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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 A comprehensive landscape and visual assessment has been carried out for the proposed Poplar Farm development off Barrowby Road in Grantham (Figure 1 details the Site Location). This report describes and evaluates the effect of the proposed development on the landscape and visual resources and amenity of the site and its surroundings. It reviews the existing baseline conditions, assesses the potential significant impacts and outlines design and mitigation proposals incorporated as part of the overall proposed development. It has been undertaken as an integral part of the evolving master plan and design process for the site. This report forms part of and should be read in conjunction with the Environmental Statement (ES) for the proposed development.

Methodology

Baseline Data Collection

1.2 The landscape and visual impact assessment approach combines information and desktop reviews with on-site surveys and appraisals. The site based assessment involves the recording of both objective descriptions and subjective impressions of the landscape, as well as details of the existing landscape condition. The assessment of visual effects includes a site based assessment of the likely effects from each of the identified receptors.

1.3 Existing available and published information and data is sourced and includes Landscape Character assessments, planning policies and designated sites and features. Statutory and relevant bodies are also consulted for other information and comments. The results of the baseline data collection are used in the assessment process as outlined below.

Assessment Methodology

1.4 The assessment methodology used in the preparation of this section has been developed from guidance given in Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Second Edition) and Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland. In summary the assessment process comprises:
• Establishment of existing or baseline conditions, including identification of landscape character types, planning designations relating to the landscape, identification of visual receptors and the recording of landscape features on the site and in the vicinity of the proposed development;

• Description of the development;

• Assessment of the impact of the development on baseline conditions;

• Recommendations for design and mitigation measures to offset or reduce identified impacts; and

• Continual reassessment of impacts based upon the evolving design and mitigation measures being in place, to determine final impact levels.

1.5 The assessment seeks to identify the magnitude and significance of changes to the character of the existing landscape and visual resources, which would arise from the construction and operation of the development.

Two broad categories of impact are considered:

1. Landscape impacts are changes in the fabric, character and quality of the landscape. These could include direct impacts upon specific landscape elements (such as loss of woodland or hedgerows) or effects on landscape character and designated areas of landscape.

2. Visual impacts relate to specific changes in the character of views and the effects of those changes on visual receptors (e.g. users of roads or public Rights of Way and residents or users of recreational facilities). Visual impact to the setting of cultural heritage features is also considered (e.g. Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Listed Buildings or Conservation Areas) as these interests are protected by planning policies.

1.6 In making the assessment, magnitude of impact is considered alongside the identified sensitivity of the individual receptors to determine the significance of impacts. Magnitude of change (assessed as high, medium, low or no discernible change) predicts the degree to which change to landscape
character, landscape features or change in view character would occur as a result of the development.

1.7 Sensitivity predicts the degree to which individual receptors will be affected by the change. Sensitivity varies between receptor types, for example, a small-scale rural landscape may be more sensitive to change than an urban fringe landscape which has been modified by man-made detractors; views from public Rights of Way would normally be more sensitive to change than views from roads, given the relative speed at which the observer moves. By combining the assessment of magnitude and sensitivity it is possible to predict the significance of the impact, which may be negligible, slight, moderate or substantial and can be either beneficial or adverse depending on the nature of the development and the design and mitigation measures proposed.

1.8 Assessment of visual impact on property is carried out on the basis of predicted effects on views (including garden views). It should be noted however, that the assessment of views from properties is based on a best assumption from publicly accessible locations close to the properties. Where it has not been possible to sufficiently assess the potential effects on properties from public viewpoints or where confidence in predictions are low this is stated within the text.

1.9 Further details of the methodology and assessment criteria are included in Appendix A.
2.0 **EXISTING BASELINE CONDITIONS**

**Topography**

2.1 The following should be read in conjunction with Figure 2.

**Context - Landform**

2.2 The broad topographic context of the site and Grantham is dominated by the River Witham valley which extends roughly north – south through the centre of Grantham. Smaller watercourses to the east and west of the river fall towards it and create a series of tributary valleys that feed into the Witham.

2.3 The higher land to the south east of the town is situated on limestone and contains some free draining loams. Higher land over limestone occurs to the west and north at Great Gonerby and towards Barrowby.

**Local - Landform**

2.4 The site lies on the western valley slopes of the Witham. Generally, these slopes have an easterly aspect and fall back towards the town. The site occupies land that varies between below 60 metres Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) in the east of the site and 95 metres AOD on the western boundary. The valley slopes continue to rise beyond the site boundary to the west to a high point (over 110 metres (AOD)) at Stubbock Hill, approximately 600 metres to the west of the site.

2.5 The eastern half of the site generally slopes more gradually and is also enclosed by rising land beyond the site to the north (including a rail line on embankment) and south. Two minor valleys exist within the site and form relatively shallow depressions in the slopes leading up towards the western site boundary. These minor valleys fall towards and intersect in the centre of the site with the southerly one of the two including a minor watercourse/wet ditch. These relatively subtle variations in the rising slopes create a more rolling landform yet still maintain a general aspect towards the east and north east and the existing settlement.
2.6 Existing settlement at Great Gonerby to the north of the site lies at around 90 – 110 m AOD; at Gonerby Hill Foot to the north at around 60 – 95 m AOD; and to the south of the site and the A52 at 55 – 95m AOD.

**Landscape Character and Context**

2.7 Landscape Character Assessments have been prepared at National, and Districtwide scales covering the site and its context. Please refer to Appendix B

**National**

2.8 The characterisation of the very broad landscape context of the site is set out in the Natural England (formerly the Countryside Agency) Character Map of England. The site and Grantham lie within a broad landscape context comprising a number of different character areas. However, the town and the site itself fall within the *Trent and Belvoir Vales* character area (No. 48). This landscape character area stretches from Nottingham, the Vale of Belvoir and Grantham in the south and west, beyond Lincoln to Gainsborough in the north. Descriptions and details contained within this study include the following:

**Trent and Belvoir Vales (Character Area 48)**

*Key Characteristics*

- Gently undulating landform, with shallow ridges dropping down gently to broad river valley
- Frequent nucleated villages with red brick houses, roofed with pantiles, and spired churches prominent in long view
- Large market towns with historic centres and substantial churches visible from afar, notably Newark, Grantham, Southwell, Lincoln.

**Landscape Character**

...In the east, there is the smaller but noticeable scarp of the Lincolnshire Edge...

.... Settlements are scattered, compact villages linked by a network of small, quiet country lanes. These contrast with the busy market towns, and the major roads that traverse the area, notably the A1 and the A46.
only slight rises of undulating land separate the Vale of Belvoir from the broad flat valley of the Witham to the north-east.

Buildings and Settlement

... Further away from Nottingham are a few, regularly spaced, large market towns - Grantham, Newark, Southwell, Lincoln and Gainsborough. These have notable historic town centres with tightly clustered brick buildings. The spires of Grantham and Newark, the Abbey at Southwell and the Minster at Lincoln are all substantial tall buildings, visible from afar across the surrounding farmland...

