

Landscape and Visual Issues: Statement

**Land West of A149 Lynn Road, Heacham
on behalf of Broadland Housing Association and
Townfolk Ltd**

December 2015

Prepared by:	Mark Flatman
Position:	Director
Qualifications:	Chartered Landscape Architect CMLI, Dip LA, BA (Hons)

File name:	Landscape and Visual Appeal Statement 15 12 11
Date issued:	12th December 2015

CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	1
1.1	Qualifications and Experience	1
1.2	Scope of Evidence/ Statement	2
2	THE SETTING OF THE SITE	6
2.1	The Site Location	6
2.2	The Existing Vegetation	8
3	LANDSCAPE CHARACTER	9
3.1	Published Landscape Character Assessments	9
4	THE NATURE OF THE PROPOSALS AND APPRAISING THE LIKELY EFFECTS ON LANDSCAPE CHARACTER	12
4.1	The Proposals	12
4.2	Settlement Pattern and Development Review	13
4.3	Local Plan and Emerging Documents	16
4.4	Land Rear of 8 Cheney Hill, Heacham (15/00352/OM - Outline Application: construction of up to 69 dwellings and associated infrastructure)	18
4.5	Review of a BKL&WN Planning Permission in the AONB	20
5	LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT (AND REVIEWING THEPOTENTIAL EFFECTS)	23
5.1	Susceptibility	23
5.2	Existing Site Contribution to the Local Landscape Character	24
5.3	The likely Significance of the Effects of the Proposals on Landscape Character	24
5.4	Significance of Landscape Effects	27

6	THE VISIBILITY AND VISUAL EFFECTS OF THE PROPOSALS	29
6.1	The Visual Resource	29
6.2	The Significance of the Visual Effects of the Proposals	41
6.3	Progressive Views of Heacham along the A149	42

7	PLANNING POLICY ISSUES	44
7.1	National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	44

8	CONCLUSIONS	46
----------	--------------------	-----------

APPENDIX A FIGURES 1-12

APPENDIX B PUBLISHED LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENTS

APPENDIX C DEVELOPMENT WITHIN SEDGEFORD

APPENDIX D SITE TECHNICAL ASSESSMENTS

APPENDIX E LVA METHODOLOGY

1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Qualifications and Experience

1.1.1 My name is Mark Flatman. I am a Chartered Landscape Architect and a Director of Liz Lake Associates, Chartered Landscape Architects and Urban Designers (LLA). I have a degree and a Diploma in Landscape Architecture from Greenwich University and I am a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute.

1.1.2 I have worked in professional practice since 1996. During this time, I have prepared landscape proposals for a range of projects including private landowners, historic landscapes, and educational, commercial and residential developments.

1.1.3 I have prepared Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments (LVIAs) to accompany planning applications for a range of projects including residential, leisure and recreation, commercial and enabling development. I have also prepared the landscape and visual assessments required for the Environmental Impact Assessments of highway and transport infrastructure projects, minerals and waste development, as well as residential and commercial development.

1.1.4 I have presented evidence at both Appeal Hearings and Inquiries on behalf of Local Authorities, Rule 6 parties and private clients, covering a wide range issues associated with the landscape and visual effects of development proposals on a broad range of project types including housing, leisure and recreation, commercial, renewables and industrial development.

1.1.5 The practice has extensive experience of sensitive sites and has recently worked on carefully considered development proposals within the AONB for the following projects:

- Persimmon Homes housing development within the Cotswolds AONB for GCHQ, Cheltenham
- Rose Builders development for 150 homes at Cox's Hill, lying immediately adjacent to the Dedham Vale AONB, Lawford, Essex. The officers report to committee stated,

“A landscape architect has been engaged and full landscaping details have been submitted. This has resulted in a welcome and positive aspect of the proposals. The Council's Principal Landscape and Tree Officer has confirmed the landscaping scheme is of a high quality”

“Landscaping has also been included along the western boundary of the site in accordance with the policy MLM4 which requires a landscaping buffer that will help to reduce any material adverse impacts on the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, located on the opposite side of Cox’s Hill, and views from Lanford Church and Conservation Area”.

- 1.1.6 Liz Lake Associates is a multidisciplinary environmental and design consultancy with over 28 years’ experience of master planning, landscape architecture, landscape planning, ecology, urban design, heritage and environmental impact assessment.

1.2 Scope of Evidence/ Statement

- 1.2.1 This statement has been updated in light of the Planning Inspectorate’s findings into earlier appeal submitted by Broadland Housing Association and Townsfolk Ltd in respect of refusal of planning permission for

“...the construction of a care home, housing with care facilities and 70 new homes. New allotments, associated landscaping, SUDS ponds and associated works including an electricity substation and a pumping station are also proposed. Access to be off School Road”

on land west of the A149 Lynn Road, Heacham, Norfolk. Heacham itself is located between Hunstanton and Snettisham, which form part of a string of settlements running broadly north south along the A149 between King’s Lynn and Hunstanton. It takes into previous Council and Third Party reps, which refer to visual impact in addition to landscape issues including that adjacent land (formerly part of HEA1), the Council’s preferred option, has recently been granted planning consent. In addition, Council Officers have highlighted concerns over the potential development in views from the A149, including the relationship with the church at Heacham.

- 1.2.2 The Site boundary is shown on Figure 1 Location Plan showing the location of the proposed development.

- 1.2.3 The developable area (built area) of the Appeal Site (the Site) occupies a much smaller proportion of the area under consideration (see Figure 10), being located adjacent to the east and west sides of School Road, however it should be noted that large areas of the Site form part of comprehensive landscape proposals and would remain undeveloped.

- 1.2.4 The Appeal Site (the Site) is composed of three principal areas:

- **For the proposed housing with care facilities:** An area of dilapidated and abandoned buildings being the former piggery associated with Marea Farm, comprising a large number of redundant sheds, barns, storage units, pens and associated fencing, features

and hard standing located to the west of School Road. The area lies in between the former Coal Depot (to the south) and the settlement edge (to the north).

- **For the proposed residential development and care home:** An area of managed grassland used as horse paddocks, including a plot comprising industrial/commercial units, and 'Bespoke Norfolk Construction' an existing engineering business, which is all located to the east of School Road and to the south of the settlement of Heacham. To the north, the area abuts the south of the existing residential areas of Woodside Avenue and The Broadway.
- **For a portion of the proposed landscape enhancements:** A broadly rectilinear parcel of unmanaged grassland, which is located to the east of the proposed developed footprint, sited adjacent to the A149 and within close proximity to two Petrol Stations.

1.2.5 Planning application (13/01541/OM) for "Outline permission for the construction of a care home, housing with care facilities and 70 new homes. New allotments, associated landscaping, SUDS ponds and associated works including an electricity substation and a pumping station are also proposed. Access to be off School Road" was refused by the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk (BKL&WN) on 3rd February 2014.

1.2.6 In relation to Landscape, the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk (BKL&WN) gave the following reason for refusal;

Reason 2:

*"The proposal represents a significant incursion into open countryside that will be visible from the surrounding landscape and from the adjacent Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The applicant has failed to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority that the proposed development preserves the intrinsic beauty and character of the countryside and will not cause unacceptable levels of harm to the character of the landscape generally and specifically to the character of the adjacent Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. In addition, the applicant has also failed to demonstrate that any harm so caused can be successfully mitigated. Consequently, the proposal is contrary to Core Strategy CS12 and to the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework."*¹

1.2.7 This Statement has been prepared to address Reason 2, the landscape and visual aspects associated with the proposed development, having regard to the character, setting and appearance of the Site and surrounding area as well as considering views, including the potential effects on landscape and visual resources. The statement will also address the

¹ Notice of Refusal of Planning Permission. BKL&WN. 15.05.14. P2.

landscape and visual aspects associated with the AONB, which were referred to in the reasons for refusal outlined above and are still relevant to the appeal.

1.2.8 It should be noted that reason 2 did not refer to the visual amenity of adjacent residents or the settlement as a whole, and therefore I conclude that the Council does not consider visual amenity from adjacent properties or the settlement to be of any material significance. I agree with that assessment. However, for completeness I have addressed visual amenity from selected locations to the edge of the settlement, as well attempting to locate visual receptors within the AONB that might be adversely affected by the proposed scheme.

1.2.9 The Statement also refers to Planning Policy where I understand these to be relevant to the landscape and visual aspects being considered. However, I am not a qualified Planner and therefore will not be dealing with the specific Policy aspects of this Appeal or the planning balance. This is addressed by Nicole La Ronde of La Ronde Wright.

1.2.10 Liz Lake Associates Ltd was commissioned by La Ronde Wright on behalf of Broadland Housing Association and Townsfolk Ltd in September 2014 for the earlier appeal. I was more recently instructed to prepare evidence for this Appeal relating to landscape and visual issues. In doing so, I have taken into consideration amongst other things the following:

- Document titled “*Land to the west of A149 and south of School Road, Heacham: Strategic Landscape and Visual Appraisal*”, prepared by Sheils Flynn Landscape Architects, which accompanied the original planning application
- Landscape Character Assessments at National and District levels
- Landscape Designations, including the Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and local designations
- A site visit to appraise the existing character of the Site and its landscape context at a local level and views within, towards and from the Site, including the AONB
- The recent approval for residential development on land to the West of Marea Farm (formerly part of HEA1).

1.2.11 In reviewing the Sheils Flynn document I have not sought to repeat the baseline review and concur with the findings of their report. I have also replicated their numbering system in providing proposed viewpoint locations in this Statement. In addition, I have reviewed the potential for additional viewpoints, including from publicly accessible locations within the AONB. Where these are considered, they are labelled clearly as LLA viewpoints on MF Figure 8.

