area including the National Cycle Route 81 that passes through Shifnal in the east via Stanton Road and exists in the north west along Haughton.
- 3.38 To the north west of the character area, designations include the conservation area of Haughton and within that is Haughton Grange, a grade II listed building. South of the conservation area is grade II listed building Haughton Hall, on Haughton Lane. To the north of Shifnal, on the junction of the southern access to the golf club is grade II listed South Lodge to Decker Hill which is an entrance lodge. Further north of that, along the access route is grade II listed Decker Hill building and accompanying courtyard. Continuing on the access are some grade II listed gates and railings near the northern access to the golf club. In Aston Court Mews, there are grade II listed buildings including a water tower, barns and byres all within close proximity to the grade II\* Aston Hall. To the south of Shifnal, off Wadlow Drive on the A464, is a grade II listed building called The Uplands.
- 3.39 Directly adjacent to Site A is Aston Coppice which is designated as ancient woodland. A further small patch of ancient woodland is located to the west of character area at Knowl Wood.
- 3.40 The key characteristics set out within the Shropshire landscape typology are:
- *Arable landuse*
  - *Regular field pattern*

- *Parkland with associated country houses*
- *Clustered settlement pattern*
- *Medium – large scale, open landscapes.*

### ***Estate Farmlands***

- 3.41 The Estate Farmlands character area covers a majority of the study area with the other character areas forming islands within this character area.
- 3.42 The topography of the Estate Farmlands ranges from approximately 75m AOD towards the south of the character area/study area to approximately 153m AOD in the north east of the character area/ study area. The character area is generally rolling.
- 3.43 Land use is predominantly large farmland in regular field patterns with clusters of farmhouse as well as clusters of cottages. Large parklands with associated country houses are also scattered around the character area. The settlement pattern is predominantly one of villages and hamlets and large estate farmsteads.
- 3.44 Main transport routes through the character area include the M54 which runs east west through the study area. The A464 also runs through the character area on a north west to south east alignment. The National Cycle Route 81 runs in an east west alignment. The railway line which connects Shifnal to the east also runs through the character area.
- 3.45 There are multiple public rights of way scattered throughout the character area, those of importance include Monarch's Way and the National Cycle Route 81. Monarch's Way comes in to the character from the south along Evelith Lane and follows the route up to Twybrook Cottage and then follows a path north east, crossing the A464 and Bonemill Bridge and then heads north through Loam Wood and Monk's Wood up to the National Cycle Route 81. National Cycle Route 81 follows the alignment of Stanton Road eastward.
- 3.46 Designations within the character area include a grade II listed building called Temple, which is in the north west part of the character area, approximately 350m west of Decker Hill. To the north of Shifnal and east of the B4379 is Drayton Lodge which is a grade II listed building. East of Drayton lodge is a Roman fort which is a scheduled monument. South of the scheduled monument, and north of the Coppice Green Lane bridge over the M54, is Coppice Green House, which is a grade II listed building. Approximately 570m west of where Stanton Road passes underneath the M54 are two grade II listed cottages known as Stanton Cottages. South of Stanton Road and north of the M54, east of the underpass of Stanton Road is a grade II listed barn and a fowl house both in close proximity to Vauxhall House.
- 3.47 To the east of the character area is a grade II listed former stable block, which is in close proximity to the Bell Inn on the A41. In the east of the character area is Tong Lodge, a grade II listed building, which is in Ruckley. To the south of Shifnal and the character, along Park Lane is a combination of grade II listed buildings called The Terrace which includes a water tower and retaining wall. Further south, where Park Lane turns into Hinnington Road, south of Evelith Lane is Evelith Manor, Lodge and adjoining gate piers which are all grade II listed buildings.

3.48 The key characteristics set out within the Shropshire landscape typology are:

- *Mixed farming landuse*
- *Clustered settlement pattern*
- *Large country houses with associated parklands*
- *Planned woodland character*
- *Medium to large scale landscapes with framed views.*

#### ***Enclosed Lowland Heaths***

3.49 The Enclosed Lowland Heaths forms a small area of steep highlands in the north eastern part of the study area. The boundaries follow the contours of 110m AOD except from in the east of the character area where the boundary follows the 100m AOD contours.

3.50 The topography of the Enclosed Lowland Heaths ranges from 100m AOD to approximately 151m AOD over a small area, forming a steep valley around the character area.

3.51 A majority of this character area is woodland which includes Lizard Wood, Dog Wood, Upper and Middle Gallops. There are a few trees scattered around the fields and their boundaries.

3.52 Land use is predominantly arable fields with a regular field pattern. These can be found surrounding the woodland areas mentioned above.

3.53 Main transport routes include Coppice Green Lane, the B4379, Nanny Murphy's Lane and a small part of the A5.

3.54 There are a small number of public rights of way which include the 0141 17/1, 2/1 and 2A/1. The 0141 17/1 runs eastward, north of Lizard Wood connecting Coppice Green Lane to Lizard Lane. 0141 2/1 connects Nanny Murphy's Lane, along the southern boundary of the character area, to the A5 through Upper and Middle Gallops and arable fields north of the woodland. 0141 2A/1 connects the B4379 to the A5 on an eastward route.

3.55 There are no landscape, ecological or heritage designations within this character area.

3.56 The key characteristics set out within the Shropshire landscape typology are:

- *Undulating lowland*
- *Impoverished, freely draining soils*
- *Planned woodland character*
- *Dispersed settlement pattern.*

#### ***Incised Sandstone Valleys***

3.57 The Incised Sandstone Valleys character area follows the approximate area of watercourses throughout the study area. Watercourses include the Wesley Brook to the south of Shifnal, and the stream which passes through Tong Forge,

Ruckley and the west of Neachley. Boundaries for the character area surrounding the Wesley Brook follow the 80m AOD contours. The boundary for the character area surrounding the stream in the east of the character area follow the approximate alignment of the 75m AOD contour from the south of the M54, and from the north of the M54 follows the approximate alignment of the 80m AOD contour. The boundary for the character area in the west occasionally includes woodland and farmland that lie adjacent to it such as; Big Wood, Monk's Wood, Old Farm Wood and Ruckley Grange.

- 3.58 Topography for this character area varies from between 85m AOD to 70m AOD.
- 3.59 Tree cover is generally dense along the watercourses; however, the occasional arable field creates breaks in this characteristic of the character area.
- 3.60 Land use consists of arable fields which can be found sparsely along watercourses. Settlements are also sparse with granges and cottages found along the watercourse.
- 3.61 There are numerous public rights of way, including those that run along the western boundary of the character area surrounding the Wesley Brook. Others connect Lizard Lane in Tong Forge to Stanton Road. The National Cycle Route 81 also passes through this character area to the west of the study areas where it runs south of the M54 along Neachley Lane.
- 3.62 Designations along the Wesley Brook part of the character area include the buildings around Manor Farm. The buildings include walls, barn houses, cottages and the manor house itself, all which are grade II listed.
- 3.63 On the eastern part of the character area in Ruckley Grange, designations include grade II listed Ruckley Grange, gates, walls, stable and lodge.
- 3.64 North of the M54 is Tong Forge which include the grade II listed cottage called Solhagen and further north of that is Brookview Cottage.
- 3.65 The key characteristics set out within the Shropshire Landscape Typology are:
- *Shallow, steep sided valleys*
  - *Planned woodland character – interlocking estate plantations*
  - *Linear tree belts along watercourses*
  - *Clustered settlement pattern*
  - *Parklands*
  - *Small-medium scale landscape with filtered views.*

#### ***The urban area of Shifnal***

- 3.66 The urban area of Shifnal consists predominantly of the settlement area of Shifnal with the exception of the recently developed Scarlett Oaks development on the south east boundary of Shifnal and Linwood Estate, currently under construction, south of Aston Hall and the Stanton Road/National Cycle Route 81 on the eastern boundary of Shifnal. Boundaries of the urban area of Shifnal generally follow the outer edge of residential settlement within Shifnal.



- 3.67 Topography of the urban area of Shifnal is generally flat with the southern area being around 90m AOD and the north 97m AOD, a rise of 7m from the south to the north.
- 3.68 Tree cover is generally sparse with much of the vegetation existing along the Wesley Brook, along the railway line and the body of water along the southern boundary.
- 3.69 Land use is predominantly residential with only a single large industrial unit in the east of the urban area along Aston Road. Outside of the conservation area of Shifnal, housing types include mixtures of post war semi-detached houses and bungalows, modern detached housing and 3 storey flats near the railway.
- 3.70 Main transport routes through the urban area of Shifnal include the A464 which enters the area from the south heading north, changing into Market Place, then Bradford Street and then the B4379 which continues out of the northern end of Shifnal. The A4169 comes into Shifnal from the south west. Priorslee Road comes into Shifnal from the north west. The railway line divides Shifnal with an east west alignment.
- 3.71 There are only three public rights of way within the urban area of Shifnal, the most notable being the National Cycle Route 81 which runs eastward along Houghton Road along the northern boundary then following the B4379 southward and eastward again on Curriers Lane out of the urban area.
- 3.72 Designations include the conservation area of Shifnal which encompasses the historic core. It includes the grade I listed St Andrews Church and multiple clusters of grade II listed buildings. The conservation area may have been an Anglo-Saxon settlement and is mentioned in the Domesday book.
- 3.73 The key characteristics identified within the urban area of Shifnal are:
- *The setting of the historic core*
  - *Views of St Andrew's Church*
  - *Views of the railway line on an embankment.*

## 4.0 Visibility of future baseline sites SHF032, SHF018b and SHF018d

### Views of the sites and extent of visibility

- 4.1 There is no public access to the sites therefore no viewpoints accessible to the public from the sites themselves, however, there are limited public views from some of the surrounding area. Views from a range of visual receptors within the study area have been identified. A number of representative viewpoints have been selected that, in the assessor's professional judgement, demonstrate how the site is experienced by identified visual receptors. The viewpoints chosen provide a representative selection of views from locations where the sites are visible and cover a range of receptors from varying directions. Fieldwork was confined to public rights of way and the highway network, with the extent of visibility across private land interpolated based on the computer model. The viewpoint locations are illustrated on figure 21 and the photographic viewpoints are illustrated on figures 22 to 37. The findings of the visual baseline studies are set out in the following paragraphs.
- 4.2 A preliminary computer-generated model of the zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV) in combination with fieldwork has been used to assess the potential visibility of proposed development from within the 2.5km study area. The ZTV has been prepared for each of the individual future baseline sites, including a ZTV prepared for proposed safeguarded employment sites SHF018a and P14. The ZTV for site SHF032 is indicated on figure 13, for sites SHF018b and SHF018d on figure 14, and on sites SHF018a and P14 on figure 15. The combined ZTV for all future baseline sites is provided on figure 16.
- 4.3 These figures have been used to identify the visual receptors that have the potential to be affected by development on these sites. The main determining factor, on the extent of intervisibility is the built urban form combined with the rolling topography and vegetation cover. Those visual receptors that may be potentially affected by development proposals are set out in table 1.2.

**Table 1.2 Visual receptors for future baseline sites SHF032, SHF018b, SHF018d, SHF018a & P14**

Visual receptor	Location	Identified viewpoint(s)
Residents	<p><b>From residential streets on the eastern edge of Shifnal adjacent to Coppice Green Lane</b></p> <p>There are a small number of properties beyond the tree belt along Coppice Green Lane and on Poplar Road from where views towards proposed housing site SHF032 will be afforded over the hedgerow that bounds the eastern edge of Coppice Green Lane. The receptors will be residents of these properties. There are no views of proposed employment sites SHF018b and SHF018d.</p>	Viewpoints 3 and 4 Figures 24 and 25
	<p><b>From Aston Hall and Aston Court Mews</b></p> <p>Aston Hall is a Grade II* listed building in private ownership which sits within a non-designated park and garden that forms the remains of what was once a much larger estate that included proposed housing site SHF032. There are also grade II listed ancillary buildings consisting of barns, byre and haycroft all of which were converted into 18 private residential dwellings. The receptors will be the owners of Aston Hall and the 18 private dwellings. There are no views of proposed employment sites SHF018b and SHF018d.</p>	Viewpoint 1 Figure 22

	<p><b>From Stanton Road</b></p> <p>Stanton Road is a 60mph rural road although a 30mph speed limit applies between the roundabout with Aston Road and the new roundabout at the Lamledge Lane, adjacent to the new Linwood Park residential development. A footpath running along the northern edge of this road also exits along this stretch of the road, but stops beyond the Lamledge roundabout. It also forms part of the number 891 bus route to Wolverhampton. A tall 1.8 high wall that forms the parkland boundary to Aston Hall runs along the north edge of this road as far as the Lamledge roundabout, before dropping to 1.5m high and then stopping completely opposite Waterworks Cottages. Views will be afforded of both proposed housing site SHF032 and proposed employment sites SHF018b and SHF018d.</p> <p>Receptors are likely to be motorists traveling to and from Shifnal, cyclists and pedestrians walking to and from Shifnal.</p>	Viewpoint 8 Figure 29
	<p><b>From Coppice Green Lane / Shifnal P3 Circular Walk</b></p> <p>Coppice Green Lane is a 60mph rural road, although road signage requests drivers to slow to 30mph as the road passes Idsall School. There is a new footpath along its western edge from the entrance to Idsall School and Idsall Sports Centre, until its junction with Curriers Lane. North of Idsall School entrance there is no footpath. A woodland tree belt, hedgerows and high estate walls associated with Aston Hall that run along the eastern edge of the lane until the exit to Idsall School will obscure views of proposed housing site SHF032. However, from this point until just north of Poplar Street views will be afforded above the 1.5-1.8m high hawthorn hedgerow that forms the eastern boundary to proposed housing site SHF032. Receptors are likely to be motorists, including parents picking up school children, cyclists and pedestrians.</p> <p>The Shifnal P3 Circular Walk is a locally designated route utilizing lengths of roads linking the national cycle route 81 along Stanton Road, along Coppice Green Lane and linking with further PROW to the north of the M54. The receptors will be walkers using the footpath.</p> <p>There are no views of proposed employment sites SHF018b and SHF018d.</p>	Viewpoints 2 and 4 Figures 23 and 25
	<p><b>From Upton Lane</b></p> <p>Upton Lane is a single-track rural road with no footpath. Views of proposed employment sites SHF018b and SHF018d will be afforded through the intervening vegetation along the lane.</p> <p>Receptors are likely to be motorists, farmers, cyclists and pedestrians walking on part of the locally designated Sabrina Way. There are no views of proposed housing site SHF032.</p>	Viewpoint 9 Figure 30
	<p><b>From the A464, Priorslee Road</b></p> <p>The A464 is a busy 60mph road that passes through the centre of Shifnal linking Telford in the west and in the east joins the A41 at Kingswood Common which links to Wolverhampton. Tall hedgerows line the road to the east and west of Shifnal. To the east of Shifnal there are very limited small lengths from where views of development on the proposed employment sites SHF018b and SHF018d will be afforded. For the most part a footpath runs along its northern edge. Receptors are likely to be motorists, cyclists and pedestrians. There are no views of proposed housing site SHF032.</p>	Viewpoints 14 and 15 Figures 35 and 36
	<p><b>From the train</b></p> <p>Shifnal station is located on the Birmingham to Shrewsbury line. Receptors will be train commuters using the line from where views of development on the proposed employment sites SHF018b and SHF018d will be afforded. There are no views of proposed housing site SHF032.</p>	No View available
Recreational routes/areas	<p><b>The Sabrina Way Long Distance Walk</b></p> <p>This is a locally designated route utilizing lengths of roads linking bridleway 041/UNI/1 with the national trail Monarch's Way in the south by utilizing Upton Lane and Hinnington Road. Views of proposed employment sites SHF018b and SHF018d will be afforded through the intervening vegetation along the Upton Lane. Views may also be afforded north of Stanton Road</p>	Viewpoint 9 Figure 30

	on bridleway 041/UNI/1. However, views from these locations are likely to be for the most part completely screened by the tall hedgerows lining both these routes. The receptors will be walkers and horse riders using the footpath, roads and bridal way. There are no views of proposed housing site SHF032.	
	<p><b>Monarch's Way</b></p> <p>This is a national trail located approximately 0.75km to the east of proposed employment sites SHF018b and SHF018d. Any views afforded are likely to be small glimpsed views over or through gaps in the hedgerow lining the trail along its length from Twybrook Cottage to Trimlet Bridge. The receptors will be walkers and dog walkers using the footpath. There are no views of proposed housing site SHF032.</p>	Viewpoints 10 and 11 Figures 31 and 32
	<p><b>PROW 0141/13/1</b></p> <p>This PROW links the A464 Priorslee Road with Shaw Lane, via Haughton Farm. This footpath, at around 120m AOD traverses the elevated land to the west of Shifnal. The receptors will be walkers using the footpath. Views of both the proposed employment sites SHF018b and SHF018d and the proposed housing site SHF032 may be afforded.</p>	Viewpoint 16 Figure 37

### Potential development proposals

- 4.4 Following an appraisal of the landscape character and visual amenity, it has been established that there is potential to develop these sites for housing and employment. This is illustrated on figures 38 and 39 and described below.

### Primary mitigation

- 4.5 The potential impacts on the landscape and visual resources were a significant consideration from the outset. The need to retain and accommodate key landscape elements, and the likely effect on receptors beyond the development boundaries, influenced and guided the preliminary proposals. In addition, the preliminary proposals have integrated measures to address natural heritage and cultural heritage issues. As a result, the scheme has been developed to best protect the landscape, natural heritage and cultural heritage resources of the site and its landscape setting.
- 4.6 Key primary mitigation measures incorporated into the preliminary appraisal layouts aim to minimise the initial predicted impacts of the proposed development and include the following:

#### *SHF032*

- Predominantly setting housing back from Coppice Green Lane
- Retention of the woodland to the north of the site
- Retention of the existing mature good quality trees and enhanced tree planting around the listed heritage assets in Aston Court Mews
- New tree planting along main vehicular access and road frontage to reduce massing and visually reduce impact of development.

#### *SHF018b & SHF018d*

- Retention of existing hedgerows in sites SHF018b and SHF018d where possible

- Creating vehicular routes aligned with existing hedgerows that are retained where possible and enhanced to create a network of greenways through the site.
- Retention of mature trees along Upton Lane
- New woodland buffer zone to the eastern boundary to provide a strong defensible boundary and provide screening to development in views from the east
- New woodland buffer zones to the southern boundary adjacent to railway line to provide screening to development in view to the south
- Larger proposed units located to the south of the site adjacent to railway, with unit sizes reducing towards Stanton Road
- Development pulled away from the north west corner of the site adjacent to Waterworks Cottages

### **Predicted sources of landscape and visual effects**

- 4.7 The principal sources of change to landscape resources and visual amenity arise from the introduction of new built forms and landscape elements. The changes that could occur to the landscape can be separated into temporary (that occur during construction) and permanent changes that occur post construction. Some of these changes may be beneficial, resulting in an improvement in quality or landscape resources, while others may be adverse. The elements that will give rise to landscape and visual effects are summarised in the following paragraphs.