2.9 As already indicated, the Natural England assessment provides a very broad contextual understanding and description covering significant landscape tracts. In this respect it does not provide details directly relevant to the site or its immediate surroundings, other than to establish the underlying characteristics of the wider landscape. Other landscape character areas lie relatively close to the south and east of Grantham and include Kesteven Uplands (No. 75), Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire Wolds (No.74) and Southern Lincolnshire Edge (No.47). More detailed and site relevant landscape character assessments are contained within the Countywide assessment as outlined below.

District (South Kesteven Landscape Character Assessment (SKLCA) – January 2007)

2.10 This assessment builds upon the national and broader Natural England assessment outlined above. At this level of assessment 7 district landscape character areas have been identified. The site and its immediate context fall within the Grantham Scarps and Valleys landscape character area key characteristics of the Grantham Scarps and Valleys are described as follows:

- Built development in Grantham is generally on the lower lying land in the valleys;
- Steep scarp slopes to the east and south, with woodland or pasture cover;
- Generally medium scale arable fields, with relatively few hedgerow trees to the west and north;
o Small scale hedged pasture fields with hedgerows trees to the east and south;

o Attractive parkland with attractive woodland and parkland trees at Belton;

o Small villages, separated from Grantham town by narrow areas of open countryside.

2.11 The districtwide assessment also includes the following relevant extracts:

“Physical Influences
Topography is one of the most important physical influences on the character of the area, with the valley of the River Witham extending to the north towards Barkston....Some of the less steep slopes are under arable cultivation, such as the land north of the A52. Across other areas of land, the topography is less dramatic, but it rises towards the A1 and Great Gonerby. The surrounding higher land characterises Grantham and has undoubtedly shaped the form of the town today.

Human Influences
Most of the historic development in the town lies in the valley bottom....The town saw a more rapid expansion during the twentieth century with some larger housing estates and industrial development spreading out along the valleys, and in some cases up the slopes. The town has now extended towards Great Gonerby, Belton and Barrowby, although the villages do retain their separate identities....many of the 20th Century housing areas are not particularly locally distinctive.

Landscape Character
....Some more recent higher density development, such as at Gonerby Hill Foot, provides a stark edge to the town, and the housing contrasts with the countryside beyond.

Settlement
....To the west of the town, residential and employment development has extended towards the A1. Much of the A1 is in cutting and is enclosed by mature highway planting. This provides a firm boundary to the town. There are currently areas of open land along the western edge of town. Some open areas are farmed, such as north of the A52 and some are unmanaged
such as at Fairview Farm, south of the A52. These areas of landscape are influenced by the residential areas adjacent to them and do not make a significant contribution to the setting of the town.

**Landscape Sensitivity**

...There are some areas closer to the edge of town, containing little of intrinsic landscape interest, that would offer the scope for development. New development and associated landscape planting could soften some of the existing hard urban edges to the town....In general terms, new development should avoid the higher valley slopes, and should not establish new built development on the skyline."

2.12 Of particular relevance is Figure 17 of the SKLCA which is titled “Landscape Sensitivity for Employment and Residential Development around Grantham” (a copy of this figure is included at Appendix B). This Figure clearly shows that the site occupies an area of Low Sensitivity in landscape terms and in this regard does constitute a logical location for appropriately designed development.

**Local Landscape Character**

2.13 A detailed assessment of local landscape character has been carried out, using field evaluation and analysis of maps and other published data based on Natural England (formerly the Countryside Agency) guidance. Local landscape character is described below and should be read in conjunction with the Landscape Appraisal Plan (Figure 3) and Aerial Photographs (Figures 4 and 5). This provides a site specific and finer level of assessment than those included within the National, County and District tiers of landscape character assessment.

2.14 The site landscape is under farmland use yet its immediate environs are dominated by a combination of the local topography and the surrounding settlement. The site forms a triangular area of land that extends in towards the centre of Grantham and up to the rail crossing of the A52, alongside the Asda roundabout. Beyond the farmland that is under arable production, the site also includes existing allotments, an area of unmanaged grassland and an existing balancing pond (dry) on the lower lying land in the east.
2.15 The existing field are of a medium scale and are generally subdivided by fragmented and low hedgerows. These are not visually significant in providing any spatial definition or landscape structure to the site. Equally, the site includes very few mature trees and overall it is perceived as being relatively open with very little mature planting or landscape structure of note.

2.16 An existing rail line passes around the northern and eastern perimeter of the site, from deep cutting in the north west corner (where it passes into Gonerby Tunnel) to being on embankment around the lower lying eastern edge of the site. To the south, the site rises up towards the A52 (Barrowby Road) and existing residential development. This include a relatively recently constructed housing area between the site boundary and the A52. This housing is relatively open to the site. A Public House (The Muddle Go Nowhere) is also located on the edge of the site and alongside the A52.

2.17 Immediately to the west of the site, the land continues as farmland up towards the highest land at Stubbock Hill and around Rectory Farm and Boundary Farm. Beyond this ridge the land falls away down towards the A1 road corridor, which includes some mature woodland and roadside planting.

2.18 In terms of water features, a small pond lies outside the western site boundary and appears to feed the small watercourse/ wet ditch that falls from this boundary through the site. This intersects with another minor watercourse/ wet ditch on the northern boundary of the site and to the north of the existing dry balancing pond that also exists within the site.

2.19 There is no vehicular access or public rights of way across the site although it is known to be informally accessed for walking and dog walking by surrounding residents.

2.20 In overall landscape sensitivity terms, the site has been assessed as Low, indicating that it is an area with a weak character or relatively few features of value, potentially tolerant of significant change and would benefit from a restoration or creation of landscape structure. Importantly, this also reflects the conclusion of the Districtwide landscape character assessment.
undertaken in January 2007 by South Kesteven District Council (relevant extracts included at Appendix B).

Trees

2.21 The site does not contain a significant number of trees. In fact, the absence of matures trees across the site and within the hedgerows is apparent and contributes to the open character and existing weak landscape structure to the site. Where trees are present these are around the perimeter of the site or within the immediately surrounding context, beyond the site boundary. These include a line of mature Poplars (refer to Figure 3 – Ref 6) on the site boundary at Green Hill and a relatively limited number of trees along the rail line corridor and lining Barrowby Rd. Further information on existing vegetation and habitats is included within the Ecology chapter.

Planning Policy, Strategies and Landscape Designations

2.22 This section considers the relevant planning and legislative framework in the context of the landscape and visual issues. Not all policies are referred to or listed in full but those of greatest relevance to the site and nature of the proposed development are included. It does not endeavour to provide full details of the planning policy context of the site or proposed development (this is included elsewhere) but to address those specifically related to landscape and visual matters.