- 1.2.12 A site visit was undertaken on 8th December 2014 for the earlier appeal and more recently in October 2015. On both occasions the weather was overcast with sunny intervals, and visibility was good. All photographs accompanying this Statement were taken with a digital camera, a Canon EOS 400D with a 30mm fixed lens. The 30mm lens is the digital equivalent to a standard 50mm focal length lens with a single lens reflex camera. Where supporting images have been created using Google Earth Street View they are referenced accordingly.
- 1.2.13 The Landscape Institute issued new “*Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*”, 3rd Edition (GLVIA3) in April 2013². This Appeal Statement has been produced using the guiding principles and recommended approach of GLVIA3.
- 1.2.14 One of the key changes in approach of GVLIA3 from the second edition (GLVIA2) is that the new version now places emphasis on landscape and visual issues towards one of “*proportionality*”.
- 1.2.15 I declare that the evidence prepared for this Appeal Statement is true. I confirm that the opinions expressed are my true and professional opinions.
-

² “Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment”, 3rd Edition, 2013; LI and IEMA

THE SETTING OF THE SITE

2.1 The Site Location

- 2.1.1 Access to the Site is gained from School Road. At Marea Farm it becomes a restricted by-way of approximately 400m length; the by-way serves to access surrounding smallholdings, industrial units, sheds, residential property and storage facilities and does not form a connected through route to the wider landscape for either pedestrians, cyclists or motorised vehicles (at the southern end).
- 2.1.2 The Site lies in a reduced position to the low lying western edge of the rolling chalk escarpment of the West Norfolk chalk plateau that falls from east to west. The topographical change can be split across the 3 portions of the Site, as follows:
- The most western part of the site is almost flat with only a very gentle fall from approximately 9m at the eastern edge (towards School Road) to below 8m AOD on the western boundary.
 - The central part of the Site is almost flat with only a very gentle fall of 1m across most of the open field. Towards the eastern edge there is a gentle 1.5m fall east to west from the south east corner of the paddock.
 - The eastern undeveloped part of the Site subject to proposed landscape enhancements is more elevated and forms part of a more pronounced landform with an approximately 4-5m fall from 16-17m AOD adjacent to the A149.
- 2.1.3 Overall the vast majority of the proposed development footprint would be built on land nestled below the 10m contour line and at a lower elevation compared to the surrounding landform.
- 2.1.4 There are residential properties located directly to the north of the Site. Marea Meadows, Woodside Avenue and The Broadway. Marea Meadows runs in an east west orientation and is accessed from School Road. Residential properties are largely on the southern side of the road however dwellings do not directly back onto the Site. Woodside Avenue is accessed from School Road and the rear gardens of dwellings on the southern side of the road back onto the Site boundary. Properties are detached and set on large plots usually containing outbuildings. Residential properties on The Broadway are separated from the Site by approximately 110m of open paddock and fields which contain numerous trees and

hedgerows. Properties are set against the Broadway, although there has been some infill to the rear of properties that front the Broadway.

- 2.1.5 The western part of the Site (west of School Road) comprises the redundant and dilapidated former piggery at Marea Farm, together with associated buildings, storage and hardstanding. It is bounded to the north and west by an established but gappy hedgerow.
- 2.1.6 The central part of the Site comprises an open grassland area, with light industrial/commercial units to the south of the parcel. This area is approximately 4.5ha in size and has a small slope running across it from approximately 9m AOD in the west and 12m AOD to the east over a distance of approximately 370m. On the boundary with School Lane is a well-established native hedgerow that is approximately 3m in height. The parcel is surrounded on the southern and eastern boundaries by established hedgerows including mature hedgerow trees. These hedgerows are similar in nature to the one on School Road. To the north the parcel borders the existing residential edge of Heacham and comprises typical back garden boundary treatments such as close board fencing. Approximately 100m along this boundary to the east from school lane, the boundary comprises a mature hedgerow including hedgerows trees and this continues along the length of this boundary.
- 2.1.7 The eastern part of the Site is a broadly rectilinear parcel approximately 3.5ha in size of predominantly scrub land that has been allowed to grow up and forms a diverse area of dense vegetation adjacent to the A149. The parcel is open to its boundary with the A149 however it is contained by mature hedgerows with hedgerow trees on the other three boundaries.
- 2.1.8 There is also a high presence of human features in the immediate vicinity of the Site, which contribute to detract from the overall character, condition and quality of the landscape. These include the existing Marea Farm units including the units associated with the Piggery and the telephone mast; the piggery units sprawl across the western parcel of the Site and detract from the visual amenity, the telephone mast adds an intrusive vertical element to the landscape. The Coal Store, allotments and numerous small holdings along the southern section of School Lane and their associated visual clutter including log piles, sheds, machinery and other associated paraphernalia create a confusing landscape that is not connected to the existing urban area of Heacham. Industrial units associated with 'Bespoke

Norfolk Construction' include a large industrial shed that due to its scale feels disconnected to the peri-urban character of this landscape.

- 2.1.9 The open nature of the arable fields and well established hedgerows and hedgerow trees provide a positive character to the Site, however this landscape has an urban fringe character due to the proximity of the obvious urban edge of Heacham.

2.2 The Existing Vegetation

- 2.2.1 Existing well-established native hedges to school road, approximately 3m in height, create a green lane from the end of the tarmacked section of School Road heading south. Site boundaries are predominantly well established native hedgerows containing established mature hedgerow trees. There are a number of internal hedgerows that break up the existing Site. These hedgerows in combination with the boundary hedgerows help give structure to the Site and create a layering effect across the wider landscape which filters views across the Site. Where the Site is visible from public locations it is usually across or filtered views through this vegetation. Where garden boundaries back up to the Site they are generally mixed in character from being open (such as properties to the western end of Woodside Avenue) to being contained by established vegetation (such as properties to the eastern end of Woodside Avenue).
- 2.2.2 The eastern part of the Site is a broadly rectilinear parcel approximately 3.5ha in size of predominantly scrub land that has been allowed to grow up and forms a diverse area of dense vegetation adjacent to the A149. The parcel is open to its boundary with the A149 however it is contained by mature hedgerows with hedgerow trees on the other three boundaries.
- 2.2.3 The western parcel of the Site contains hard standing, infrastructure (piggery) and open grassland. There are a few trees on the southern boundary with the coal yard where hedgerow trees have been allowed to grow out.

3 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

3.1 Published Landscape Character Assessments

3.1.1 A brief summary of the published Landscape Character Assessments (LCA's) by BKL&WN (2007) in the context of the Site is summarised below:

3.1.2 The key characteristics that are relevant to the Heacham LCA are noted as being:

- A medium scale landscape with an open character.
- Regular spaced contours make for a gently sloping landform with the even slope falling away towards the coastal marshes.
- A land use dominated by arable farming and organised within a regular geometric field pattern.
- Flailed hawthorn hedges define the field boundaries (generally established around the time of the Enclosure Act). These appear largely continuous however there are some areas where the hedges are gappy and visually less intact.
- Settlement is generally linear in form and concentrated along the A149 towards the base of the slope. The largest settlement Heacham, lies on the west facing slope and extends downwards towards the coast, with the smaller settlements evenly dispersed and aligning the A149 on the north-facing slope.
- The skyline is strong - predominantly defined by the edge of plateau and is for the most part smooth although there are some areas where trees and hedgerows silhouette against the sky bringing varied heights and texture to the horizon.
- Views to the plateau landscape are restricted by the edge of plateau forming a strong visual boundary – blocking views beyond. The slopes form an important backdrop and skyline to the coastal edge.
- Church towers and spires associated with the settlements form subtle landmark features. The A149 is a busy coastal road but away from this main thoroughfare movement within the landscape is minimal.
- This is not a remote landscape – although rural and for the most part quiet, there are a number of visible settlements and human influence is apparent although on higher ground, away from the A149, there is a strong sense of tranquillity.

3.1.3 The evaluation of the Heacham LCA identifies the following *Landscape Sensitivities*:

- Relatively open and panoramic views eastwards to adjacent open coastal marshes/ North Beach.

- Mature parkland landscape associated with Heacham Hall.
- Striking built character (combination of traditional carstone and chalk clunch).
- Patches of intact hedgerow network.
- Existing vegetation fringing the settlement edges of Heacham and Hunstanton.

Response: The proposals would not compromise the key Landscape Characteristics or Sensitivities identified. The proposals will not affect the regular alignment of hedgerows across the slopes, which are mostly beyond the Site and the existing hedge structure would be retained on the Site boundaries; as a consequence, the layering effect in views from the south and the A149 would be retained. The development proposals allow for the opportunity to enhance existing hedgerow boundaries on the Site itself and beyond, using land under control of the applicants and create further enhancements to landscape character, for example the reinstatement of lost hedgerow features shown on historic maps (refer to landscape masterplan) and the enhancement of the hedgerow along the A149. A small length of hedgerow on School Lane would be removed to facilitate the access from School Road, including minor loss to internal hedgerows to allow access between parcels, however these would be replaced with new hedgerows forming part of the proposals.

3.1.4

The Landscape Planning Guidelines for the Heacham LCA:

- Seek to conserve and enhance the landscape setting of and gap between Hunstanton and Heacham
- Seek to conserve open views westwards, along North Beach and across adjacent Open Coastal Marshes
- Seek to ensure the sensitive location of development involving tall structures (such as telecommunications masts and wind turbines for example) in relation to prominent skyline locations both within the character area and within adjacent character areas
- Seek to ensure that any new small-scale development in or on the edges of Hunstanton or Heacham, responds to existing settlement pattern

Response: The proposals will involve the removal of derelict farm buildings and structures, including some overhead lines and wires that cross the site at Marea Farm. However, beyond the Site overhead power wires that criss-cross the landscape and form prominent skyline features within the AONB (adjacent area) will remain. Vertical lighting columns on the A149, which lie in between the Site and the AONB, will remain, as will the petrol station complex. Overall the proposals will respond to the existing settlement pattern

and will contribute to enhancing the quality and condition of the landscape, particularly where it is degraded. As a consequence of the very gentle topographical change and layering effect of existing hedgerows, the setting of the village will be preserved because much of the site is nestled at a lower level than that of the surrounding areas, e.g. A149, Cheney Hill and the existing settlement.