#### *Predicted temporary effects during construction*

- 4.8 The following activities will cause temporary changes to landscape and visual receptors during all phases of the construction period:
- Infrastructure provision – building access roads / connection to services / trenching operations
  - The erection of temporary protective and security fencing as well as hoarding to reduce noise impact
  - Site compounds and contractors' car parking
  - Site excavation and the movement of site soils for the construction of the new vehicular access
  - Site level changes, mainly involving foundations, creation of new road infrastructure and the creation of a development platform
  - Introduction of cranes, rigs and large machinery and their associated movement and noise, both to and from the site and around the site
  - Temporary lighting and signage associated with construction works
  - Changes to the surrounding roads due to the movement of additional heavy machinery during construction
  - Construction related noise affecting local levels.

#### *Predicted permanent effects at completion (post-construction)*

- 4.9 The following activities will cause permanent changes to landscape and visual receptors:

- Construction of residential development along with new infrastructure including lighting
- Construction of new employment sites including office sheds with new infrastructure including lighting
- Introduction of new tree and shrub planting
- Introduction of new junction arrangement, internal roads
- Earthworks including a balancing area and development platform
- Changes in visual appearance of the sites
- Loss of views
- Changes to the character of the site.

## 5.0 Predicted potential landscape and visual effects of future baseline sites

- 5.1 The following section predicts the potential effects on the landscape resources and visual amenity receptors within the sites and in the areas surrounding the sites identified in the baseline section. In each case, the predicted degree of the effects is described in relation to the completion stage of both sites.

### **Predicted effects on landscape character**

- 5.2 The effects on the landscape resources identified in the baseline are set out below for each identified landscape character area within the ZTVs indicated on figures 14 - 16.

#### *Predicted effects on the landscape character of site SHF032*

- 5.3 As described in the baseline section of this report, the landscape character of this site comprises a small area of arable farmland predominantly bounded by a hedgerow along its western boundary with Coppice Green Lane, the mature woodland belt to the north east, and the mature trees and scrub to the south east and south around the access road to Aston Court Mews. See figure 12. The only area unbounded is an approximate 120m long gap along its eastern boundary allowing more distant views of the arable farmland beyond. However, this view is only afforded from the publicly accessible Coppice Green Lane for approximately 15m before being screened behind a hedgerow. While also visible from the access road to Aston Court Mews, this is a private road. There are no public rights of way or landscape, ecological or heritage designations on the site. However, located adjacent to the listed buildings at Aston Court Mews, that were converted into 18 residential units in the 1980's, consideration needs to be given with regards the effect of development on the setting of these buildings.
- 5.4 The site lies adjacent to Idsall School and Idsall Sports Centre, with the very northern section of the site located opposite the newly constructed housing area, Honeysuckle Grange. These fringe characteristics influence the site. The sensitivity of this site is considered to be high / medium.
- 5.5 The proposed development will largely retain the existing vegetation and this will be enhanced with new tree planting. The site therefore will remain for the most part enclosed. Its development as housing will see its main key characteristics, as an agricultural field altered. While in contrast to its existing land use, it will be consistent with the similar new housing development further north on Coppice Green Lane, at Honeysuckle Grange. Overall, the changes as a result of the development will be large adverse. The degree of effects will therefore be substantial adverse.

#### *Predicted effects on the landscape character of sites SHF018b and SHF018d*

- 5.6 As described in the baseline section of this report, the landscape character of these sites comprises six rectilinear arable fields separated by hedgerows and isolated trees with Upton Lane splitting the two sites into SHF018b and SHF018d. See figure 12. The railway forms their southern boundary and Stanton Road the northern boundaries. Woodland and scrub line the railway to the south of site

SHF018b which then becomes a hedgerow and scrub along its remaining length south of site SHF018d. An almost continuous hedgerow runs along Stanton Road helping to screen southward views across the sites from most but the taller vehicles. However, this hedgerow stops opposite Stanton Hill Wood as far west as Waterworks Cottages, where clear views across site SHF018b southward are afforded. Woodland blocks and tall hedgerows contain the site visually to the west. While the majority of the eastern boundary is undefined across an open field, Loam Wood, Monk's Wood and Big Wood contain views further from the east. The proposed employment development will see new access roads and parking associated with large sheds and office buildings. The preliminary appraisal proposals indicate the larger buildings set back adjacent to the railway and buildings getting progressively smaller as they move closer to Stanton Road. A retention pond and soft landscape is proposed adjacent to Waterworks Cottages. A locally designated footpath runs along Upton Lane. Apart from this there are no other rights of way or designations. The railway and Shifnal Industrial Estate form urban fringe characteristics to the site. These sites are considered to be of medium sensitivity.

- 5.7 The proposed development will largely retain the existing vegetation and this will be enhanced with new tree planting. The site therefore will remain for the most part enclosed. Its development for employment will see its main key characteristics as agricultural fields altered. Overall, the changes as a result of the development will be large adverse. The degree of effects will therefore be substantial adverse.

***Predicted effects on the Sandstone Estatelands landscape character area***

- 5.8 Both site SHF032 and the majority of site SHF018b are located within this character area, which is generally located to the south, west and north west of both sites. The M54, the railway and the A464 are the three main transport routes that traverse this area. It has a number of public rights of way including a length of National Cycle Route 81 that runs to the north of SHF018b and SHF018d, via Stanton Road. The land use is predominantly medium to large agricultural fields with a scattering of residential properties, including a small number of country houses set within parkland, such as Aston Hall to the south of site SHF032. Its value is considered to be medium as the landscape is reasonably distinctive with some recreational and heritage interest. It is considered this character area could accommodate a medium change related to the proposed housing and employment development without undue consequences arising on the condition and quality of its defining characteristics. We therefore consider the susceptibility of the character area to be low and the area's sensitivity to be medium / low.
- 5.9 The effects of the proposed employment and residential development will be largely localised to the immediate landscape surrounding of the sites, with the intervisibility with this character area being very limited and where development will create only very minor alterations to the landscape. The magnitude of change as a result of the development will be negligible adverse. The degree of effects will therefore be negligible adverse.

***Predicted effects on the Estate Farmlands landscape character area***

- 5.10 Both a small southern area of site SHF018b and the entirety of site SHF018d are located within this character area, which covers the majority of the 2.5km study



area. The M54, the railway, the A464 and the A4169 are the main transport routes that traverse this area. It has a number of public rights of way including a long length of National Cycle Route 81 that runs to the north of SHF018b and SHF018d, via Stanton Road, through Shifnal and towards the west via Haughton Road. The land use is predominantly large regular shaped agricultural fields with clusters of farm buildings and cottages, including a small number of country houses set within parkland. Its value is considered to be medium as the landscape is reasonably distinctive with some recreational and heritage interest. It is considered this character area could accommodate a large change related to the proposed housing and employment development without undue consequences arising on the condition and quality of its defining characteristics. We therefore consider the susceptibility of the character area to be low and the areas sensitivity to be low.

- 5.11 The effects of the proposed employment and residential development will be largely localised to the immediate landscape surrounding of the sites. Through the proposed tree and woodland planting to the boundaries of these sites the visual impact of this development is likely to be greatly reduced. However, this proposed mitigation planting is not indicated on the preliminary ZTVs. The magnitude of change as a result of the development will be negligible adverse. The degree of effects will therefore be negligible adverse.

***Predicted effects on the Enclosed Lowland Heaths landscape character area***

- 5.12 Site SHF032 has no intervisibility with this character area and therefore there will be no effect. There is however a very small amount of intervisibility with sites SHF018b and SHF018d. This is due to the fact that this character area occupies areas of elevated land to the north of the M54, most of which are covered with woodland. There are no publicly accessible locations or public rights of way within the area of intervisibility and therefore views would only be afforded from areas of open farmland. This character area is considered to be of low sensitivity.
- 5.13 The effects of the proposed employment development will be localised to a very limited extent of this character area. The magnitude of change as a result of the development will be negligible adverse. The degree of effects will therefore be negligible adverse.

***Predicted effects on the urban area of Shifnal***

- 5.14 Sites SHF018b and SHF018d have no intervisibility with this character area and therefore there will be no effect. There is however a very small amount of intervisibility with site SHF032. This intervisibility with site SHF032 is restricted to the eastern edge of the new residential development north of Coppice Green Lane. While locally commonplace the townscape is reasonably distinctive and therefore the receptors are of medium value. However, the susceptibility to change is negligible as the townscape is considered to be able to accommodate a large change related to the proposed development on site SHF032. This character area is considered to be of low sensitivity.
- 5.15 The effects of the proposed residential development will be extremely localised. The magnitude of change as a result of the development will be negligible adverse. The degree of effects will therefore be negligible adverse.

### *Predicted effects on visual amenity*

- 5.16 The effects on visual amenity to specific receptors are assessed below. To illustrate the visual effects, a number of representative viewpoints have been used.
- 5.17 Figures 13 to 15 indicate the preliminary ZTV of development on each of the individual future baseline sites. Figure 16 shows the combined preliminary ZTV for the future baseline sites. In order to produce the preliminary ZTVs selected points were added around the edges and middle of each site and extruded to 10m high above the existing ground levels to indicate an average two storey residential property or industrial shed/two storey office. The height from which the proposed development would be visible was set at 1.6m. For full details of the heights and methodology used, refer to technical appendix A part 2.
- 5.18 The preliminary ZTVs are contained within a 2.5km radius from the combined site boundaries. Figure 13 indicates the preliminary ZTV for site SHF032. This illustrates that the visual splay would be predominantly localised to the open farmland to the east of the site (Alternative safeguarded sites A and B), and across the playing fields to Idsall School and Shifnal Primary School. Due to the elevated slope of the site it may also be visible from some of the elevated farmland 2.3km to the west of Shifnal. However, with the exception of one public right of way this land is not publicly accessible.
- 5.19 Figure 14 indicates the preliminary ZTV for sites SHF018b and SHF018d. Although a more extensive visual splay it illustrates that it is predominantly localised to the open farmland to the south of the railway and to the east, although visibility is limited to the east by Loam Wood, Monk's Wood and Big Wood. The visibility extends to the elevated ridge to the south of the M54 and then a small section of more elevated land to the south and east of Lizard Wood. With the exception of one public right of way, enclosed by tall hedgerows north of Stanton Road, these areas of visual splay are again not publicly accessible. Like site SHF032, the visual splay also extends to areas of elevated farmland 2.3km to the west of Shifnal.
- 5.20 Figure 15 indicates the preliminary ZTV for sites SHF018a and P14. The extent of its visual splay is roughly between that of site SHF032 and sites SHF018b and SHF018d. However, its visibility is limited to very small areas of open farmland to the south of the railway and is limited by the hedgerow and trees along Upton Lane to the east. Like the other sites, its splay occupies the south facing elevated slope north of Stanton Road to the south and east of Aston Coppice. It also spreads into the parkland of Aston Hall. Like the other sites, the visual splay also extends to areas of elevated farmland 2.3km to the west of Shifnal.

### *From residential streets on the eastern edge of Shifnal adjacent to Coppice Green Lane*

- 5.21 The receptors are expected to be residents of these new properties; therefore, the receptors are considered to be of medium to high sensitivity. From these few properties, approximately ten in number, fronting Coppice Green Lane and on Poplar Street, the proposed housing development would be viewed obliquely by all but three properties. The proposed housing would be set back from the 1.8m high hedgerow fronting site SHF032 and would also be enhanced with new trees and shrub planting. See representative viewpoints 3 and 4, figures 24 and 25. It

is therefore envisaged that only the upper storeys of properties and rooftops would be visible. This proposed development would also be experienced and seen in the context of the existing development at Honeysuckle Grange and viewed, for the most part, from these locations against the tall belt of existing woodland. Views of sites SHF018b and SHF018d are not afforded.

- 5.22 The magnitude of visual change is expected to be medium, for while the proposed housing will create major alterations to the composition of the views, it will only be seen from a small number of locations. The degree of effects will therefore be moderate adverse.

***From Aston Hall and Aston Court Mews***

- 5.23 The receptors are expected to be residents of this privately-owned grade II\* listed Aston Hall and the 18 dwellings converted from the grade II listed ancillary buildings consisting of the barns, byre and haycroft. Therefore, the receptors are considered to be of high /medium sensitivity. See representative viewpoint 1, figure 22. From the hall, views of the proposed housing on site SHF032 are only likely to be from the upper rear floors. From the 18 dwellings that make up Aston Court Mews, views will be filtered through the retained existing vegetation around the north west of Aston Court Mews, although they will be clear views from its access road. The impact on the setting of these existing properties associated with Aston Hall needs to be considered. For this reason, careful consideration has been given, as indicated on the appraisal layout, figure 39. Mitigation planting in the form of new tree and evergreen hedge planting, along with the siting of properties away from the site's edges will assist in screening / filtering views. Views of sites SHF018b and SHF018d are not afforded.

- 5.24 The magnitude of visual change is expected to be medium, for while the proposed housing will create major alterations to the composition of the views, it will only be seen from a small number of locations. The degree of effects will therefore be moderate adverse.

***From Stanton Road / National Cycle Route 81***

- 5.25 The receptors are expected to be motorists, cyclists, bus users and pedestrians that use Stanton Road. It should be noted that the footpath exists for only 250m from the Aston Road roundabout to the new Lamledge roundabout opposite the new Linwood Park housing development where the speed limit is reduced to 30mph. The remainder of this rural road is 60mph, running for approximately 4km through the study area from the A41 junction east of the M54 to the Aston Road roundabout on the eastern edge of Shifnal. As a rural road the sensitivity would normally be considered as medium. However, given this road is also National Cycle Route 81 the receptors sensitivity has been increased to high / medium. See representative viewpoint 8, figure 29.
- 5.26 Views of site SHF032 are limited to a short stretch of the road from the west of Stanton Hill Wood to the eastern edge of Aston Hall parkland. From this stretch of the road views will be seen obliquely, where the roofline of the proposed properties will be seen in the distance. This will create very minor alterations to the composition of the view from a small section of the road, where the focus is more likely to be on the road than the landscape. The magnitude of visual change

will therefore be small to negligible. The degree of effects from development on site SHF032 will be slight adverse.

- 5.27 Views of sites SHF018b and SHF018d will be afforded for approximately 1km of the total 4km of Stanton Road as it passes through the study area, from just west of the road junction with Stanton to the east of Waterworks Cottages. A hedgerow runs along the majority of the southern road edge with the exception of a short stretch from Stanton Hill Wood to Waterworks Cottages, where no hedgerow exists. Given the height of the eye level of most drivers will be at approximately 1.2-1.5m high, the hedgerow along Stanton Road is likely to screen most views of the employment proposals. However, bus users, cyclists and lorry drivers will have unrestricted views. While not indicated on the appraisal layout, figure 39 and the overarching master plan, figure 40, it would not be uncharacteristic within the receiving landscape to provide a new woodland belt to the south of Stanton Road from the Spinney to Waterworks Cottages, just past Stanton Hill Wood.
- 5.28 By providing this new woodland belt and siting development further south from the road edge, views from this road would be greatly reduced so that rather than creating major alterations on the composition of the view, the proposals with a new woodland belt would create only partial alterations to the view. As views will only be afforded from a relatively short length of the overall length of Stanton Road, and provided a new woodland belt is incorporated into the proposals, the magnitude of visual change is considered to be medium to small. The degree of effects from development on sites SHF018b and SHF018d will therefore be moderate adverse.

#### *From Coppice Green Lane / Shifnal P3 Circular Walk*

- 5.29 The receptors are expected to be motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians that use Coppice Green Lane. This is a two-lane road with a new footpath along its western edge from the entrance to Idsall School and Idsall Sports Centre, until its junction with Curriers Lane. North of Idsall School entrance there is no footpath, except for a very short stretch adjacent to the play area, north of Alder Road. The national speed limit applies for most of its length which reduces to 30mph from Curriers Lane to the entrance to Idsall School. This road is also locally designated as part of the Shifnal P3 Circular Walk. The receptors are considered to be of medium sensitivity. See representative viewpoints 2 and 4, figures 23 and 25. Views of sites SHF018b and SHF018d are not afforded.
- 5.30 Of the total 3.2km length of this lane that links Curries Lane in the south to Nanny Murphy's Lane in the north, at Woodcock Corner, views of the proposed housing development on site SHF032 will only be afforded for approximately 0.5km from just south of the exit to Idsall School to just north of Poplar Street. The existing hedgerow forming the western boundary to site SHF032 will assist in screening a large majority of views for drivers, although gaps in the existing hedgerow at the entrance to Aston Court Mews will allow clearer views. Views for pedestrians using the footpath to the west of the lane will see the upper storeys and rooflines of proposed residential development, although these will be partially screened by the new tree planting to the eastern edge of the existing hedgerow and new shrub planting along the access road to Aston Court Mews. See appraisal layout figure 39. Views of residential development are unlikely to be perceived as uncharacteristic given the proximity to two schools, a sports centre and new

housing to the north west of site SHF032. This development will create alterations to a small proportion of the view from only a small number of locations.

- 5.31 Overall, the magnitude of visual change will be small. The degree of effects will therefore be slight adverse.

#### *From Upton Lane*

- 5.32 Upton Lane is a rural single-track lane. The receptors are expected to be motorists, farmers, cyclists, and pedestrians using Upton Lane. Upton Lane also forms part of the locally designated Sabrina Way Long Distance Walk. The locally designated footpath has been assessed as a separate receptor. See representative viewpoint 9, figure 30. The receptors are considered to be of low / medium sensitivity. Development on site SHF032 is not visible from this lane.
- 5.33 Of the approximate 2.3km length of Upton Lane within the study area, the proposed employment development on sites SHF018b and SHF018d will only be afforded from 1km of its length. This is mainly where it passes between sites SHF018b and SHF018d and for a short length to the south of the railway and Upton Mill. However, with regards to the length between the two sites, as indicated on the appraisal layout, figure 39, the hedgerow and mature trees on both sides of this lane will be retained where possible and enhanced with new tree and shrub planting. Therefore, views will be partially screened even in winter. From south of the railway, any employment development would be viewed in the context of the large sheds at Upton Mill or the more distant sheds within Shifnal Industrial Estate. These would also be screened due to the proposed woodland belt along the southern edge of the sites, adjacent to the railway.
- 5.34 The magnitude of visual change will be small, where the employment development will form only minor alterations to a small proportion of the field of view from only a small number of locations. The degree of effects will therefore be slight adverse.