National and Regional and Context

2.23 National planning policy contains a number of relevant general policy references within the Planning Policy Guidance (PPG’s) and Planning Policy Statement (PPS’s) documents. The most relevant to landscape and visual issues are:

- Planning Policy Statement 1 : Delivering Sustainable Development
- Planning Policy Statement 7 : Sustainable Development in Rural Areas
- Planning Policy Guidance 17 : Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation

These documents have been considered in the planning and design of the proposed development.
Regional planning guidance is contained within the Regional Spatial Strategy for the East Midlands (RSS8) published in March 2005. Other relevant regional strategies and documents include: A Regional Environment Strategy (published in August 2002), the East Midlands Green Infrastructure - Phase 1 Scoping Study (Final Report published September 2006) and Green Infrastructure in the East Midlands - A Public Benefit Mapping Project. All of these guidance and strategy documents set a broad and strategic context for the site. The relevant broad landscape principles contained in these documents have been considered in the proposed development. They do not contain any more site specific landscape guidance.

Lincolnshire Structure Plan (Adopted September 2006)

The Structure Plan strategy “seeks to prevent unnecessary development in the countryside. Necessary development will generally be allowed subject to environmental impact criteria.”

Policy NE7 (Protecting Historic Landscapes) of the Structure Plan states;

DEVELOPMENT MUST BE APPROPRIATE TO THE CHARACTER OF THE LANDSCAPE WITHIN WHICH IT IS SITUATED, AND CONTRIBUTE TO ITS CONSERVATION, ENHANCEMENT OR RESTORATION. PROPOSALS WILL BE ASSESSED IN RELATION TO:
(a) BOTH STATUTORY AND LOCAL DESIGNATION OF LANDSCAPE FEATURES
(b) LOCAL DISTINCTIVENESS AND SENSE OF PLACE
(c) HISTORIC CHARACTER, PATTERNS AND ATTRIBUTES OF THE LANDSCAPE
(d) THE LAYOUT AND SCALE OF BUILDINGS AND DESIGNED SPACES
(e) THE QUALITY AND CHARACTER OF THE BUILT FABRIC
(f) THE CONDITION OF THE LANDSCAPE
(g) BIODIVERSITY AND ECOLOGICAL NETWORKS WITHIN THE LANDSCAPE
(h) PUBLIC ACCESS TO AND COMMUNITY VALUE OF THE LANDSCAPE
(i) REMOTENESS AND TRANQUILITY
(j) VISUAL INTRUSION
(k) NOISE AND LIGHT POLLUTION
2.26 The proposed development has been fully considered in the context of landscape character and in relation to the relevant points above.

South Kesteven Local Plan (Adopted April 1995)

2.27 Within the adopted Local Plan, the site is specifically covered by Policies H1.5 and S8.1. These policies identify the site for Major New Housing Development (H1.5), incorporating Local Shopping Facilities (S8.1). The relevance and significance of these policies are addressed within the Planning Statement and elsewhere within the Environmental Statement.

2.28 The only general policy relevant to the site and the proposed development in landscape terms is Policy EN1 (Protection and Enhancement of the Environment). The proposed development has considered this policy in its layout and design. Further information relating to the protection and enhancement of the environment is also contained within the Design and Access Statement forming part of the planning application.

Landscape Designations

2.29 There are no landscape designations that apply to the site or its immediate context.

Visual Receptors and Existing Views

2.30 A detailed visual appraisal has been undertaken for the proposed development. The baseline appraisal seeks to explore the nature of the existing visual amenity of the area and to establish the approximate visibility of the site from any surrounding receptors. This section provides a baseline analysis of the available views and amenity and is supported by a series of photo viewpoints (Figures 7 – 12). An assessment of the visual effects of the proposed development upon the receptors is detailed in the subsequent effects section. Figure 6 details the location of the photo viewpoints. It is important to note that not all viewpoints have been taken from publicly accessible locations. Some have been included to aid in the understanding of the landscape and visual issues associated with the site and proposed development. The viewpoints are described below.

Viewpoint A

2.31 Taken from roundabout on the A52 (Barrowby Road) this viewpoint illustrates the existing view from the main vehicular access into the site.
Existing relatively recent residential development occupies the foreground on the right of the view and the Muddle Go Nowhere public house is visible to the very left. Both of these front onto the A52.

2.32 Part of the site is visible occupying a relatively small proportion of the view in the middle distance below and in front of the existing residential development at Gonerby Hill Foot. Great Gonerby is also visible on the skyline beyond. The main vehicular access into the site falls away from the roundabout.

*Viewpoint B*

2.33 This broad panorama is taken from towards the western end of Balmoral Drive on the edge of the recent development area and overlooking the proposed site. The site is clearly visible stretching between the higher ground and western site boundary and the lower lying land contained by the existing settlement edge and rail line and embankment.

2.34 The existing residential development fronting Balmoral Drive can be seen sitting largely above and overlooking the immediate site area. Great Gonerby and existing lower lying residential development off Gonerby Road are visible in the middle distance beyond the site. Distant views are also possible north eastwards across Grantham to the wooded and upper valley slopes beyond the town. It is apparent from this viewpoint that the majority of the hedgerows within the site are low and fragmented and are not visually significant. A small depression and pocket of scrubby vegetation is occupies the immediate foreground.

*Viewpoint C*

2.35 Taken from the lower eastern end of the existing Balmoral Drive, this viewpoint encompasses the flatter, lower and more enclosed eastern parts of the site. Much of this land is occupied by rough grassland, with the existing dry balancing pond and pumping station visible within this part of the site.

*Viewpoint D*

2.36 Distant and longer ranging views are possible from the elevated (approx 75 metres AOD) southern boundary of the site. These views extend across the northern parts of Grantham and the River Witham valley in this direction.
However, there are no clear views westwards, southwards or over the main built up areas of Grantham from this position.

2.37 The existing adjoining residential development and rail line and embankment are clearly visible and define and contain parts of the site at this location. The relatively taller and more significant existing hedgerow within the site is visible on the stretching across the right hand half of the viewpoint. A small number of tall mature trees are also visible on the site boundary (to the rear of existing Barrowby Road properties) on the right of the view.

*Viewpoint E*

2.38 Taken from the lower lying eastern boundary of the site, this view looks westwards across the site and includes the rising slopes within the site boundary and the highest slopes beyond. From this position the importance of the topography and general aspect of the site is clearly illustrated; falling towards the existing settlement and contained in part by the adjoining rail embankment and the more elevated existing development.

2.39 The absence of a strong or mature framework of woodland, trees or other site based landscape features is also apparent from this viewpoint. Those trees and woodland visible are located beyond the site boundary.

*Viewpoint F*

2.40 The existing dry balancing pond facility occupies the foreground of this viewpoint. The mounds surrounding this existing feature are visible on both sides of the viewpoint with the floor of the dry pond occupied by rough grassland. The more elevated recent residential development and higher land leading to Stubbock Hill beyond the western site boundary occupy the skyline from this location.

*Viewpoint G*

2.41 From the mid slopes on the northern site boundary, this viewpoint looks southwards across the site towards Barrowby Road. The highest parts of Grantham town centre, including the church are just visible as part of a limited and more channelled view south eastwards to the higher valley slopes of the River Witham beyond the town. The existing residential
development and other existing buildings along Barrowby Road occupy the higher ground beyond the southern edge of the site.

