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Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal | Rev B | July 2022

Document Check Sheet

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Introduction

Smeeden Foreman Ltd. was commissioned to undertake a preliminary Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVIA) of a proposed strategic housing allocation site (ST14) within the unitary authority of the City of York.

The LVIA identifies landscape and visual effects that are likely to result from changes arising from proposed development as a consequence of the site being proposed for allocation for housing within the emerging Local Plan [1]. The LVIA assesses the overall level of effects in the context of receptor (landscape and visual) sensitivity.

The proposed allocation site is set within land where development control is currently informed by Green Belt policies within the local plan [2] and proposed to be removed from the Green Belt within the emerging local plan. The report assesses the sites contribution to Green Belt functions described in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the implications of removing the land from it.

This LVIA was undertaken during February 2017 and updated in October 2017.

I.1 THE SITE

The site is situated on 55 hectares of grade 3 agricultural land, located to the north of the city of York and falls within the City of York Council in North Yorkshire. *Image 1.1 Site Location Plan* and *Image 1.2 Google Earth* show the location of the proposed allocation site relative to York and its wider landscape setting.

The site is disconnected from nearby settlements and is located almost equidistant between the urban edges of Skelton to the west, Clifton Moor to the south, and Haxby to the east. It is situated approximately 400m to the north of the A1237 York Outer Ring Road.

The site comprises approximately 15 medium to large scale arable and grazing fields which are broadly regular in shape and are bound by hedgerows and trees. The indicative access connections to the B1363 Wigginton Lane to the east and the A1237 to the south also partly cross a further four fields, woodland and a local nature site. To the east, the site is bordered by a mixed plantation of woodland, Nova Scotia Plantation that contains areas used for commercial tree planting. There are two further plantations, the first, Moor Plantation, is located adjacent to the south eastern corner of the site and the other, Skelton Plantation, is located within the site on its western boundary. There are no Public Rights of Way within the site and the site cannot be accessed via any roads.

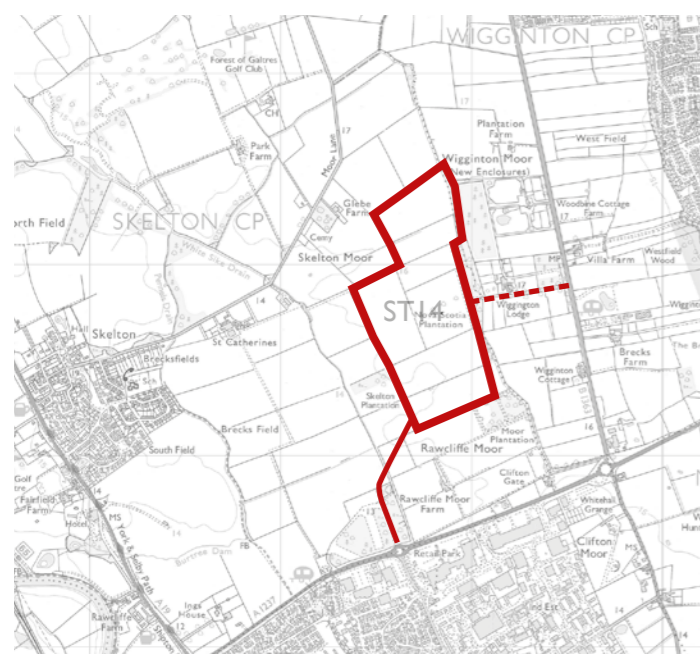


Image 1.1 Site Location Plan



Image 1.2. Google Earth

I.2 PROPOSED ALLOCATION SITE

The proposed allocation site is identified as *ST14 Land West of Wigginton Road* within the emerging Local Plan.

The function of the Local Plan;

- “...sets out the spatial vision for the city for the next 15 years and the green belt boundaries beyond this time period. This process requires us to understand what the key drivers of change for the city are and how we would like to see York in the future. Its main function is to help direct and manage different development across the city whilst simultaneously supporting economic prosperity, promoting a sustainable environment and creating an inclusive place to live.
- is to support the emerging Local Plan “to assess the existing and future supply of land available for economic development, and its sufficiency and suitability to meet identified needs.” [1]

Planning Principals

ST14 is a 55ha proposed housing allocation site with a capacity to yield 1348 new dwellings which will include new shops, community buildings, nursery and primary school. The site is not accessible via any existing roads and therefore a network of new roads and associated buildings and infrastructure including a cycle/footbridge is required as part of the proposals.

Policy SS12: Land West of Wigginton Road in the emerging Local Plan [1] identifies the following key principles which govern the way the site should be delivered:

- Create a new ‘garden’ village that reflects the existing urban form of York of the main York urban area as a compact city surrounded by villages
- Deliver a sustainable housing mix in accordance with the Council’s most up to date Strategic Housing Market Assessment and affordable housing policy
- Create a new local centre incorporating appropriate shops, services and community facilities to meet the needs of future residents.
- Deliver on site, accessible combined nursery and primary education facilities, which are well connected to housing by dedicated pedestrian/ cycleways
- Secure developer contributions for secondary school places as necessary to meet the need for new places.
- Ensure provision of new all purpose access roads to the east/south from A1237 Outer Ring Road/Wigginton Road roundabout and off the Wigginton Road/B1363 (as shown on the proposals map). The internal layout of any future development on the site could be such that it creates discrete sectors, each with a specific access
- Demonstrate that all transport issues have been addressed, in consultation with the Council as necessary, to ensure sustainable transport provision at the site is achievable. The impacts of the site individually and cumulatively with site’s ST7, ST8, ST9, ST15 and ST35 should be addressed
- Deliver local capacity upgrades to the outer ring road in the vicinity of the site, to include associated infrastructure to protect public transport journey times on junction approaches. Opportunities to provide grade separated, dedicated public transport routes across the A1237 should be explored in feasibility, viability and cost-benefit terms.
- Deliver high quality, frequent and accessible public transport services throughout the development site, which provide links to other local rural communities where feasible, as well as to main employment centres. It is envisaged such measures will enable upwards of 15% of trips to be undertaken using public transport.
- To encourage the maximum take-up of more active forms of transport (walking and cycling), ensure the provision of high quality, safe, direct and accessible pedestrian and cycle links which create well-connected internal streets and walkable neighbourhoods including to:
 - the community, retail and employment facilities immediately to the south, (likely to take the form of an overbridge);
 - the surrounding green infrastructure network (with particular regard to public rights of way immediately west of the site and improvements to A1237 crossing facilities); and
 - existing pedestrian and cycle networks across the city.

- xi. Maintain landscape buffers around the site to prevent coalescence with adjacent settlements and maintain the setting of the city and the village of Skelton.
- xii. Protect and enhance local green assets, trees and hedge-lines and enhance existing landscape character.
- xiii. Provide open space to the west of the site to minimise the visual proximity of the development areas to Skelton.

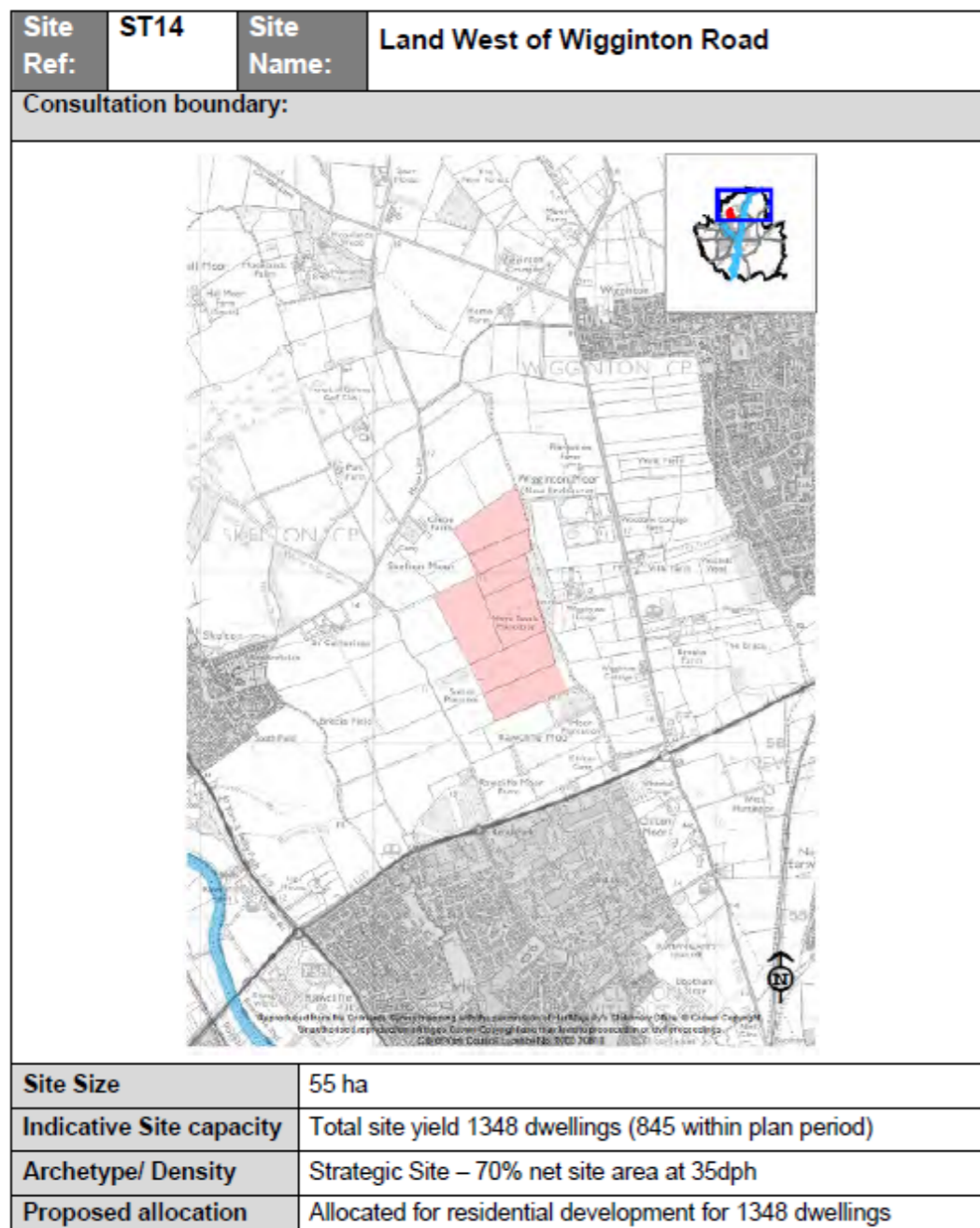


Figure I.3 Extract from City of York Local Plan - Preferred Sites Consultation



Methodology

The process has been guided by the third edition of the document ‘Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment’, published by Landscape Institute with the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment [3].