#### *From the A464*

- 5.35 The A464 is a busy 60mph road that passes through the centre of Shifnal linking Telford in the west and in the east joins the A41 at Kingswood Common which links to Wolverhampton. The receptors are expected to be motorists, cyclists, and also pedestrians, although the footpath to the north of the road is as narrow as half a metre in a lot of locations. Almost the entire length of the A464, either side of Shifnal, is lined on both sides by a 1.5 – 1.8m high hedgerow. The receptors are considered to be of low sensitivity.
- 5.36 Of the 6.5km of the A464 that passes through the study area, only approximately 1km, between Upton Lane and the Monarch's Way National Trail, is afforded views of sites SHF018b and SHF018d. Views of site SHF032 are not visible. The hedgerows lining the road will screen views towards sites SHF018b and SHF018d from most car users, although motorists in larger vehicles will be afforded distant views. However, with the proposed woodland belt along the southern edge of the sites, adjacent to the railway any views of the proposed employment sheds will be partially screened and will be viewed in the context of the large shed complex immediately adjacent to the sites, at Upton Mill.

- 5.37 The magnitude of visual change will be small, where the employment development will form only minor alterations to a small proportion of the field of view from only a small number of locations. The degree of effects will therefore be slight adverse.

*From the train*

- 5.38 Shifnal station is located on the Birmingham to Shrewsbury line. Receptors will be train commuters using the line. The receptors are considered to be of low sensitivity, whose attention is unlikely to be on the landscape. Development on site SHF032 is not visible from the train.
- 5.39 The train line runs for approximately 5.8km through the study area of which 1km passes directly south of the proposed employment sites SHF018b and SHF018d. However, having left Shifnal station the train passes along approximately 0.85km of industrial land use and therefore with the proposed employment sites extending this 0.5km to the east, this development would not appear uncharacteristic in the landscape. Views will also be partially screened due to the proposed woodland belt along the southern edges of both sites.
- 5.40 The magnitude of visual change will be small, where the employment development will form only minor alterations to a small proportion of the field of view from only a short length of the train line. The degree of effects will therefore be slight adverse.

*From the Sabrina Way Long Distance Walk*

- 5.41 This is a locally designated route utilizing lengths of roads linking bridleway 041/UNI/1 with the Monarch's Way National Trail in the south by utilizing Upton Lane and Hinnington Road. Site SHF032 is not visible. The receptors are expected to be local residents and dog walkers and are considered to be of medium sensitivity.
- 5.42 Views of the proposed employment development on sites SHF018b and SHF018d will only be afforded where Upton Lane passes between sites SHF018b and SHF018d and for a short length to the south of the railway, just past Upton Mill. However, as stated above in the assessment of Upton Lane, views south of the railway will be partial due to the proposed woodland belt along the southern edges of both sites. These views will also be viewed in the context of the large sheds at Upton Mill that will be seen in the mid and foreground of these views. from Upton Lane as it passes between the two sites views will again be screened by the retained and enhanced hedgerow planting on both sides of the lane. See representative viewpoint 9, figure 30. To the north of Stanton Road, the Sabrina Way uses bridleway 041.UNI/1. While the ZTV indicates the visual splay from the employment development spreads over the farmland either side of this PROW, having visited the site it can be confirmed that the tall thick hedgerows on both sides of the bridleway screen all views of this development.
- 5.43 The magnitude of visual change will be small, where the employment development will form only minor alterations to a small proportion of the field of view from only a small number of locations. The degree of effects will therefore be slight adverse.

*From the Monarch's Way National Trail*

- 5.44 This is a national trail located approximately 0.75km to the east of proposed employment sites SHF018b and SHF018d. The receptors are expected to be local residents and dog walkers and long-distance walkers using the trail. Being a national trail means the receptors are likely to have their primary focus on the landscape and therefore their susceptibility to change is high. However, the landscape is undesignated and therefore of medium to low value. It is therefore considered the sensitivity of the receptors is medium. Ste SHF032 is not visible.
- 5.45 From the location opposite Stanton Farm only a very small area of the eastern section of the proposed employment development, site SHF018d will be visible at 0.75km to the west. However, from this location the Spinney woodland belt obscures the majority of this site. See representative viewpoint 10, figure 31.
- 5.46 Further south while crossing over the railway line on Bonemill Bridge, the proposed safeguarded employment sites will be more visible, although they will be set behind numerous hedgerows and lines of trees. Nevertheless, development would be visible at this location, although views of employment sheds and offices would be partially screened behind the proposed woodland belt along the eastern edge of site SHF018d. See representative viewpoint 11, figure 32.
- 5.47 While the visibility splay indicated on figure 14 shows further areas of this trail from where these sites can be viewed this is actually from the open farmland either side of the trail. Having verified on site the remainder of this trail we can confirm that a tall hedgerow screens all views.
- 5.48 The magnitude of visual change will be small, where the employment development will form only minor alterations to a small proportion of the field of view from only a very limited number of locations. The degree of effects will therefore be slight adverse.

*From PROW 0141/13/1*

- 5.49 This PROW links the A464 Priorslee Road with Shaw Lane, via Haughton Farm. This footpath, at around 120m AOD traverses the elevated land to the west of Shifnal. The receptors will be walkers using the footpath and their sensitivity is considered to be medium.
- 5.50 The visual splay indicated on figure 14 for the proposed employment sites SHF018b and SHF018d indicates that views of the proposed employment sites are visible from this PROW adjacent to Haughton Farm. However, following a field visit it was verified that this visual splay occupies the open farmland but a continuous tall hedgerow screens all views from the footpath. The visual splay indicated on figure 13 for the proposed housing site SHF032 indicates that views are afforded from this same footpath to the south of the railway line. This view is indicated on representative viewpoint 16, figure 37. While the site is located beyond St Andrew's Church, which is visible above the trees in the mid ground, it is approximately 2.3km away. Therefore, it is not possible to discern particular tree groups such as Aston Coppice. Once constructed it is possible the roofline of the proposed houses with site SHF032 may be visible, however, at this distance they will be barely discernible.

- 5.51 The magnitude of visual change will be negligible, where the housing development will form very minor alterations to a negligible proportion of the field of view from only a very limited number of locations. The degree of effects will therefore be negligible adverse.



## 6.0 Summary of future baseline sites

- 6.1 Proposed housing site SHF032 forms a small parcel of land on slightly elevated land adjacent to Coppice Green Lane. It is bounded by woodland and hedgerows on almost all sides. No public rights of way cross it and there are no ecological or cultural heritage designations. It does play a minor role in the setting of the listed ancillary buildings at Aston Court Mews.
- 6.2 It shares some of the characteristics of the character area Sandstone Eastlands, in which it is located. Its landscape sensitivity is considered to be high to medium and the magnitude of change as a result of housing development will be large. The degree of effects is therefore substantial adverse.
- 6.3 Proposed employment sites SHF018b and SHF018d comprise of six rectilinear arable fields located between the railway line in the south and Stanton Road in the north. Partly bounded by the Spinney to the east and along the western boundary by a hedgerow bounding Hillcrest Shifnal School and Shifnal Industrial Estate. Upton Lane is locally designated as Sabrina Way, a long distance walk and runs between both sites.
- 6.4 Site SHF018b sits predominantly in character area Sandstone Eastlands and site SHF018d sits within character area Estate Farmlands. Both sites share some of the characteristics of the character area in which they are located. Its landscape sensitivity is considered to be medium and the magnitude of change as a result of housing development will be large. The degree of effects is therefore substantial adverse.
- 6.5 This appraisal of effects on landscape character of these sites are not unexpected given the extent and nature of the proposed development in each, which will inevitably represent a permanent and long-term change to the landscape character of these sites. The development of both housing and employment on what is presently agricultural fields will introduce new elements in the form of houses in the case of SHF032 and employment sheds and offices in the case of sites SHF018b and SHF018d and associated infrastructure including landscape planting. However, both proposed developments will not necessarily be uncharacteristic in the receiving landscape. The proposed housing on site SHF032, on the suburban edge of Shifnal, will be viewed in the context of the housing developments to the north of Coppice Green Lane and the two schools, sports centre and their associated infrastructure such as parking, sports fields, flood lighting etc. The proposed employment development on sites SHF018b and SHF018d is also not uncharacteristic in this landscape. It will be viewed in the context of the large sheds at Upton Mill to the south of the railway and the adjacent employment land use within Shifnal Industrial Estate. Furthermore, it is located adjacent to proposed safeguarded employment sites SHF018a and P14 that is presently the fields and woodland that wrap around Hillcrest Shifnal School, to the south of Stanton Road.
- 6.6 In regards to the three remaining character areas that share some intervisibility with these sites, the magnitude of change represented by development would be negligible, whereby the proposals will barely affect any of the essential characteristics of these character areas and therefore the degree of landscape effects will be negligible adverse.

- 6.7 Eleven representative viewpoints were chosen to represent views from a number of different receptors. The receptors tended to be residents, motorists with transitory views, cyclists and pedestrians. The majority of the receptors were considered to be of medium or medium / low sensitivity with the exception of people in residential properties adjacent to Coppice Green Lane, residents of Aston Hall and Aston Court Mews that were considered to be of high / medium sensitivity. Equally, the receptors using Stanton Road were upgraded from medium to high / medium due to the fact that this particular length of Stanton Road was also National Cycle Trail 81.
- 6.8 The proposed developments at both sites will have slight adverse visual effects on almost all the receptors apart from the residential properties at Coppice Green Lane, residents of Aston Hall, Aston Court Mews that will have moderate adverse effects.
- 6.9 In terms of receptors using Stanton Road / National Cycle Trail 81, the degree of effects for site SHF032 was considered as only slight adverse. However, with regards development on sites SHF018b and SHF018d the degree of effects was considered to be moderate adverse.

## 7.0 Visibility of alternative safeguarded sites A and B

### Views of the site and extent of visibility

- 7.1 Site A has a public bridleway, number 0141/UNI/1 which is also locally designated as part of the Sabrina Way a long-distance walk along its northern western corner where it runs adjacent to the M54. Apart from this PROW there are no other areas of the sites that are publicly accessible. There are also a small number of public views from some of the surrounding area. Views from a range of visual receptors within the study area have been identified. A number of representative viewpoints have been selected that, in the assessor's professional judgement, demonstrate how the site is experienced by identified visual receptors. The viewpoints chosen provide a representative selection of views from locations where the sites are visible and cover a range of receptors from varying directions. Fieldwork was confined to public rights of way and the highway network, with the extent of visibility across private land interpolated based on the computer model. The viewpoint locations are illustrated on figure 21 and the photographic viewpoints are illustrated on figures 22 to 37. The findings of the visual baseline studies are set out in the following paragraphs.
- 7.2 A preliminary computer-generated model of the zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV) in combination with fieldwork has been used to assess the potential visibility of proposed development from within the 2.5km study area. The ZTV has been prepared for each of the proposed alternative safeguarded sites A and B. The ZTV for site A is indicated on figure 17, for site B on figure 18. A ZTV for the combined sites A and B is indicated on figure 19. Figure 20 indicates the ZTV for sites A and B overlaid on the ZTV of the future baseline sites providing a cumulative ZTV for all sites.
- 7.3 These figures have been used to identify the visual receptors that have the potential to be affected by development on these sites. The main determining factor on the extent of intervisibility is the built urban form combined with the rolling topography and vegetation cover. Those visual receptors that may be potentially affected by development proposals are set out in table 1.3.

<b>Visual receptor</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Identified viewpoint(s)</b>
<b>Residents</b>	<p><b>From residents on the eastern edge of Shifnal adjacent to Coppice Green Lane</b></p> <p>There are a small number of properties beyond the tree belt along Coppice Green Lane and around the area of open play space on Alder Road from where views towards alternative safeguarded site A will be afforded over the hedgerow that bounds the eastern edge of Coppice Green Lane. The receptors will be residents to these properties and users of the open space.</p>	Viewpoints 3 and 4 Figures 24 and 25
	<p><b>From Aston Hall</b></p> <p>Aston Hall is a Grade II* listed building in private ownership which sits within a non-designated park and garden that forms the remains of what was once a much larger estate that included alternative safeguarded sites A &amp; B. There are also grade II listed ancillary buildings consisting of barns, byre and haycroft all of which were converted into 18 private residential dwellings. The receptors will be the owners of Aston Hall and the 18 private dwellings.</p>	Viewpoint 1 Figure 22

	<p><b>From Linwood Park</b></p> <p>There are a small number of new residential streets with dwellings fronting Stanton Road and Lamledge Lane from where views across alternative safeguarded sites A &amp; B may be available. Receptors will be residents to these dwellings</p>	Viewpoint 7 Figure 28
<b>Transport routes</b>	<p><b>From Stanton Road / National Cycle Route 81</b></p> <p>Stanton Road is a 60mph rural road although a 30mph speed limit applies between the roundabout with Aston Road and the new roundabout at the Lamledge Lane, adjacent to the new Linwood Park residential development. A footpath running along the northern edge of this road also exits along this stretch of the road, but stops beyond the Lamledge roundabout. It also forms part of the number 891 bus route to Wolverhampton. A tall 1.8 high wall that forms the parkland boundary to Aston Hall runs along the north edge of this road as far as the Lamledge roundabout, before dropping to 1.5m high and then stopping completely opposite Waterworks Cottages. Views will be afforded of both proposed alternative safeguarded sites A &amp; B. Receptors are likely to be motorists traveling to and from Shifnal, cyclists and pedestrians walking to and from Shifnal.</p> <p>This length of Stanton Road is also the National Cycle Route 81 that links Albrighton in the east with Telford in the West. Views afforded of alternative safeguarded sites A &amp; B are likely to be restricted to a 1km length stretch of the route between Stanton Hill Wood and Coppice Green Lane. The receptors will be cyclists using the route</p>	Viewpoint 8 Figure 29
	<p><b>From Coppice Green Lane / Shifnal P3 circular walk</b></p> <p>Coppice Green Lane is a 60mph rural road, although road signage requests drivers to slow to 30mph as the road passes Idsall School. There is a new footpath along its western edge from the entrance to Idsall School and Idsall Sports Centre, until its junction with Curriers Lane. North of Idsall School entrance there is no footpath. Woodland, a tree belt, hedgerows and high estate walls associated with Aston Hall run along the eastern edge of the lane until the exist to Idsall School and obscure views towards alternative safeguarded sites A &amp; B. Beyond the entrance to Aston Court Mews a dense 1.5-1.8m high hawthorn hedgerow forms the eastern boundary to the road and predominantly screens views toward the east. Receptors are likely to be motorists, including parents picking up school children, cyclists and pedestrians.</p> <p>The Shifnal P3 Circular Walk is a locally designated route utilizing lengths of roads linking the national cycle route 81 along Stanton Road, along Coppice Green Lane and linking with further PROW to the north of the M54. The receptors will be walkers using the footpath.</p>	Viewpoints 2 and 4 Figures 23 and 25
	<p><b>From Upton Lane</b></p> <p>Upton Lane is a 60mph rural road with no footpath. Views of alternative safeguarded sites A &amp; B are barely discernible through the intervening vegetation along the lane. Receptors are likely to be motorists, farmers, cyclists and pedestrians walking on part of the locally designated Sabrina Way.</p>	Viewpoint 9 Figure 30
	<p><b>From the A464, Priorslee Road</b></p> <p>The A464 is a busy 60mph A road that passes through the centre of Shifnal linking Telford in the west and in the east joins the A41 at Kingswood Common which links to Wolverhampton. Tall hedgerows line the road to the east and west of Shifnal. From the west of Shifnal views toward alternative safeguarded sites A &amp; B are unlikely. To the east of Shifnal there are very limited small lengths from where these parcels may be visible. however, from these locations, development is likely to be barely discernible.</p> <p>For the most part a footpath runs along its northern edge. Receptors are likely to be motorists, cyclists and pedestrians.</p>	Viewpoints 14 and 15 Figures 35 and 36

	<p><b>From A4169</b></p> <p>The A4169 is a busy 60mph A road linking Halesfield and the south of Telford with Shifnal. For most of this length there is no footpath. However, a footpath does start at the Wyke Equestrian Centre and continues the west of the road until Shifnal. Receptors will be motorists and cyclists.</p>	Viewpoint 13 Figure 34
	<p><b>From the M54</b></p> <p>The M54 is a 70mph motorway linking Telford in the West and the M6, north of Walsall in the east.</p>	No view available
	<p><b>From the train</b></p> <p>Shifnal station is located on the Birmingham to Shrewsbury line. Receptors will be train commuters using the line.</p>	No view available
Recreational routes/areas	<p><b>The Sabrina Way Long Distance Walk</b></p> <p>This is a locally designated route utilizing lengths of roads linking bridleway 041/UNI/1 with the national trail Monarch's Way in the south by utilizing Upton Lane and Hinnington Road. Views towards alternative safeguarded sites A &amp; B are only likely to be from the length on Upton Lane, north of the railway line and sections of the bridleway 041/UNI/1, north of Stanton Road. However, views from these locations are likely to be for the most part completely screened by the tall hedgerows lining both these routes. Clearer views will be afforded along the north western section of bridleway 041/UNI/1 where it runs adjacent to the M54 and joins Coppice Green Lane, passing through the north western section of alternative safeguarded site A. The receptors will be walkers and horse riders using the footpath, roads and bridleway.</p>	Viewpoints 5 and 9 Figures 26 and 30
	<p><b>PROW 0141/2/1</b></p> <p>This PROW link Shifnal with Sheriffhales in the north and also links with local designated Shifnal P3 Circular Walk. This southern section cuts out the loop in Coppice Green Lane and traverses an area of elevated farmland north of Coppice Green. The receptors will be walkers using the footpath. Possible views of development to the north of site A may be visible through the woodland belts lining both sides of the M54.</p>	Viewpoint 6 Figure 27
	<p><b>Monarch's Way</b></p> <p>This is a national trail located approximately 2.6km to the south of alternative safeguarded sites A &amp; B and approximately 1.3km to the east. Any views afforded are likely to be small glimpsed views over or through gaps in the hedgerow lining the trail along its length from Twybrook Cottage to Trimlet Bridge. The receptors will be walkers using the footpath.</p>	Viewpoint 11 Figure 32
	<p><b>PROW 0141/13/1</b></p> <p>This PROW links the A464 Priorslee Road with Shaw Lane, via Haughton Farm. This footpath, at around 120m AOD traverses the elevated land to the west of Shifnal. The receptors will be walkers using the footpath.</p>	Viewpoint 16 Figure 37
	<p><b>PROW 0141/11/1</b></p> <p>This PROW links Park Lane, at the vehicular entrance to Lodgehill Farm with Wesley Brook, to the south of Lodge Hill. The receptors will be walkers using the footpath.</p>	Viewpoint 12 Figure 33

### Future baseline

- 7.4 For development at proposed alternative safeguarded sites A and B to come forward it is assumed that proposed residential development site SHF032 to the east of Coppice Green Lane and the proposed employment sites at SHF018b and SHF018d between the railway line and Stanton Road, assessed previously in sections 4 to 6, will have been built out and completed. Although not part of the promotion by Harrow Estates, we have also assumed development at proposed

safeguarded employment site SHF018a and P14 has been completed. These sites will form the future baseline.