Viewpoint H

2.42 In the opposite direction, existing residential development is clearly visible off Gonerby Hill Road immediately beyond the rail line (which is in cutting at this point). This development stretches up the lower slopes of Gonerby Hill, with Great Gonerby visible on the highest parts of the hill beyond. Existing hedgerow and scrubby vegetation along the site boundary and immediately beyond assists in filtering some of the lower level views to and from this existing development.

Viewpoint I

2.43 Taken from the highest western boundary of the site, this view eastwards stretches across the town to the higher eastern slopes of the River Witham valley. The site itself falls away from the foreground towards the existing town edge. The wider ranging views reveal Grantham on the lower and mid valley slopes and stretching up the tributary valley slopes (as illustrated by the existing development off Gonerby Road). Grantham town centre and church are visible on the right of the photo. The low hedgerows around and within the site are also clearly visible from this point.

Viewpoint J

2.44 Looking north eastwards from the relatively elevated south east corner of the site close to Barrowby Road, this view does not include much of the site which falls away from this point towards the existing settlement edge. The viewpoint includes Great Gonerby and the existing housing off Gonerby Road in the middle distance and the higher eastern valley slopes of the River Witham beyond Grantham. The Muddle Go Nowhere public house and a relatively short stretch of mature boundary planting are visible to the right and left of the viewpoint respectively.

Viewpoint K

2.45 This represents a similar view to J above, yet is taken from the footpath adjacent to Barrowby Road. This viewpoint similarly illustrates how the site falls away from this relatively elevated position down towards the existing
settlement edge and rail line. The view from the road at this point is relatively open to this immediate part of the site. Great Gonerby and Stubbock Hill are visible on the higher ground beyond the site.

**Viewpoint L**

2.46 Taken from within the recent residential development off Balmoral Drive, this viewpoint depicts a channelled view along Richmond Drive towards the site boundary. The prominent existing Poplar trees on the site boundary and to the rear of the properties on Barrowby Rd are clearly visible within this view.

**Viewpoint M**

2.47 From north of the B1174 (Gonerby Rd) views towards the site are possible from part of the existing settlement area. The nature of these views do however vary and this viewpoint illustrates one of the clearest views towards the site. From other properties and locations surrounding this position views are either further restricted or not possible at all.

2.48 In this view, the more elevated southern parts of the site are visible leading up towards the existing housing off Balmoral Drive and along Barrowby Rd. The view remains dominated by the immediate and existing housing context.

**Viewpoint N**

2.49 An existing channelled view towards the more elevated western part of the site is possible along Penine Way. Existing properties and vegetation along Barrowby Rd can be seen from this position occupying the skyline above the site.

**Viewpoint O**

2.50 This viewpoint is taken from the elevated southern edge of Great Gonerby looking southwards. In this narrow view the more elevated western part of the site is visible in the mid ground with Barrowby Rd and more distant housing, employment units and landscapes beyond.
2.51 From the footpath alongside the B1174 (Gonerby Hill), parts of the east and west of the site are visible beyond the existing urban edge. In this view the elevated south eastern part of the site is visible, with the existing Poplar trees just visible on the site boundary. A narrow strip of the site is also visible leading up to the recent residential development off Balmoral Drive. The more elevated western part of the site is also partially visible across the Penine Way junction.

*Viewpoint Q*

2.52 Similarly taken from north of the site boundary, this view looks over an existing balancing pond (related to the existing development off Penine Way) and over the mature vegetation lining the rail corridor to parts of the site beyond. Existing properties and vegetation lining Barrowby Rd are just visible towards the left of the viewpoint. These are situated ion the highest ground beyond the site boundary.

*Viewpoint R*

2.53 This viewpoint is taken from the access track leading to Rectory Farm (from the A52). It demonstrates how the nature of the local landform close to this location effectively hides the site in views. This is an elevated location and is situated above the site and looking towards the existing settlement edge. The vast majority of Grantham is not visible from this position as the town occupies the lower and mid valley slopes to the east. The site is concealed by its general aspect towards the east and the existing urban edge.
3.0 LANDSCAPE DESIGN AND MITIGATION

Introduction and Objectives

3.1 The existing landscape resource of the site and its context have been considered by the assessment and masterplanning process. This has extended from preliminary landscape and visual appraisals through to the production of the guiding design principles, the Concept Masterplan and the Design and Access Statement (DAS). This iterative approach would continue throughout the subsequent detailed design process and would include continued and close collaboration between landscape, architectural, urban design, engineering and ecological professionals.

3.2 The key objectives of the Landscape proposals are as follows:

- Respect existing landscape character.
- Conserve and enhance landscape areas and features as an integral and structuring part of the landscape framework.
- Create a high quality and robust new landscape framework, including tree and structure planting, hedgerows, other mixed habitats, open spaces and water features.
- Provide new planting as part of a thorough and long term approach to the growth and management of the overall landscape framework.
- Minimise any potential adverse landscape or visual effects through the application of best practice design principles and careful attention to design through all stages of the development process.
- Adopt specific landscape measures to mitigate any potential adverse landscape, visual or other environmental effects (e.g. noise mitigation).

Landscape Framework - Proposals

3.3 A high quality landscape framework would be an essential part of the proposed development. This would be an integral part of creating a high quality and sustainable scheme appropriate to both the site landscape and its settlement context. The landscape proposals would establish a quality setting for buildings; encourage activity, recreation and play; provide
identity within the built form; maximise bio diversity and form a cohesive and accessible framework to the built development proposals.

3.4 In broad terms, the landscape framework would include both soft and hard landscape and incorporate woodland and structural planting, open spaces and nature conservation areas, sports and play provision, sustainable drainage and water features and the general public realm of streets and spaces. The landscape approach will be founded on inclusive designs, with the emphasis on quality and simplicity.

3.5 The existing site landscape is largely devoid of any significant landscape structure or assets. There are very few mature trees and the majority of hedgerows are fragmented and low and do little in terms of spatial definition. Arguably, the most notable feature within the site is the minor watercourse/wet ditch that runs through the centre of the site and a small number of the perimeter and internal hedgerows. These however, remain as only minor and locally positive features within the site itself.

3.6 The proposed landscape framework would effectively incorporate the majority of these features within a new layout of open spaces, planting proposals and associated access and recreation areas. It should however also be noted that as the immediate context of the site is dominated by existing development and is relatively close to the centre of Grantham, the proportion of landscape proposals to the overall built development areas is not as significant as if the site was in a more urban fringe and countryside setting. This does however reflect the location of the site and its relationship to its immediate built up context.

3.7 The landscape framework proposals also acknowledge the potential and logical future extension of development immediately to the west of the site. Consequently, at this time no significant outer or enduring landscape edge (to the western site boundary) would be established as part of the development. This is deemed to be the most appropriate solution as it retains the ability to fully assimilate future development immediately to the west of the site before establishing an appropriately sited and robust landscape edge to the settlement towards the highest ground approaching Rectory Farm. Importantly, it has been assessed that a landscape “buffer”
to this western boundary is not required as part of any mitigation measures to address any likely significant effects.