‘Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) is a tool used to identify and assess the significance of and the effects of change resulting from development on both the landscape as an environmental resource in its own right and on people’s views and visual amenity.’ Para 1.1 P4

The two distinct components of LVIA are:

1. Assessment of landscape effects: assess effects on the landscape as a resource in its own right;
2. Assessment of visual effects: assessing effects on specific views and on the general visual amenity experienced by people.’ Para 2.21 P21 [3]

This report separates these elements into two distinct sections so that the differences can be clearly appreciated. In order to satisfy the objective of this study, each section has been set out as follows:

Baseline Analysis - This is an analysis of the existing situation within and surrounding the site. It draws upon information gathered during a desk study and field survey work. In relation to the visual amenity section, the area of study (extent of visibility) is also identified and visual receptors are selected and visited. Planning designations intended to protect landscape and visual amenity are also recorded.

Assessment of Landscape and Visual Effects - This part of the study describes the likely nature and scale of changes to landscape character and visual amenity. The proposed development is studied and then compared against the baseline information to ascertain potential effects upon the landscape and visual amenity.

To accompany the description of baseline and assessment information, a series of classifications have been applied to the landscape character of the site and each visual receptor. These act as a summary and place a defined value on; the sensitivity of the character area/visual receptor, the magnitude of change and the subsequent *significance of the effect* of the development.

2.1 SENSITIVITY OF EXISTING LANDSCAPE / VISUAL RECEPTORS

The sensitivity of the landscape to change is the degree to which a particular landscape can accommodate changes, or new features without significant detrimental effects to its essential characteristics.

The sensitivity of a given receptor is determined by making judgements about:

- the *susceptibility* of the receptor to the type of change arising from the specific proposal, and
- the *value* attached to the receptor.

The sensitivity of landscape character or a visual receptor is defined as being High/Medium/Low, where High is the most sensitive. Where viewpoint locations have more than one receptor, the impacts for those of greatest anticipated sensitivity will be used to determine the anticipated overall impact magnitude; thus ensuring the worst case scenario is reported.

General criteria for making judgements about the value, susceptibility and ultimate sensitivity of visual receptors and landscape character are set out in the following table.

Sensitivity	Visual Receptors	Landscape Character
High	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Residential properties with predominantly open views from windows, garden or curtilage. Views will normally be from principal living rooms and from windows of rooms in use during the day. 2. Users of Public Rights of Way/Public Open Space with predominantly open views and of recreational use. 3. Non-motorised users of minor or unclassified roads in the countryside 4. Visitors to recognised viewpoints or beauty spots, or to designated buildings or landscapes where the wider landscape setting contributes to or adds value to the experience. 5. Users of outdoor recreational facilities with predominantly open views where the purpose of that recreation is enjoyment of the countryside – e.g. Country Parks, National Trust sites etc.... 	<p>Strong landscape structure.</p> <p>Strong positive character.</p> <p>Good condition.</p> <p>Strong sense of place.</p> <p>Visually distinctive.</p> <p>Aesthetically pleasing/occasional detracting features.</p> <p>Distinct features worthy of conservation.</p> <p>Designated landscapes such as National Parks, Registered Parks and Gardens or designated buildings/structures where landscape character contributes to its designation.</p>
Medium	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Residential properties with views from windows, garden or curtilage. Views from ground floor windows will be oblique or partially obscured by garden and/or other intervening vegetation. 2. Users of Public Rights of Way/Public Open Space with restricted views, in less sensitive areas or where there are significant existing intrusive features. 3. Schools and other institutional buildings, and their outdoor areas. 4. Motorised users of minor or unclassified roads in the countryside. Where attention is focussed upon often narrow and winding routes. 	<p>Recognisable landscape structure.</p> <p>Positive character.</p> <p>Moderate condition.</p> <p>Reasonable sense of place.</p> <p>Visually notable.</p> <p>Aesthetically satisfactory or uninspiring/some detracting features.</p> <p>Some features worthy of conservation.</p>
Low	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. People in their place of work. 2. Users of main roads or passengers on public transport on main routes. 3. Users of outdoor recreational facilities with restricted views or where the activity is focussed within the area. 4. Occupants of industrial premises. 	<p>Weak or degraded landscape structure.</p> <p>Weak or negative character.</p> <p>Poor condition.</p> <p>Poor sense of place.</p> <p>Visually poor.</p> <p>Aesthetically unsatisfactory or unpleasant.</p> <p>Many detracting features, which are likely to be dominant.</p> <p>Few or no features worthy of conservation.</p> <p>Scope for positive enhancement.</p>

2.2 MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE

The magnitude of change is the ‘combination of the scale, extent and duration’ [4] of the development and its impact on landscape receptors and visual receptors.

In the case of landscape effects this relates to:

- The size, extent or degree of change to landscape character or individual landscape features;
- Whether there is a direct impact resulting in the loss of landscape features or a change beyond the land take of the scheme having an impact on the character of the area; and,
- Whether the impact is permanent or temporary.

For visual effects this relates to:

- Degree of change to existing views;
- Distance of the receptor from the application site; and,
- Whether the impact is permanent or temporary.

Magnitude of Change	Visual Amenity	Landscape Character
High	Where the proposals become the only dominant feature in the scene or would form a significant and immediately apparent element which would affect the overall impression of the view.	High degree of loss or major alteration to one or more key elements/features/characteristics of the landscape character. Introduction of elements considered to be uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving landscape.
Medium	Where proposals would form a visible and recognisable new feature in the scene but may not be immediately apparent, or become the dominant feature in the view.	Partial loss of or alteration to one or more key elements/features/characteristics of the landscape character. Introduction of elements that may be prominent but may not necessarily be considered to be substantially uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving landscape.
Low	The proposals constitute only a minor component of the wider view and may not be immediately apparent to the casual observer. Awareness of the proposals would not have a marked effect on the overall quality of the scene.	Minor loss of or alteration to one or more key elements/features/characteristics of the landscape character. Introduction of elements may not be uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving landscape.

The magnitude of change may also be Negligible or No Change and in this instance the resulting Effect Significance would also be Negligible or No Change as the application development would hardly be seen or not seen at all or the loss to landscape features and the character of the area would experience very little or no change.

Magnitude of Change	Visual Amenity	Landscape Character
Negligible	The proposal is largely indiscernible and/or they are at such a distance that they are scarcely appreciated. Consequently they have little effect on the scene.	Very minor loss of or alteration to one or more key elements/features/characteristics of the landscape character. Introduction of elements are not uncharacteristic with the surrounding landscape.
No Change	No change to the view is experienced.	No change to the landscape character is experienced.

2.3 ASSESSING THE EFFECT

The two principal criteria determining the level of effect are the **magnitude of change** and the **sensitivity** of the location or receptor. ‘A higher level of significance is generally attached to large-scale effects and effects on sensitive or high-value receptors; thus small effects on highly sensitive sites can be more important than large effects on less sensitive sites. It is therefore important that a balanced and well-reasoned judgement of these two criteria is achieved’ [4]. The matrix shown below encourages transparency in the process of identifying the level of effect but the experience and judgement of the landscape architect is also used.

		Magnitude of Change				
		High	Medium	Low	Negligible	No Change
Sensitivity	High	Major	Moderate/ Major	Moderate	Minor	No change
	Medium	Moderate/ Major	Moderate	Minor/ Moderate	Minor/Neutral	No change
	Low	Moderate	Minor/ Moderate	Minor	Neutral	No change

2.4 NATURE OF IMPACT

Determination of the nature of an impact is a result of judging whether the introduction of a proposed development would be of benefit or detriment to the existing landscape character or view. Therefore, the effect of a proposed development can be adverse or beneficial.

The following system of categorisation is used to describe the nature of the impact:

Nature of Impact	
Adverse	The key characteristics of the existing landscape or view would be weakened by the introduction of the proposed development.
Neutral	The key characteristics would neither be weakened nor strengthened by the proposed development.
Beneficial	The key characteristics of the existing landscape or view would be strengthened by the introduction of the proposed development.

Effects will be categorised using the terms Neutral, Minor, Moderate and Major effects.

Overall Effect	Visual Amenity	Landscape Character
Major adverse	The proposals would result in a large and obvious change to a view from a highly sensitive receptor and would constitute a discordant, dominant element in the view.	The proposed scheme would result in effects that are at complete variance with the landform, scale and pattern of the landscape. It would permanently degrade, diminish or destroy the integrity of valued characteristic features, elements and/or their setting. A high quality landscape would be permanently changed and its quality diminished.
Moderate adverse	The proposals would cause some damage to a view from a more sensitive receptor or would be an obvious element in the view of less sensitive receptors.	The proposed scheme would be either: Out of scale with the landscape and/or at odds with the local pattern and landform and/or it would leave an adverse impact on valued landscape features.
Minor adverse	The proposals would cause limited damage to a view from a receptor of medium sensitivity, but would still be a noticeable element within the view, or greater damage to a view from a receptor of low sensitivity.	The proposed scheme would not entirely fit into the landform and scale of the landscape and it would affect an area of valued landscape features.
Neutral	No obvious change in the view.	The proposed scheme would compliment the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape and would maintain existing landscape quality.

Minor beneficial	The proposed development would result in visual effects that constitute a perceptible improvement in the existing view.	The proposed scheme has the potential to improve landscape character. It would fit in with the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape and enable the incorporation of valued characteristic features.
Moderate beneficial	The proposed development would result in visual effects that constitute a conspicuous improvement in the existing view.	The proposed scheme would have the potential to accord with landscape character and improve the quality of the landscape through removal of damage caused by existing land uses.
Major beneficial	The proposed development would result in a substantial improvement to the existing view and positively influence the quality of the view.	The proposed scheme would have the potential to accord seamlessly with the landscape character and significantly improve the quality of the landscape through restoration and the removal of damage caused by existing land uses.

2.6 ILLUSTRATIVE MATERIAL

2.6.1 General Photographs

Photographs illustrating views from the selected series of viewpoints were taken using a Canon EOS 450D digital SLR camera. The camera lens used is a 35mm f/2 Canon lens, a digital equivalent of a 50mm lens on a 35mm format camera and which is generally considered to best represent the field of view experienced by the human eye.

Photographs within the body of this report should be used as a reference and are provided to assist the reader in conveying the location and nature of views from which each assessment was made. Photography should not be relied upon and should not be a substitute for visiting the location in the field.

2.6.2 Maps and Plans

Plans have been produced using a 1:25,000 scale Ordnance Survey map as a base, to show the Cultural Heritage and Landscape Designations (Figure 1), Viewpoint Locations and Public Rights of Way (Figure 2), and Site Analysis (Figure 3).



Planning Context

This section introduces the landscape planning context for the project, listing relevant landscape-related policies and designations, applicable to the site and surrounding landscape.

3.1 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)[5] was published in March 2012 replacing Planning Policy Statements (PPS) and Planning Policy Guidance (PPG). The overarching emphasis of the NPPF is on sustainable development, which has economic, social, and environmental components. In contributing to achieving sustainable development the Planning System performs a number of roles, including:

“Contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.” Para 7 p2

The statements detailed below are important in relation to the site and are copied directly from the National Planning Policy Framework.