3.1.5 The Norfolk Coast Partnership classify the Visitor Management Zones of the Norfolk Coast AONB on a sliding scale from Red (most sensitive/fragile) through to Orange, Dark Orange, Yellow, Light Green and Dark Green (least sensitive/more robust). Immediately east and south of Heacham is annotated clearly as **Dark Green**, that being a “*more robust area, with few visitor pressures at present*”³ – coupled with limited public access, the area has been judged as being of less landscape and habitat sensitivity. Landscapes which are more robust are generally more capable of absorbing change without harmful effects on character.

3.1.6 Whilst lying to the east of the Site and beyond the A149, the Norfolk Coast AONB Integrated Landscape Guidance highlights that for the character area Heacham CS1:

- “*Urban fringe influences are strong towards the edge of Heacham*”

³ <http://www.norfolkcoastaonb.org.uk/content/maps/mapvms.html>

4 THE NATURE OF THE PROPOSALS AND APPRAISING THE LIKELY EFFECTS ON LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

4.1 The Proposals

4.1.1 The proposals comprise the following elements which are illustrated on the Architects plan, Ingleton Wood Proposed Site Plan, dwg 30745/110:

4.1.2 *“...the construction of a care home, housing with care facilities and 70 new homes. New allotments, associated landscaping, SUDS ponds and associated works including an electricity substation and a pumping station are also proposed. Access to be off School Road?”*

4.1.3 In order to facilitate the proposed development the scheme includes the following works:

- Demolition and removal of the former piggery (south of Marea Farm), now an unattractive, redundant and dilapidated collection of barns, sheds, storage units and hard standing, footprint totalling approximately 7,336 m² (to the west of School Road).
- Demolition and removal of the collection of industrial units, sheds and storage blocks centrally located to the southern edge of the Site and immediately east of the Engineering Company ‘Bespoke Norfolk Construction’, footprint totalling approximately 4,226 m² (to the east of School Road).

4.1.4 The developed footprint (which includes rear gardens and internal landscape areas in the calculation) associated with the proposals is less than 50% (approximately 46%) of the total red line application boundary. Consequently, there is a significant proportion of the Site (54%) covering an area of 5.3 Ha (53,000m²) which, if conditioned, would form the area of comprehensive detailed Landscape Proposals and provide the basis for the creation of substantial landscape enhancements, refer to Figure 10. It should be noted that even within the area of developed footprint the layout is of sufficiently low density to accommodate a comprehensive landscape scheme incorporating generous areas including large trees, hedges, planting and open space, which would ensure the proposals are well integrated into their setting.

4.1.5 Fully developed landscape proposals as part of a condition could consist of:

- Structural landscape features and boundary strengthening
- Infilling of existing hedgerow network and provision of new hedgerows

- Screen planting
- New woodland blocks
- Semi natural green space
- Wildflower meadows and/ or lavender field
- Local amenity space and play space
- SUDs and drainage features
- Allotments (which could also include orchard planting)

4.1.6 The landscape proposals would provide further softening of the proposed built form in combination with the existing retained tree and hedge vegetation, and help settle the proposed development into its surrounding context. Consequently, I consider these measures would ensure the development can be successfully assimilated into the landscape setting and provide significant enhancements to green and blue infrastructure provision, including to provide more accessible green space for the community and meet the aims of the Council's policies and guidance.

4.1.7 In addition to the above benefits, the proposals provide further opportunity for connectivity and linkage to areas of open space, and public rights of way network, by adopting (some of) the principles shown on the Landscape Connections Plan (Figure 15). The plan provides a series of opportunities that provide links and connections to existing areas in and around Heacham, as well as unlocking the potential for strategic connections that are currently poorly provided for.

4.2 Settlement Pattern and Development Review

4.2.1 The proposals have been carefully considered and sited to be located adjacent to the developed curtilage of the existing settlement and the proposed built form is largely positioned at reduced levels in relation to the surrounding wider landscape, so that it is well sited and nestles in relation to the existing settlement edge and the surrounding landform. The proposed development is partially contained by the breadth of the existing settlement which wraps around on two sides.

4.2.2 To the north of the Site, the most easterly developed edge of Heacham's settlement boundary already extends fully up to and adjacent to the A149 and the Norfolk Coast AONB, comprising residential properties on Broadway, Rolfe Crescent and Lynn Road, in

addition to the Jet Petrol Station and former Stainsby garage workshop and repair centre. This means that the existing settlement edge extends a further c.205 metres beyond the developed footprint of the Site, virtually abutting the AONB. The A149 is the only feature separating the edge of the settlement and the AONB in this location.

4.2.3 The A149 itself is a principal transport route running broadly north-south, and is a detracting landscape feature in this location being visually intrusive and noisy (which together with lighting) reduce tranquillity. The alignment of the A149 runs between the Site and the AONB.

4.2.4 It should be noted that built development has continued further east within the AONB Developments and features within the designated landscape further east include (as shown on MF Figure 9):

- Norfolk Lavender (1), the industrial units and car parking to the rear, in particular
- Heacham Village Allotments (2)
- Petrol Station and Car Wash Centre (9)
- Restaurant (9)
- Heacham Waste and Recycling Centre (11)
- Power Lines and Communications Masts (as approximately shown), running up the slopes and along the plateau on the skyline

4.2.5 Seen on their own as individual elements, all the above features contribute to lower either one or more of the existing landscape condition, quality, natural beauty and tranquillity of the AONB; being intrusive built features (some visibly so) within the designated landscape. When seen in combination with each other, the accumulation of these features further erodes the special landscape qualities and intrinsic beauty and character of the AONB in this location.

4.2.6 The A149 (with associated lighting and signage) forms the edge to the AONB in this location. The special qualities and landscape setting of the AONB are also adversely affected by the presence of the transport corridor, which is visually intrusive and reduces tranquillity of the setting due to incessant noise and light pollution.

4.2.7 To the south of the Site, the most southerly developed edge of Heacham's settlement boundary extends to Lamsey Lane, comprising residential properties on Collingwood Close.

This means that the existing settlement edge extended a further 404 metres south beyond the developed footprint of the Site.

4.2.8 To the south of the Site development in various forms has taken place beyond the southern edge of the settlement boundary in open countryside:

- A residential development on Foreman Close, located to the south west of Lamsey Lane close to Collingwood Road, which is within a previously designated Area of Important Landscape Quality. In May 2006 BKL&WN granted permission for this development on land to the south of Lamsey Lane, Heacham for the change of use from agricultural land for the construction of 24 new dwellings, in open countryside.
- A Caravan Park site adjacent to Mount Pleasant, also within the previously designated Area of Important Landscape Quality, has been developed.

4.2.9 These developments do not contribute in providing an attractive setting of quality for the southern edge of Heacham and have adversely eroded the character and quality of the settlement edge in landscape and visual terms. The new housing in particular on Foreman Close has extended and introduced development south across Lamsey Lane, introducing new built form into previously undeveloped rural open countryside and extending the settlement edge further south into the previously designated landscape.

4.2.10 Consequently, the proposed footprint is a settlement extension that does not project beyond the eastern or southern edges of the settlement and as such is somewhat 'contained' by the existing settlement pattern of Heacham which wraps around to the east and south. In combination with lower landform in this location, the footprint is largely positioned at reduced levels in relation to the surrounding landscape adjacent to the existing settlement.

4.2.11 However, although it is acknowledged that the development would result in the extension of the village into an area of landscape, it would have only a very localised effect on the surrounding landscape and visual amenity. Part of the development would be built on previous developed land (the abandoned piggeries and industrial buildings) and would improve its appearance and condition. Both the south and east sides of the existing built settlement already extend much further than the proposed development footprint. As a consequence most views of the development from the surrounding landscape, in an arc formed from south to east, would be set in context with the existing settlement as a backdrop. This is covered further in my assessment of the Landscape and Visual Effects (Sections 5 and 6 of this Statement).

- 4.2.12 The generous undeveloped green areas around the new footprint would be enhanced to allow for further integration of the proposed development into the landscape, providing improvements to the fabric, condition and quality of the landscape and setting of the village in this location. Landscape proposals would be comprehensively addressed in detail as part of a landscape condition.

4.3 Local Plan and Emerging Documents

- 4.3.1 BKL&WN made a Call for Sites in May 2009, under the first steps of preparing “Site Specific Allocations and Policies Development Plan Document”. In relation to landscape the following Sustainability Appraisal Topics were considered:

- Avoid damage to protected sites and historic buildings
- Maintain and enhance the diversity and distinctiveness of landscape and townscape character
- Create places, spaces and buildings that work well, wear well and look good

Response: The proposed Site of the development footprint is not protected and there are no historic buildings being affected or damaged. The diversity and distinctiveness of the landscape in this location would be enhanced by replacing a series of damaged/dilapidated buildings and associated industrial units of low quality and providing substantial landscape proposals that contribute to creating places and spaces of quality that regenerate the landscape and help improve the landscape fabric, condition and quality, with buildings that work well, wear well and look good.

- 4.3.2 The Site Assessment Criteria for **Environment** that accompany the emerging documents (see MF Appendix D) refers to 4 specific questions:

- Could the development allocation have an impact on European and International environmental designations? (i.e. Ramsar, SAC, SPA)
- Could the development allocation impact upon other environmental designations? (e.g. SSSI, Local Nature Reserve, County Wildlife Site etc.,)
- Could the allocation of the site impact on local biodiversity?
- Will the development allocation have detrimental impact on the landscape/townscape?

Response: The Council’s methodology for the Technical Assessments included a 1500m buffer as a stone curlew buffer for the ecology element. However, the Council’s

methodology for the Technical Assessments did not include any such buffer for the AONB; even at Stage 1b it was based on whether the site was either in or out of the AONB. Therefore one might conclude that the setting of the AONB was considered by the Council to be of no material importance or significance in the selection of sites, as the methodology did not include a buffer or acknowledgement of any setting issues. Indeed the Technical Assessment concludes that the Site is **unconstrained** by the AONB. It should also be noted that the same Technical Assessments for all other potential sites in Heacham, even those abutting the AONB are also scored as being unconstrained. .