- 7.5 The following sections will therefore assess the landscape and visual effects of development at alternative safeguarded sites A and B from the surrounding study area against these future baseline sites as if they are already built in order to understand how they will be perceived in the landscape and to understand the cumulative effects of the development proposals on all these sites.

### **Potential development proposals**

- 7.6 Following an appraisal of the landscape character and visual amenity, it has been established that there is potential to develop these sites for housing and employment. This is illustrated on figure 40 and described below.

### **Primary mitigation**

- 7.7 The potential impacts on the landscape and visual resources were a significant consideration from the outset. The need to retain and accommodate key landscape elements, and the likely effect on receptors beyond the development boundaries, influenced and guided the preliminary proposals. In addition, the preliminary proposals have integrated measures to address natural heritage and cultural heritage issues. As a result, the scheme has been developed to best protect the landscape, natural heritage and cultural heritage resources of the site and its landscape setting.
- 7.8 Key primary mitigation measures incorporated into the preliminary appraisal layouts aim to minimise the initial predicted impacts of the proposed development and include the following:
- Predominantly setting housing back from Coppice Green Lane and Stanton Road
  - Retention of the woodland and existing mature trees
  - Retention of the existing hedgerows and enhancement tree planting around the listed heritage assets in Aston Court Mews and the parkland to Aston Hall
  - Planting of new tree planting along main vehicular access and road frontages to reduce massing and visually reduce impact of development.
  - Sensitive siting of development away from Aston Court Mews, Aston Hall and its associated parkland in order to respect the setting of these heritage assets.
  - Enhancement and new woodland belts, waterbodies and parkland tree groups to the south of site A adjacent to the parkland to Aston Hall
  - Enhancement and new woodland belts, waterbodies and parkland tree groups to the south of site B adjacent to Stanton Road.
  - New woodland belt on the north of site B linking Stanton Hill Wood with Aston Coppice
  - New woodland belt on the north west of site A, linking with Aston Coppice and enhancing the existing woodland belt adjacent to the M54 as well as assisting in noise reduction from the M54

### **Predicted sources of landscape and visual effects**

7.9 The principal sources of change to landscape resources and visual amenity arise from the introduction of new built forms and landscape elements. The changes that could occur to the landscape can be separated into temporary (that occur during construction) and permanent changes that occur post construction. Some of these changes may be beneficial, resulting in an improvement in quality or landscape resources, while others may be adverse. The elements that will give rise to landscape and visual effects are summarised in the following paragraphs.

#### *Predicted temporary effects during construction*

7.10 The following activities will cause temporary changes to landscape and visual receptors during all phases of the construction period:

- Infrastructure provision – building access roads / connection to services / trenching operations
- The erection of temporary protective and security fencing as well as hoarding to reduce noise impact
- Site compounds and contractors' car parking
- Site excavation and the movement of site soils for the construction of the new vehicular access
- Site level changes, mainly involving foundations, creation of new road infrastructure and the creation of a development platform
- Introduction of cranes, rigs and large machinery and their associated movement and noise, both to and from the site and around the site
- Temporary lighting and signage associated with construction works
- Changes to the surrounding roads due to the movement of additional heavy machinery during construction
- Construction related noise affecting local levels.

#### *Predicted permanent effects at completion (post-construction)*

7.11 The following activities will cause permanent changes to landscape and visual receptors:

- Construction of residential development along with new infrastructure including lighting
- Introduction of new tree and shrub planting
- Introduction of new junction arrangement, internal roads
- Earthworks including a balancing area and development platform
- Changes in visual appearance of the sites
- Loss of views
- Changes to the character of the site.

## 8.0 Predicted potential landscape and visual effects of proposed alternative safeguarded sites A and B

- 8.1 The following section predicts the potential effects on the landscape resources and visual amenity receptors within the sites and in the areas surrounding the sites identified in the baseline section, including the future baseline sites. In each case, the predicted degree of the effects is described in relation to the completion stage of both sites.
- 8.2 The majority of the landscape character areas and visual receptors for alternative sites A and B are the same for those previously assessed for the future baseline sites. Rather than repeating the text describing the landscape resources or receptor and the explanation provided for its assessed sensitivity, we will simply state the sensitivity unless there is something different regarding sites A and B. Where a character area or visual receptor has not been assessed as part of the future baseline assessment then a full explanation of its resources, location and sensitivity will be provided.

### **Predicted effects on landscape character**

- 8.3 The effects on the landscape resources identified in the baseline are set out below for each identified landscape character area within the ZTVs indicated on figures 17 - 20.

#### *Predicted effects on the landscape character of alternative safeguarded sites A*

- 8.4 As described in the baseline section of this report, site A is predominantly in the Sandstone Estatelands with the northern extent of its area within the Estate Farmlands. This site wraps around Aston Coppice from its northern western corner to the woodland edge adjacent to the M54. The western boundary follows the hedgerow bounding Coppice Green Lane and then along the western edge of a tree belt, across an open arable field to the north western corner of the access road in Aston Court Mews. Its southern boundary is the parkland associated with Aston Hall, marked by a small number of trees and low scrub. Its western boundary is an undefined line within an arable field that forms the western boundary of site B. The remaining length of its northern boundary is Aston Coppice. Site A has a public bridleway, number: 0141/UNI/1 which is also locally designated as part of the Sabrina Way a long-distance walk along its northern western corner where it runs adjacent to the M54. Apart from this PROW there are no other areas of the sites that are publicly accessible. There are no heritage designations on the site. However, located adjacent to the listed buildings at Aston Court Mews, that were converted into 18 residential units in the 1980's and with the undesignated parkland to Aston Hall forming the southern boundary consideration needs to be given to the effect of development on the setting of these buildings. The sensitivity of this site is considered to be high / medium.
- 8.5 The proposed development indicated on the appraisal layout on the overarching master plan, figure 40, indicates that the existing vegetation will be retained and enhanced with a new woodland belt to the north, adjacent to the M54 which will assist in reducing the noise of traffic on the M54 which is clearly audible in the northern section of site A. The southern boundary will have enhancement planting adjacent to the parkland associated with Aston Hall, with new belts of trees and



parkland tree groups as well as new attenuation water bodies. A new main access road will be extended from the access road within site SHF032, itself linked to Coppice Green Lane. This road will have tree planting, which along with the planting to the south will assist in partially screening and reducing the massing of development on this site.

- 8.6 Its development as housing will see its main key characteristics as an agricultural field altered. While in contrast to its existing land use, it would be a logical progression to the housing within site SHF032 and will be consistent with the similar new housing development further north on Coppice Green Lane, the new Linwood Park development south of Stanton Road and the Extra Care development, also south of Stanton Road, directly opposite the main façade of Aston Hall. Overall, the changes as a result of the development will be large adverse. The degree of effects will therefore be substantial adverse.

***Predicted effects on the landscape character of alternative safeguarded site B***

- 8.7 As described in the baseline section of this report, site B is also predominantly within the Sandstone Estatelands with its northern extent within the Estate Farmlands. The eastern boundary follows the alignment of the western edge of Stanton Hill Wood from the Stanton Road to the north western corner of the wood where the northern boundary continues from this point westward, through an arable field, to meet the eastern boundary of site A. The western boundary of site B follows the same alignment as the eastern boundary of site A, which is an undefined line through an arable field before running along the eastern boundary the parkland associated with Aston Hall. Its southern boundary runs along Stanton Road which is lined for approximately 300 linear metres until Waterworks Cottages by a 1.5m high stone wall associated with Aston Hall. Beyond this point the road edge is bounded by a 1.8m high hedgerow. There are no heritage designations or public rights of way on the site. However, it is located along part of its western boundary with the undesignated parkland associated with Aston Hall which needs consideration with regards to the effect of development on the setting of both Aston Hall and its parkland. These sites are considered to be of medium sensitivity.
- 8.8 The proposed development indicated on the appraisal layout on the overarching master plan, figure 40, indicates that the existing vegetation will be retained and enhanced with a new woodland belt to the north along the ridgeline linking Stanton Hill Wood with Aston Coppice in order to screen views of development from the higher land to the north and north west, north of the M54. The southern boundary will have enhancement planting adjacent to the parkland associated with Aston Hall, with new belts of trees and parkland tree groups as well as new attenuation water bodies. Development will also be pulled away from Stanton Road and the National Cycle Route 81. The main access road will be extended from site A and site SHF032, and will link onto Stanton Road to the west of Waterworks Cottages. Tree planting along the access roads and the wide landscape buffer with Stanton Road will assist in partially screening and reducing the massing of development on this site.
- 8.9 Its development as housing will see its main key characteristics as an agricultural field altered. While in contrast to its existing land use, it would be a logical progression to the housing within site SHF032 and site A. With the employment

development to the south on sites SHF018a, 018b, 018d and P14, housing development on site B will form a consistent edge to the north east of Shifnal.

- 8.10 Overall, the changes as a result of the development will be large adverse. The degree of effects will therefore be substantial adverse.

*Predicted effects on the Sandstone Estatelands landscape character area*

- 8.11 As stated previously, it is considered this character area could accommodate a medium change related to the proposed housing on sites A and B without undue consequences arising on the condition and quality of its defining characteristics. We therefore consider the susceptibility of the character area to be low and the area's sensitivity to be medium / low.

- 8.12 The effects of the proposed residential development will be largely localised to the immediate landscape surrounding of the sites with the intervisibility with this character area being very limited. The magnitude of change as a result of the development will be negligible adverse. The degree of effects will therefore be negligible adverse.

*Predicted effects on the Estate Farmlands landscape character area*

- 8.13 As stated previously, it is considered this character area could accommodate a large change related to the proposed housing development on sites A and B without undue consequences arising on the condition and quality of its defining characteristics. We therefore consider the susceptibility of the character area to be low and the areas sensitivity to be low.
- 8.14 The effects of the proposed residential development will be largely localised to the immediate landscape surrounding of the sites. At this preliminary stage the ZTV prepared are very basic and do not model the mitigation measures indicated on the appraisal layout on the overarching master plan, figure 40. However, the woodland belts to the north of both sites will greatly reduce the visual splay to the more elevated land in the north. The magnitude of change as a result of the development will be negligible adverse. The degree of effects will therefore be negligible adverse.

*Predicted effects on the Enclosed Lowland Heaths landscape character area*

- 8.15 As stated previously, there is only a very small amount of inter-visibility with sites A and B on which there are no publicly accessible locations or public rights of way. This character area is considered to be of low sensitivity.
- 8.16 The effects of the proposed employment development will be localised to a very limited extent of this character area. The magnitude of change as a result of the development will be negligible adverse. The degree of effects will therefore be negligible adverse.

*Predicted effects on the Incised sandstone valleys landscape character area*

- 8.17 This character area follows the approximate area of watercourses throughout the study area. Land use consists of arable fields which can be found sparsely along the watercourses. Settlements are also sparse and found along the water courses. There is only one small section of this character area that shares

intervisibility with the sites and this is to the west of Tong Forge, south of Lizard House. This character area is considered to be of low sensitivity.

- 8.18 The effects of the proposed employment development will be barely discernible from this character area. The magnitude of change as a result of the development will be negligible adverse. The degree of effects will therefore be negligible adverse.

*Predicted effects on the urban area of Shifnal*

- 8.19 As stated previously, this character area is considered to be of low sensitivity.

- 8.20 The effects of the proposed residential development will be extremely localised. The magnitude of change as a result of the development will be negligible adverse. The degree of effects will therefore be negligible adverse.

*Predicted effects on visual amenity*

- 8.21 The effects on visual amenity to specific receptors are assessed below. To illustrate the visual effects, a number of representative viewpoints have been used.
- 8.22 Figures 17 to 20 indicate the preliminary ZTV of development on each of the individual future baseline sites. Figure 20 shows the combined preliminary ZTV for proposed alternative sites A and B which are indicated in pink and overlaid on the combined ZTV for the future baseline sites, indicated in purple. Viewed as a whole it provides the cumulative ZTV for all the sites north east of Shifnal.
- 8.23 In order to produce the preliminary ZTVs selected points were added around the edges and middle of each site and extruded to 10m high above the existing ground levels to indicate an average two storey residential property. The height from which the proposed development would be visible was set at 1.6m. For full details of the heights and methodology used, refer to technical appendix A part 2.
- 8.24 Figure 17 indicates the preliminary ZTV for site A. This illustrates that the visual splay would be predominantly localised to the open farmland to the east of the site (alternative safeguarded site B), across the elevated ridge to the east of Aston Coppice. To the south it covers the parkland to Aston Hall, the new residential development at Limwood Park and areas of the proposed employment land on Sites SHF018b and SHF018d. To the north of the M54 the visual splay covers the high elevated land north of Coppice Green and south of Lizard Wood. There are also more distant areas to the south east across open farmland and elevated land to the west.
- 8.25 Figure 18 indicates the preliminary ZTV for site B. The visual splay is almost identical to site A with the exception that there are no views from the elevated area around Coppice Green where development will be screened by Aston Coppice.
- 8.26 Figure 19 indicates the combined preliminary ZTV for sites A and B.

*From residential streets on the eastern edge of Shifnal adjacent to Coppice Green Lane*

- 8.27 The receptors are expected to be residents of these new properties; therefore, the receptors are considered to be of medium to high sensitivity. From these few properties, approximately ten to twelve in number, fronting Coppice Green Lane and on Alder Road, the proposed housing development would be viewed directly from these properties and from within the play area. While the proposed housing will be set well back from the 1.8m high hedgerow fronting site, the upper storeys and roofline of the properties within the north western section of site A will be visible, even with tree planting enhancement works. See representative viewpoints 3 and 4, figures 24 and 25. This proposed development would also be experienced and seen in the context of the existing development at Honeysuckle Grange and properties within proposed site SHF032.
- 8.28 The magnitude of visual change is expected to be medium, for while the proposed housing will introduce elements that will be of medium prominence, it will only be seen from a small number of locations. The degree of effects will therefore be moderate adverse.

*From Aston Hall and Aston Court Mews*

- 8.29 The receptors are expected to be residents of this privately-owned grade II\* listed Aston Hall and the 18 dwellings converted from the grade II listed ancillary buildings consisting of the barns, byre and haycroft. Therefore, the receptors are considered to be of high /medium sensitivity. See representative viewpoint 1, figure 22. From the hall, views of the proposed housing on sites A and B are only likely to be from the upper rear floors. From the 18 dwellings that make up Aston Court Mews, views will be filtered through the retained existing vegetation around the north west of the Aston Court Mews. As indicated on the appraisal layout on the overarching master plan, figure 40, proposed development will be set back with a buffer zone of landscape containing woodland belts, parkland tree groups and areas of attenuation in the form of water bodies. The eastern elevation to Aston Hall and its views eastward across its parkland is one of its primary views. For this reason, no development is proposed directly opposite the western boundary of the parkland. Instead the area is proposed as a wide swathe of landscape with a new health centre surrounded by landscape set slightly further north.
- 8.30 The magnitude of visual change is expected to be medium, as the proposed housing will create major alterations to the composition of the views over a large proportion of the views. However, these views will only be afforded from a small number of locations. The degree of effects will therefore be moderate adverse.

*From Linwood Park / Extra Care*

- 8.31 There are a small number of new residential streets with dwellings fronting Stanton Road and Lamledge Lane on a development that is presently reaching completion. Equally, there is a three storey Extra Care development to be located in an area presently surrounded by new development within the Limwood Park to the south of Stanton Road, directly opposite Aston Court. The receptors will be new residents within these developments and their sensitivity is considered to be medium.

- 8.32 Both developments are located opposite Aston Hall and its associated parkland containing many mature parkland trees. The parkland is also bounded along the edge of Stanton Road by a 1.8m high stone estate boundary wall. The elevated land of both site A and B are visible, although they are glimpsed views over the wall and between the parkland trees. See representative viewpoint 7, figure 28. The proposed residential development is proposed to be located away from Stanton Road and the northern and eastern boundary of Aston Hall parkland. This new development will not appear uncharacteristic in the receiving landscape, given the nature of the new development at Limwood Park, along Coppice Green Lane and within site SHF032. Equally, in taking account of the future baseline employment sites, there will also be employment land use opposite those properties facing Lamledge Lane with sites SHF018a and P14.
- 8.33 The magnitude of visual change is expected to be small, as the proposed housing will create minor alterations to the composition of the views from a small number of locations that will be glimpsed between existing parkland trees and new proposed landscape associated with development of sites A and B. Given the 1.8m high wall and the set back of development within sites A and B it is also likely the views will only be afforded from upper storey windows. The degree of effects will therefore be slight adverse.

*From Stanton Road / National Cycle Route 81*

- 8.34 The receptors are expected to be motorists, cyclists, bus users and pedestrians that use Stanton Road. As a rural road the sensitivity would normally be considered as medium. However, given this road is also National Cycle Route 81 the receptors sensitivity has been increased to High / medium. See representative viewpoint 8, figure 29.
- 8.35 Views of sites A and B are limited to a short stretch of the road from the west of Stanton Hill Wood to the Aston Road roundabout. From this stretch of the road for most road users the hedgerow or estate wall to Aston Hall will screen almost all views of residential development. Oblique views are more likely to be afforded when travelling west and from cyclists and motorists in larger vehicles where the proposed properties will be visible on the elevated south-facing slopes north of Stanton Road. As indicated on the appraisal layout on the overarching master plan, figure 40, properties will be set well back from the road especially in the south western section of site B set in a wide swathe of landscape that will contain a new health centre. Once established, the development will be viewed against a new woodland belt linking Stanton Hill Wood to Aston Coppice. This residential development will also be viewed in the context of the housing development at Limwood Park and the employment development to the south of Stanton Road within sites SHF018a, P14, SHF018b and SHF018d.
- 8.36 It is considered the residential development on sites A and B will create alterations to a medium proportion of the field of view from only a relatively short length of Stanton Road as it passes through the study area. The magnitude of visual change is considered to be medium to small. The degree of effects from development on sites A and B will therefore be moderate adverse.