9. Protecting Green Belt land

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

Green Belt serves five purposes:

1. to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
2. to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
3. to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
4. to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
5. to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

Once Green Belts have been defined, local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity; or to improve damaged and derelict land.” Para 79 - 81 p19

12. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

“Local planning authorities should set out in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. In doing so, they should recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance. In developing this strategy, local planning authorities should take into account:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
 - the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;
 - the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and
 - opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.”
- Para 126 p29

3.1.2 GREEN BELT

The site is located on land identified as Green Belt land within the City of York Local Plan [2]. The policy has been used to inform planning decisions since its adoption in 2005, however the emerging Local Plan proposes to remove a section of land (see red line boundary in Image 3.1) and designate a housing allocation site. The following sections of this report will discuss the function of this site and adjacent parcels of land against the purposes of the Green Belt as set out within the NPPF.

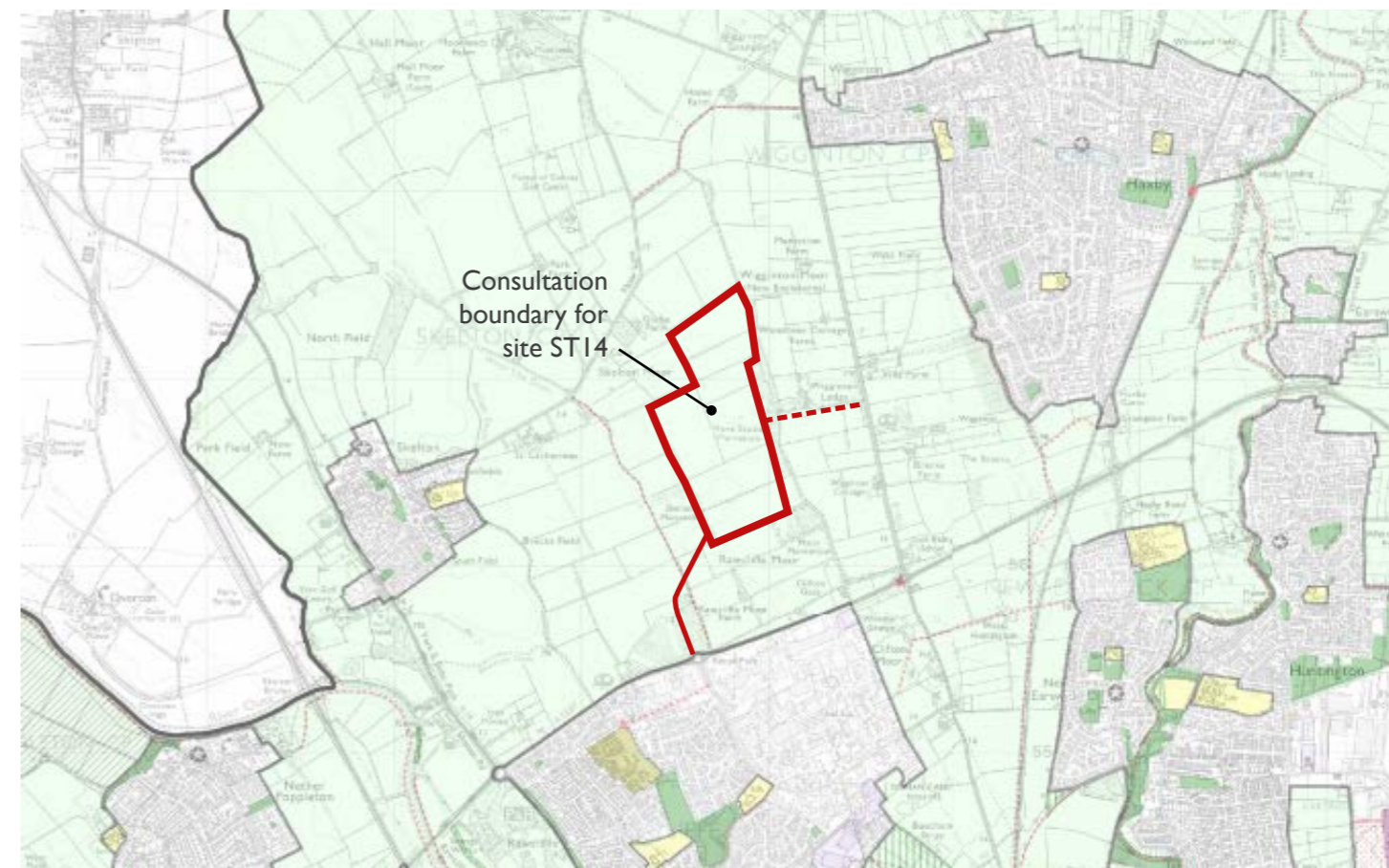


Image 3.1 Screen shot of approved Development Control Local Plan (2005) within the Draft Local Plan Incorporating the Fourth Set of Changes with and overlay showing the location of ST14

3.2 LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

The Local Authority are consulting on a new Local Plan and have recently undertaken a period of consultation which was held between July and September 2016. The following policies are taken from the Draft Local Plan which was approved in 2005 to inform development control. Policies are material considerations for development control decisions.

POLICY SP2:

“The primary purpose of the York Green Belt is to safeguard the setting and historic character of the City of York and is defined on the Proposals Map. Although the rural area of the City of York is integral to the open countryside (and therefore subject to certain controls over development generally), virtually all land outside the main settlements is designated as Green Belt in this Local Plan.”

Surrounding countryside

“The relationship between the band of open countryside, which links these green wedges around the City, and the urban area has changed since the completion of the Outer Ring Road (A1237 / A64). This has effectively opened up views of the historic skyline, the green wedges, the urban fringe and land adjacent to existing villages. The swathe of open countryside between the Outer Ring Road and the urban area varies considerably in depth - from physically adjacent in the north, to 750 metres in the east and south-east and 200 metres to the west of the built-up area - as does its prominence and visibility. Nevertheless it forms an important part of York’s character and setting. The work undertaken on the Green Belt review highlighted the importance of the views from the outer ring road and the need to protect them. The Green Belt review work also identified that any new greenfield allocations should not be built right up the ring road to protect the setting of the city from it.

Within the Green Belt, planning permission for development will only be granted where:

- a) the scale, location and design of such development would not detract from the open character of the Green Belt; and
- b) it would not conflict with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt; and
- c) it would not prejudice the setting and special character of the City of York;”

POLICY SP3: Safeguarding the Historic Character and Setting of York

The draft policy states that;

‘A high priority will be given to the protection of the historic character and setting of York. When considering planning applications the Council will apply the following principles:

- c. The protection of the environmental assets and landscape features which enhance the historic character and setting of the City. These comprise the river corridors and the green wedges, both existing and extended. They also include areas of open countryside, which provide an impression of a historic city, such as locations which allow good views of the Minster or an urban edge including a Conservation area, and views into the City from a number of main transport routes.’

The policy also states that:

- “the extension of the green wedges into the urban area offers a sense of openness when approaching the historic core along the main transport corridors.
- The landscape in the vicinity of the main radial routes leading to the built up areas of York (particularly the ‘A’ roads and railway lines) attract development due to their accessibility. However, this can have an adverse impact on the character, openness and greenness of the area, particularly when development takes place.” [5]

3.3 OTHER STATUTORY AND NON-STATUTORY LANDSCAPE APPLICABLE DESIGNATIONS AND CLASSIFICATIONS

The following information should be read in conjunction with Figure 1.

3.3.1 Landscape Character Areas

The application site and wider study area lie within:

- National Character Area 28: Vale of York [6]
- North Yorkshire Landscape Character Type 28: Vale Farmland with Plantation Woodland [7]

Detailed descriptions of these established character areas are provided in Chapter 3 of this document.

3.3.2 Listed Buildings

There are no listed buildings on the application site. There is one listed building located approximately 500m east of the application site:

- MILEPOST OPPOSITE VILLA FARM, Grade II, reference 1173446

There are many listed buildings within the wider study area, these are shown on Figure 1.

3.3.3 Conservation Areas

The application site is not located within a Conservation Area but there are four distinct conservation areas within the study area:

- NETHER POPPLETON, located approximately 2.2km to the south west
- SKELTON, located approximately 1.5km to the west
- NEW EARSWICK, located approximately 2km to the south east
- HAXBY, located approximately 2km to the north east

3.3.4 Local Nature Reserve (LNR)

There are no LNRs on the application site. The nearest designated LNR is located 1.8km to the north east and is: CLIFTON BACKIES

3.3.5 Public Rights of Way (PROW)

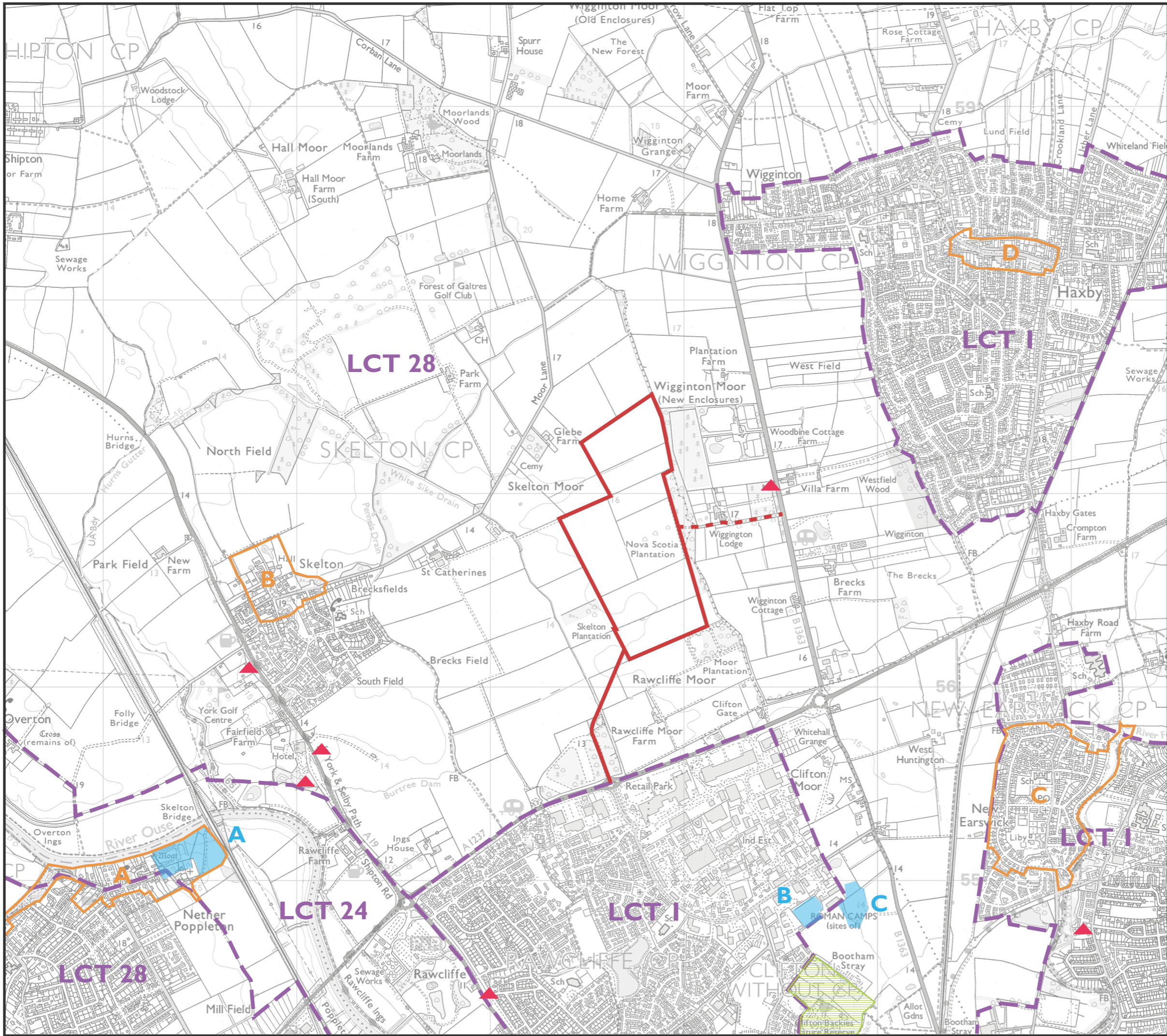
There are no Public Rights of Way located on the site, however there are two footpaths and one bridleway located within 1.5km of the site boundary. Viewpoints will be considered from the following PROW (refer to Figure 3) located within the study area;