4.3.3 The Technical Assessments also conclude that for Height/Shape the land is not considered by the Council as being unsuitable to develop upon, and is therefore **unconstrained**. The topographical plan, MF Figure 4, shows the site position in relation to the surrounding area and levels, which I also consider fits well with the existing settlement pattern.

4.3.4 Within the Site Specific Allocations and Policies Development Plan Document, paragraph 8.11.5, page 137, the Council states:

“The following table shows the sites which were “accepted” or “partially acceptable” (arising from the SHLAA process) and are therefore considered as potential options for allocation for residential development”.
[Underling added].

4.3.5 The accompanying notes for sites 206, 292, 476, 482, 654, 883 which partly include the Appeal Site, confirms that;

4.3.6 *“smaller parts of the site have had various uses in the past”* and,

4.3.7 *“Possible contamination issues on brownfield parts of the site”* and,

4.3.8 *“However, part of the site could be developed if it were selected as the preferred option for allocation...”*

4.3.9 The Site being within “accepted” or “partially accepted” land, there is a clear opportunity to improve the character and quality of the landscape and regenerating potentially contaminated brownfield land, and at the same time improving the visual amenity of the land for the benefit of the community.

4.3.10 In contrast, sites 441 and 184 are wholly greenfield, have never been developed and the accompanying site notes do not refer to any varying past uses or contamination issues. In addition, the notes mention the proximity of the residential edge, which it should be noted is

extensive in this location and will result in many more residential receptors (considered to be the highest sensitivity) being affected on visual amenity grounds. It should also be noted that the 2 parcels are on land that rises gradually to the west from Marea Farm, as visible in MF Figure 12 (photographic sheet 3 of 7) viewpoint 7, towards a small plateau at Cheney Hill. As the photograph illustrates, existing dwellings in the background are partially obscured and set at a lower level than 441 and 184, and from this location, new dwellings built on 441 and 184 in the rising foreground will potentially be more prominent, sitting slightly more elevated than the existing dwellings and in doing so they would break the skyline above the settlement edge (assuming they are standard 2 storey units).

- 4.3.11 Accordingly, I consider there can be no suggestion that development of the Appeal Site would have a materially greater adverse impact on the landscape than sites which the council proposes to allocate for residential development. Indeed, the sites which the Council has considered acceptable as its preferred option would in my judgement result in more harmful landscape and visual effects than the proposed development.

4.4 Land Rear of 8 Cheney Hill, Heacham (15/00352/OM - Outline Application: construction of up to 69 dwellings and associated infrastructure)

- 4.4.1 Since the original appeal part of the the adjacent Site has been consented.
- 4.4.2 A copy of the Planning Committee Report (for 5th October 2015) highlights pertinent information from the application documents (planning statement and LVIA).
- 4.4.3 Firstly, the Council’s Case Officer draws on elements of the applicants Planning Statement in relation to ‘clear benefits’:

“The proposals are not considered to change the character of the AONB or wider contextual landscape. No AONB or other protected land is lost as a result of the proposal and there are minimal opportunities for views to the site from the AONB”.

- 4.4.4 Secondly, at “Impact upon the wider countryside”, the following is highlighted:

“Core Strategy Policy CS12 requires development proposals to reduce the visual impact of new buildings or structures. The site is within the countryside and some 100m away from the AONB. The NPPF states, nationally designated areas such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), have been confirmed by the Government as having the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The

conservation of the natural beauty of the landscape and countryside should therefore be given great weight in planning policies and development control decisions in these areas. In this case the application site is open land currently used mainly as agricultural land and partly as paddock. In this case the impact upon the open countryside has already been considered as part of the site allocation exercise and is referred to above. In summary, the 'Site Allocations' document states that: 'The potential impact on the wider countryside to the east of Heacham is somewhat limited due to the site being screened by existing industrial/agricultural buildings to the east of the site surrounding School Road. A further network of fields separates the site from the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and the Norfolk Coast Partnership and Natural England have expressed a preference for development at this location above alternative options. Notwithstanding this, the design of the development should have regard to the potential visual impact on the wider countryside and to existing residents in the surrounding area.'

The application has been supported by a Landscape Visual Impact Assessment. This document concludes that the proposal will not give rise to an unacceptable visual impact. Any effects are considered to be short term and predominantly localised and contained. The LVIA considers that overall proposals will lead to a negligible to minor / moderate negative landscape effect at year 1. Following the establishment of landscape planting by year 10, this effect is expected to change to a minor negative landscape effect, with further improvement as tree and hedgerows continue to establish over time. Visual effects arising from the proposal result in a negligible to minor negative visual effect at year 1. Following the initial establishment of the planting measures this is expected to change to a negligible negative visual effect at year 10. Ongoing planting establishment will continue to improve the site's visual character over time. In summary the development has been carefully designed to have regard to the potential visual impact on the wider countryside and to existing residents in the surrounding area. No AONB or other protected land is lost as a result of the proposal.

There are minimal opportunities for views to the site from the AONB or wider countryside and the proposals are not considered to change the character of the AONB or wider contextual landscape. It is considered that the proposal will only lead to minor landscape and visual change, and will not give rise to unacceptable visual impact and such complies with the requirements of Core Strategy Policy CS12".

4.4.5

It is important to note that these conclusions and the Council's apparent acceptance of them are drawn from the following issues:

- The Council confirm that the potential impact on the wider countryside is somewhat limited due to the screening effect of existing industrial/agricultural buildings.
- A site where 3 sides of the development are viewed by existing housing, giving rise to an increasing scale of visual effects from a higher number of more sensitive receptors.

- An apparent acceptance that the proposals for a wholly greenfield site (with no existing built development) would give rise to a minor adverse landscape effect overall at year 10, with further improvements over a longer period.
- An apparent acceptance that the proposals give rise to only minor/negligible visual effects at year 1, and negligible at year 10, with further improvements to the visual character over time.
- The Site is more elevated (Cheney Hill) and the proposals contain limited mitigation proposals as most of the parcel is developed, therefore it may not be as effective in screening as envisaged due to position and depth.

4.5 Review of a BKL&WN Planning Permission in the AONB

4.5.1 In 2008 BKL&WN resolved to grant planning permission for a residential development on land west of Jarvie Close, Sedgeford, ref 08/01225/FM. A copy of the Officer's Report, Decision Notice, and drawings is appended in MF Appendix C. This Site qualified as a 'major development' application and is located approximately 2-2.5km to the east of Heacham and is sited in a very prominent location on elevated land (circa 45m AOD) with clear views of the AONB. The Officer's Report notes the existence of the AONB designation and states the following under Principle of Development:

"The site is within the countryside and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) as defined on the proposals map of the Local Plan. This area is therefore subject to countryside protection policies. Development which would be detrimental to the natural beauty of the designated AONB...will not be permitted". [Underling added]

4.5.2 Under Landscape Implications the Council noted:

"The dimensions and topography of the site mean that the development will be visible in the landscape. The impact upon the landscape is a prime material consideration within the AONB, so very careful consideration needs to be given to the design, layout and landscaping of the scheme to ensure it will not be detrimental to the natural beauty of the designated area", and;

"..... a landscaping belt has been shown on the plans to the north and west boundaries to reduce and soften the impact of the built form upon the surrounding area and help it assimilate into the countryside. Although the above will lessen any impact there will, by virtue of the fact houses are being introduced into an open area, be some level of impact on the AONB". [Underling added]

4.5.3 The concluding summary stated,

“...housing scheme is of a good quality design and materials, and incorporates a significant amount of planting to ensure the impact of the development is lessened....and although the scheme will be visible in the AONB, the harm is limited....”. [Underling added]

4.5.4 My conclusions regarding this site at Jarvie Close (in respect of landscape and visual issues) are:

- Despite this site being highly visible, exposed and prominent within the AONB, both the Site and the nature of the development were considered acceptable by the Council and to be of limited harm.
- The principle of development of this site (being located within the AONB) must have been considered not to be detrimental to the natural beauty of the AONB; otherwise this application would have been refused.
- The landscape proposals plan which accompanied the application (see MF appendix C) was considered sufficient enough in terms of delivering enough buffer planting so as to lessen the visual impact of the dwellings on the AONB to an acceptable level.
- The external landscape treatments delivered (as was conditioned), such as fences, walls, lighting and surfacing must have been considered by the Council to be of high enough quality, vernacular or traditional in style, so as not to affect the natural beauty of the sensitive landscape setting. (Although we note fairly standard timber picket and close board fences have been used throughout, together with concrete block paving on driveways).
- There are public and private views of the development from locations within the AONB and the Locally Important Area of Landscape Quality, including residential properties, community hall and playing fields, Rights of Way etc.
- This elevated site remains extremely prominent and visible from the surrounding area and is close to being one of the most elevated and prominent new residential developments to have been built in the settlement of Sedgford and the surrounding AONB, lying at approximately 40-45m AOD.
- The Council must have concluded that constructing 2 storey dwellings with steeply pitched roof lines, together with volume and massing that exceed the adjacent single storey bungalows was an acceptable approach that caused only limited harm in the AONB. (The existing bungalows on the upper side of Jarvie Close follow a similar contour line, but have lower ridge heights).

4.6 Review of a Tending Planning Permission in the AONB

4.6.1 In 2008 BKL&WN resolved to grant planning permission for a residential development on land west of Jarvie Close, Sedgford, ref 08/01225/FM. A copy of the Officer's Report, Decision Notice, and drawings is appended in MF Appendix C. This Site qualified as a 'major development'

4.6.2 [p]

4.6.3

5 LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT (AND REVIEWING THEPOTENTIAL EFFECTS)

5.1 Susceptibility

5.1.1 An important element in identifying the effects of a Proposal is to assess the ability (the susceptibility) of the existing landscape to accommodate the specific proposed changes with regard to the consequences on the local landscape character.