*From Coppice Green Lane / Shifnal P3 Circular Walk*

- 8.37 As stated previously, the receptors are expected to be motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians that use Coppice Green Lane. The receptors are considered to be of medium sensitivity. See representative viewpoints 2 and 4, figures 23 and 25.
- 8.38 Of the total 3.2km length of this lane that links Curries Lane in the south to Nanny Murphy's Lane in the north, at Woodcock Corner, views of the proposed housing development on site A will only be afforded for approximately 0.2km as the lane passes over the M54 to the tree belt just south of Alder Road. Views of site B will not be afforded from this route. Any other views of site A are either obscured by existing vegetation and estate walls to Aston Hall or by the housing development within site SHF032. However, as indicated on the appraisal layout on the overarching master plan, figure 40, properties will be set well back from Coppice Green Lane and with the tall hedgerow and no footpath along this stretch of the road it is likely that most views apart from motorists using driving larger vehicles will be screened.
- 8.39 Overall, the magnitude of visual change will be small /negligible, whereby the proposed development on site A will create only very minor alterations to the composition of the views from a small number of locations along this road. The degree of effects will therefore be slight adverse.

*From Upton Lane*

- 8.40 As stated previously, the receptors are expected to be motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians using Upton Lane. Upton Lane also forms part of the locally designated Sabrina Way Long Distance Walk. The locally designated footpath has been assessed as a separate receptor. See representative viewpoint 9, figure 30. In assessing these receptors including the future baseline, new receptors will be workers and business visitors associated the proposed employment land use on sites SHF018b and SHF018d, either side of this section of Upton Lane, between Stanton Road and the railway. The receptors using this route are considered to be of low / medium sensitivity and those receptors using the employment land as a place of work will in fact be of low sensitivity.
- 8.41 Of the approximate 2.3km length of Upton Lane within the study area, the proposed residential development on sites A and B will only be afforded from 0.6km of its length. This is mainly where it passes between sites SHF018b and SHF018d for a short length between Stanton Road and the railway. As indicated on representative viewpoint 9, figure 30, views of sites A and B are only afforded as glimpsed views within gaps of the hedgerow on top of the tall embankment that borders both sides of this lane. Given the limited amount of visibility we consider the magnitude of change to be small and therefore the degree of effects to be slight adverse. However, in accounting for the future baseline, the hedgerows bounding this lane will be enhanced with new tree and shrub planting. Furthermore, employment development will be located on both sides of this section of the lane. This development is likely to completely screen any views of sites A and B so that the magnitude of change will be negligible and the degree of effects negligible adverse.

*From the A464*

- 8.42 As stated previously, the receptors are expected to be motorists, cyclists, and also pedestrians, although the footpath to the north of the road is as narrow as half a metre in a lot of locations. Almost the entire length of the A464, either side of Shifnal, is lined on both sides by a 1.5 – 1.8m high hedgerow. The receptors are considered to be of low sensitivity.
- 8.43 Representative viewpoint 14 on figures 35 indicates the view from this road to the west of Shifnal and indicates that sites A and B are not visible. Representative viewpoint 15 on figure 36 is from a small gap in the hedgerow from where a very small section of site A, to the south of Aston Coppice will be visible. However, from this extremely limited location the development will be almost indiscernible. From the east of Shifnal, views will only be afforded from extremely short lengths of this road, west of the Monarch's Way. As with the assessment of sites SHF018b and SHF018d, the hedgerows lining the road will screen views from most receptors except motorists using larger or taller vehicles.
- 8.44 The magnitude of visual change will be negligible, where the residential development will form very minor alterations to a small proportion of the field of view from only a very small number of locations from receptors those focus is unlikely to be on the landscape. The degree of effects will therefore be negligible adverse.

*From the A4169*

- 8.45 The A4169 is a relatively busy 60mph road linking Halesfield and the south of Telford with Shifnal. For most of this length there is no footpath. However, a footpath does start at the Wyke Equestrian Centre and continues the west of the road until Shifnal. Receptors will be motorists and cyclists. See representative viewpoint 13, figure 34. At approximately 2.5km away from development on sites A and B, only the upper roofline of a very small section of site A adjacent to Aston Coppice will be visible. The receptors are considered to be medium / low sensitivity.
- 8.46 Residential development on these two sites will be barely discernible and therefore the magnitude of change will be negligible. The degree of effects will therefore be negligible adverse.

*From the train*

- 8.47 As stated previously, the receptors will be train commuters using the line. The receptors are considered to be of low sensitivity, whose attention is unlikely to be on the landscape.
- 8.48 The train line runs for approximately 5.8km through the study area of which approximately 0.75km are afforded views of sites A and B. In assessing this development against the future baseline, residential development will be viewed at a distance of approximately 1km on the southern slopes of sites A and B beyond the employment land use on sites SHF018b and SHF018d and the mitigation landscape previously described in association with the development. This development will create very minor alterations to the composition of views from a

limited length of the railway, with receptors whose attention is unlikely to be on the landscape.

- 8.49 The magnitude of visual change will be small / negligible. The degree of effects will therefore be slight / negligible adverse.

*From the M54*

- 8.50 The M54 is a busy 70mph motorway. The receptors will be motorists using the motorway. The receptors are considered to be of low / negligible sensitivity, whose attention is unlikely to be on the landscape.
- 8.51 This motorway runs for approximately 6.5km through the study area of which approximately 0.3km are afforded views of site A. Site B is not visible. From this limited stretch of the motorway the upper storeys and roofline of residential properties to the north of site A will be visible. However, as indicated on the appraisal layout on the overarching master plan, figure 40, a new mitigation woodland belt is proposed adjacent to the existing motorway tree belt connecting to Aston Coppice. Once established these views would be completely screened.
- 8.52 The magnitude of visual change will be small / negligible. The degree of effects will therefore be negligible adverse.

*From the Sabrina Way Long Distance Walk*

- 8.53 As stated previously, the receptors are expected to be local residents and dog walkers and are considered to be of medium sensitivity. See representative viewpoints 5 and 9, figures 26 and 30. The ZTVs on figures 17 and 18 indicate that views of both sites A and B will be afforded from Upton Lane, between the railway line and Stanton Road. However, as stated in the assessment for Upton Road views are only afforded from a limited number of gaps within the existing embankment and hedgerow. When assessed against the future baseline, whereby both sites SHF018b and SHF018d will contain employment development, it is unlikely that from even these gaps, views of residential development will be afforded.
- 8.54 Where the Sabrina Way uses PROW 14/UNI/1 views of development on the northern section of site A will be afforded where this PROW runs along the M54. However, as indicated on the appraisal layout on the overarching master plan, figure 40, a new mitigation woodland belt is proposed adjacent to the existing motorway tree belt connecting to Aston Coppice. This section of the PROW will run to the north of this new woodland belt and therefore, once established will screen views of the residential development.
- 8.55 The magnitude of visual change will be small, and the degree of effects will be slight adverse. However, as the woodland belt to the north of site A matures the degree of effects will likely become negligible.

*From PROW 0141/2/1*

- 8.56 This PROW links Shifnal with Sheriffhales in the north and also links with local designated Shifnal P3 Circular Walk. This southern section cuts out the loop in Coppice Green Lane and traverses an area of elevated farmland north of Coppice



Green. The receptors will be walkers using the footpath. See representative viewpoint 6, figure 27. The receptors will be walkers using the footpath and their sensitivity is considered to be medium.

- 8.57 The upper storeys and roofline of proposed residential development within the area of site A north of Aston Coppice may be visible through and above the intervening woodland belts lining both sides of the M54, especially during the winter. However, as indicated on the appraisal layout on the overarching master plan, figure 40, a new mitigation woodland belt is proposed adjacent to the existing motorway tree belt connecting to Aston Coppice. From this elevated section of the PROW, this planting will partially screen views of the development.
- 8.58 The magnitude of visual change will be small, where the housing development will form minor alterations to a limited proportion of the field of view from only a limited length of this PROW when travelling south. The degree of effects will therefore be slight adverse.

*From the Monarch's Way National Trail*

- 8.59 As stated previously, the receptors are expected to be local residents and dog walkers and long-distance walkers using the trail. The sensitivity of the receptors is considered to be medium.
- 8.60 While the visibility splay indicated on figures 17 and 18 shows various areas along this trail from where site A and B will be visible, having verified this on site we can confirm the tall hedgerow lining the trail obscures all views with the exception of where it crosses the railway at Bonemill Bridge. See representative viewpoint 11, figure 32.
- 8.61 The majority of the sites are screened by intervening vegetation in the mid ground or by Stanton Hill Wood. However, a view of a small section of site B is afforded. At approximately 1.75km away the upper storeys and roofline of residential development on this site will be visible. This development would create very minor alterations to the composition and nature of the view from a single viewpoint. The magnitude of visual change is therefore considered to be negligible. The degree of effects will be negligible adverse.

*From PROW 0141/13/1*

- 8.62 As stated previously, the receptors will be walkers using the footpath and their sensitivity is considered to be medium.
- 8.63 The visual splay indicated on figures 17-19 for the alternative safeguarded site A and B indicates that views of the proposed residential sites are visible from this PROW adjacent to Haughton Farm. However, following a field visit it was verified that this visual splay occupies the open farmland but a continuous tall hedgerow screens all views from the footpath. Views are also indicated as being afforded further south as represented on viewpoint 16, figure 37.
- 8.64 While the site is located beyond St Andrew's Church, which is visible above the trees in the mid ground, sites A and B are approximately 2.3km away. Therefore, it is not possible to discern particular tree groups such as Aston Coppice. Once

constructed it is possible the roofline to the proposed houses may be visible, however, at this distance they will be barely discernible.

- 8.65 The magnitude of visual change will be negligible, where the housing development will form very minor alterations to a negligible proportion of the field of view from only a very limited number of locations. The degree of effects will therefore be negligible adverse.

*From PROW 0141/11/1*

- 8.66 This PROW links Park Lane, at the vehicular entrance to Lodgehill Farm, with Wesley Blook, to the south of Lodge Hill. The receptors will be walkers using the footpath and their sensitivity is considered to be medium.
- 8.67 The visual splay indicated on figures 17-19 for the alternative safeguarded site A and B indicates that views of the proposed residential sites are visible from the more elevated section of this PROW as indicated on representative viewpoint 12, figure 33.
- 8.68 Numerous areas of woodland are visible in these views, such as Lizard Wood and Middle Gallop approximately 4km away, and Aston Coppice can just about be identified amongst them. However, sites A and B remain screened by intervening vegetation. Once constructed it is possible the roofline to the proposed houses may be visible, however, at a distance of approximately 2.3km it will be barely discernible.
- 8.69 The magnitude of visual change will be negligible, where the housing development will form very minor alterations to a negligible proportion of the field of view from only a very limited number of locations. The degree of effects will therefore be negligible adverse.

## 9.0 Summary of effects

- 9.1 Proposed alternative safeguarded site A wraps around Aston Coppice from its north western corner to the woodland edge adjacent to the M54, to the east of site SHF032 and south of Aston Coppice to the northern boundary of the parkland associated with Aston Hall. It lies predominantly in the Sandstone Eastelands character area with the northern extent within the Estate Farmlands. It has one PROW also designated locally as part of the Sabrina Way, a long-distance walk. It does play a minor role in the setting of the listed Aston Hall, its listed ancillary buildings at Aston Court Mews and its undesignated parkland.
- 9.2 It shares some of the characteristics of the character areas in which it is located. Its landscape sensitivity is considered to be high to medium and the magnitude of change as a result of housing development will be large. The degree of effects is therefore substantial adverse.
- 9.3 Proposed alternative safeguarded site B sits predominantly in character area Sandstone Eastelands with its northern extent within the Estate Farmlands. The eastern boundary follows the alignment of the western edge of Stanton Hill Wood. Its northern boundary is an undefined line along the ridge of the south facing slopes fronting Stanton Road. The western boundary of site B follows the same alignment as the eastern boundary of site A, which is an undefined line through an arable field before running along the eastern boundary the parkland associated with Aston Hall. It has no PROW or heritage assets but does play a minor role in the setting of the listed Aston Hall and its undesignated parkland.
- 9.4 It also shares some of the characteristics of the character areas in which it is located. Its landscape sensitivity is considered to be medium and the magnitude of change as a result of housing development will be large. The degree of effects is therefore substantial adverse.
- 9.5 This appraisal of effects on landscape character of sites A and B is not unexpected given the extent and nature of the proposed development in each, which will inevitably represent a permanent and long-term change to the landscape character of these sites. The development of housing on what is presently agricultural fields will introduce new elements in the form of houses and associated infrastructure including landscape planting. However, development on both sites will not necessarily be uncharacteristic in the receiving landscape. The proposed housing on sites A and B on the suburban edge of Shifnal, will be viewed in the context of the housing developments to the north of Coppice Green Lane, the two schools, sports centre and their associated infrastructure such as parking, sports fields, flood lighting etc. as well as the newer housing development at Limwood Park and Extra Care to the south of Stanton Road, directly opposite Aston Hall and its associated parkland.
- 9.6 In taking account of the future baseline it will also form a logical extension to the housing within site SHF032 and will be viewed in the context of employment developments on sites SHF 018b, SHF018d, SHF018a and P14.
- 9.7 In regards to the five remaining character areas that share some intervisibility with these sites, the magnitude of change represented by development on them would be negligible whereby the proposals will barely affect any of the essential

characteristics of these character areas and therefore the degree of landscape effects will be negligible adverse.

- 9.8 Sixteen representative viewpoints were chosen to represent views from a number of different receptors. The receptors tended to be residents, motorists with transitory views, cyclists and pedestrians. The majority of the receptors were considered to be of medium or medium / low sensitivity with the exception of people in residential properties adjacent to Coppice Green Lane, residents of Aston Hall and Aston Court Mews that were considered to be of high / medium sensitivity. Equally, the receptors using Stanton Road where upgraded from medium to high / medium due to the fact that this particular length of Stanton Road was also National Cycle Trail 81.
- 9.9 The proposed developments at both sites A and B will have slight to negligible adverse visual effects on almost all the receptors apart from the residential properties at Coppice Green Lane, residents of Aston Hall, Aston Court Mews and receptors using Stanton Road / National Cycle Trail 8, that will have moderate adverse effects.
- 9.10 In conclusion this development when seen as a whole, accounting for all sites, will form a logical extension to the north east of Shifnal. Apart from three receptor groups immediately adjacent to the sites all landscape and visual effects are either slight or negligible. Through the appraisal layouts indicated on figures 38-40 it has also been shown that through the mitigation methods proposed and the careful consideration of the heritage assets and associated parkland in the siting of development and new landscape planting the effects of development can be further reduced.

## 10.0 Assessment of sites A, B, SHF018b, SHF018s and SHF032 against the Green Belt purposes

### Introduction

- 10.1 This section of the report will build upon our representations made in February. It will look first at the Shropshire Green Belt Assessment by LUC, in relation to the September 2017 assessment of parcels P11, P13a and P14, in which sites SHF032, SHF018b, SHF018d and alternative sites A and B are located.
- 10.2 Sites SHF032 and alternative sites A and B lie within Green Belt parcel P11. Sites SHF018a & P14 and SHF018b lie within green belt parcel P14 and site SHF018d lies within green belt parcel P13a. See figure 41.
- 10.3 We will then appraise the assessment of the Shropshire Green Belt Review: Stage 2 and the comments made in this report should these parcels be released from Green Belt.
- 10.4 Finally, it will look at proposed sites SHF032, SHF018b, SHF018d and alternative sites A and B and assess them using the LUC methodology and Green Belt purpose criteria in order to evaluate how these sites score against the purposes of Green Belt as individual sub-areas of the assessed parcels.
- 10.5 Within the policy context of the Green Belt, the NPPF (2019) confirms that; *“the Green Belt serves five purposes:*
1. *To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;*
  2. *To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;*
  3. *To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;*
  4. *To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and*
  5. *To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land”.*

### Comments on the NPPF Green Belt purposes used in the Shropshire Green Belt assessment

- 10.6 In regards to purpose 1 – sprawl, LUC discuss the definition of sprawl and what is meant in terms of large built-up area in paragraphs 3.25-3.35. In agreement with Shropshire Council the towns that should be considered as ‘large built-up areas’ were Telford and the West Midlands conurbation. As only Telford lies adjacent to the Shropshire Green Belt only parcels that lay adjacent to Telford were considered under purpose 1. We agree with this methodology.
- 10.7 In regards to purpose 5 – urban regeneration, LUC discuss this purpose in paragraphs 3.58 – 3.63. We agree in their conclusion that it is not possible to assess the performance of purpose 5 in a meaningful way, and therefore only purposes 1 to 4 are assessed.

## Appraisal of Shropshire Green Belt Assessment

### Parcel P11

- 10.8 In terms of the Green Belt parcel P11's performance against the relevant NPPF purposes its scoring within the Shropshire GBA is provided below.
- Purpose 1 – To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas – No contribution
  - Purpose 2 -To prevent neighbouring towns from merging – Moderate
  - Purpose 3 – Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment – Moderate
  - Purpose 4 – To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns – Strong
  - Purpose 5 – To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land – All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
- 10.9 We do not agree with the assessment of purposes 2 and 4.
- 10.10 In regards to purpose 2 – merging, it states this parcel has a relationship with the settlement of Albrighton, approximately 5km away to the south east. It rates the parcel as moderate. However, moderate states:
- “the parcel plays some role in preventing the reduction of the visual or physical distances between settlement”*
- 10.11 We agree that the assessment of this parcel cannot be on distance alone, however, it does not account for the large amount of intervening woodland along to the east and west of Ruckley Pool or the numerous woodland belts around the various watercourses to the west of RAF Cosford. We therefore do not believe that if developed it would lead to the perception of narrowing the gap between these two settlements. We feel this parcel should have been rated as weak against this purpose.
- 10.12 LUC have used digital analysis, based on bare earth height data, and have therefore placed too much emphasis on the fact that as this parcel lies on elevated land it must therefore be visible from the historic core, which in Shifnal's case is the conservation area in the south west of the town. They have rated its contribution to purpose 4 as strong.
- 10.13 In this appraisal we have prepared a series of ZTVs using a digital surface model. This takes account of all built form, vegetation and individual structures in the landscape, as indicated on figures 13 - 20. These indicate where development at 10m high can be viewed at an eye level of 1.6m. They indicate that even with 10m high development, due to more recent development on the eastern edge of Shifnal such as Idsall School, Shifnal Sports Centre, Shifnal Primary School, housing development in the 1950's and the more recent housing development along Coppice Green Lane and Stanton Road, views of the conservation area are completely screened. Therefore, parcel P11 does not contribute to the historic significance of the settlement, its setting or its special character. We would rate the contribution of this parcel against purpose 4 as weak.