- 11/2/10 and 11/10/10 (footpath)
- 12/6/30 and 12/6/20 (footpath)
- 11/4/10, 11/5/10 and 12/7/10 (bridleway)







3.3.6 Existing Trees

There are no Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) relating to trees within site. The site does contain mature trees and hedgerow located within the site and on the site boundary and these could potentially be affected, either directly or indirectly, by the proposals.

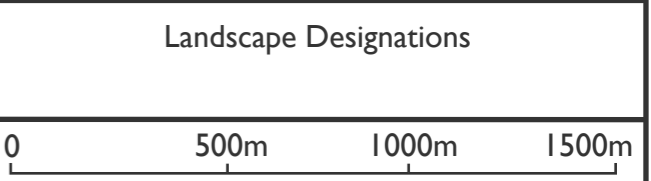
Note that trees may be subject to legal protection under a range of other legislation, much of which is aimed at wildlife and habitat protection, particularly nesting birds and bats. Likewise existing hedgerows on the site may be classed as Important Hedgerows under the Hedgerow Regulations 1997.



LAND WEST OF WIGGINTON LANE, YORK

- KEY**
-  Site Boundary
 -  Local Conservation Area (Ref: City of York Council)
 - A - Conservation Area 17: Nether Poppleton
 - B - Conservation Area 18: Skelton
 - C - Conservation Area 20: New Earswick
 - D - Conservation Area 22: Haxby
 -  Local Nature Reserve (LNR) - Clifton Backies
 -  Scheduled Ancient Monument
 - A - Mediaeval moated site; List Entry No. 1014621
 - B - Roman camp on Clifton Moor; List Entry No. 1019859
 - C - Roman camp on Bootham Stray; List Entry No. 1019342
 -  Listed Building (outside of Local Conservation Area)
 -  Landscape Character Types (Ref: North Yorkshire and York Landscape Characterisation Project, BCA, 2011)
 - I - Urban Landscapes
 - 24 - River Floodplain
 - 28 - Vale Farmland with Plantation Woodland and Heathland

National Character Area 28: Vale of York - covers whole map area



SF 2633
Figure 1





Landscape Appraisal

4.1 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Landscape character is defined as a distinct and recognisable pattern of elements that occur consistently in a particular type of landscape. Patterns in the landscape including vegetation cover, land use, connectivity, heritage and cultural associations, activity or tranquillity, combine together to create landscape character. It is important that this is considered so that a full understanding of the site and its surroundings can be achieved.

During the site visit, the landscape of the site and wider study area were appraised in relation to the established National and Local (District) Landscape Character Areas.

4.2 EFFECTS ON LANDSCAPE FABRIC

Landscape fabric is defined as the physical components/features, such as landform, vegetation cover, water courses, built elements etc. that make up the overall character of a landscape. Proposals may affect the landscape fabric either directly (i.e. through physical disturbance such as tree removal) or indirectly (i.e. separated from the source of change in time or space, e.g. alteration to a drainage regime could result in changes in vegetation cover down stream).

Development on this site would result in the permanent and irreversible loss of 15 medium to large scale agricultural fields, a further 4 fields which would be disturbed by the creation of new access routes into the site from the A1237 Outer Ring Road and the B1363 Wigginton Lane, the loss of part of Nova Scotia Plantation which would be disturbed by the creation of the new access route from Wigginton Lane that passes through it and landscape features within the site such as trees and hedgerows that would be lost or severed by the introduction buildings, roads, street lighting and other such urban elements within the allocation site.

4.3 EFFECTS ON LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

4.3.1 National Character

The site and surrounding study area is located within the National Character Area (NCA) 28: Vale of York [6]

Characteristics of NCA 28: Vale of York which are applicable to the site and wider study area, include:

- A largely open, flat and low-lying landscape between the higher land of the Southern Magnesian Limestone ridge to the west, the Howardian Hills to the north and the Yorkshire Wolds to the east.
- Predominantly agricultural land use, with medium- to large-scale arable fields defined by hedgerows (which are often low and intermittent with sparse hedgerow trees) and fences. Large dispersed farmsteads and small villages on higher land are set within a quiet rural landscape.
- The main urban centre, the City of York, with roads radiating from the city and York Minster forming a prominent landmark and focal point for the Vale

Statements of Environmental Opportunity (SEO) offer suggestions where action can be best targeted to conserve and improve the natural environment. For NCA 28 Vale of York some of the key SEO landscape opportunities are as follows:

- SEO 1 - Managing, restoring and thickening hedgerows, as well as replacing and planting new hedgerow trees to create species-rich hedgerows. This will help to create a network across the agricultural landscape which enhances sense of place and creates wildlife corridors
- SEO 1 - Strengthening historic field systems and patterns through hedgerow restoration and management, especially the older field patterns around villages
- SEO 4 - Ensuring that new development, redevelopment and land use changes do not detract from the rural feel of the National Character Area (NCA), through selection of appropriate materials and development design
- SEO 4 - Conserve the tranquillity of the Vale through sympathetic design and development plans, in particular minimising light

spill through careful lighting design to retain the 'undisturbed' feel of the NCA and to lessen the development impact on the more rural areas.

The sensitivity of the NCA to the proposed development is considered to be **high**. The medium to large scale fields are highly susceptible to the proposed development as these elements would be significantly changed by new buildings and infrastructure and although the site does not form part of a landscape designation at international, national or local authority level it is likely to be valued for its contribution to maintaining the characteristic settlement pattern of open countryside with scattered settlements that exists beyond the Outer Ring Road.

The magnitude of change brought about by the proposed development, on the National Character Area is considered to be **high**. It would result in change over a large area within the NCA and in a major alteration to a number of key characteristic features that include the flat medium to large scale fields and the hedgerows that bound the fields. These changes would also be permanent and irreversible.

Drawing together the sensitivity and the magnitude of change results in an overall **major** level of effect on the NCA. The nature of the change is considered to be adverse because the proposals would introduce urban elements such as the cycle/footbridge, street lighting and signage that would conflict with the key characteristics of the National Character Area as they would detract from the open, rural and undisturbed feel of this agricultural landscape.

The overall level of effect on NCA 28 Vale of York is therefore considered to be **major adverse**.

4.3.2 Local Landscape Character

The site is located within the area covered by the North Yorkshire and York Landscape Character Assessment. Within this assessment the site lies within the Farmed Lowland and Valley Landscapes Landscape Character Area and specifically within the Vale Farmland with Plantation Woodland and Heathland Landscape Character Type (Type 28) [7]

Key characteristics of this landscape character type applicable to the site are:

- A patchwork of low lying, predominantly arable fields, often delineated by a network of mature hedgerows and interspersed with patches of regular-shaped mixed and coniferous plantation woodlands;
- Strong sense of openness throughout much of this Landscape Character Type;
- Scattered settlement pattern of towns, villages and farmsteads within the landscape around the main historic City of York (which forms part of the Urban Landscapes Primary Landscape Unit);

Sensitivity to change issues relevant to the site are:

- Moderate visual sensitivity overall. Whilst there is a strong sense of openness within much of the farmland as a result of the flat or gently undulating topography, patches of plantation woodland disrupt views to adjacent Landscape Character Types in places;
- Moderate landscape and cultural sensitivity overall. In places, historic landscape patterns are compromised by modern developments and infrastructure and hedgerows are gappy. There are, however, numerous historic landscape features present including parkland landscape, historic villages and prehistoric earthworks.

•

Guidance relevant to the site for managing landscape change include:

- Protect the scattered settlement pattern of towns, villages and farmsteads and avoid settlement on the floodplain
- Strengthen historic field systems and patterns through hedgerow planting and management
- Conserve open views along and across the river floodplains towards adjacent Landscape Character Types
- Protect and enhance public enjoyment of the landscape, including appreciation of the sense of escapism it provides, through identifying opportunities to create new circular routes or links to existing public rights of way.

The site is typical of the Vale Farmland with Plantation Woodland and Heathland Landscape Character Type. It comprises a patchwork of arable and grazing fields bound by mature hedgerows. Adjacent to the site are regular shaped blocks of both mixed and plantation woodland at Nova Scotia Plantation to the eastern edge of the site, Moor Plantation to the south eastern corner of the site and Skelton Plantation within the site on its western boundary.

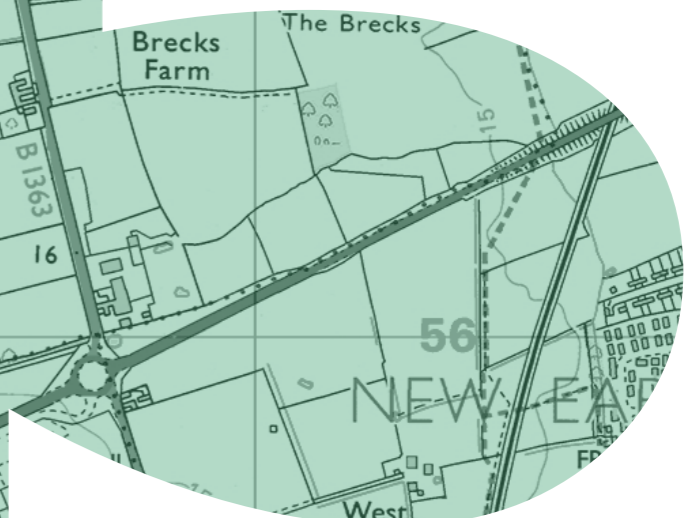
The sensitivity of the landscape character type to the proposed development is judged to be **high**. The medium to large scale patchwork of agricultural fields are highly susceptible to the proposed development. These characteristic features would be lost or partly removed and replaced with new buildings and infrastructure, introducing new urban form and urban elements that are alien to the Vale Farmland landscape character type and which would have a characterising effect on it.