5.1.2 I have assessed the Site and consider that The Site (landscape resource) on balance to be of **Medium/Low Susceptibility:**

A damaged or robust landscape where appropriate change can be absorbed and could contribute to the restoration of key characteristics, individual elements or features and specific aesthetic or perceptual aspects or, overall local landscape character.

5.1.3 This reflects my assessment of a (higher) Medium Susceptibility in the more open northern part of the Site of the agricultural field; compared to a Low Susceptibility at the former piggery at Marea Farm; however overall this assessment is made in the context of the quality and condition of the landscape and the wider area which, although it lies within open countryside, contains many detracting features and urbanising elements which have been allowed to influence the Site from all sides, including:

- A149 arterial route, a major transport corridor, with lighting columns
- Petrol station and Garage repair workshop (Stainsby), close to the Site
- Petrol station, restaurant and car wash, opposite the Site
- Redundant former piggery (dilapidated and abandoned and could be regenerated)
- Former Coal Store site
- Joinery and Carpentry industrial units on School Road
- Overhead wires and telegraph poles on both sides of School Road and at Marea Farm
- Telecommunications masts and vertical elements
- Property with small holdings, storage units and caravans

5.1.4 The developed part of the Site lies wholly within an area of land which is undesignated, being of lower landscape condition and quality, given the visual intrusion and landscape harm

caused by existing features in the area and it is the character of these surrounding features that now contributes to the representative character of the Site.

5.2 Existing Site Contribution to the Local Landscape Character

- 5.2.1 We have assessed the existing Landscape amenity of the developed part of the Site within the context of LCA Heacham Landscape Character Area and consider it to offer **Limited contribution** to the Local Landscape Character of the District, where:

The existing character of the Site contains some attributes representative of the local landscape character but also incongruous elements that detract from the local landscape character.

5.3 The likely Significance of the Effects of the Proposals on Landscape Character

- 5.3.1 Part of the application Site to be developed is a parcel of agricultural land to the east of School Road, the remainder is located within the developed curtilage of the former piggery at Marea Farm, which is a degraded and unattractive feature. Together with other urban fringe influences surrounding land in the vicinity of School Road, part of the existing development dominates the immediate character of the Site. The remainder of the Site is a grass paddock that is clearly heavily associated and influenced by the urban fringe land uses south of Heacham.
- 5.3.2 To the north of the Site lies the existing settlement, together with a storage building (redundant buildings) and a hard surfaced maintenance yard that are also located close to the northern boundary. These features form the extent of development to the north. These features are shown on MF Figure 8. The proposed extension will nestle in the managed grass space in between the existing complex and the 2 storey building.
- 5.3.3 Overall the proposals will be experienced within the setting and context of an existing residential edge and other human influences. The new built forms will be in the form of an settlement extension, which is in keeping with the existing buildings, be of the similar height and scale, using appropriate materials. A large proportion of the proposals will be within the curtilage of the existing incongruous farm complex and although they will extend into the countryside, they will not be the outermost developed features of the surrounding landscape. As such it will not introduce any new incongruous elements into the landscape, but will regenerate a derelict site. The developed edge of the existing settlement will be extended

from its current position, although the proposed extension will not extend materially beyond the existing built features of the existing settlement to either the south or east. As a result the linear hedgerow character that is a result of the agricultural landscape will remain unchanged. The Alternative Additional Car Parking Arrangements shown on Figure SA480-03 14 result in better effects on the landscape resource of the Site and are deemed to be more congruous with the existing car parking arrangement.

5.3.4 To the eastern edge of the settlement, the existing settlement edge will remain the easternmost built structures of the settlement and these built features define the eastern extent of the developed footprint, immediately adjacent to the A149 and the AONB. In landscape and visual terms significant parts of the Site footprint are already developed land. The additions are largely sited between the existing built forms (former Coal Store, existing dwellings, industrial/commercial units) and the settlement edge of Heacham, which is illustrated on MF Figure 10.

5.3.5 It is considered that the proposals would not unacceptably affect nearby properties or the locality in general to any significant degree; The view given by the Case Officer within their Report at the time of the refusal notice says;

“.....it is clear that the proposal does not preserve the landscape setting of Heacham. It is also clear that the proposal will be visible from a number of vantage points within the AONB. Natural England quite clearly state in their consultation response that ‘even if the proposed landscaping were implemented negative impacts on the setting of and views from the Norfolk Coast AONB would remain due to the significant size and location of this development at the edge of Heacham’.”⁴

5.3.6 I am not convinced that Natural England or the Council has carefully reviewed the limited public access within the AONB in this location, the low level of visual receptor as a consequence, together with the distinct lack of public ‘vantage points’ that exist. Indeed, the Council now seem to accept (as discussed at 4.4.4 for Cheney Hill application) that there are very few public locations within the AONB from which a site will be visible.

5.3.7 Landscape Setting of Heacham: The landscape setting of Heacham will be preserved. The existing settlement boundary already extends further south (to Lamsey Lane) and east (to the A149) than the proposed development will extend. From the south-east on the A149 or the

⁴ Case Officer’s Report. KL&WN BC. 13/01541/OM. P5

pedestrian footway the proposed development would be seen in context with the existing settlement. The landscape setting of Heacham is contained by the subtle increases in elevation of the undeveloped and rather steeper landform in the foreground view (for example from the A149 or Lamsey Lane), which together with the regular alignment of hedgerows across the slopes provides softening and layering, which would remain in the foreground setting. The proposed new built forms would be partially screened and, would nestle comfortably behind the sloping landform and layered hedgerows on lower ground adjacent to the existing settlement, thereby preserving the setting space in the foreground.

5.3.8

Visual Effects from within the AONB: Following my site investigations, I have concluded that the proposal will only be visible from a very limited number of visual receptors within the AONB. Of these viewpoints, none are typical ‘vantage points’, in the sense that they are not considered to be closely associated those recreational users or those visitors who might wish to experience the AONB for its inherent qualities, natural beauty or views (as noted in Core Strategy: CS12 Policy Notes). These visual receptors are:

- From the Petrol Filling Station, restaurant and Car Wash complex located on the A149 (VP18, MF Figure 8) east of the Site.
- From a private track leading to Church Farm through a gap in the hedgerow (VP14, MF Figure 8). (Although it should be noted this location is not a public viewpoint (it is a private access track), the view would arise briefly when the viewer turned their head for a moment, heading west to Heacham from the Farm).
- From the byway (no through route) and elevated access track (when looking west) leading from in front of the Heacham Waste and Recycling Centre, together with the Petrol Station, Restaurant and Car Wash and the A149 located in the foreground view (VP12, MF Figure 8; also Photomontage Location, MF Appendix F).
- From the private Parish Council open space (Millenium wood adjacent to the Recycling Centre), beyond the plantation of young woodland, there are wider panoramic views of the Wash, with Heacham in the foreground but filtered views by planting. Both Cheney Hill and the application Site are partially visible from the upper part of the restored former quarry.

The likely visual change experienced by these receptors is recorded in the Visual Assessment at section 6.

5.3.9

This is reflected in the Sheils Flynn Figure 4, Approximate Zone of Visual Influence drawing, which highlights the limited visual sphere of the site from public or private viewpoints in relation to the surrounding landform, vegetation and features in the AONB.

As noted in the BKL&WN Landscape Character Assessment, the landform of the scarp slopes of the AONB rise sharply from the A149 to the plateau, and together with the existing vegetation and wooded features which restrict views in the wider landscape beyond, there were no further viewpoint receptors found beyond the ridgeline in the AONB.

Consequently, I must disagree with the assertions of both the Council and Natural England that negative impacts on views from the Norfolk Coast AONB are of any material concern. Other than the four locations above, there appears to be no public vantage or viewing point or location from which the proposed development would be visible to a user or visitor of the AONB landscape. Therefore, I consider that users and visitors to the AONB, who are there for the enjoyment of the AONB for its intrinsic quality and beauty would remain unaffected by the development.

5.4 Significance of Landscape Effects

- 5.4.1 Effects can be adverse or beneficial. Where the Proposals are judged to cause deterioration to the landscape resource / local landscape character this is described as an adverse effect. Where the Proposals are judged to increase the value of the Site to the landscape resource / local landscape character this is described as a beneficial effect. The criteria for assessing significance are set out in Liz Lake Associates Methodology for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment in Appendix E.
- 5.4.2 The significance of the landscape effects with regard to the proposed development has been assessed to represent a **Neutral Effect**.
- 5.4.3 The Proposals would do one or more of the following:
- *make no change to the landscape character type*
 - *complement the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape*
 - *incorporate measures for mitigation to ensure that the scheme will blend in well with surrounding landscape*
 - *avoid being visually intrusive*
 - *have no adverse effect on the current level of tranquillity of the landscape*
 - *maintain existing landscape character*
 - *maintain the existing green infrastructure*
 - *avoid conflict with guidelines for the landscape character area*

- *avoid conflict with government policy towards protection and enhancement of the countryside*
- *a neutral effect can also be the result of the removal of incongruous or intrusive elements and the introduction of new elements.*

5.4.4

The proposals in part regenerate a dilapidated former piggery and remove other industrial buildings providing positive benefits, offset against adverse effects of development in other open areas of grassland paddock. There are substantial landscape benefits as a large proportion of the Site red line area will remain undeveloped and contribute to a significant enhancement of landscape features and elements of green infrastructure, including access, as shown on the landscape masterplan. On balance it is considered that the new development would not adversely affect local landscape character or the character of the AONB and the proposals would complement well with the existing character of Heacham.