***Parcel P13***

10.14 In terms of the Green Belt parcel P13's performance against the relevant NPPF purposes its scoring within the Shropshire GBA is provided below.

- Purpose 1 – To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas – No contribution
- Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns from merging – Moderate
- Purpose 3 – Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment – Strong
- Purpose 4 – To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns – No contribution
- Purpose 5 – To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land – All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.

10.15 We agree with this assessment.

***Parcel P14***

10.16 In terms of the Green Belt parcel P14's performance against the relevant NPPF purposes its scoring within the Shropshire GBA is provided below.

- Purpose 1 – To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas – No contribution
- Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns from merging – Moderate
- Purpose 3 – Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment – Moderate
- Purpose 4 – To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns – Weak
- Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land – All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.

10.17 We do not agree with the assessment of purposes 2 and 3.

10.18 In regards to purpose 2 – merging, it states this parcel has a relationship with the settlement of Albrighton, approximately 5km away to the south east. It rates the parcel as moderate. However, moderate states:

*“the parcel plays some role in preventing the reduction of the visual or physical distances between settlement”*

10.19 We agree that the assessment of this parcel cannot be on distance alone, however, it does not account for the large amount of intervening woodland along to the east and west of Ruckley Pool or the numerous woodland belts around the various watercourses to the west of RAF Cosford. We therefore do not believe that if developed it would lead to the perception of narrowing the gap between these two settlements. We feel this parcel should have been rated as weak against this purpose.

10.20 In regards to purpose 3, LUC state:

*“The parcel itself contains few urbanising features (other than few residential properties), with the majority of the parcel being open, containing arable land and woodland, and displaying the characteristics of countryside.”*

10.21 While the parcel itself is free of urbanising features, it has new residential development at its eastern end with the new development at Limwood Park, it has Hillcrest Shifnal School with associated playing fields and infrastructure and Shifnal industrial Estate in the south, along with a short length of railway line. It is therefore impossible to assess this parcel in isolation as having no urbanising features when it is basically surrounded by urbanising development along its entire western and southern boundary that compromises its openness. We therefore feel this should be rated as contributing weakly to purpose 3.

### **Appraisal of Shropshire Green Belt Review: Stage 2**

10.22 The Shropshire Green Belt Review rates the level of harm resulting from the release of parcels from the Green Belt. The methodology states that the assessment of harm is based on the assumption that the openness (in Green Belt terms) of a defined area will be lost. Consideration is given to parcels’ location and how they have the potential to affect neighbouring parcels or the wider integrity of the Green Belt. Equally, the strength of the parcel’s boundary is considered. However, overall the relationship between these factors is up to professional judgement with a rating using a 5-point scale. We would also note that although some parcels are smaller, such as site P13a, the assessment against the Green Belt purposes remains the same as the original larger parcel.

10.23 The following section reviews this assessment of harm on parcels P11, P13a and P14.

#### ***Parcel P11***

10.24 The assessment states:

*“...Releasing the parcel from the Green Belt would constitute encroachment into the countryside and would significantly weaken neighbouring areas of green belt land, specifically parcel P14 as this would be enclosed by development on two sides...”*

10.25 This is no longer the case. Within the Preferred Site Allocations and Preferred Safeguarded Land parcel P14 and part of P13 have been identified as a proposed employment site and proposed safeguarded land for development beyond 2036. As stated above, we consider the parcel contributes only weakly in preventing the perceived merging of Shifnal with Albrighton, some 5km to the south, due to the intervening woodland. Its openness does not make a significant contribution to the historic area of Shifnal and its setting, as indicated by the ZTVs. We therefore consider the harm to the Green Belt resulting from the release of parcel P11 should be moderate rather than high.

#### ***Parcel P13a***

10.26 In the Shropshire Green Belt Review: Stage 2 LUC split P13 into p13a and



P13b. We are only interested with the assessment of P13a.

10.27 The assessment of harm states

*“...Releasing this parcel from the green belt would lead to encroachment into the countryside to the east of Shifnal and a slight narrowing of the gap between Shifnal and Albrighton...”*

10.28 However, parcel P13a is less than a third of the area of parcel P13 and therefore there will only be a very slight narrowing of the gap between Shifnal and Albrighton.

10.29 Also, as stated above, development on parcel P13a would be contained to a high degree by existing established woodland such as Loam Wood, Monk’s Wood, Big Wood, Slaney’s Covert, Barnes Pool Wood, Old Farm Wood and Timlet Covert, therefore having little to no impact on the perceived distance between Shifnal and Albrighton.

10.30 Furthermore, within the Preferred Site Allocations and Preferred Safeguarded Land P13a has already been proposed as an employment site.

10.31 The LUC assessment of harm to Green Belt resulting from the release of P13a was rated as high. Based on the above factors we consider it should be rated as moderate.

#### ***Parcel P14***

10.32 The assessment states that the parcel:

*“...is more closely associated with the wider area of open countryside to the east of Shifnal than the settlement edge to the west...”*

10.33 However, new housing at Linwood Park, Hillcrest Shifnal School, Shifnal Industrial Estate and Upton Mill heavily influence the parcel, making it feel more urban than rural.

10.34 The assessment also states that releasing parcel P14 from the Green Belt would narrow the gap between Shifnal and Albrighton, However, the parcel is small and is surrounded on two sides by urban development and would therefore only narrow the gap by a very limited degree if developed. This would be completely screened by intervening woodland between parcel P14 and Albrighton and would therefore not narrow the perceived gap.

10.35 Furthermore, within the Preferred Site Allocations and Preferred Safeguarded Land, P14 has already been proposed as a safeguarded land for development beyond 2036.

10.36 The LUC assessment of harm to Green Belt resulting from the release of P14 was rated as moderate-high. Based on the above factors we consider it should be rated as moderate.

10.37 In the third part of the Shropshire Green Belt Review: Stage 2, LUC assess the harm of Green Belt release for opportunity area -Sh-1. This groups P11, P13a and P14 together along with P15 south of the railway line. Its rating of harm is

high. However, most of the reasoning behind this rating is based on the perceived prominence of the elevated slope to parcel P11, and the fact that any development would narrow the perceived gap between Shifnal and Albrighton, ignoring that they are 5km apart and have vast areas of intervening woodland between them. They also make the same point regarding P11 making an important contribution to the historic setting of Shifnal. Again, as illustrated by the ZTVs, this is not the case.

**Green Belt Appraisal proposed sites SHF032, SHF018b, SHF018d and alternative sites A and B**

- 10.38 In this section we have assess each potential development site against the Green Belt purposes, ignoring purpose 5 as all parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.

*SHF032 – See figure 42*

*Purpose 1 - Sprawl*

- 10.39 This site plays no contribution to this purpose.

*Purpose 2 - Merging*

- 10.40 The parcel is located adjacent to Coppice Green Lane with the settlement edge of Shifnal to the west, the new housing development to the north and Aston Hall to the south. Parcel SHF032 is approximately 6km from Albrighton. The parcel is enclosed by woodland to the north east, by trees, hedgerows and the estate wall to Aston Hall and Aston Court Mews to the south and a hedgerow to the west.

- 10.41 The predominantly enclosed nature of the site and that existing established woodland such as Stanton Hill Wood, The Spinney and woodland further west, around Ruckley Pool and the various watercourses to the west of RAF Cosford will limit the perceived narrowing of the gap between Albrighton and Shifnal.

- 10.42 The parcel is therefore rated as weak due to the size of the parcel, its containment and distance from Albrighton as well as it only being perceived from a short length of Coppice Green Lane.

*Purpose 3 - Encroachment*

- 10.43 Although the parcel itself does not include any development the residential dwellings at Aston Court Mews and the new housing development to the west of the parcel can clearly been seen from a majority of the parcel. Equally, traffic noise from the M54 is audible.

- 10.44 The parcel should therefore be rated as weak, as although there is no development, the urban influences compromise the site's openness.

*Purpose 4 - Setting*

- 10.45 Based on a ZTV undertaken with a digital surface model (DSM) the site will not be visible from the historic core of Shifnal therefore the parcel contributes poorly to the historic significance of Shifnal, its setting and special character and is

considered to rate weakly against this purpose.

***Harm of SHO32 being released from Green Belt***

- 10.46 Given the small size and enclosed nature of the site it is considered the harm to the Green Belt from its release would be low-moderate as it would require a new strong woodland belt to close its eastern boundary between the existing woodland belt and the north western corner of Aston Court Mews in order to create a strong defensible Green Belt boundary.

***SHF018b and SHF018d – See figure 45***

***Purpose 1 - Sprawl***

- 10.47 This site makes no contribution to this purpose.

***Purpose 2 - Merging***

- 10.48 The parcel lies on both sides of Upton Lane, directly east of proposed safeguarded site SHF018a and P14, south of Stanton Road and north of the railway line. The parcel lies approximately 4.6km from Albrighton. The topography of the parcel gently slopes from west to east. Although the site is open it will be only seen from the railway line and Stanton Road. Stanton Hill Wood, The Spinney, Loam Wood, Monk's Wood, Big Wood, Slaney's Covert, Barnes Pool Wood, Old Farm Wood and Timlet Covert interrupt views from the east and therefore if developed it would not necessarily reduce the perceived gap between Shifnal and Albrighton. Given these factors we consider these sites perform weakly against this purpose.

***Purpose 3 - Encroachment***

- 10.49 SHF018b and SHF018d retain much of their rural characteristics such as openness and containing no urban development, however Shifnal Industrial Estate and Upton Mill are highly visible and compromise the openness toward the west. Therefore, we consider sites SHF018b and SHF018d should be rated as weak/moderate against this purpose.

***Purpose 4 - Setting***

- 10.50 These sites make no contribution to this purpose.

***Harm of sites SHF018b and SHF018d being released from Green Belt***

- 10.51 These sites make no contribution to purposes 1, 4 and 5. They have been rated as performing weakly against purpose 2 and weak/moderate for purpose 3.
- 10.52 Furthermore, as illustrated on figure 39, the sites have scope for strong landscape mitigation measures such as new woodland belts along the southern, northern and eastern boundaries. These linear woodland belts will not appear uncharacteristic within the receiving landscape and will further reduce views of development from the east. In regards to a new woodland belt along the eastern edge of site SHF18d, along with the existing woodland at the Spinney, this would create a strong defensible Green Belt boundary. We therefore consider the harm from Green Belt release to be moderate.

*Proposed alternative sites A and B – See figures 43 and 44*

*Purpose 1 - Sprawl*

10.53 The sites make no contribution to this purpose.

*Purpose 2 - Merging*

10.54 Site A wraps around Aston Coppice with a north western section abutting the M54. Its western boundary is site SHF032 and its southern is the parkland to Aston Hall. Site B is located to the west of Aston Coppice and has an undefined boundary along its northern boundary. Its western boundary is Stanton Hill Wood and its southern boundary is Stanton Road.

10.55 The western boundary of site B is approximately 5.2km from Albrighton. Stanton Hill Wood, The Spinney and woodland further west, around Ruckley Pool and the various watercourses to the west of RAF Cosford will limit the perceived narrowing of the gap between Albrighton and Shifnal.

10.56 The parcel is therefore rated as weak as the parcel plays a limited role in preventing the merging of settlements, and the loss of openness would not be perceived as reducing the gap between settlements.

*Purpose 3 - Encroachment*

10.57 The M54 is audible from the northern part of site A, and with the new housing development at Limwood Park to the south west both sites have a degree of urbanising elements. Equally, there is development safeguarded beyond the plan period 2036 to the south of Stanton Road within parcel SHF018a and P14 and proposed employment land on sites SHF018b opposite site B. However, overall the site retains its rural characteristics and is rated as performing moderately against this purpose.

*Purpose 4 - Setting*

10.58 Based on a ZTV undertaken with a digital surface model (DSM) the site will not be visible from the historic core of Shifnal therefore the parcel contributes poorly to the historic significance of Shifnal, its setting and special character and is considered to rate weakly against this purpose.

*Harm of sites A and B being released from Green Belt*

10.59 These sites make no contribution to purposes 1 and 5. They rate as performing weakly against purpose 2 and purpose 4 and moderate for purpose 3.

10.60 As illustrated on figure 40, the sites have scope for strong landscape mitigation measures such as new woodland belts linking Aston Coppice to the existing woodland belts adjacent to the M54 and from Aston Coppice to Stanton Hill Wood. These linear woodland belts will not appear uncharacteristic within the receiving landscape. These new woodland belts would create strong defensible Green Belt boundaries. We therefore consider the harm from Green Belt release to be moderate.

## 11.0 Overall summary

- 11.1 In looking at the individual sites as sub areas of the LUC Green Belt assessments it has been concluded that that proposed housing site SHF032 would make no contribution for purpose 1, and would perform weakly for purposes 2, 3 and 4 and is considered that it would create low to moderate harm if released from the Green Belt.
- 11.2 Proposed employment sites SHF018b and SHF018d do not contribute to purpose 1 and 4 and perform weakly for purpose 2 and weak to moderate for purpose 3. If released from the Green Belt it is considered they would create moderate harm.
- 11.3 Alternative sites A and B do not contribute to purpose 1 and perform weakly for purpose 2 and 4, but moderately against purpose 3. If released from the Green Belt it is considered they also would create moderate harm.
- 11.4 In regards to the effects on landscape and visual amenity the moderate visual effects for all sites were generated by the residential receptors in the immediate vicinity of the sites or from Stanton Road next to or close to all sites.
- 11.5 From all remaining receptors the effect of development on these sites will have only slight to negligible effects. In fact, while the visual splays indicated on figures 13-20 appear fairly large, with the exception of the receptors listed above, views of development on these sites from almost all publicly accessible locations will create only minor to very minor alterations to the composition of the views and in most cases will be barely discernible.
- 11.6 With regards to character, the sites themselves have been assessed as having a moderate adverse degree of effects. This is to be expected given the extent and nature of the proposed development on what is presently agricultural fields. However, from the remaining character areas the effects from all sites was again slight or negligible.
- 11.7 We therefore conclude that with careful consideration to siting, massing and landscape, all of these sites could be released from the Green Belt and developed with limited harm to the Shropshire Green Belt and its overall integrity and limited effects on both landscape character and visual amenity.
- 11.8 The existing boundaries to almost all of the sites are made up of strong defensible boundaries such as roads, railways, woodland, and where some site existing boundaries are presently weak, there is scope on all sites to create new strong defensible boundaries through the creation of new woodland belts which will not appear uncharacteristic in the landscape.
- 11.9 Overall, we consider that development on all these sites would form a logical extension to the north east of Shifnal.

## Appendix A part 1: Planning policy

### National planning policy

- A1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, came into effect in February 2019. It sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The NPPF provides a framework within which councils can produce their own local and neighbourhood plans. The relevant guidance on landscape and visual issues is stated below:

#### *Making effective use of land*

- A1.2 The NPPF in paragraph 117 states:

*“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. Strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously-developed or ‘brownfield’ land.”*

- A1.3 The NPPF in paragraph 118 lists:

*“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;*

*c) give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs, and support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land;*

*d) promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained and available sites could be used more effectively (for example converting space above shops, and building on or above service yards, car parks, lock-ups and railway infrastructure); and*

*e) support opportunities to use the airspace above existing residential and commercial premises for new homes. In particular, they should allow upward extensions where the development would be consistent with the prevailing height and form of neighbouring properties and the overall street scene, is well designed (including complying with any local design policies and standards), and can maintain safe access and egress for occupiers.”*

### ***Achieving appropriate densities***

A1.4 The NPPF in paragraph 122 lists:

*“Planning policies and decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land, taking into account:*

- a) the identified need for different types of housing and other forms of development, and the availability of land suitable for accommodating it;*
- b) local market conditions and viability;*
- c) the availability and capacity of infrastructure and services – both existing and proposed – as well as their potential for further improvement and the scope to promote sustainable travel modes that limit future car use;*
- 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.”*

A1.5 The NPPF in paragraph 123 lists:

*“Where there is an existing or anticipated shortage of land for meeting identified housing needs, it is especially important that planning policies and decisions avoid homes being built at low densities, and ensure that developments make optimal use of the potential of each site. In these circumstances:*

- a) plans should contain policies to optimise the use of land in their area and meet as much of the identified need for housing as possible. This will be tested robustly at examination, and should include the use of minimum density standards for city and town centres and other locations that are well served by public transport. These standards should seek a significant uplift in the average density of residential development within these areas, unless it can be shown that there are strong reasons why this would be inappropriate;*
- b) the use of minimum density standards should also be considered for other parts of the plan area. It may be appropriate to set out a range of densities that reflect the accessibility and potential of different areas, rather than one broad density range; and*
- c) local planning authorities should refuse applications which they consider fail to make efficient use of land, taking into account the policies in this Framework. In this context, when considering applications for housing, authorities should take a flexible approach in applying policies or guidance relating to daylight and sunlight, where they would otherwise inhibit making efficient use of a site (as long as the resulting scheme would provide acceptable living standards).”*

### ***Achieving well-designed places***

A1.6 The NPPF in paragraph 124 confirms:

*“The creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design*

*expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process”*

A1.7 The NPPF in paragraph 127 states:

*“Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:*

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

#### ***Protecting green belt land***

A1.8 Paragraph 133 describes the fundamental aim of green belt stating:

*“The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.”*

A1.9 Paragraph 134 lists the five purposes of green belt:

*“Green Belt serves five purposes:*

- 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.”*

A1.10 Paragraph 141 describes enhancing the beneficial use of green belt:



*“Once Green Belts have been defined, local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance their beneficial use, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity; or to improve damaged and derelict land.”*

A1.11 Paragraph 143 gives the definition of inappropriate development as:

*“Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.”*

A1.12 Paragraph 144 gives the circumstances by which very special circumstances will exist:

*“When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. ‘Very special circumstances’ will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.”*

A1.13 Paragraph 145 lists the exceptions to inappropriate development:

*“A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this are:*

- a) buildings for agriculture and forestry;*
- b) the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;*
- c) the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;*
- d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;*
- e) limited infilling in villages;*
- f) limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan (including policies for rural exception sites); and*
- g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would:*
  - not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or*
  - not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority.”*

A1.14 Paragraph 146 lists further exceptions to inappropriate development:

*“Certain other forms of development are also not inappropriate in the Green Belt provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. These are:*

- a) mineral extraction;*
- b) engineering operations;*
- c) local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location;*
- d) the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction;*
- e) material changes in the use of land (such as changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation, or for cemeteries and burial grounds); and*
- f) development brought forward under a Community Right to Build Order or Neighbourhood Development Order.”*

### ***Conserving and enhancing the natural environment***

A1.15 Paragraph 170 establishes that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- *“protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);*
- *recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services– including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;*
- *maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;*
- *minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;*
- *preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and*
- *remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.”*

A1.16 Paragraph 171 states that:

*“Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green*

*infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.”*

A1.17 Paragraph 172 states that:

*“Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads. The scale and extent of development within these designated areas should be limited. Planning permission should be refused for major development other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:*

- the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;*
- the cost of, and scope for, developing outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and*
- any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.”*

#### ***Conserving and enhancing the historic environment***

A1.18 Paragraph 184 states:

*“Heritage assets range from sites and buildings of local historic value to those of the highest significance, such as World Heritage Sites which are internationally recognised to be of Outstanding Universal Value. These assets are an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.”*

A1.19 Paragraph 185 states that:

*“Plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. This strategy should take into account:*

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;*
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and*
- opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.”*

#### ***Proposals affecting heritage assets***

A1.20 Paragraph 189 states that:

*“In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.”*

A1.21 Paragraph 190 states that:

*“Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal.”*

A1.22 Paragraph 192 states that:

*“In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:*

- *the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- *the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
- *the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.”*

### **Considering potential impacts**

A1.23 Paragraph 193 states that:

*“When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.”*

A1.24 Paragraph 194 states that:

*“Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:*

- *Grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional;*
- *Assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II listed*

*buildings, grade I and II registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.”*

A1.25 Paragraph 195 states that:

*“Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:*

- *the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and*
- *no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and*
- *conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and*
- *the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.”*

A1.26 Paragraph 196 states that:

*“Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.”*

A1.27 Paragraph 197 states that:

*“The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.”*

#### ***National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)***

A1.28 The National Planning Practice Guidance contains government guidance, the following of which is relevant to this assessment.