In terms of its value the landscape of the development site makes a positive contribution to the landscape character type. It has a strong sense of openness and contains a network of medium to large scale fields that are characteristic of this landscape character type. It also contributes positively to the scattered pattern of settlement by defining the separation between the scattered settlements of Skelton to the west and Haxby to the east.

The magnitude of change brought about by the proposed development on the Vale Farmland with Plantation Woodland and Heathland (28) is considered to be **high**. It would result in change over a large area and in a major alteration to a number of key characteristic features that include the flat medium to large scale fields and the hedgerows that bound the fields and loss of part of Nova Scotia Plantation resulting from the creation of the access road off the B1363 Wigginton Lane. These changes would also be permanent and irreversible.

Drawing together the sensitivity and the magnitude of change results in an overall **major** level of effect on the Vale Farmland with Plantation Woodland and Heathland landscape character type. The nature of the change is considered to be adverse because the proposals would introduce urban elements such as bridges and street lighting that will conflict with the key characteristics of the landscape character type which would detract from the open, rural and undisturbed feel of this agricultural landscape.

The overall level of effect on the Vale Farmland with Plantation Woodland and Heathland landscape character type is therefore considered to be **major adverse**.



Visual Appraisal

5.1 VIEWPOINT SELECTION

Through desk and field-based studies, visual receptor locations were identified. These viewpoints represent views of the existing site and/or viewpoints from which the proposed allocation will be visible. Figure 2 illustrates the position of these representative viewpoints.

Although the photographs are representative of views experienced from each location, it should be noted that they should not be considered a substitute for visiting the viewpoint in the field. The locations from which viewpoints are shown were from publicly accessible land, unless permission from private landowners had been sought. The viewpoint locations are considered to best represent potential receptors to which the assessment refers.





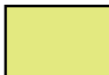
Site work was undertaken in February when deciduous trees and shrubs are not in leaf, and therefore represent conditions where the site is at its most visible.

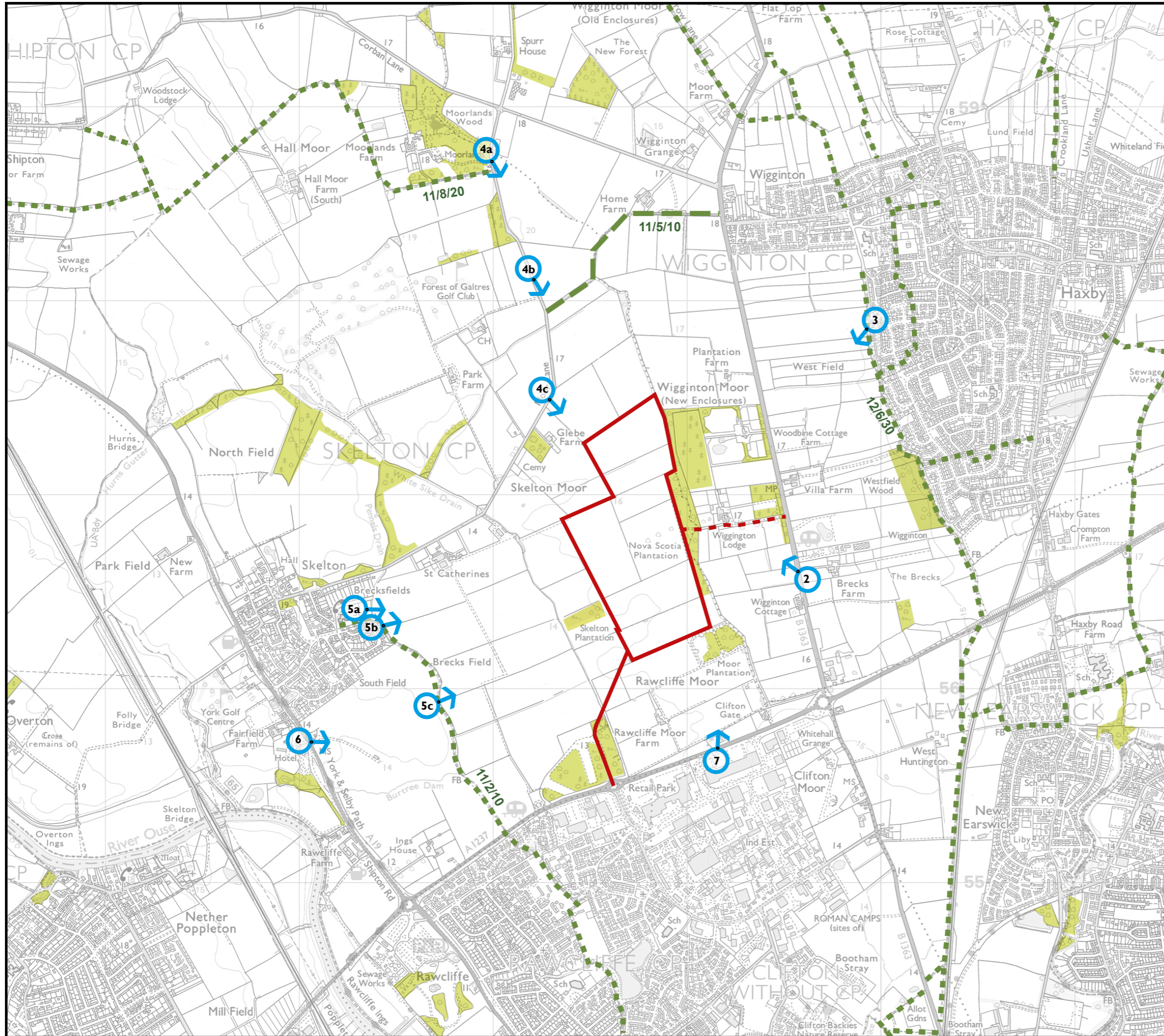
Table 1. Viewpoint Location Table

Viewpoint no.	Viewpoint Location	Approximate Distance from nearest site boundary (m)	Key Receptors at viewpoint
1	The White Horse and York Minster	N/a	Visitors to the tourist destinations
2	B1363 Wigginton Lane	500m	Road users
3	Footpath 12/6/20	1km	Users of PROW
4	Moor Lane	<1km	Users of Road
5	Skelton recreation ground and footpath 11/2/10	<1km	Users of PROW
6 and 7	York Ring Road and A19 Shipton Road	<1km	Road users

LAND WEST OF WIGGINGTON LANE, YORK

KEY

-  Site Boundary
-  Viewpoint
-  Public Right of Way - Footpath
-  Public Right of Way - Bridleway
-  Areas of woodland/vegetation that provide screening



Viewpoint Locations



SF 2633
Figure 2



Image 5.1.1



View from the White Horse across the Vale of York

5.1.1 VIEWPOINT I LONG DISTANCE VIEWS

Viewpoint Representation from the White Horse at Kilburn and York Minster

The view from the White Horse at Kilburn is identified as a key view within the York Central Historic Core Conservation Area Appraisal, Section 3.0 Views and Building Heights [8]. The chapter considers the character and sensitivity of the skyline and roofscape of York and states that:

“The quantity and quality of views, often inextricably linked to the absence of tall modern buildings, is one of the most important, most precious and most fragile components of the city’s historic townscape.”

The view towards the Minster from the White Horse and to the White Horse from the Minster will be assessed

Existing Conditions

The White Horse at Kilburn is located on Roulston Scar within the Hambleton Hills and is a popular visitor attraction due to the extensive views and it being a historic site of an Iron Age Hill Fort. The views from this location are vast and rural in character and are important to the landscape setting of York. York Minster is visible on the horizon on a clear day.

The views from York Minster are expansive and panoramic across the Vale of York. The flat topography allows for extensive long distance views where the horizon to the north is marked by Roulston Scar and Sutton Bank. The urban edge is clearly defined by the A1237 Outer Ring Road, followed by a band of countryside between the city and the ridge of Roulston Scar to the north. The band of countryside is largely flat and appears as a narrow belt beneath the rising ground to the north. The proposed allocation site (ST24) is located within this narrow band of countryside which clearly defines the urban core of York and the open countryside to the north of the Outer Ring Road, differentiating the urban and rural environment.

Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

The primary visual receptors at this location are considered to be visitors and tourists visiting this nationally recognised viewpoint and therefore the sensitivity of these receptors is considered to be **high** as described within the methodology as follows:

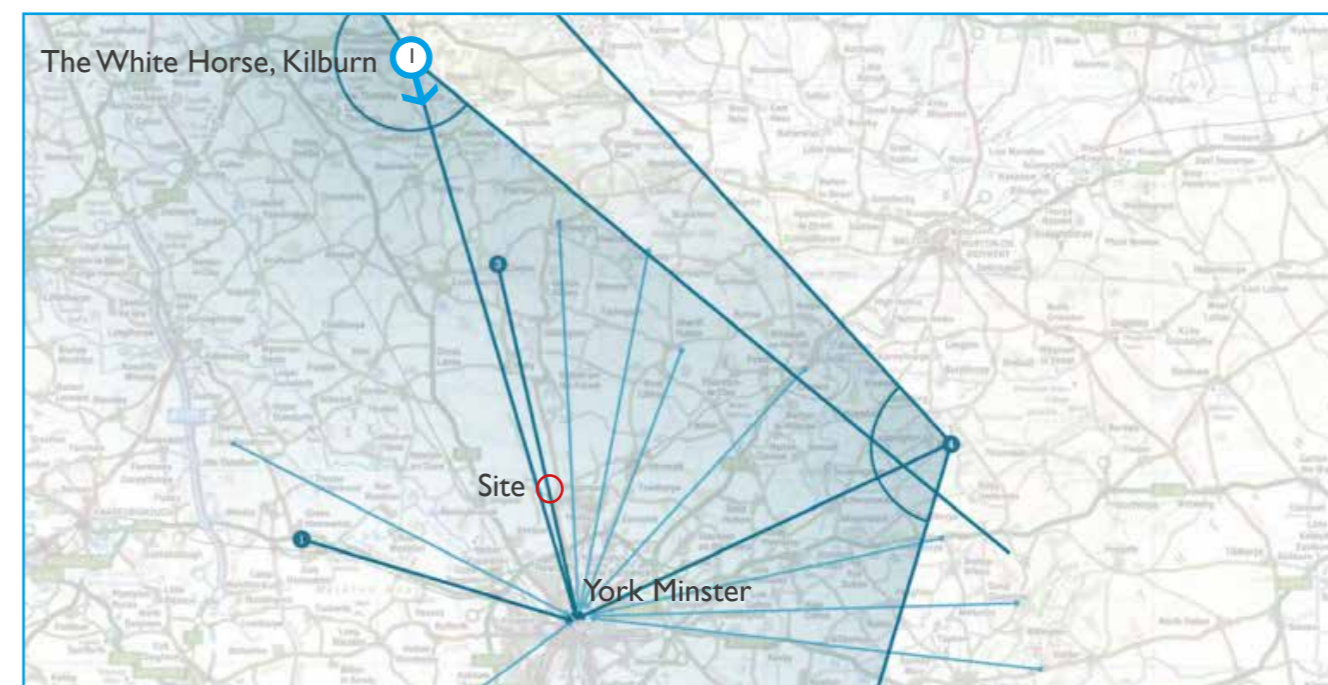
- Visitors to recognised viewpoints or beauty spots, or to designated buildings or landscapes where the wider landscape setting contributes to or adds value to the experience (high).