3.8 The soft landscape proposals would include pockets of new broadleaved woodland, trees, hedgerows, areas of amenity, wildflower and conservation grassland, and wetland habitats. This will enhance the character of the development and the site’s bio-diversity by providing greater habitat diversity.

3.9 All existing trees and significant planting to be conserved would be fully protected during construction as set out in BS 5837: ‘Trees in Relation to Construction’.

3.10 The resultant landscape framework proposals include the following character areas and corridors:

1. Community Park (incorporating Formal Sports)
2. Primary Landscape Corridor
3. Other Landscape Corridors and Areas
4. Existing Allotments
5. Play Areas and Pocket Parks

**Community Park (incorporating Formal Sports)**

3.11 Located on the lower lying and more level eastern part of the site, a significant area would be dedicated to and designed as a Community Park, incorporating sports and play facilities. This area would occupy approximately 7.6 hectares and would extend from the northern edge of the existing allotments in the very east of the site around the lower lying land towards the rail line boundary to include the existing balancing pond facility and into the core of the site.

3.12 This area would serve as a key focus within the development with key landscape and access corridors extending into it from the higher slopes to the west. Surrounding built development would address and define much of this area with key views and vista’s into it and beyond created.

3.13 To the north of the existing allotments, the existing area of rough grassland would be conserved and would be more actively managed for principally
wildlife objectives. The main footway/cycleway linking the development into the town centre would pass through this area yet would be kept to the perimeter with simple fencing to limit access to the area itself.

3.14 Towards the north west of this proposed “wildlife” area and encompassing the existing balancing pond facility, further open space and sustainable drainage proposals would be provided within a relatively natural setting. This would include significant native tree, shrub and aquatic planting and would also be managed for wildlife and access benefits. New native planting around and within the existing balancing facility would be agreed with the relevant authorities and although it is anticipated that this may be fairly limited, it would nevertheless improve the visual and wildlife interest of the existing facility.

3.15 Sports and play facilities would be sited to the west of this existing balancing pond at the heart of the development. These would be framed and overlooked by dwellings fronting onto this space. The sports facilities would include senior and junior football pitches and a multi use games area (MUGA), together with a new changing pavilion and car parking. A play area would also be sited alongside these sports facilities.

Primary Landscape Corridor

3.16 This landscape corridor would extend from the elevated western site boundary (close to the existing off site boundary pond) through the site along the line of the existing minor watercourse. It would extend through the centre of the site to link up with the Community Park on the lower lying land.

3.17 The corridor would typically vary in width between 20 – 80 metres and would incorporate a series of ponds (as part of the sites sustainable drainage strategy), a key footpath and cycleway and a mix of open space and structural planting proposals. Dwellings and development on the edge of the corridor would be orientated to face and actively overlook the proposals. The corridor would be highly permeable with easy access to all of the surrounding new development.
3.18 The detailed design of this corridor would include the provision of new pedestrian and cycle bridges and high quality hard landscape and street furniture proposals. Importantly, the drainage ponds would be designed as natural and attractive features and would complement the overall impression and character of the corridor.

Other Landscape Corridors and Areas
3.19 A number of other structural landscape corridors and areas would be formed as part of the development. These would assist in assimilating the built development proposals; establishing a suitable setting and in providing the key pedestrian and cycle routes. These additional corridors and areas would vary in design and character with some adopting a stronger emphasis on hard landscape and public realm proposals and others with a softer and more natural approach.

3.20 Many other landscape areas and proposals would extend within and throughout the built development areas shown and would include significant new trees, shrub and hedgerow planting and a series of play areas and “pocket parks”.

Existing Allotments
3.21 The existing allotments in the east of the site would be retained as part of the development. Although there would be some minor disruption and change to the existing allotments arising from the construction of a footway and cycleway link around the perimeter of the allotments, an additional area of land (at least equivalent to the area lost) immediately to the north of the existing allotments area would be provided for new allotments. The detailed design and nature of these changes to the existing allotments would be undertaken in full consultation with the relevant parties. Appropriate fencing, hedging, signage and boundary treatments would be included alongside the proposed footway and cycleway link.

Play Areas and Pocket Parks
3.22 A series of play areas will be provided throughout the proposed development, either within the proposed landscape framework as set out
above or in the form of smaller play spaces and pocket parks within the built development areas.

3.23 The play areas will be designed as Neighbourhood Equipped Areas of Play (NEAP’s), Locally Equipped Area’s of Play (LEAP’s) and Local Area of Play (LAP). The number, extent, location and detailed design of these facilities would be agreed with the relevant authorities as part of the detailed design process. It is however envisaged that a single NEAP will be provided within the Community Park area and within easy access of the Primary Landscape Corridor at the heart of the development.

**Landscape Management**

3.24 All of the landscape areas and features would be managed and maintained in the long term. This would be achieved through the implementation of a comprehensive Landscape Management Plan (LMP) (Appendix D sets out the structure of the LMP; this would be agreed with all relevant parties in due course), to ensure the successful establishment and continued thriving of the landscape framework proposals.

**Outline Landscape Specification – Soft Landscape**

3.25 An outline specification and typical planting mixes relating to the Landscape Framework proposals are included at Appendix E.

**Landscape Design and Mitigation Measures - Summary**

3.26 A summary of the key features of the proposed landscape framework and design is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Design</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Conservation of existing trees, hedgerows and other habitats within the main organising landscape framework proposals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Significant new planting and associated habitats as part of the landscape framework and public open space proposals. Appropriately robust design solutions and proposals to respect the landscape character assessments and include woodland and planting areas, hedgerows and hedgerow trees, grassland and wetland areas (all</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Designed in conjunction with biodiversity constraints and opportunities

- Detailed attention to the design of the landscape and public open spaces to maximise their contribution to the design and quality of the proposed development as a whole. These proposals should form an integral part of the development and not simply act as buffers or barriers to existing or new development areas

- Retention and extension of existing landscape and access corridors as part of the main overall landscape framework. New access routes (footways and cycleways) to be incorporated as a key feature of this framework and to provide logical and easy connections within and beyond the proposed development.

- Establishment of a high quality public realm with well designed furniture, signage, and access measures as a fully co-ordinated package of proposals;

- “Design in” sports facilities, play areas and other public realm areas as part of the overall landscape framework to ensure that these are logically sited, well connected and contribute positively to the public open space and landscape proposals

- Use of indigenous tree and shrub species to maximise biodiversity opportunities

**Construction**

- Protective Measures provided in accordance with BS 5837 (Trees in relation to construction);

- Location and siting of site compounds and working facilities to minimise visual effects;

- Lighting, signage, boundary fencing and any temporary earthworks to minimise visual effects;

- Wherever practicable, landscape proposals programmed and phased to achieve early effects and to optimise planting seasons.