#### ***Natural Environment - Landscape***

A1.29 Landscape character (paragraph 001 Ref ID: 8-001-20140306 revised 06.03.2014) states that:

*“One of the core principles in the National Planning Policy Framework is that planning should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. Local plans should include strategic policies for the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment, including landscape. This includes designated landscapes but also the wider countryside.*

*Where appropriate, landscape character assessments should be prepared to complement Natural England’s National Character Area profiles. Landscape*

*Character Assessment is a tool to help understand the character and local distinctiveness of the landscape and identify the features that give it a sense of place. It can help to inform, plan and manage change and may be undertaken at a scale appropriate to local and neighbourhood plan-making. Natural England provides guidance on undertaking these assessments.”*

### **Design**

- A1.30 Promoting landscape character (paragraph 007 Ref ID: 26-007-20140306 revised 06.03.2014) states that:

*“Development should seek to promote character in townscape and landscape by responding to and reinforcing locally distinctive patterns of development, local man-made and natural heritage and culture, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation.*

*The successful integration of all forms of new development with their surrounding context is an important design objective, irrespective of whether a site lies on the urban fringe or at the heart of a town centre.*

*When thinking about new development the site’s land form should be taken into account. Natural features and local heritage resources can help give shape to a development and integrate it into the wider area, reinforce and sustain local distinctiveness, reduce its impact on nature and contribute to a sense of place. Views into and out of larger sites should also be carefully considered from the start of the design process.*

*Local building forms and details contribute to the distinctive qualities of a place. These can be successfully interpreted in new development without necessarily restricting the scope of the designer. Standard solutions rarely create a distinctive identity or make best use of a particular site. The use of local materials, building methods and details can be an important factor in enhancing local distinctiveness when used in evolutionary local design, and can also be used in more contemporary design. However, innovative design should not be discouraged.*

*The opportunity for high quality hard and soft landscape design that helps to successfully integrate development into the wider environment should be carefully considered from the outset, to ensure it complements the architecture of the proposals and improves the overall quality of townscape or landscape. Good landscape design can help the natural surveillance of an area, creatively help differentiate public and private space and, where appropriate, enhance security.”*

- A1.31 Promoting a network of greenspaces (paragraph 009 Ref ID: 26-009-20140306 revised 06.03.2014) states that:

*“Development should promote public spaces and routes that are attractive, accessible, safe, uncluttered and work effectively for all users – including families, disabled people and elderly people. A system of open and green spaces that respect natural features and are easily accessible can be a valuable local resource and helps create successful places. A high quality landscape, including trees and semi-natural habitats where appropriate, makes an important contribution to the quality of an area.*

*Public spaces should be designed with a purpose in mind, and wherever possible deliver a range of social and environmental goals. They can take many different forms (for example path, street, square, park, plaza, green), and can serve different functions (for example informal, civic, recreational, commercial). Space left over after development, without a function, is a wasted resource, can detract from a place's sense of identity and can increase the likelihood of crime and anti-social behaviour occurring (a function could include informal spaces and design elements that add character, and should not be limited only formal functional uses). The benefit of greenspaces will be enhanced if they are integrated into a wider green network of walkways, cycleways, open spaces and natural and river corridors."*

### **Green Infrastructure**

A1.32 Requiring good design (Paragraph 030 Ref ID: 8-030-20160211, revised 11.02.2016) states that:

*"Well-designed green infrastructure helps create a sense of place by responding to, and enhancing, local landscape character. Green infrastructure can also help create safe and accessible environments in new development and the regeneration of brownfield sites in existing built up areas."*

### **Local planning policies**

#### **Shropshire Core Strategy**

#### **Core policy CS5 – Countryside and Green Belt**

A1.33 This policy states that:

*"New development will be strictly controlled in accordance with national planning policies protecting the countryside and Green Belt.*

*Subject to the further controls over development that apply to the Green Belt, development proposals on appropriate sites which maintain and enhance countryside vitality and character will be permitted where they improve the sustainability of rural communities by bringing local economic and community benefits, particularly where they relate to:*

- *Small-scale new economic development diversifying the rural economy, including farm diversification schemes;*
- *dwelling to house agricultural, forestry or other essential countryside workers and other affordable housing / accommodation to meet a local need in accordance with national planning policies and Policies CS11 and CS12;*
- *With regard to the above two types of development, applicants will be required to demonstrate the need and benefit for the development proposed. Development will be expected to take place primarily in recognisable named settlements or be linked to other existing development and business activity where this is appropriate.*

#### **Green Belt**

*Within the designated Green Belt in south-eastern Shropshire, there will be additional control of new development in line with government guidance in PPG2. Land within development boundaries in the settlements of Shifnal, Albrighton, Alveley, Beckbury, Claverley, and Worfield, and at the Alveley and Stanmore Industrial Estates is excluded from the Green Belt. In addition to appropriate development in these areas, limited infilling will be permitted in any other Community Hubs and Community Clusters listed in the SAMDev DPD, subject to the requirements of Policies CS4, CS6 and CS11.*

*Also, limited local needs affordable housing on exceptions sites which accords with the requirements of Policy CS11 will be permitted in the Green Belt. Areas of safeguarded land are reserved for potential future development at Albrighton and Shifnal, while the military base and Royal Air Force Museum at Cosford is recognized as a major existing developed site within the Green Belt where limited defence related development will be permitted. The Green Belt boundary and all relevant policy areas are identified on the Proposals Map for the SAMDev DPD, which sets out the detailed approach to development in the Green Belt and any new site allocations required within the safeguarded land.”*

### **Core policy CS17 – Environmental Networks**

A1.34 This policy states that:

*“Development will identify, protect, enhance, expand and connect Shropshire’s environmental assets, to create a multifunctional network of natural and historic resources. This will be achieved by ensuring that all development:*

- *Protects and enhances the diversity, high quality and local character of Shropshire’s natural, built and historic environment, and does not adversely affect the visual, ecological, geological, heritage or recreational values and functions of these assets, their immediate surroundings or their connecting corridors;*
- *Contributes to local distinctiveness, having regard to the quality of Shropshire’s environment, including landscape, biodiversity and heritage assets, such as the Shropshire Hills AONB, the Meres and Mosses and the World Heritage Sites at Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal and Ironbridge Gorge;*
- *Does not have a significant adverse impact on Shropshire’s environmental assets and does not create barriers or sever links between dependant sites;*
- *Secures financial contributions, in accordance with Policies CS8 and CS9, towards the creation of new, and improvement to existing, environmental sites and corridors, the removal of barriers between sites, and provision for long term management and maintenance. Sites and corridors are identified in the LDF evidence base and will be regularly monitored and updated.”*



## **Shropshire Site Allocations and Management of Development Adopted Plan (SAMDev Adopted Plan)**

### *Shropshire Core Strategy*

#### *Core policy MD2 – Sustainable Design*

A1.35 This policy states that:

*“Further to Policy CS6, for a development proposal to be considered acceptable it is required to:*

*1. Respond positively to local design aspirations, wherever possible, both in terms of visual appearance and how a place functions, as set out in Community Led Plans, Town or Village Design Statements, Neighbourhood Plans and Place Plans.*

*2. Contribute to and respect locally distinctive or valued character and existing amenity value by:*

*i. Responding appropriately to the form and layout of existing development and the way it functions, including mixture of uses, streetscape, building heights and lines, scale, density, plot sizes and local patterns of movement; and*

*ii. Reflecting locally characteristic architectural design and details, such as building materials, form, colour and texture of detailing, taking account of their scale and proportion; and*

*iii. Protecting, conserving and enhancing the historic context and character of heritage assets, their significance and setting, in accordance with MD13;*

*and*

*iv. Enhancing, incorporating or recreating natural assets in accordance with MD12.*

*3. Embrace opportunities for contemporary design solutions, which take reference from and reinforce distinctive local characteristics to create a positive sense of place, but avoid reproducing these characteristics in an incoherent and detrimental style.*

*4. Incorporate Sustainable Drainage techniques, in accordance with Policy CS18, as an integral part of design and apply the requirements of the SuDS handbook as set out in the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy.*

*5. Consider design of landscaping and open space holistically as part of the whole development to provide safe, useable and well-connected outdoor spaces which respond to and reinforce the character and context within which it is set, in accordance with Policy CS17 and MD12 and MD13, including.*

*i. Natural and semi-natural features, such as, trees, hedges, woodlands, ponds, wetlands, and watercourses, as well as existing landscape character, geological and heritage assets and;*

*ii. providing adequate open space of at least 30sqm per person that meets local needs in terms of function and quality and contributes to wider policy objectives such as surface water drainage and the provision and enhancement of semi natural landscape features. For developments of 20 dwellings or more, this should comprise an area of functional recreational space for play, recreation, formal or informal uses including semi-natural.”*

#### **Core policy MD6 – Green Belt and Safeguarded Land**

A1.36 This policy states that:

*“1. In addition to meeting the general requirements that apply in the countryside as set out in Policies CS5 and MD7a and MD7b, development proposed in the Green Belt must be able to demonstrate that it does not conflict with the purposes of the Green Belt. Further to these requirements the following development will be supported:*

*i. Limited infill development in identified Community Hubs or Clusters that accords with Policy MD3 and can demonstrate that it is sympathetic to the character of the settlement and the settlement policy, and in all other respects meets the policy tests set out in the Local Plan;*

*ii. Development on previously developed sites, which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development, providing the development is for employment or economic uses, defence uses, local community use or affordable housing; and the development enhances the site and its contribution to the landscape setting.”*

#### **Core policy MD7a – Managing Housing Development in the Countryside**

A1.37 This policy states that:

*“1. Further to Core Strategy Policy CS5 and CS11, new market housing will be strictly controlled outside of Shrewsbury, the Market Towns, Key Centres and Community Hubs and Community Clusters. Suitably designed and located exception site dwellings and residential conversions will be positively considered where they meet evidenced local housing needs and other relevant policy requirements. In the case of market residential conversions, requiring planning permission, the conversion of buildings to open market use will only be acceptable where the building is of a design and form which is of merit for its heritage/ landscape value, minimal alteration or rebuilding is required to achieve the development and the conversion scheme would respect the significance of the heritage asset, its setting and the local landscape character. In order to protect the long term affordability of single plot exception dwellings, they will be subject to size restrictions and the removal of permitted development rights, as well as other appropriate conditions or legal restrictions.”*

#### **Core policy MD12 – Natural Environment**

A1.38 This policy states that:

*“In accordance with Policies CS6, CS17 and through applying the guidance in the Natural Environment SPD, the avoidance of harm to Shropshire’s natural assets and their conservation, enhancement and restoration will be achieved by:*

*1. Requiring a project-level Habitats Regulations Assessment for all proposals where the Local Planning Authority identifies a likely significant effect on an internationally designated site. Permission will be refused where a HRA indicates an adverse effect on the integrity of a designated site which cannot be avoided or fully mitigated. Where mitigation can remove an adverse effect, including that identified by the HRA for the Plan or the Minerals HRA, measures will be required in accordance with; CS6, CS8, CS9, CS17, CS18, MD2; remedial actions identified in the management plan for the designated site and the priorities in the Place Plans, where appropriate.*

*2. Ensuring that proposals which are likely to have a significant adverse effect, directly, indirectly or cumulatively, on any of the following:*

- i. the special qualities of the Shropshire Hills AONB;*
- ii. locally designated biodiversity and geological sites;*
- iii. priority species;*
- iv. priority habitats*
- v. important woodlands, trees and hedges;*
- vi. ecological networks*
- vii. geological assets;*
- viii. visual amenity;*
- ix. landscape character and local distinctiveness.*

*will only be permitted if it can be clearly demonstrated that:*

*a) there is no satisfactory alternative means of avoiding such impacts through re-design or by re-locating on an alternative site and;*

*b) the social or economic benefits of the proposal outweigh the harm to the asset. In all cases, a hierarchy of mitigation then compensation measures will be sought.*

*3. Encouraging development which appropriately conserves, enhances, connects, restores or recreates natural assets, particularly where this improves the extent or value of those assets which are recognised as being in poor condition.*

*4. Supporting proposals which contribute positively to the special characteristics and local distinctiveness of an area, particularly in the Shropshire Hills AONB, Nature Improvement Areas, Priority Areas for Action or areas and sites where development affects biodiversity or geodiversity interests at a landscape scale, including across administrative boundaries.”*

#### **Core policy S15 – Shifnal area**

A1.39 This policy states that:

- “1. The town of Shifnal will have balanced development that provides a mix of housing, employment, facilities and services with around 1,250 dwellings and 5 hectares of employment development over 2006-2026.*
- 2. Land is allocated for housing and employment development as set out in Schedules S15.1a and S15.1b below and identified on the Policies Map.*
- 3. The Primary Shopping Frontages at Bradford Street and Cheapside are protected for retail uses in accordance with Policies CS15 and MD10a.*
- 4. Land beyond the development boundary that is not part of the Green Belt is safeguarded for Shifnal’s future development needs beyond the current Plan period. Only development which would not prejudice the potential future use of this land to meet Shifnal’s longer term development needs will be acceptable on the safeguarded land during the plan period.*
- 5. Existing employment land at the Lamledge Lane industrial estate is reserved for development within use classes B1, B2 and B8 only, in accordance with SAMDev Policy MD9.”*

## Appendix A part 2: Appraisal methodology

*To be read with reference to figures 1 to 6.*

### Introduction

- A2.1 The following paragraphs set out the methodology that has been followed in the baseline study of the existing landscape and visual amenity and the subsequent appraisal of the effects of the proposals.

### *LVIA Guidelines*

- A2.2 The landscape appraisal has been carried out in accordance with the following best practice guidelines:
- The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, (GLVIA) 3rd Edition, Landscape Institute (LI) and Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) (2013)
  - An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment, Natural England (October 2014)
  - SNH Visual Representation of Wind Farms guidance, version 2.1 December 2014
  - Landscape Institute Advice Note 01/11, Photography and Photomontage in Landscape and Visual Assessments.
- A2.3 Whilst the above best practice guidelines primarily set out the principles and process of an LVIA, paragraph 1.11 of the GLVIA states that the guidelines ‘*can also be used to assist in the ‘appraisal’ of forms of land use change or development that fall outside the requirements of the EIA Directive and Regulations*’. Therefore, this methodology follows the more informal process of a stand alone ‘appraisal’ but the essence of the approach of an LVIA still applies with exception of assessing the likely significance of effects.

### *Role of the LVIA (and LVA)*

- A2.4 Paragraph 2.21 of the GLVIA states that there are two distinct components of the LVIA:

*“Assessment of landscape effects: assessing effects on the landscape as a resource in its own right;*

*Assessment of visual effects: assessing the effects on specific views and on the general visual amenity experienced by people.”*

### *Definition of landscape*

- A2.5 In describing landscape, paragraph 2.19 of the GLVIA states that:

*“Landscape results from the interplay of the physical, natural and cultural components of our surroundings. Different combinations of these elements and their spatial distribution create the distinctive character of landscapes in different places, allowing different landscapes to be mapped, analysed and described.*

*Character is not just about the physical elements and features that make up a landscape, but also embraces the aesthetic, perceptual and experiential aspects of the landscape that make different places distinctive.”*

### **Definition of visual amenity**

A2.6 In the GVLIA glossary defines the meaning of visual amenity as:

*“The overall pleasantness of the views people enjoy of their surroundings, which provides an attractive visual setting or backdrop for the enjoyment of activities of the people living, working, recreating, visiting or travelling through an area.”*

A2.7 The methodology for assessing both the landscape and visual effects are outlined in paragraphs P2.32 to P2.65.

### **Appraisal process**

A2.8 The process of landscape and visual appraisal includes the following stages:

- **Project description** – Describes the proposed development, identifying the main features of the proposals, and establishes parameters such as maximum extents of the development or sizes of the elements.
- **Baseline studies** – Establishes the existing nature of the landscape and visual environment in the study area, including any relevant changes likely to occur independently of the development proposal. Includes information on the value attached to the different environmental resources.
- **Identification and description of effects** – Systematically identifies and describes the effects that are likely to occur, including whether they are adverse or beneficial.
- **Mitigation** – Makes proposals for measures designed to avoid / prevent, reduce or offset (or compensate for) any significant negative (adverse) effects.

### **Professional judgement**

A2.9 Professional judgement is an important consideration in the determination of the overall landscape and visual effects and even with qualified and experienced professionals there can be differences in the judgements made.