Magnitude of Visual Change

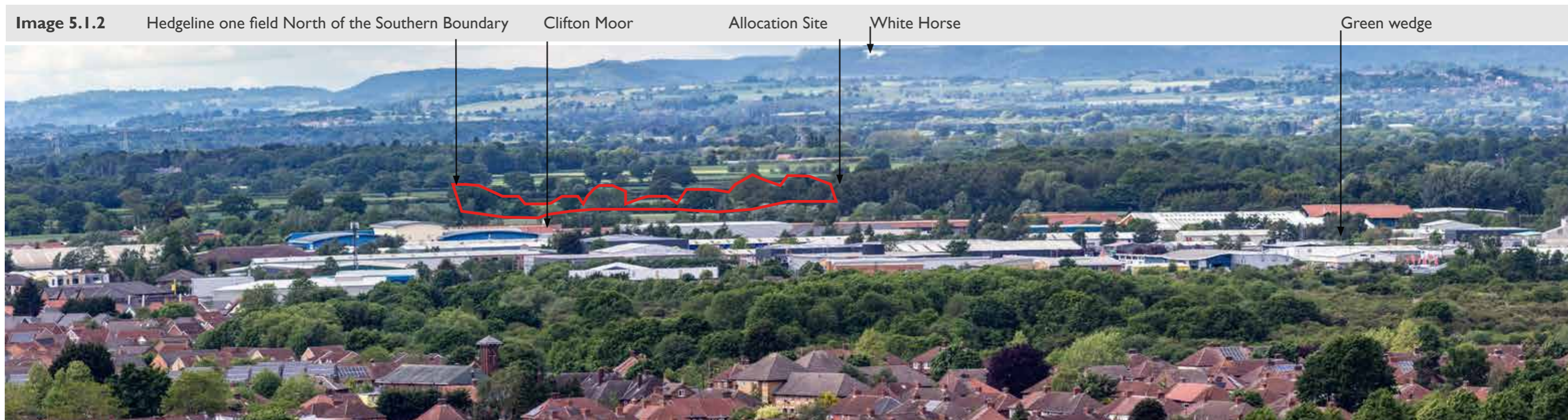
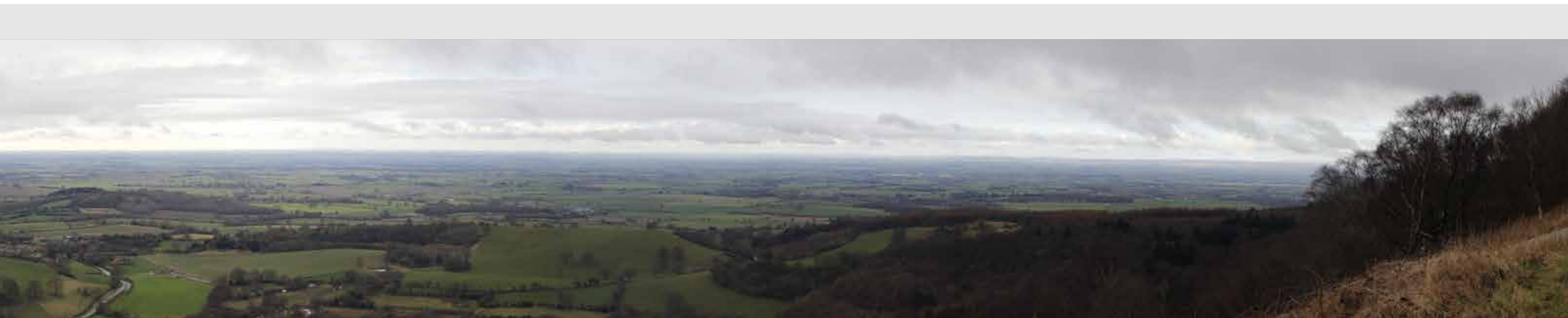
Views from the White Horse at Kilburn are extensive and cover a vast area across the Vale of York and beyond. The allocation site cannot be appreciated at this distance and therefore the magnitude of change is considered to be **no change**.

Whilst visiting York Minster, information boards direct receptors to look towards the White Horse as a focal point in the distance (see Image 5.1.2). The fields on which the allocation site occupies are critical to the landscape setting of York.

The development of the proposed allocation site within a comparatively narrow belt of landscape would extend the urban form into this band of countryside, which would be further reinforced by the connecting roads, lighting columns and potential grade separated road connections to the existing highway network. The magnitude of change is therefore considered to be **high**.



Extract from the York Central Historic Core Conservation Area Appraisal



View from the tower at York Minster towards The White Horse and Roulston Scar

Summary of Visual Effects

- The sensitivity of visual receptors at both The White Horse and York Minster viewpoints is assessed as being **high**.
- The anticipated magnitude of change, from the White Horse viewpoint is judged as being **no change**, and as **high** from the Minster tower.

The overall level of visual effects is judged as being **no change** from The White Horse and **major** from York Minster. The nature of the effect is considered to be adverse as the proposed allocation would extend the urban form into views of the belt of countryside that surrounds York.

The overall effect is therefore **major adverse**.

Effects on the Green Belt

- The openness of the Green Belt that surrounds York would be eroded
- Development on the site would lead to the sprawl of built form beyond the Outer Ring Road and into the open countryside
- The development and its associated infrastructure together with the construction of a new footpath/cycle bridge over the A1237 would constitute the encroachment of urban elements into the open rural landscape beyond the A1237 Outer Ring Road

Image 5.1.2

SITE: Partially screened by hedgerow and woodland

B1363



View from B1363 Wigginton Lane - looking north west towards the site

5.1.2 VIEWPOINT 2: B1363 WIGGINTON LANE

Viewpoint Representation

Viewpoint 2 is located approximately 500m east of the proposed allocation site boundary on the B1363 Wigginton Lane. It is also broadly representative of views from properties located between Wigginton Lane and the site.

Existing Conditions

The views from Wigginton Lane towards the site are largely restricted by boundary vegetation and blocks of woodland, however where views are available they extend over fields. The character and nature of the views are distinctly rural. When travelling northbound from the York ring road (A1237) there is a clear distinction between the urban character contained within the ring road and that of the countryside beyond.

Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

The primary visual receptors at this location are considered to be people travelling along Wigginton Lane. The sensitivity of these receptors is considered to be **medium** as described within the methodology as follows:

- Users of minor roads or unclassified roads in the countryside.

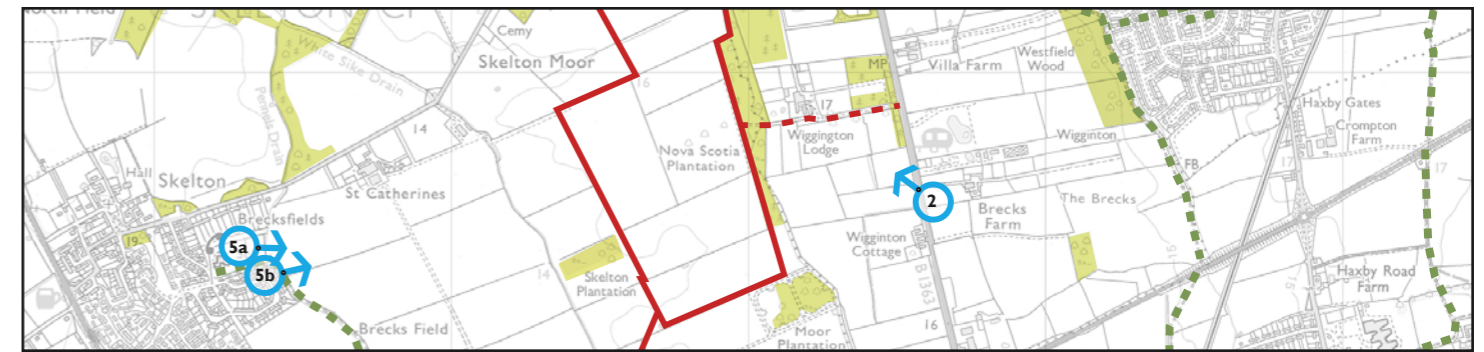
Magnitude of Visual Change

Development on the site would introduce elements into the view which are not already present or characteristic within the existing scene. The surrounding woodland would partially screen and filter views towards the site, particularly during summer months when vegetation is in leaf. However, the presence of the new entrance into the site and its associated infrastructure such as lighting and signage would introduce urban elements into the view that would alter the character of the existing view. The magnitude of change is assessed as **high**.

Summary of Visual Effects

- The sensitivity of the visual receptors travelling along this route are judged as being **medium**.
- The anticipated magnitude of visual change, as perceived at this viewpoint, is judged as **high**.

The overall level of visual effect is therefore assessed as being **moderate/major**. The nature of the effect is considered to be adverse as the proposed allocation would introduce new urban elements into the view. These would be partially screened by the plantation woodland of Nova Scotia Plantation but the new access from Wigginton Lane would form a prominent new element within views from this location. The overall effect is therefore **moderate/major adverse**.



Contribution to the Green Belt

The parcels of land to the east and west of Wigginton Lane make a positive contribution to the function of the Green Belt in terms of protecting the openness of the land to the north of the A1237 Outer Ring Road and the dispersed pattern and setting of York's satellite villages. Development on ST14 would introduce urban elements into a predominantly rural landscape and the necessary highway infrastructure improvements on Wigginton Road would contribute to encroachment. The extension of the urban character, lighting, new road features and upgrades would contribute to urban sprawl and encroachment into the countryside.

Effects on the Green Belt

- The openness of the Green Belt that surrounds York would be eroded
- Development on the site would lead to the sprawl of built form beyond the Outer Ring Road and into the open countryside
- The development and its associated infrastructure (roads, signage, lighting etc.) together with the construction of access into the site from Wigginton Lane would constitute encroachment of urban elements into this predominantly open and rural landscape

Image 5.1.3

SITE: Screened



View from public footpath 12/6/20 looking west

5.1.3 VIEWPOINT 3: PUBLIC FOOTPATH 12/6/20

Viewpoint Representation

Viewpoint 3 is located approximately 1km to the north east of the proposed allocation site on a Public Right of Way (PRoW), 12/6/20 to the rear of properties on Manor Garth. The viewpoint is representative of views from this footpath on the western edge of Haxby and from the rear of residential properties on the western settlement edge of Haxby.