**Operation**
- Implementation of a comprehensive and long term Landscape Management Plan to ensure that the conserved and new landscape and environmental areas are appropriately and thoroughly managed for landscape and nature conservation uses;

- Monitoring of landscape and environmental areas and features;

- Seek to involve other environmental organisations in the agreement and delivery of the ongoing management works.
4.0 CONSTRUCTION EFFECTS

4.1 The details of the construction requirements of the project, its programme and anticipated phasing are included elsewhere within the ES.

4.2 The location and design of any temporary site compounds, signage and perimeter screen fencing, combined with effective project management would seek to ensure that the potential landscape and visual effects are mitigated and minimised during the construction phase. It is anticipated that the construction working methods would seek to adopt best practices wherever practicable and be agreed with the Local Planning Authorities and Statutory Bodies. Inevitably, the nature of the effects will vary throughout the construction period and would be influenced by the sequencing and phasing of the development. The visual effects in particular, would vary subject to the relative location and intensity of the construction activity within the site.

4.3 Construction activities and plant movements within the site would be visible from surrounding receptors. The closest and clearest views towards these activities and plant movements would be experienced by those properties off Balmoral Drive immediately adjacent to the site. The most significant effects upon these properties would occur during construction of the development immediately opposite these houses. At other times and once built development in these areas has been completed the effects of construction would be reduced.

4.4 From the other existing receptors surrounding the site with potential views of the construction activities, the effects would be less significant and generally more limited to specific parts of the site. The visual effects for these receptors would generally be greatest at the peak of the construction activity. For all of the receptors with potential views of the construction process, it is important to recognise that this activity would be seen within an existing built up and urban context; with many existing views already dominated by or containing busy roads, rail lines and significant housing areas.

4.5 Overall, the construction effects on the surrounding visual receptors would predominantly be slight adverse, with those houses off Balmoral Drive with
the closest and clearest views experiencing moderate or moderate/substantial adverse visual effects during the closest construction activity.

4.6 A very limited amount of existing site vegetation would be removed through the construction phase. This would comprise a small number of the existing hedgerows which are generally low and fragmented and do not contribute significantly to the landscape or visual character the site. The removal of this planting would be undertaken outside the bird nesting season (or would otherwise if unavoidable, be inspected prior to removal by a suitably qualified ecologist and only removed following confirmation that there are no nesting birds present). The majority of the existing planting within and around the perimeter of the site would however, be conserved as part of the final landscape framework proposals.

4.7 Protective fencing and measures in accordance with BS 5837 (Trees in relation to construction) would be implemented as required to protect the conserved trees and planting within the site. These would be implemented prior to the commencement of construction work within the vicinity of the specific trees or planting.

4.8 In landscape terms, the effects arising from construction would reflect the overall change to the landscape character of the site and loss of landscape resources as outlined in the subsequent Landscape Effects section. Overall and relative to the local landscape character and resources, there would be a slight adverse effect during construction.

4.9 With careful attention paid to the management and programming of the construction activities and with the application of best practices and agreed working methods, there should not be any unacceptable landscape or visual effects during the construction period.
5.0 OPERATIONAL EFFECTS

5.1 This section details the landscape and visual effects arising from the proposed development of the site. The assessment is based upon the Proposals Plans forming part of the planning application.

Landscape Effects

5.2 The predicted effects are considered with reference to the planning policy and landscape designations, landscape character assessments and landscape features and components.

5.3 The existing landscape characteristics of the site and surroundings are largely shaped by the combination of the existing settlement, roads, rail and other infrastructure, the localised and wider topography, the farmland and the weak landscape and planting framework across the site. The sensitivity of the site landscape and its immediate has been assessed as Low (indicating that it is an area with a weak character or relatively few features of value).

5.4 The proposed development would result in significant changes in the character and use of the site landscape. Equally, well planned and designed development on the site does represent a logical and appropriate solution. In character terms, the existing site is already strongly influenced by its urban context, which stretches around and contains much of the site and in this regard, the general magnitude in the change to landscape character is lessened.

5.5 The general aspect and topography of the site fall towards the urban edge, with the highest ground lying beyond the site boundary to the west. This reinforces the relationship and influence of the existing town with the site. Significantly, the South Kesteven Landscape Character Assessment also recognises the low sensitivity of the site landscape and its suitability for future residential development. Figure 17 of this document clearly demonstrates that the site does represent an appropriate site for this type of development. In fact, in conjunction with a slightly smaller landscape area close to the south west (and south of the A52), it does represent the most appropriate landscape location for any new residential development around Grantham.
5.6 At a more detailed level, the proposals would result in built development and associated roads, other infrastructure and landscape and public open space replacing predominantly existing farmland. Though limited, much of the existing planting across the site would be conserved within the overall design of the proposals. Careful attention has been paid to maximising the retention and use of these areas and features largely within the resultant landscape and public open space proposals.

5.7 Consequently, the proposed development would result in the loss of only a small number of the existing hedgerows (which have been assessed as having limited landscape, visual or ecological significance). There would be no loss of any significant or mature trees as part of the proposed development. The existing small watercourse and associated hedgerow that falls across the site from close to the south west corner of the site to the north east would be conserved as part of the Primary Landscape Corridor running through the proposed development. Inevitably, this would be punctuated and crossed by a small number of roads to facilitate access but the proposals would seek to minimise any resultant disruption and maintain connectivity along this and any other landscape corridors.

5.8 The existing dry balancing pond facility, the allotments and the adjacent (to the north) rough grassland area would all be conserved within the proposed development. The most notable physical changes to these areas would arise from the introduction of new footway and cycleway access, sympathetic landscape management and associated landscape and planting improvements. It should also be noted that there are no proposed changes to the use or layout of the allotments; except where this is unavoidable in siting the proposed footway and cycleway route around the perimeter of the area. Any loss of allotments area arising from this would be compensated for by at least an equivalent area immediately adjoining the northern boundary. This would result in the loss of a relatively narrow and short strip of the adjoining rough grassland.

5.9 The proposed development would include significant new landscape and planting proposals. The landscape framework, public open space and associated proposals (as shown on Figure 13) would occupy approximately 17 hectares of the site as shown below. This represents approximately 25% of the total site area.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area/ Use</th>
<th>Ha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sports Facilities</td>
<td>3.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposed Structural Landscape (including proposed balancing ponds and wetlands)</td>
<td>8.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balancing Pond – Existing (including surrounds and adjacent channel)</td>
<td>2.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wildlife Area – Existing</td>
<td>1.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allotments – Existing</td>
<td>1.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>17.13 Ha</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.10 Within this total area there would be a mix of new and conserved features and planting, formal and informal spaces and uses and a well connected network of footways and cycleways. A mix of new habitats would be established; including woodland, grassland and wetlands. Planting proposals would predominantly utilise native and locally occurring species to maximise biodiversity opportunities. New tree, shrub and hedgerow planting would be carried out with over an estimated 25,000 new plants being established within these areas. All of the new and conserved landscape areas would be underpinned by a comprehensive Landscape Management Plan (LMP) which would ensure the successful establishment and long term success of the landscape. In the longer term this would also generate some localise landscape benefits.