A2.10 Paragraph 2.23 of the GLVIA states that:

*“While there is some scope for quantitative measurement of some relatively objective matters, for example the number of trees lost to construction of a new mine, much of the assessment must rely on qualitative judgements, for example about what effect the introduction of a new development or land use change may have on visual amenity or about the significance of change in the character of the landscape and whether it is positive or negative.”*

A2.11 Paragraph 2.24 of the GLVIA states that:

*“In all cases there is a need for the judgements that are made to be reasonable and based on clear and transparent methods so that the reasoning applied at different stages can be traced and examined by others.”*

## Baseline

A2.12 The landscape and visual baseline conditions were established by:

Landscape	Visual
Identify elements and features	Identify extent of possible visibility (ZTV)
Identify landscape character and key characteristics	Identify visual receptors (people) who may be affected
Consider value attached to landscape	Identify and select representative, illustrative and specific viewpoints
Identify landscape receptors	

### *Site familiarisation*

A2.13 The sites and surrounding area were visited in June 2019 to obtain familiarity with the landscape. Field studies and desk studies of photographs, aerial photographs, map information, landscape character assessments and statutory and emerging planning policy documents have enabled the recording of landscape elements such as topography, drainage, land use, development, vegetation and other features.

### *Defining the study area*

A2.14 The study area defines the scope of the appraisal. The study area includes the sites themselves and the wider area around them, within which the proposed development may have a significant influence. The extent of the study area has been established using a zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV) of the proposed development in combination with observations made on site. During the appraisal process the study area may change as a result of fieldwork studies or changes to the proposals.

A2.15 A 2.5km study area was chosen as the visibility beyond this distance will become limited and the proposed development is unlikely to have any significant effects.

### *Identifying landscape character, elements and features*

A2.16 Published and adopted landscape character assessments (LCA) prepared by relevant authorities at varying levels, from national through to local assessments, have been referred to in order to identify the baseline landscape character, resources and associated value. These established assessments have been reviewed in terms of their status, scale and level of detail provided and therefore suitability for use within the LVA. This review also took account of the date in which the assessments were carried out and how relevant the content is in relation to the current landscape characteristics.

A2.17 National and county level LCA generally give a broad scale assessment which often provides an overview of the landscape context and setting but does not necessarily represent the local landscape characteristic of the site and surrounding area. Local LCA provide more detail on the types of landscape that occur in the study area. They are therefore considered appropriate as a basis for describing the key characteristics and are used to inform the description of the landscapes that may be affected by the proposals.

- A2.18 Detailed fieldwork carried out within the site and immediate surroundings is used to check the applicability of the landscape character assessments throughout the study area, and where variations in the landscape are identified since the LCA was adopted, modifications or supplementary information are provided in the baseline appraisal.
- A2.19 ZTV analysis and field studies have been carried out to determine which landscape character areas will be physically or perceptually affected by the proposals.

*Identifying possible extent of visibility (ZTV)*

- A2.20 Computer generated mapping has been used in combination with fieldwork, to assess the potential visibility of the proposals. The extent of visibility over which the proposed development may theoretically be seen, Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV), is provided in figures 13 – 20.
- A2.21 The preliminary ZTVs have been derived from a Digital Surface Modelling. The DSM used was based on a 2m grid provided by Bluesky. This uses photogrammetrically derived information during summer that provides a highly detailed three-dimensional model of the landscape and townscape. Topographic features including landform, woodland, settlements, individual buildings, isolated trees, copses, hedgerows, embankments and other minor topographic features, out to a distance of 2.5km from the application boundary, are all modelled. The accuracy of the DSM falls within acceptable limits; however, there are potential discrepancies between the DSM and the actual landform where there are minor topographic features that are too small to be picked up. The Bluesky data can pick up the majority of the woodland and buildings, although areas can be missed between the 2m grid.
- A2.22 For this project, the preliminary ZTVs have been generated using the DSM with proposed built development at 10m high to provide a height for a typical two storey residential house or employment shed / two storey office.
- A2.23 The height from which the proposed development would be seen was set at 1.6m (mid-way between the average heights for men and women given in the GLVIA). A professional judgement has been made for this appraisal that approximately 2.5km is the distance beyond which proposals of this scale, nature and context would not have an effect on either landscape character or views. The resulting preliminary ZTVs, figures 13 – 20, illustrates the extent to which any part of the proposals (large or small) is potentially visible from the surrounding area.
- A2.24 During fieldwork, any significant discrepancies in the visual envelope and preliminary ZTVs are recorded and later amended. Fieldwork was confined to accessible parts of the site, public rights of way, transport routes and other publicly accessible areas.

*Identifying visual receptors*

- A2.25 The baseline study will have determined the individuals and/or defined groups of people who have the potential to be affected by the proposals. These are referred to as visual receptors.



A2.26 Paragraph 6.13 of the GVLIA states that visual receptors may include:

*“...people living in the area, people who work there, people passing through the landscape on road, rail or other forms of transport, people visiting promoted landscapes or attractions, and people engaged in recreation of different types”.*

### ***Identifying viewpoints***

A2.27 Following analysis of the preliminary ZTVs and fieldwork, a series of viewpoints from which the proposals will be seen by the individual or groups of visual receptors were identified. To illustrate all potential viewpoints from which the proposals will be seen by the different visual receptors within the study area is not practical and is unnecessary. Therefore, viewpoints selected for inclusion in the LVA broadly fall into three groups:

- **Representative** viewpoints (represent the experience of different types of visual receptors). For example, certain points may be chosen to represent the views of users from a particular public right of way.
- **Specific** viewpoints (a particular view from a key or promoted viewpoint). For example, viewpoints with a particular cultural landscape associations.
- **Illustrative** viewpoints to demonstrate a particular effect/issue. For example, the restricted visibility at a certain location.

A2.28 Generally viewpoints are selected from publicly accessible land and/or the transport routes. Representative or specific viewpoints from these areas can take into consideration that similar views may be afforded from receptors of residential properties.

### **Description of proposals**

A2.29 This report summarises the elements that are likely to give rise to landscape or visual effects. The effects on landform and on existing landscape features such as vegetation are also described. Proposals for landscape measures such as new planting are set out.

### **Mitigation measures**

A2.30 The GLVIA describes three forms of mitigation measures. These are:

- *“Primary measures, developed through the iterative design process, which have become integrated or embedded into the project design;*
- *Standard construction and operational management practices for avoiding and reducing environmental effects;*
- *Secondary measures, designed to address any residual adverse effects remaining after primary measures and standard construction practices have been incorporated into the scheme.”*

A2.31 The first two forms are referred to as primary mitigation, while the last is referred to as secondary mitigation. Within this LVA only the first form is considered to be applicable and has been incorporated during the process in order to prevent/avoid, reduce and where possible offset or remedy potential adverse effects.

## Landscape appraisal

A2.32 The landscape appraisal judges the potential effects of the proposals on the landscape receptors that have been identified. The potential landscape effects are determined by consideration of the sensitivity of the landscape receptors and the magnitude of the landscape effect as a result of the proposals. These are defined in the following paragraphs.

### *Criteria for assessing potential degree of landscape effects*

#### *Sensitivity of landscape receptor*

A2.33 The sensitivity of the landscape is assessed by combining the considerations of two factors:

- Value
- Susceptibility to specific change.

A2.34 The value of the landscape receptor is defined in the GLVIA (paragraph 5.19) as:

*“The relative value that is attached to different landscapes by society, bearing in mind that a landscape may be valued by different stakeholders for a whole variety of reasons.”*

A2.35 The **value** of the landscape receptor is established at the baseline stage and considers two key categories as highlighted in paragraph 5.44 of the GLVIA:

- *“The value of the landscape character types or areas based on review of any designations at both national and local levels, and, where there are no designations, judgements based on criteria that can be used to establish landscape value;*
- *The value of individual contributors to landscape character, especially the key characteristics, which may include individual elements of the landscape, particular landscape features, notable aesthetic, perceptual or experiential qualities, and combinations of the contributors.”*

A2.36 Landscape designations should not be over relied upon to signify the value of the landscape receptors. Other factors that can help in the identification of valued landscapes include:

- Landscape quality (condition)
- Scenic quality
- Rarity
- Representativeness
- Conservation interests
- Recreational value
- Perceptual aspects including wildness and/or tranquillity
- Associations.

A2.37 In the absence of a formal landscape designation or landscape character area, judgement on the value of a landscape is based on the criteria set out in paragraph A2.36.

A2.38 The landscape receptors' **susceptibility** to specific change is defined in the GLVIA (paragraph 5.40) as follows:

*"The ability of the landscape receptor (whether it be the overall character or quality/condition of a particular landscape type or area, or an individual element and/or feature, or a particular aesthetic and perceptual aspect) to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and /or achievement of landscape planning policy and strategies."*

A2.39 Paragraph 5.42 of the GLVIA also states that:

*"Since landscape effects in LVIA are particular to both the specific landscape in question and the specific nature of the proposed development, the assessment of susceptibility must be tailored to the project."*

A2.40 Factors for judging susceptibility to change include:

- Vulnerability or robustness of elements of the landscape
- The tolerance, i.e. the extent to which elements of the landscape can be replaced, restored or may be altered
- The level or role elements of the landscape have in defining the character of the landscape
- The landscape sensitivity to the specific type of development proposed.

A2.41 The guidance set out in figure 1 has been used in this appraisal to arrive at an overall evaluation of landscape sensitivity. Both susceptibility to change and value are judged as high, medium, low or negligible based on the criteria shown. There may be circumstances where the weighting given to some criteria may be greater than others. The combination of susceptibility and value produces an overall evaluation of landscape sensitivity, which is ultimately a matter of professional judgement, and is defined in this report as high, medium, low or negligible.

#### ***Magnitude of landscape effect***

A2.42 The magnitude of effect is assessed in terms of:

- Size/scale
- Geographical extent
- Duration
- Reversibility.

A2.43 The **size or scale** of an effect is assessed by determining the degree of change that would arise from the proposals. The effect of both loss and addition of new features is judged as major, partial, minor or very minor based on the criteria set out in figure 2. The judgements may take into account:

- The extent of existing landscape elements that will be lost (this may be quantified)
- The degree to which aesthetic or perceptual aspects of the landscape are altered through the loss of or addition of landscape resources / elements. For example removal of hedges may change a small-scale intimate landscape into a large scale, open one.
- Whether the effect changes any of the key characteristics which are distinctive to the landscape character.

A2.44 The **geographical extent** of effects is assessed by determining the area over which the landscape effects will be felt. The effect is considered across varying scales of wide, intermediate, localised or limited based on the criteria set out in figure 2. In general, the effects will vary according to the nature of the project and may not be relevant on every occasion.

A2.45 The **duration** of effects is assessed by the period of time over which the degree of change to the landscape would arise from the development. Duration is judged as long term, medium term or short term based on the criteria set out in figure 2.

A2.46 The **reversibility** of an effect assesses the prospects or practicality of the effect being reversed. The effect is judged as reversible, partially reversible or permanent as set out in figure 2.

A2.47 Duration and reversibility can be considered together so that a temporary or partially reversible effect is linked to definition of how long that effect may last.

A2.48 The guidance notes and criteria set out in figure 2 have been used to make a judgement on the magnitude of landscape effect for this appraisal. The magnitude of landscape effect is determined by combining the judgements of the four individual factors of size/scale, geographical extent, duration and reversibility. There may be circumstances where the weighting given to some criteria may be greater than others. The combination of all four factors produces an overall evaluation of magnitude of landscape effect, which is ultimately a matter of professional judgement, and is defined in this appraisal as large, medium, small or negligible.

#### *Judging the overall degree of landscape effect*

A2.49 The degree of the effects on the landscape resources is considered from a sequentially combined evaluation of the landscape sensitivity and the magnitude of effect. The matrix in figure 3 has been used to guide this judgement. The definitions used are included in that figure. They are applied to both potential effects, and to residual effects.

A2.50 The GLVIA guidance also states that thought must be given to whether the likely degree of landscape effects are judged to be positive (beneficial) or negative (adverse). The GLVIA (paragraph 5.37) suggests that when judging the effects to be adverse or beneficial the factors to be considered should include, but not be restricted to the following:

- *“The degree to which the proposal fits within the existing landscape character*

- *The contribution to the landscape that the development may make in its own right, usually by virtue of good design, even if it is in contrast to existing character.”*

### Visual appraisal

A2.51 The visual appraisal judges the potential effects of the proposals on the visual receptors that have been identified. The degree of a visual effect is determined by consideration of the sensitivity of the visual receptors and the magnitude of the visual effect on visual amenity. These are defined in the following paragraphs.

#### *Criteria for assessing potential degree of visual effects*

##### *Sensitivity of visual receptors*

A2.52 A visual receptor is a particular person or group of people who would be experiencing the view or are likely to be affected at a specific viewpoint.

A2.53 The sensitivity of the visual receptor is assessed by combining the judgements of two factors:

- Value attached to views
- Susceptibility of visual receptors to change.

A2.54 The GLVIA suggests that when judging the **value** attached to the views experienced (paragraph 6.37), account should be taken of:

- *“recognition of the value attached to particular views, for example in relation to heritage assets, or through planning designations;*
- *indicators of the value attached to views by visitors, for example through appearances in guidebooks or on tourist maps, provision of facilities for their enjoyment and references to them in literature or art”*

A2.55 The value attached to the views experienced is established at the baseline stage and considers these two key categories:

- The quality of the view/visual experience i.e. attractive unspoilt landscape
- The associations which contribute to the visual experience i.e. cultural/historical/ecological interests and planning designations.

A2.56 The visual receptors' **susceptibility** to change is defined in the GLVIA (paragraph 6.32) as follows:

- *“the occupation or activity of people experiencing the view at particular locations; and*
- *the extent to which their attention or interest may therefore be focused on the views and the visual amenity they experience at particular locations.”*

A2.57 The guidance set out in figure 4 has been used in this appraisal to arrive at an overall evaluation of the sensitivity of the visual receptors. Both susceptibility to change and value are judged as high, medium, low or negligible based on the criteria shown. There may be circumstances where the weighting given to some

criteria may be greater than others. The combination of susceptibility and value produces an overall evaluation of visual receptor sensitivity, which is ultimately a matter of professional judgement, and is defined in this report as high, medium, low or negligible.

### *Magnitude of visual effect*

A2.58 The magnitude of visual effect is assessed in terms of:

- Size/scale
- Geographical extent
- Duration
- Reversibility.

A2.59 The **size or scale** of a visual effect is assessed by determining the degree of change that would arise from the proposals. The effect of loss, addition or change to the composition of the view through the introduction of development is judged as major, partial, minor or very minor based on the criteria set out in figure 5. The GLVIA (paragraph 6.39) suggests that when judging the visual effects the following be taken account of:

- *“the scale of the change in the view with respect to the loss or addition of features in the view and changes in its composition, including the proportion of the view occupied by the proposed development;*
- *the degree of contrast or integration of any new features or changes in the landscape with the existing or remaining landscape elements and characteristics in terms of form, scale and mass, line, height, colour and texture;*
- *the nature of the view of the proposed development, in terms of the relative amount of time over which it will be experienced and whether views will be full, partial or glimpses.”*

A2.60 The **geographical extent** of visual effects is assessed by determining the area over which the visual effects will be seen. The visual effect is considered across varying scales of wide, intermediate, localised or limited based on the criteria set out in figure 5. The GLVIA (paragraph 6.40) suggests that extent is likely to reflect:

- *“the angle of view in relation to the main activity of the receptor;*
- *the distance of the viewpoint from the proposed development;*
- *the extent of the area over which the changes would be visible.”*

A2.61 The **duration** of effects is assessed by the period of time over which the degree of change to the visual receptor would arise from the development. Duration is judged as long term, medium term or short term based on the criteria set out in figure 5.

A2.62 The **reversibility** of an effect assesses the prospects and the practicality of the effect being reversed. The effect is judged as reversible, partially reversible or permanent as set out in figure 5.

A2.63 The guidance notes and criteria set out in figure 5 have been used to make a judgement on the magnitude of visual effect for this appraisal. The magnitude of visual effect is determined by combining the judgements of the four individual factors of size/scale, geographical extent, duration and reversibility. There may be circumstances where the weighting given to some criteria may be greater than others. The combination of all four factors produces an overall evaluation of magnitude of visual effect, which is ultimately a matter of professional judgement, and is defined in this appraisal as large, medium, small or negligible.

*Judging the overall degree of visual effects*

A2.64 The degree of the effects on the visual receptor is considered from a sequentially combined evaluation of the visual receptor sensitivity and the magnitude of effect. The matrix in figure 6 has been used to guide this judgement. The definitions used are included in that figure. They are applied to both potential effects and to residual effects.

A2.65 The GLVIA guidance also states that thought must be given to whether the likely degree of visual effects are judged to be positive (beneficial) or negative (adverse). This is based on professional judgement as to whether the effects will affect the quality of the visual experience for those people who will see the proposed development, given the nature of the existing views. The GLVIA (paragraph 6.44) suggests that when judging the effects to be adverse or beneficial the factors to be considered should include but not be restricted to the following:

- *“Effects on people who are particularly sensitive to changes in views and visual amenity are more likely to be significant*
- *Effects on people at recognised and important viewpoints or from recognised scenic routes are more likely to be significant*
- *Large-scale changes which introduce new, non-characteristic or discordant or intrusive elements into the view are more likely to be significant than small changes or changes involving features already present within the view.”*

## **Appendix A part 3: Photographic images methodology**

### **Photographic survey**

- A3.1 The aim is to recreate as closely as possible what the human eye can see. 50 mm is a traditionally agreed focal length for matching a photograph to the actual view seen, but a range between 45 mm to 55 mm is often used.
- A3.2 For this appraisal, a Canon EOS 6D camera was used in conjunction with a 50mm prime lens. The EOS 6D employs a sensor of similar size to a traditional SLR therefore the 50mm lens used results in a focal length of 50mm as no modification factor is applied. This methodology is in accordance with the LI Advice note 01/11, Photography and photomontage in landscape and visual impact assessment.
- A3.3 In this appraisal, the photographs are taken at approximately 1.6 m above ground level using a tripod.
- A3.4 GPS is used to provide a six-figure National Grid reference for the view. The accuracy of this device can vary (depending on factors such as satellite coverage, proximity of buildings, tree coverage etc.) so these figures are then checked on detailed OS survey plans to give a more accurate reference.
- A3.5 For panoramic photographs an overlap of between 35% and 50% of each frame is used to allow the creation of a seamless panoramic, using Photoshop.