Existing Conditions

The views are largely restricted by hedgerows and the flat topography but where available through gaps in the vegetation extend over fields. The view and character of the area is rural and does not contain any obvious detracting features. Views of the site are obscured by vegetation, however development on the site maybe perceivable, particularly at night time due to lighting.

Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

The primary visual receptors at this location are considered to be users of the footpath and secondary receptors are residents of the properties on Manor Garth. The sensitivity of these receptors is considered to be **medium** as described within the methodology as follows:

- Residential properties with views from windows, garden or curtilage. Views from ground floor windows will be oblique or partially obscured by garden and/or other intervening vegetation (medium).
- Users of Public Rights of Way/Public Open Space with restricted views, in less sensitive areas or where there are significant existing intrusive features (medium).

Magnitude of Visual Change

The site is largely screened and is not anticipated to be visible during the day from this location. However, potential highways upgrades and lighting would become more apparent at night. The magnitude of change is assessed as **low**.

Summary of Visual Effects

- The sensitivity of the visual receptors at this viewpoint is assessed as being **medium**.
- The anticipated magnitude of visual change, as perceived at this viewpoint, is assessed as **low**.

The overall level of visual effect is assessed as being **minor/moderate**. The nature of the effect is considered to be adverse as the although the proposed allocation is largely screened from view, it would introduce new urban elements into the view, particularly at night-time when lighting may be visible. The overall effects is therefore **minor/moderate adverse**.



Contribution to the Green Belt

This area of undeveloped agricultural land forms a distinct open landscape buffer between the settlement of Haxby to the east and the B1363 Wigginton Road to the west. It therefore contributes positively to the openness of the Green Belt, the separation between Haxby and Skelton and contributes to the rural character and landscape setting of the village.

Effects on the Green Belt

- The openness of the Green Belt that surrounds York would be eroded
- Development on the site would lead to the sprawl of built form beyond the Outer Ring Road and into the open countryside.
- The development and its associated infrastructure (roads, signage, lighting etc.) together with the construction of access into the site from Wigginton Lane would constitute encroachment of urban elements into this predominantly open and rural landscape
- The character of the surrounding land would be influenced by lighting from the development

Image 5.1.4.1



View from Moor Lane looking south across site ST14 (Viewpoint 4c on Figure 2)

Image 5.3.4.2

SITE set behind hedgerow



View from Moor Lane looking south (Viewpoint 4b on Figure 2)

Image 5.3.4.3

Gaps in boundary vegetation allow for open views across fields

Moor Lane



View from Moor Lane looking south east (Viewpoint 4a on Figure 2)

Image 5.3.5.1



View from Public footpath 112/10 looking east towards the allocation site (Viewpoint 5a on Figure 2)

Image 5.3.5.2



View from Skelton recreation ground looking east towards the allocation site (Viewpoint 5b on Figure 2)

Image 5.3.5.3



View looking north along public footpath 1110/10 (Viewpoint 5b on Figure 2)



5.1.5 VIEWPOINT 5: SKELTON RECREATIONAL GROUND AND PUBLIC FOOTPATH 11/2/10 AND 11/10/10

Viewpoint Representation

Viewpoint 5 represents views from a series of three points on the eastern side of Skelton and along the public footpath connecting Skelton in the north to Rawcliffe to the south.

Existing Conditions

The public right of way follows the course of Burtree Dam between two field boundaries. The footpath is bound on both sides by mature vegetation, including a mixture of evergreen and deciduous shrub and tree species. Views to the east and west are largely restricted by the vegetation however, where views are available they extend across fields. The character is rural, however there is an appreciation of Skelton when travelling along the footpath in a northerly direction.

Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

The primary visual receptors at this location are considered to be users of the footpath and recreational ground. The sensitivity of these receptors is considered to be **medium** as described within the methodology as follows:

- Users of Public Rights of Way/Public Open Space with restricted views (medium).
- Schools and other institutional buildings, and their outdoor areas (medium).

Magnitude of Visual Change

Development on the site would introduce elements into the view which are not already present or characteristic within the existing scene. Lighting from the development would also be apparent from the edge of the village. The scale of the development is out of context within the receiving landscape and would be seen as a significant negative visual detractor and the magnitude of change is considered to be **medium to high**.

Summary of Visual Effects

- The sensitivity of the visual receptors at this viewpoint is assessed as being *medium*.
- The anticipated magnitude of visual change, as perceived at this viewpoint, is assessed as *medium to high*.

The overall level of visual effect is therefore assessed as being **major**. The nature of the effect is considered to be adverse as the proposed allocation would significantly alter the character of the existing views. The overall effect is therefore **major adverse**.



Contribution to the Green Belt

The effects of development on ST14 would have a negative effect on the openness of the land to the east and change the character and landscape setting of Skelton. The development would reduce the visual separation between Skelton and the nearest settlement. The proposed allocation is not bound to its west by any strong or permanent features and therefore is at risk from future development and further encroachment into the countryside.

Effects on the Green Belt

- Development would damage the openness of the rural landscape setting of Skelton.
- The character of surrounding land would significantly change due to the large scale urban development and be considered encroachment into the countryside.

Image 5.3.6.1



View looking east from the A19 Shipton Road (Viewpoint 6)

Image 5.3.6.2



View looking north from the A1237 York outer ring road (Viewpoint 7)

5.1.6 VIEWPOINTS 6 and 7: A19 AND YORK RING ROAD A1237

Viewpoint Representation

Viewpoints 6 and 7 represent views from the two main roads with potential views to the proposed allocation site.

Existing Conditions

The A19 Shipton Road and the A1237 (York outer ring road) are both busy A-roads. The A19 is an arterial route into York from the north and connects the Village of Skelton with York. The road has some detracting features, however, is considered to be generally rural in character as large lengths of the route are bound by mature hedgerow, trees and bordered by fields.

The A1237 ring road contains the urban character of York within its centre. The surrounding land to its north is rural in character and provides the setting to York.

Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

The primary visual receptors at this location are users of the main roads. The sensitivity of these receptors is considered to be **low** as described within the methodology as follows:

- Users of main roads (low).

Magnitude of Visual Change

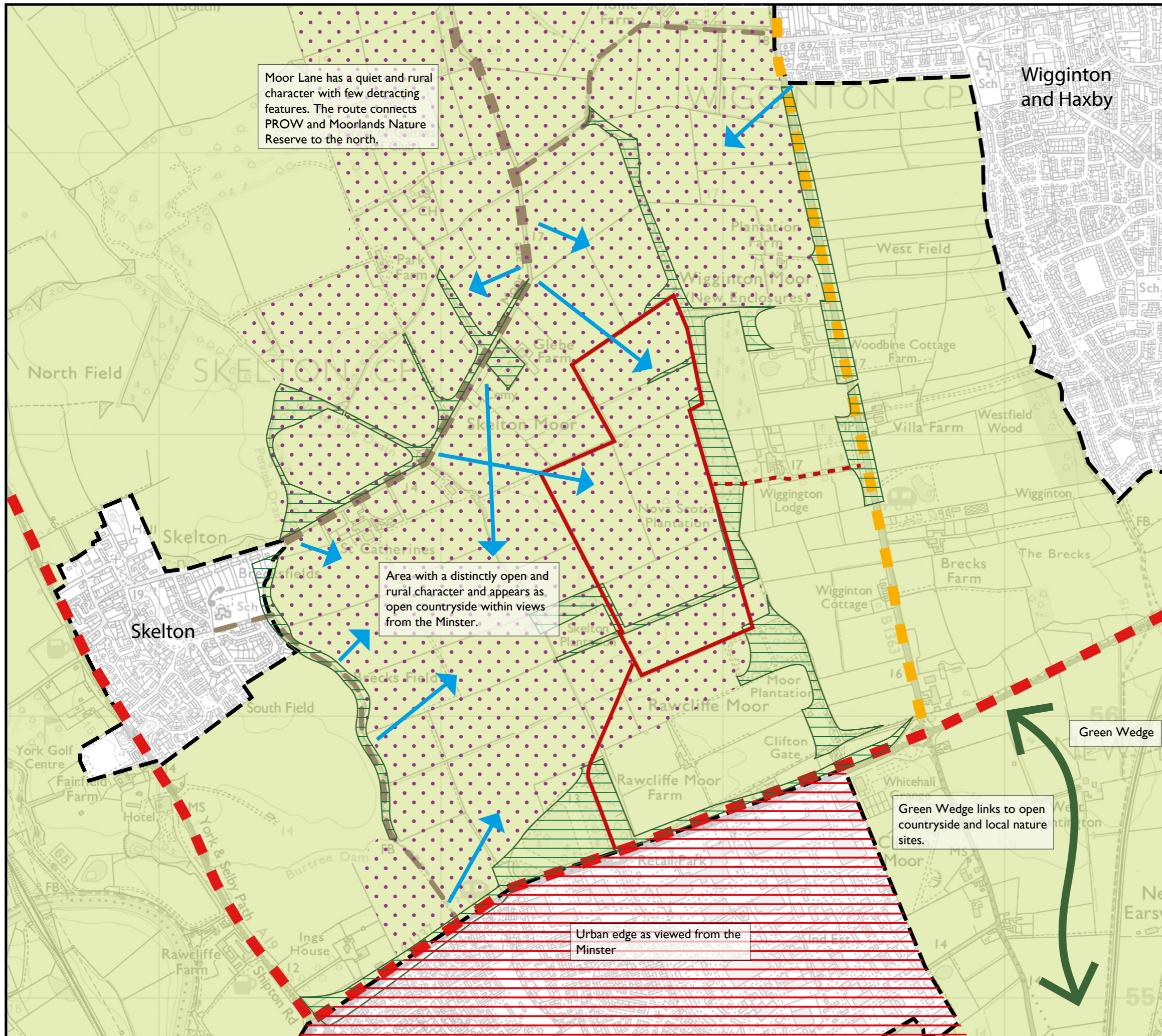
Development on the site would have a limited impact on views from these locations due to the amount of intervening vegetation between the receptors and the proposed allocation site. The receptors are likely to be travelling at high speed and are therefore unlikely to have much of an appreciation of development. If development was to occur on the site then it may become apparent at night with increased light pollution.



Summary of Visual Effects

- The sensitivity of the visual receptors at this viewpoint is assessed as being **low**.
- The anticipated magnitude of visual change, as perceived at this viewpoint, is assessed as **low**.

The overall level of visual effect is therefore assessed as being **major**. The nature of the effect is considered to be adverse as the although the proposed allocation is largely screened from view, it would introduce new urban elements into the view, particularly at night-time when lighting may be visible. The overall effect is therefore **minor adverse**.




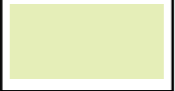





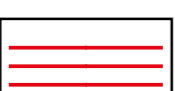

Moor Lane has a quiet and rural character with few detracting features. The route connects PROW and Moorlands Nature Reserve to the north.

Area with a distinctly open and rural character and appears as open countryside within views from the Minster.