5.11 Overall and in local landscape character terms the proposed development would represent a *Low / Medium Adverse* magnitude of change to the existing situation. Combined with the *Low* sensitivity of the site landscape this would result in an overall *Slight Adverse* effect on the local landscape. A similar overall effect would arise based upon the broader landscape character assessment undertaken by SKDC.
5.12 The landscape effects of the proposed development are summarised below:

### Landscape Effects – Summary Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment (and Scale)</th>
<th>Landscape Receptor</th>
<th>Landscape Sensitivity</th>
<th>Magnitude of Change</th>
<th>Landscape Effects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Districtwide Landscape Character Assessment (SKDC)</td>
<td>Grantham Scarps and Valleys Landscape Character Area</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low Adverse</td>
<td>Slight Adverse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local and Site Landscape (FPCR)</td>
<td>Landscape Character and Resources</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low / Medium Adverse</td>
<td>Slight Adverse</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Visual Effects

5.13 A comprehensive visual appraisal of the proposed development has been undertaken to determine the potential effects upon surrounding receptors. Using the methodology outlined at the beginning of this section and in Appendix A, receptors with potential views to the proposed development have been assessed in terms of sensitivity, proposed changes to view and resulting overall significance.

5.14 Two assessments have been conducted for all receptors. The first considers the effects upon completion of the proposed development and in the winter period (ie the screening effects of any deciduous foliage is not taken into account) and the second predicts the effects 15 years after completion and in the summer period (thus enabling the effectiveness of any planting to be evaluated).
5.15 Figure 6 illustrates the results of the Visual Impact Assessment and Appendix C includes the full Visual Effects Table. The description of existing views is outlined earlier in this section and the accompanying Photo Viewpoints (Figures 7 – 12) should also be referred to in conjunction with the following descriptions. The results of this assessment are described and summarised below.

**Zone of Visual Influence (ZVI)**

5.16 The Zone of Visual Influence (ZVI) (Figure 6) is the area from within which any part of the proposed development would be potentially visible. It should be noted that the ZVI is not an indicator of the level of significance of the impact on the view but simply, the potential extent of visibility. The ZVI for the proposed development has been prepared based upon site based analysis and cross sectional information.

5.17 It remains approximate, although it is sufficiently well researched and accurate to be representative of the potential visible extent of the proposals. Nevertheless, there could be some limited locations (beyond the extent of the ZVI shown) that could have a potential view to part of the proposed development. Yet equally, there could be some limited locations shown within the ZVI that would not experience any views to the resultant development.

5.18 The potential ZVI of the proposed development would be well contained and limited in its extent. The immediately adjoining settlement edge, higher ground along Barrowby Road to the south and the rail line embankment and existing development to the east effectively restrict views in these directions. To the west of the site, the ZVI would extend up towards the highest ground between Boundary Farm and Rectory Farm and to the north, it would encompass some of the south facing settlement area at Gonerby Hill Foot and would extend up to the southern edge of Great Gonerby.

5.19 As acknowledged under Note 3 of Figure 6, there would be some distant (approximately 4 kilometres) and elevated locations to the east and north east of Grantham that would have some potential views towards the proposed development; including from locations on the higher ground around Bellmount Tower and Bellmount Plantation. In addition to these views being very distant, the site and any proposed development where
discernible would only be perceived beyond the existing town. There would be no discernible or negligible visual effects for any of these locations with available views.

5.20 With the exception of the recent housing development off Balmoral Drive and the relatively small area of existing settlement at Gonerby Hill Foot, there are no significant numbers of housing or other receptors with potential views towards the proposed development.

Effects upon Visual Receptors

5.21 The effects of the proposed development upon visual receptors is set out in the Visual Effects Table in Appendix C. Receptor references included below refer to this Table.

Settlement and Properties Summary

5.22 The clearest views towards the proposed development would occur for those existing properties off Balmoral Drive (Ref 1) immediately to the south of the site. Some of these properties have existing elevated views northwards across the site to the settlement and landscape beyond. Views towards the site are significantly more restricted for those properties set behind and within this recent housing development.

5.23 Proposed development on the site would obstruct some open views northwards, yet would still maintain some channelled and more distant views. Careful attention should be paid at the detailed design stage to minimising the visual effects upon the properties immediately fronting the site. This should entail detailed analysis of the massing and heights of the proposed development on the opposite side of Balmoral Drive. The resultant visual effects for properties at this location have been assessed as ranging from Slight Adverse to Moderate/ Substantial Adverse, reflecting the differing visibility of the site from these properties. Those with the closest and clearest views would experience the most significant effects.

5.24 A smaller number of residential properties lining the southern side of Barrowby Road (Ref 2) to the west of the Muddle Go Nowhere public house and roundabout would have some limited and generally restricted views to the proposed mixed use area in the south west corner of the site. These
properties have been assessed as experiencing slight adverse effects from the proposals. Approximately a kilometre to the east of these properties and on the opposite side of Barrowby Road, a relatively small number of large properties at Green Hill (Ref 3) would have some views to the proposed development immediately adjoining this boundary. The nature of these views is likely to be variable subject to the relative position and boundary and garden planting associated with each of the existing properties. The visual effects have however, generally been assessed as slight adverse and at worst moderate adverse.

5.25 North of the site and the rail line in cutting, views towards the proposed development would be possible from properties off Penine way at Gonerby Hill Foot (Ref 4). For the relatively limited number of properties at this location with any views towards the site, these are generally from the 1st floor, with ground floor views substantially screened by boundary fencing and mature scrub planting to the tops of the rail cutting. In addition to the proposed built development being visible for some of these properties, the opening up of the Penine Way link would also introduce additional traffic into the views of those properties fronting Penine Way. The resultant visual effect for those properties at this location with the clearest views has been assessed as slight adverse.

5.26 To the north of Gonerby Road, some of the residential properties surrounding the factory (or works unit) (Ref 5) would have oblique or channelled views across existing housing to parts of the proposed development leading up towards Balmoral Drive and Barrowby Road. For the majority of these properties with any views towards the proposed development the resultant visual effects would be negligible.

5.27 On the very southern edge of Great Gonerby, a very small number of properties (Ref 6) would have potential elevated but distant views towards parts of the proposed development. It would however, be perceived set down in the existing settlement context as part of a more expansive view across Grantham to the south east. The resultant visual effect for those properties with the clearest views would be slight adverse.

5.28 From Rectory Farm, Boundary Farm and the neighbouring “Limes” property (Refs 7 and 8) views would only be possible to the proposed development
on the western perimeter of the site. The rolling nature of the immediate landform is very significant in limiting views from these properties into the site. In fact from this location the site is effectively hidden from view on the falling east facing slopes. The resultant visual effect has been assessed as at worst slight adverse.

5.29 The Muddle Go Nowhere public house (Ref 9) adjoins the southern edge of the site and allows views (largely from the car park and external areas) across much of the western half of the site. Although views to the proposed development (primarily the mixed use area) would be possible from the public house, the significance of these are lessened by the nature of the existing views (dominated by Barrowby Rd and existing development). Careful attention should however be paid at the detailed design stage to ensuring that appropriate boundary and landscape proposals are incorporated as part of the proposed development. The resultant visual effects have been assessed as slight adverse.