6 THE VISIBILITY AND VISUAL EFFECTS OF THE PROPOSALS

6.1 The Visual Resource

Views from the Site

Close views from the Site

- 6.1.1 Close views from within the Site are limited by the form and pattern of the existing settlement edge, which wraps around to the north and west of the Site. Boundary vegetation and topographical change restricts views of the wider landscape to the east and south. From within the proposed Site there are possible views east and south east of the slopes to the first ridge within the AONB (in the direction of Sedgeford), and views south to Lamsey Lane. There are views of the existing industrial units associated with 'Bespoke Norfolk' Construction. This large green coloured industrial shed as well as a number of smaller sheds to the rear. To the south east of the Site is an existing coal yard and this is visible from the western parcel of the Site.

Distant Views from the Site

- 6.1.2 Distant views from the Site are limited by topography and the existing built form of Heacham, however there are views towards elevated ground to the north and views of the escarpment to the east. The radio masts located at the recycling centre within the AONB accessed from the A149 are visible from the Site in views east as well as the A149 and associated lighting columns etc.

Views of the Site

- 6.1.3 The visual amenity experienced by people (visual receptors) in the locality of the Site differs according to many factors. Visual receptors of higher sensitivity with limited susceptibility to change include residents at home (private viewpoints), people engaged in outdoor recreation (including use of Public Rights of Ways (PRoWs)), visitors to heritage assets and other attractions, travellers on recognised scenic routes (public viewpoints), or within public locations in nationally designated landscapes (such as AONBs) and, people at their work place where views are an important contributor to the setting and quality of their working life.

- 6.1.4 Travellers on road, rail or other transport routes and people engaged in outdoor sport or recreation are considered less sensitive to changes in visual amenity.
- 6.1.5 Consideration of the study area, via desk research and field survey, has identified locations from which the Site (proposed development) will potentially be visible. The following specific, representative and illustrative viewpoints have been selected for inclusion in the assessment to illustrate the visual effects. Where views of the Site have been assessed they have considered the potential effects on visual amenity of the proposed development from locations surrounding the Site. (See MF Figure 8).

Sheils Flynn Viewpoints

1. Looking south along School Road

Looking south along School Road as it crosses the site. The road becomes an attractive 'green lane' (and a public right of way) with hedged wide verges.

This viewpoint is typical of views from vehicles and pedestrians traveling south along School Road towards the Site. School Road is dominated by residential dwellings and is urban in character, where School Road passes through the Site it becomes an attractive 'green lane' (and a Restricted Byway; Heacham RB13) with hedged wide verges, however telegraph poles transect the lane urbanising its appearance. Existing views from this viewpoint are of School Road (RB13), the entrance to Marea Farm (including associated sheds) and the existing industrial units associated with 'Bespoke Norfolk' Construction; this large green coloured industrial shed dominates views south from this location and screens further views south. There are also views of shorter industrial units extending eastwards from the rear of the larger unit. There are views south east towards the AONB, however where possible the AONB is seen above or set against the existing industrial units. Views into the AONB are also limited due to the landform; the chalk escarpment screens long views of the AONB, with views being contained by the escarpment.

School Lane is the proposed Site access, and as such it is expected that from this location there will be a change in the nature of views with the section of School Lane running through the Site becoming more urban in character to facilitate access into the Site, however the green nature of School Lane will be maintained and reinforced. It is anticipated that residential units within the Site will be visible from this location, however these will be seen

set against the existing 'Bespoke Norfolk' industrial unit and will be seen as a continuation of the existing residential dwellings on School Lane.

It is expected that once constructed there will be a **Moderate Adverse Effect** on visual amenity from this viewpoint, where; *Proposals would cause a moderate deterioration to existing views and visual amenity.*

Viewpoints 2, 3 and 4 are all along the same section of School Lane and form a progressive series of views.

2. **Looking south along Public Right of Way Heacham RB13**

Further (south) along the public right of way Heacham RB13. The green lane ends at a meadow on the low ridge to the south of Heacham. However, the public right of way ends just before the meadow so there is no right of access.

Viewpoint 2 is not directed towards the Site, therefore it is considered that there will be **No Change** on visual amenity from this Viewpoint. However in views back towards the Site it is expected that once constructed there will be a **Slight Adverse Effect** on visual amenity from this viewpoint, where; *Proposals would cause a slight deterioration to existing views and visual amenity.*

In existing views north west from this location, school lane is seen as an attractive 'green lane' (Restricted Byway; Heacham RB13) with hedged wide verges. The built residential edge of Heacham is visible to the north. Residential property The Cabin is dominant in close views north to the residential edge of Heacham. This two storey detached dwelling is accessed from school lane and screens views north to the Site and Heacham. Directly south to this property is an area of small holdings including numerous sheds, wood piles and machinery, which is untidy in nature and detracts from the visual quality of the area. The industrial sheds at 'Bespoke Norfolk' are visible, although boundary vegetation associated with The Cabin does partially screen views. Views north west contain the Parish Council coal yard and associated infrastructure. It appears that this site is also used as a rubbish dump and for the storage of unwanted or broken electrical items including washing machines and fridges which lead to it being untidy in nature. Hay bale storage and sheds give the site vertical form that screens views across the yard.

It is anticipated that residential units within the Site would be visible from this location to the east of, and set behind The Cabin. However, where visible, residential units would be seen

set against the existing residential edge of Heacham and, as such, the nature of the view will not fundamentally change. The existing 'Bespoke Norfolk' industrial unit would screen views to a number of residential units that are proposed to the north of this viewpoint and that proposals to the west of the Site would be seen set behind the existing Coal Store and against the existing built edge of Heacham.

3. **Looking north along School Road**

Set to the south of Restricted Byway; Heacham RB13 looking north towards the existing residential edge of Heacham across the Site. It is anticipated that views would be similar in nature to those experienced at Viewpoint 2 with the proposals being visible set against the existing urban edge of Heacham and set behind **The Cabin** and the existing 'Bespoke Norfolk' industrial shed. Proposals to the west of the Site would also be seen set against residential properties on the urban edge of Heacham. It is expected that once constructed there would be a **Slight Adverse Effect** on visual amenity from this viewpoint, where; *Proposals would cause a slight deterioration to existing views and visual amenity.*

4. **Northwards towards Heacham site (Private Viewpoint)**

This is a private viewpoint and not publically accessible, however Sheils Flynn Strategic Landscape and Visual Appraisal describes the view as;

'The view northwards towards the site and Heacham from the meadow on the low ridge to the south of the village. The photograph shows that the site is relatively low lying and is partially screened by the 'layers' of existing hedgerows, which run east-west across the site. On the right of the photograph the mowed strip of the meadow leads to the green lane (public right of way) which leads through part of the site.'

It is anticipated that where views of the proposals are possible they would be seen in context to, and set against the existing built edge of Heacham. As a result, it is expected that once constructed there would be a **Negligible effect** on visual amenity from this viewpoint, where; *changes are visible with the Proposals but they are not readily discernible, often because they are distant views.*

5. **School Road looking south-west**

Viewpoint 5 is not directed towards the Site, therefore it is considered that there would be **No Change** on visual amenity from this Viewpoint. From this location there are views south west towards existing residential dwellings within Heacham along Lamsey Lane. The

existing settlement pattern of Heacham on Lamsley Lane wraps to the south west of the Site and the built edge is clear in views from this location.

Views back towards the Site from this location are predominantly screened by existing vegetation along School Lane, the existing coal yard and the 'Bespoke Norfolk' industrial unit.

In views back towards the Site (in a generally northerly direction) it is expected that once constructed there would be a **Slight Adverse Effect** on visual amenity from this viewpoint, where; *Proposals would cause a slight deterioration to existing views and visual amenity.*

6. **Looking west across part of the site, adjacent to west verge of School Road**

Looking west across part of the site - the derelict farmyard (Marea Farm) which is adjacent to the west verge of School Road. This is a degraded area of land, with substantial derelict farm buildings which detract from the visual amenity of the area. Viewpoint 6a demonstrates the view through a gap the sheet metal fence on school lane.

The proposals would lead to this part of the Site becoming more organised and coherent in character which will enhance the quality of views and visual amenity from this location. Substantial areas of green space, landscape planting and tree planting will help to anchor the built proposals within their context whilst creating a new softer edge to Heacham. Furthermore, the proposals would be seen set against the existing residential edge of Heacham and will be seen in front of any future development that is brought forward in Strategic Parcel HEA1.

Accordingly, it is expected that once constructed there would be a **Slight Beneficial Effect** on visual amenity from this viewpoint, where; *Proposals would cause a minor improvement to the existing visual amenity.*

7. **North-west edge of site looking north**

Viewpoint 7 is a private viewpoint located within the north-west edge of the site (just beyond the derelict farm buildings) looking north across the pastures to the north-west of the site towards the existing residential built edge of Heacham including houses on the southern (Bearsted Close) and western (Cheney Hollow/Cheney Crescent) fringes of Heacham).

The proposals would lead to this part of the Site becoming more organised and coherent in character which will enhance the quality of views and visual amenity from this location. Substantial areas of green space, landscape planting and tree planting will help to anchor the built proposals within their context whilst creating a new softer edge to Heacham. The proposals would be seen set against the existing residential edge of Heacham and would be seen in front of any future development that is brought forward in Strategic Parcel HEA1. Thus, it is expected that once constructed there will be a **Slight Beneficial Effect** on visual amenity from this viewpoint, where; *Proposals would cause a minor improvement to the existing visual amenity.*

8. View north east to School Road from Cheney Crescent

The view towards the Site from Cheney Crescent, on the western fringes of Heacham. Views into the site are partially screened by existing hedgerows and mature hedgerow trees, but the farm buildings (and silo) along School Road are visible and it is possible to make out the profile of the wooded chalk escarpment in the distance. The existing residential edge of Heacham dominates views north and north east with residential properties forming a strong urban edge. It is anticipated that the removal of the existing Piggery sheds would make a positive contribution to visual amenity and that from this location the proposals would be seen set against the existing urban edge of Heacham.