Urban edge as viewed from the Minster

Green Wedge links to open countryside and local nature sites.

LAND WEST OF WIGGINTON LANE, YORK

-  Site boundary
-  Green Belt
-  Development Limits
-  Key screen vegetation
-  Area contributing to a positive landscape character
-  Public Right of Way
-  Minor roads
-  Urban character area
-  View contributing to a positive character



Landscape Analysis

0 500m 1000m

SF 2633
Figure 4





Sewage Works

WIGGINTON CP

Forest of Galtres Golf Club

North Field

SKELTON CP

Skelton Moor

Wigginton Moor (New Enclosures)

Haxby

Park Field

New Farm

Hall Skelton

Brecksfields

St Catherines

Nova Scotia Plantation

Brecks

56 NEW EA

South Field

Brecks Field

Rawcliffe Moor

Rawcliffe Moor Farm

Fairfield Farm

Hotel

MS York & Selby Path A19

Burtree Dam

Retail Park

River Ouse

Skelton Bridge

Rawcliffe Farm

Shipron Rd

Ings House

Ind Est

Nether Poppleton

Sewage Rawcliffe

Rawcliffe

RAWCLIFFE CP

CLINTON WITHOUT CP

Bootham Stray

Summary and Conclusions

6.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 SUMMARY OF LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

Development of ST14 would have the following landscape effects:

- Development of 1350 or 1725 homes and associated infrastructure would directly alter the fabric of the physical components within the site and introduce built form into an area which was previously pastoral. Supporting infrastructure and associated structures and lighting are required to service the development and will extend outside of the consultation boundary. The nature and location of the new highways, infrastructure upgrades and extent of lighting are unclear within the City of York Plan - Preferred Sites Consultation 2016.
- The character of the site is considered to have few detracting features and contribute to a positive landscape character. The area conforms to, and contains many of the key characteristics described within the Vale Farmland with Plantation Woodland and Heathland character type described within section 4 of this report. Development on the site would introduce built form and visual detractors, the most obtrusive considered to be the increased amount of lighting into this area and as such would conflict with national and local landscape character.
- The setting of the outlying villages would change as the scattered settlement pattern would become less apparent when travelling along the country lanes and footpaths within the study area and the quiet rural landscape which currently separates them would become urbanised.
- The necessary upgrading of infrastructure to support the development on land off Wigginton Lane (ST14) would potentially change the character of this rural road with the addition of street lighting and improvements to the junction. There is currently a lack of information on how the plans for upgrading infrastructure will integrate into the existing landscape. The character of land to the north of the ring road has been described as important to the setting of York and urbanisation along this road corridor would extend the urban character out in a radial direction.
- Development would impair the perception of important green links from the existing Green Wedge into the open countryside.

6.2 SUMMARY OF VISUAL EFFECTS

Viewpoint Number and location	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Overall Visual Effect
1 The White Horse and York Minster	High	No Change (from White Horse) High (from York Minster)	Major Adverse
2 B1363 Wigginton Lane	Medium	High	Moderate/Major Adverse
3 Footpath 12/6/20	Medium	Low	Minor/Moderate Adverse
4 Moor Lane	Medium - High	High	Major Adverse
5 Skelton	Medium	Medium - High	Moderate Adverse
6 and 7 York Ring Road and A19 Shipton Road	Low	Low	Minor Adverse

The table summarises the outcomes at the seven viewpoint locations. Receptors at the viewpoints range in sensitivity. Low sensitivity receptors have been defined at viewpoints where people experiencing the view are motorised users of roads. Many of the viewpoints are transitional and consequently views of the allocation site change depending on the direction of movement and position along the route.

Overall the greatest visual effects are likely to be experienced close to the proposed allocation at Viewpoint 4 Moor Lane and at Viewpoint 2 Wigginton Lane where the overall level of effect is judged to be major adverse. At these locations the development would form a prominent new component within the view that would alter the character of the view.

In terms of effects on long range views, particularly from York Minster, the development would blur the distinction between the urban core of the city and the open countryside beyond, negatively affect to the setting of York. Development of a new housing development with associated infrastructure, overbridge, grade separated junction, and upgrades to existing road networks would have a moderate and above adverse impact on visual amenity from the majority of the viewpoints visited as part of this study.

6.3 FUNCTION OF THE GREEN BELT

Development on site ST14 and on adjoining land would conflict with all of the five purposes of the Green Belt as defined within the National Planning Policy Framework and described within the following statements;

- The distinction between the urbanised character of land contained within the outer ring road and open countryside, currently designated as Green Belt beyond the ring road would change as urbanisation would extend outwards along Wigginton Lane as 'urban sprawl'
- The lighting from the development would change the setting and dispersed nature of the scattered settlements within the receiving landscape and would illuminate an area with previously dark skies. This is considered to be 'encroachment into the countryside'.
- Development would have a negative impact on the 'openness' of the area to the north of the ring road and between the villages of Skelton, Wigginton and Haxby
- The band of visible countryside between Monks Cross and the White Horse contributes to the 'historic landscape setting' of York. Development on the site would change the perception of the setting of York when viewed by highly sensitive receptors at York Minster
- Development on ST14 does not encourage the 'recycling of derelict and other urban land'
- The site boundary is contained to the east by woodland but has weak boundaries to the south, north and west. The NPPF states that when defining boundaries, local planning authorities should "define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent". The weak boundary is not considered defensible as there are no permanent defining physical features and therefore removing this site from the Green Belt could facilitate further encroachment into the countryside

6.4 CONCLUSIONS

From a landscape and visual perspective the respondents **do not** support the principle of allocating the site for residential development in the emerging City of York Local Plan for the following reasons:

- The proposed allocation is being promoted as a 'Garden Village'. However, a key principle of the Garden City movement is that they are surrounded by a belt of countryside that prevents unplanned urban sprawl. To its south the proposed allocation is separated from the urban area of York by the A1237 Outer Ring Road and a narrow strip of land that would be approximately 456m for BDW/TWF Option 1 masterplan and reduced to 413m for BDW/TWF Option 2 masterplan. However, given the existing significant traffic congestion associated with the A1237 and future plans for dualling of the road, it is reasonable to assume that this belt of land could be subject to further development pressure which would result in the development becoming an extension of the urban area rather than a contained garden village surrounded by countryside.
- The proposed development does not constitute sustainable development as defined in the NPPF. In the ST14 Representation Summary contained in the letter of support from PBP Planning dated 12 September 2016 it is stated that "the allocation boundary needs to be expanded in order to deliver a minimum of 1350 homes at the site". It goes on to state in the CYC Planning Parameters Comparison with BDW & TWF Development Options that the site needs to increase in size by over 10ha for BDW/TWF Option 1 masterplan and over 17ha for BDW/TWF Option 2 masterplan. Therefore, the level of effects identified in the accompanying landscape and visual appraisal are likely to be greater given the larger area required to accommodate either number of homes.
- The Clifton Gate Concept Masterplan document dated September 2016 explains that one of the key characteristics of York is how the city developed outwards from its historic core in the form of development corridors separated by green fingers. It goes on to state that the site "aligns with one of these development corridors". However, these development corridors extend to the A1237 Outer Ring Road, not beyond it. As identified in the visual appraisal the Outer Ring Road provides a clear boundary that differentiates between the open, rural countryside to the north and urban core of York to the south. Development at Clifton Gate would serve to extend the north westerly development corridor that lies between the Ouse Corridor to the west and Bootham Stray to the east, beyond the strong physical and defensible boundary provided by the Outer Ring Road.
- Furthermore, the Concept Masterplan document goes on to state on Page 7 that, "The site is located between two green corridors". This is not the case. As explained in the above point, the 'green fingers' extend to the Outer Ring Road. It is the case, therefore, that the allocation sits within the open countryside to the north of the A1237 Outer Ring Road and would result in the extension of the urban core into the open countryside that surrounds York.
- Beyond the A1237 Outer Ring Road the landscape has a strong perceptual sense of openness. Its landscape pattern is characterised by open countryside interspersed with a scattered settlement pattern of towns, villages and farmsteads as identified in both national and local landscape character assessments. Development at ST14 would introduce a substantial sized new settlement within this landscape, between the gap that exists between Skelton and Haxby. As explained above the allocation boundary needs to expand in order to accommodate even the lower number of new homes proposed in BDW/TDF Option 1 Masterplan. This would tip the balance between open countryside and scattered settlements resulting in a landscape characterised by settlements interspersed with countryside.
- The Clifton Gate Concept Masterplan document states on Page 6 that "The site is in Green Belt land, which surrounds the city beyond the Outer Ring Road. This road acts as a physical and psychological barrier between the development and the suburban edges of York". However, the Outer Ring Road provides a clearly recognisable, strong defensible boundary between York and the open countryside beyond. Development at ST14 will blur this definition, effectively creating a fuzzy boundary that leads to the peri-urbanisation of this north west development corridor of the Outer Ring Road. This characterising effect will be further exacerbated by any future dualling or junction improvements along the A1237 and by any expansion of the allocation boundary, which the promoters state is required in order to deliver the net developable area of either masterplan options. In terms of effects on

landscape character this will result in the loss of characteristic features of the Vale Farmland landscape character type and permanently and irreversibly change this part of the landscape character type into an area of urban character.

- The NPPF paragraph 9 identifies that a key characteristic of Green Belts is their openness and permanence. Development at ST14 would significantly compromise the stated purposes of the Green Belt by contributing to urban sprawl by enabling the extension of the urban development corridor into the open countryside to the north of the A1237 Outer Ring Road.
- The development would not directly result in the merging of the neighbouring settlements of Skelton and Haxby. However, the proposed allocation would reduce the gap that separates the two settlements and together with the identified required expansions to the allocation boundary would significantly contribute towards the coalescence of these two settlements.
- The development would introduce urban elements such as roads, lighting, signage in open countryside that is largely free of detracting features. The Clifton Gate Concept Masterplan document identifies the creation of a new cycle/footbridge that would connect the development with the existing Clifton Moor retail facilities to the south of the Outer Ring Road. While it is recognised that this will be of benefit to future residents, it reinforces the connection between the proposed allocation to the north and the development corridor to the south and together with the other urban elements would significantly encroach upon the open countryside that surrounds York. Furthermore, the development would penetrate through the defensible boundary provided by the A1237 and would not provide a sufficiently strong boundary to the Green Belt capable of withstanding development pressures during the plan period and beyond.
- The proposed masterplan options incorporate view corridors through the development that recognise the importance of views from the countryside towards York Minster. However, the indicative masterplans fail to recognise the importance of views from the Minster out across the urban core to the belt of countryside that surrounds the city. In particular, in long range views towards The White Horse the development would extend the urban form into this band of countryside.

In summary, the respondents **do not** support the proposed allocation of the site for housing because it cannot be considered sustainable or appropriate development when considered within the context of the NPPF in landscape and visual terms. The development would also result in significant harm to the landscape and visual amenity of the countryside due to the characterising effect it would have and the significant harm it would cause to the setting of the city of York.



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7.0 Bibliography

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