Accordingly, it is expected that once constructed there will be a **Slight Beneficial Effect** on visual amenity from this viewpoint, where; *Proposals would cause a minor improvement to the existing visual amenity.*

9. View to School Road from South Moor Drive

The view directly towards the School Road site from South Moor Drive, a residential cul-de-sac on the western fringes of Heacham which adjoins its western boundary. Views into the site are predominantly screened by dense groups of hedgerow trees, which are growing along the ditch in this low-lying part of the site. There are glimpsed views of the top of the existing agricultural buildings within the coal yard.

It is expected that once constructed there would be a **Negligible Effect** on visual amenity from this viewpoint, where; *Changes are visible with the proposals but they are not readily discernible, often because they are distant views.*

10. Looking northwards to School Road from Lamsey Lane

This is a view looking northwards towards the School Road site from Lamsey Lane. From the junction with the A419 Lamsey Lane is an east-west orientation before turning to the north-west and heading into the residential area of Heacham. Potential views experienced by travellers on Lamsey Lane will be transient glimpsed oblique views of the proposals from this viewpoint.

Existing views north from this location towards the Site, located approximately 850m to the north of this viewpoint, are across existing agricultural fields including vegetated hedgerows towards Heacham. Heacham that is set a lower elevation to this viewpoint and the topography of the landform of these fields helps screen the urban area of Heacham, however existing ridgelines of houses on the southern edge of Heacham are visible between gaps in vegetation. The site is in the middle distance and is screened by the existing hedgerows and hedgerow trees, however due to the nature of existing views it is assumed that the proposals may be visible, at least in part. Where the proposals are visible they would be seen set against the existing residential edge of Heacham and therefore there would be no change in the nature of views from this location.

Hunstanton Watertower and the tower of Heacham Church are distant landmarks on the slopes of the escarpment to the north of Heacham village centre.

It is expected that once constructed there would be a **Negligible Effect** on visual amenity from this viewpoint, where; *Changes are visible with the proposals but they are not readily discernible, often because they are distant views.*

Located to the south of Lamsey Lane following the existing field edge is Public Footpath Heacham FP15. When adjacent to Lamsey Lane, Heacham FP15 is located directly behind a well established hedgerow which screens views to the Site. Adjacent to the A149 the PRoW is again located to the field edge, however traveling in a north-south direction. It is anticipated that views from Public Footpath Heacham FP15 would be similar in nature to those experienced at viewpoint 10 and it is expected that once the proposals are constructed there would be a **Negligible Effect** on visual amenity.

11. A149 Looking North-west/ just north of The Coppers

Views north west from this section of the A149 are open transient views across the large adjacent arable field towards the existing residential edge of Heacham. Existing views to the central part of the site are partially screened by existing hedgerows and hedgerow trees. Existing houses on the southern edge of Heacham are visible as is the industrial units associated with 'Bespoke Norfolk' Construction.

It is anticipated that on completion the proposals would be seen set against existing residential properties on the urban edge of Heacham. It is expected that once constructed there would be a **Slight Adverse Effect** on visual amenity from this viewpoint, where; *Proposals would cause a slight deterioration to existing views and visual amenity.*

12. View westwards towards site from PRow Heacham BOAT14

Viewpoint 12 is located on PRow Heacham BOAT14, the access road to the recycling centre on the upper slopes of the chalk escarpment to the east of the site. From this location existing views westwards to the settlement are dominated in the foreground by the BP petrol station on the A149, car wash and the Silk Road Restaurant which are located within the AONB on the east of the A149. Lighting columns associated with the A149 add detracting vertical elements to the view, a set of electrical transmission lines running along the north of the access road are also visible which also detract in the quality of views west towards Heacham from this location, however the roof of the BP building provides a screen of areas of the Site with the existing hedgerows and hedgerow trees also providing a partial screen. The existing residential edge of Heacham is partially visible behind the BP building and through the existing detractors. There are glimpsed views into the site from this elevated viewpoint.

Upon completion, the proposals would be seen set against existing residential properties on the urban edge of Heacham, as shown in the accompanying photomontage (MF Appendix F); it is considered the overall nature of this view remains unchanged despite the introduction of new built forms, which are in keeping with the scale and material finishes of existing residential components and would not break the skyline above the existing settlement. It is expected that once constructed there would be a **Slight Adverse Effect** on visual amenity from this viewpoint, where; *Proposals would cause a slight deterioration to existing views and visual amenity.*

13. **View due South to School Road**

Looking due south towards the Site from the forecourt of the petrol filling station on the A149 to the north of the site. The site boundary crosses the centre of the field in the foreground to the view and there are open views into this northern part of the site. This area of the Site is proposed as a landscape zone with no development taking place other than opening access across the area. Extensive landscaping to the east of the developed area of the Site would very much help screen any potential views of the proposals from this location.

It is expected that once constructed there would be a **Neutral Effect** on visual amenity from this viewpoint, where; *there are noticeable changes from the Proposals but no deterioration or improvement to existing views and the visual amenity.*

14. **Looking southwards towards site from Church Farm Lane, North East of Heacham (private viewpoint)**

This private viewpoint is typical of glimpsed views through gaps in vegetation towards the site from Church Farm Lane, to the north east of Heacham. This elevated private viewpoint is from the chalk escarpment on the edge of the Norfolk Coast AONB. Within views the petrol filling station to the west of the A149 is prominent, as is traffic moving along the A149. The allotments on the B1454 are also a detracting feature within views due to their eclectic mix of garden and agricultural infrastructure. Caley Mill Lavender Farm including large Polytunnels are also visible within the AONB. The urban area of Heacham is clearly visible. It is anticipated that the roof lines of new houses might be visible during winter months set behind the existing ridgelines of residential properties within Heacham.

The proposed open space within the eastern part of the site, alongside the A149, is visible from this viewpoint.

It is expected that once constructed there would be a **Negligible Effect** on visual amenity from this viewpoint, where; *Changes are visible with the proposals but they are not readily discernible, often because they are distant views.*

Liz Lake Associates Viewpoints

15. **Residential Properties on Woodside Avenue**

Residential properties on the south of Woodside Avenue back directly onto the Site. There are existing direct first floor views across the Site from these properties; views from

properties located to the eastern end of Woodside Avenue are filtered through existing mature hedgerow vegetation, there are more open views from properties to the west of Woodside Avenue where there is less boundary vegetation. Existing views south from these properties are of the existing Site, the industrial units associated with 'Bespoke Norfolk' Construction, the existing derelict piggery sheds and the sheds and storage units associated with the coal yard. There are also wider views of the chalk escapement within the AONB, the A149 and the BP petrol station on the A149, car wash and the Silk Road Restaurant which are located within the AONB, Lighting columns associated with the A149 and the telephone mast adjacent to the coal yard add detracting vertical elements to the view.

It is anticipated that once constructed the nature of views from these properties would change from one of predominantly open landscape with detracting features to views of residential development and associated infrastructure. A proposed landscape buffer would soften the proposed development.

It is expected that once constructed there will be a **Moderate Adverse Effect** on visual amenity from this viewpoint, where; *Proposals would cause a moderate deterioration to existing views and visual amenity.*

16. **Residential Properties on Broadway**

Residential properties on the south of Broadway have rear elevations facing towards the Site. These properties are separated from the Site by approximately 110m of open paddock and fields which contain numerous trees and hedgerows.

Existing views south from the rear of properties are of the existing paddock landscape, the Site and the industrial units associated with 'Bespoke Norfolk' Construction. There are also wider views of the chalk escapement within the AONB, the A149 and the BP petrol station on the A149, car wash and the Silk Road Restaurant which are located within the AONB, Lighting columns associated with the A149 and the telephone mast adjacent to the coal yard add detracting vertical elements to the view.

The outline proposals indicate that the eastern area of the Site is to be heavily landscaped, and it is anticipated that these proposals would help to screen the development while anchoring the proposals within their location.

It is anticipated that on completion, the proposals would be buffered from the existing residential development on Broadway by existing vegetation and proposed mitigation planting. In views from these properties the proposals would only be seen within a well landscaped environment and therefore it is expected that once constructed there would be a **Slight Adverse Effect** on visual amenity from this viewpoint, where; *Proposals would cause a slight deterioration to existing views and visual amenity.*

17. View along B1454 towards Heacham

It is anticipated that due to the extent of the built proposals within the Site and intervening landform and vegetation any views from this location would be limited to glimpsed views of rooftops and ridgelines. Where views of this nature are possible, the proposals would be seen set against the existing developed residential edge of Heacham and therefore once constructed there would be a **Negligible Effect** on visual amenity from this viewpoint, where; *Changes are visible with the proposals but they are not readily discernible, often because they are distant views.*

18. View west from unnamed road adjacent to Lavender Hill BP Petrol Station

This viewpoint is located on the publically accessible road adjacent to the BP Petrol Station which connects to the access track for the access road to the recycling centre. Views west from this location are towards the existing residential edge of Heacham across an existing area of scrub. Existing residential properties on Broadway and Woodside Avenue to the north are visible, as too are partial views of properties on Lamsey Lane. The existing industrial units associated with 'Bespoke Norfolk' Construction are partially screened by existing vegetation.

The proposals identify that the area of scrubland that is overlooked from this location is to be retained and a substantial landscape buffer created, with the proposed residential properties set against the existing urban edge of Heacham.

In views from this location the proposals would be seen within a well landscaped environment, set against the existing urban edge of Heacham, and therefore it is expected that once constructed there would be a **Slight Adverse Effect** on visual amenity from this viewpoint, where; *Proposals would cause a slight deterioration to existing views and visual amenity.*

19. Residential properties on Collingwood Close

Residential properties at the end of Collingwood Close are single storey dwellings, and due to their orientation there are potential views north east from a small number of properties at this location, particularly numbers 35 and 37. Existing views north east towards the Site are of existing arable fields, the coal yard, the industrial units associated with 'Bespoke Norfolk' Construction and of the The Cabin on School Lane and its surrounding infrastructure. There are views of the existing residential edge of Heacham including views across the adjacent arable fields towards the A419, the BP Petrol Station, and the chalk escarpment. Once complete the proposals will be seen set against the existing residential edge of Heacham and set behind the existing coal yard and the residential property The Cabin.

Views from this location the proposals will be seen within a well landscaped environment, set against the existing urban edge of Heacham so that that once constructed there would only be a **Slight Adverse Effect** on visual amenity from this viewpoint, where; *Proposals would cause a slight deterioration to existing views and visual amenity.*

20. View west from Public Right of Way Sedgeford BR3 and rear of adjacent residential properties on Jarvine Close

Public Bridleway Sedgeford BR3 is located to the north of the village of Sedgeford and is orientated north to south. From this location is impossible to see the village of Heacham on foot, however it is recognised that there is the potential for views west from people on horseback, or oblique views from the rear of residential properties on Jarvine Close, however intervening vegetation and landform help screen views. This viewpoint is located just over 2.5km from the proposals and it is expected that if visible the proposals would be seen set against the existing urban backdrop of Heacham and it is therefore expected that once constructed there would be a **Neutral Effect** on visual amenity from this viewpoint, where; *there are noticeable changes from the Proposals but no deterioration or improvement to existing views and the visual amenity.*

21. View westwards towards site from Parish Council open space (private location on former quarry/ landfill site)

Viewpoint 21 is located within the Parish Council open space area, which is a plot of land beyond the recycling centre on the upper slopes of the chalk escarpment to the east of the site. From this location at lower levels, the existing foreground views westwards to the settlement are filtered for the most part by the young woodland and/ or planted bunds

(retained from former quarry workings) which is an establishing landscape feature, with glimpses of the existing settlement visible.

On elevated ground the nature of the view changes and a bench provides the focus of the view, which is a wider long distance panorama across the Wash. Lighting columns associated with the A149, a set of electrical transmission lines running and 2 communications masts are also partially visible from this location.

Upon completion, the proposals would be seen set in context with the existing residential properties on the urban edge of Heacham, in the middle ground, however the focus of the long distance view would remain unchanged. Accordingly, it is expected that once constructed there would be a **Slight Adverse Effect** on visual amenity from this viewpoint, where; *Proposals would cause a slight deterioration to existing views and visual amenity.*

6.2 The Significance of the Visual Effects of the Proposals

- 6.2.1 The assessment demonstrates that there are very few receptors from where the proposals will be seen as a substantial adverse feature in the landscape. Where there are adverse effects these are to receptors within the immediate vicinity of the Site and are not considered significant.
- 6.2.2 It is anticipated that once constructed the proposals would have a **Slight Adverse** on visual amenity; *Where the Proposals would cause a slight deterioration to existing views and visual amenity by doing one or more of the following:*
- Affect people who are sensitive to changes in views and visual amenity to a limited degree
 - Affect people at recognised viewpoints or important viewpoints or from recognised scenic routes to a limited degree
 - Remove characteristic or valued elements or features on a minor scale
 - Introduce small-scale changes of new, non-characteristic, discordant or intrusive elements in terms of form, scale and mass, line, height, colour or texture
 - Dominate a small proportion of a view with partial or glimpsed views
 - Be within an oblique view from a sensitive receptor

- From a road, right of way, train or other means of transport, be dominant in the view for a relatively moderate period of time
- Be visible from a small area.

6.2.3 Overall it is my judgment that once established the proposals would only have a **Negligible Effect** on visual amenity; *Where changes are visible with the Proposals but they are not readily discernible, often because they are distant views.*

6.3 Progressive Views of Heacham along the A149

6.3.1 The Council's Planning Officer has also expressed new concerns about views of Heacham and how these would change with the backdrop of St Mary's Parish Church, along the A149. It is typical in Norfolk to find views and vistas of rural churches on the rural village approach.

6.3.2 Figure 13, illustrates the location of a 'Sequence of Views along A149', taken at regular intervals to gain an understanding of how the proposed site would be seen in context with the existing settlement and the Church. These are then illustrated in Figure 14, Photographic Sheets, 1-3, which shows viewpoints A – I, described below. It should be remembered that all these views are taken to be from the main road, which is a 60mph national speed limit road, and accordingly all views would be seen as very quick moving glimpses. It should also be noted that the photographs were taken at standard height of 1.65m above ground level, whereas viewers in cars would be seated at height of approximately 1.15m (i.e. elements in the photographs would be less visible).

6.3.3 **Viewpoint A:** The first view of Heacham Church is gained from elevated ground on a bend in the A149, close to Dunston Drove, where the church is visible.

6.3.4 **Viewpoint B-C:** From the junction with Lamsey Lane the view of the Church is seen in context with glimpses of the existing settlement.

6.3.5 **Viewpoint C-D:** From viewpoint C the Church is hidden behind woodland and garden vegetation associated with the Coppers (residential property). A view of the Church only reappears again at Viewpoint D, as a glimpse through a gap in the vegetation, however it should be noted that the proposed built forms at this point would be out of line with the Church (i.e. to the left).

- 6.3.6 **Viewpoint D-F:** From Viewpoint D, the glimpsed view would quickly disappear behind a hedge. From the next gap (Viewpoint E) the Church is visible with glimpses of the existing settlement present. The proposed built forms are seen in context with the existing settlement only, not in front of the Church. When the next opening appears (Viewpoint F), the Church is no longer visible (hidden behind trees), however parts of the existing village are visible.
- 6.3.7 **Viewpoint F-G:** From Viewpoint F, the Church remains hidden in view behind the trees, with the Site to the left, where proposed built forms may be seen in context with the existing built settlement. Beyond the trees a further gap in the vegetation reveals a glimpse of the Church (Viewpoint G), however the Site and proposed built forms would not conflict with the Church and are partially hidden by trees.
- 6.3.8 **Viewpoint G-H:** From Viewpoint G, the Church seen in the gap disappears from view behind the hedge, but reappears quickly as the existing settlement becomes more apparent (much closer). The built forms are sited to the left of the Church and would be seen in context with the existing settlement (Viewpoint H).
- 6.3.9 **Viewpoint H-I:** From Viewpoint I, the built forms are sited some distance to the left of the Church and would be seen in context with the existing settlement (Viewpoint I) as one moves towards Heacham village.
- 6.3.10 **Summary:** Overall, when considering the proposals that are sited at lower levels compared to the road and the existing settlement, any built forms would appear integrated as they would nestle on lower ground within the existing network of hedges, set amongst the built form of the existing settlement which is visible. It is considered that views towards the Church and settlement along the A149 would not be affected by the proposals and in most instances the proposals (if seen) would be visible in context with the existing settlement, not competing with the Church itself, which is seen in glimpses along the A149.

6.3.11

PLANNING POLICY ISSUES

7.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

7.1.1 NPPF is fairly brief on landscape policy. Para 109 aims to protect and enhance valued landscapes, para 111 encourages the effective use of previously developed land and para 115 requires great weight to be given to conserving landscape beauty in designated areas. The Site is not in a National Park or AONB but it is located close to the Norfolk Coast AONB and within its setting.

7.1.2 The Council alleges that,

“The application as it stands fails to adequately assess the harm caused to the character of the countryside, which includes the AONB, and whether or not any such harm can be successfully mitigated. Consequently, the proposal is contrary to Core Strategy CS12 as well as to the NPPF”

7.1.3 Local Plan Landscape Policy – CS12:

7.1.4 From a landscape perspective the key aspect of CS12 is Landscape Character. The policy states:

“Proposals to protect and enhance our historic environment and landscape character, biodiversity and geodiversity will be encouraged and supported”,

and,

“Proposals for development will be informed by, and seek opportunities to reinforce the distinctive character areas and potential habitat creation areas identified in the King’s Lynn and West Norfolk Landscape Character Assessment, the West Norfolk Econet Map and other character assessments”,

and,

“Development proposals should demonstrate that their location, scale, design and materials will protect, conserve and, where possible, enhance the special qualities and local distinctiveness of the area (including its historical, biodiversity and cultural character), gaps between settlements, landscape setting, distinctive settlement character, landscape features and ecological networks”.

Response: The proposals respond well to the existing landscape character and the removal of incongruous elements within the Site, such as the industrial sheds and the piggery units, would very much help to enhance the character of the Site. The outlined landscape proposals are considered extensive and would make a large contribution to enhancing biodiversity across the Site. The eastern parcel of the Site would have its landscape features

enhanced and reinforced. Proposed allotments and water features add to the diversity of the landscape features that are proposed for the wider Site. Large areas of scrub/shrub planting would create areas of new habitats whilst helping to anchor the proposals within the landscape. The Design and Access Statement outlines the proposed design principles for the Site and identifies how the proposals will protect, conserve and, where possible, enhance the special qualities and local distinctiveness of the area which would allow the proposals to support the character of the local landscape including the AONB.

CONCLUSIONS

-
- 8.1.1 The proposal is for the construction of a care home, housing with care facilities and 70 new homes. New allotments, associated landscaping, SUDS ponds and associated works including an electricity substation and a pumping station are also proposed. Access to be off School Road on land west of the A149 Lynn Road, Heacham, Norfolk. Heacham itself is located between Hunstanton and Snettisham, which form part of a string of settlements running broadly north south along the A149 between King's Lynn and Hunstanton.
- 8.1.2 The significance of the landscape effects with regard to the proposed development has been assessed to represent a **Neutral Effect**. It is my clear judgement that on balance the scale, height, layout, siting, form, design and materials of the new development would not adversely affect local landscape character or the character of the AONB and the proposals would complement well with the existing character of Heacham.
- 8.1.3 It is anticipated that once constructed the proposals would have only a **Slight Adverse** on visual amenity; *Where the Proposals would cause a slight deterioration to existing views and visual amenity*. Overall it is anticipated that once established the proposals would have a **Negligible Effect** on visual amenity and would also bring some landscaping and visual benefits; *Where changes are visible with the Proposals but they are not readily discernible, often because they are distant views*.
-