*Rights of Way Summary*

5.30 Very limited views south and eastwards towards the site and Grantham are possible from a very short stretch of the public footpath (Ref 10) between Great Gonerby and Rectory Farm to the west of the site. No views are however possible from south west of the farm. Even to the north east of the farm, existing tall mature field hedgerows and the nature of the local landform effectively screen views towards the site. The clearest view (and this would only be towards the proposed development on the western boundary) would be from Rectory Farm (see above). In general, there would be no visual effects upon this footpath, except at this specific point and at one or two other gaps in the existing hedgerows to the north of the farm. Where visible and at worst the visual effects have been assessed as slight adverse.

*Roads and Rail Summary*

5.31 From Barrowby Road (A52) (Ref 11), road users would have views towards the proposed development for a stretch of the road to the west of the Muddle Go Nowhere public house and roundabout. Existing views for road users over this stretch are already dominated by the existing urban edge with residential development to the south of the road. This section of the
road does form part of the main approach into Grantham from the west of the town and consequently its design treatment is important. Careful attention should be paid at the detailed design stage to the mixed use development area to the road frontage. The resultant visual effects have been assessed as negligible/ slight adverse.

5.32 For road users approaching Grantham along the B1174 (Gonerby Hill), views towards the proposed development would be possible over a short stretch of the road between the edge of Great Gonerby and Gonerby Hill Foot (Ref 12). The resultant visual effects for road users over this short stretch have been assessed as negligible/ slight adverse.

5.33 Views of the site and the proposed development would be possible for users of the Nottingham - Grantham rail line (Ref 13), where this passes around the eastern edge of the site on embankment. To the north of the site the rail line is in cutting (before it enters Gonerby Tunnel) and consequently no views towards the site or the proposed development would be possible. From the eastern boundary of the site elevated views would be possible looking westwards up the site. With the proposed development in place, views would be possible to the lower lying open space and sports facilities with the built development beyond. Views to the north for rail users along this short stretch are already dominated by existing urban surrounds. The resultant visual effects for rail users have been assessed as negligible/ slight adverse.

Other Receptors Summary

5.34 Users of the allotments situated within the site boundary (Ref 14) would experience limited visual effects from the majority of the proposed development. These allotments are located at the south eastern edge of the site and are largely visually separated from the rest of the site by the nature of the landform and the tall continuous hedgerow that extends north – south, from the north eastern boundary of the allotments. The most notable visual change that would occur for users of these allotments would be the introduction of a footway/ cycleway around the perimeter. This would entail changes to the allotments along the boundary and the provision of new fencing and associated hedgerow planting. The resultant visual effects for this receptor have been assessed as at worst slight adverse.
5.35 Further allotments and a small number of properties (Ref 15) are located on the northern edge of the site (and south of the rail line). From this location allotment users and residents have existing views beyond the surrounding hedgerow boundaries to the wider settlement context and parts of the site. The proposed development would be visible from this location yet would be filtered and screened in parts by the existing hedgerows and planting within the area. Much of the site to the south east of this location would be retained as open space, with built development visible beyond. The resultant visual effects for this receptor have been assessed as at worst slight/moderate adverse.

Night – time Visual Effects

5.36 A night-time visual impact has been conducted to assess the development proposals in relation to existing lighting levels in the Zone of Visual Influence (ZVI). The assessment was conducted at night to assess the site context and the interrelationship and visibility of the existing light sources. This has been compared with the anticipated lighting that would be generated by the proposed development.

5.37 At this stage, general lighting throughout the proposed development site has been considered. Subsequent detailed lighting proposals would be based upon the latest best practice guidelines, including “Lighting and the Environment: A Guide to Good Urban Lighting” (Institute of Lighting Engineers) and would seek to minimise any potential adverse night time effects.

5.38 The following factors largely influence the extent of the night time visual effects:

- adoption of best lighting design practice,
- the existing extent and levels of lighting in and around the application site
- the number of receptors with views to the proposals.

5.39 Due to the existing urban fringe context of the site, that includes adjoining housing areas and roads, existing light sources do occur throughout the immediate surroundings. Barrowby Rd (A52), Balmoral Drive, Penine Way
and the other nearby roads all include street lighting. Lighting from the surrounding housing and other urban uses are also present. There are no existing light sources however, within the farmland of the site or immediately to the west of the site boundary.

5.40 At this stage, no floodlighting to the sports facilities has been considered as part of this assessment. However, should this subsequently be required or desirable then a further assessment of these specific lighting proposals should be undertaken to determine the effects.

5.41 On the basis that the site is situated within the existing urban edge, which includes light sources throughout much of its immediate context and that the nature of any proposed lighting would not differ significantly from that existing (except where this would be improved through the latest design guidelines and products), the proposed development would not result in any significant adverse night time effects. Further consideration of the detailed lighting design will nevertheless still be required at the detailed stage to ensure that any potentially adverse effects are minimised.
6.0 **RESIDUAL EFFECTS**

6.1 The residual effects consider the effects of the proposed development after the incorporation of mitigation measures. In the context of the landscape and visual impact assessment, the majority of these measures are incorporated as an integral part of the scheme design process. This iterative approach has resulted in the proposed development being designed and modified to take account of the surveys and assessments undertaken. This has enabled the extent and scale of any potentially adverse effects to be continually appraised as part of the evolving scheme design.

6.2 The design approaches adopted have included measures to avoid, reduce or remediate potentially significant adverse effects arising from the proposed development. Primary measures adopted as part of the proposals have considered many aspects, including, the location, extent, siting and height of the built development. Other additional measures considered have included the use of landscape areas, planting and screen fencing. In this respect, the potential effects of the proposed development have been minimised through the design process and consequently at the outset of the development the residual effects would reflect those described in the preceding Operational Effects section.

6.3 In the longer term, these effects would reduce further through the maturing of the proposed landscape framework proposals and other conserved planting. Consequently, those effects stated in the preceding Operational Effects section are “at worst” and would lessen over time
7.0 STATEMENT OF EFFECTS

7.1 The site landscape is dominated and characterised by a combination of the local topography, farmland and urban influences. In particular, the landform and its easterly and north easterly aspect reinforce the sites relationship with the existing settlement surrounds; rather than with the landscape and countryside to the west. The site landscape includes little of any intrinsic interest or value. The majority of the site is occupied by open farmland fields of a medium to large scale. These fields are bounded by a fragmented arrangement of predominantly low hedgerows that offer little visual interest or relief. The site also includes a dry balancing pond facility (on the lowest lying land), an area of rough grassland and some allotments. A small number of mature hedgerows and the small watercourse that runs across the site from south west to north east constitute only site based and localised landscape assets.

7.2 In landscape character terms the site falls within the Grantham Scarps and Valleys character area, as set out in the South Kesteven Landscape Character Assessment (SKLCA) – January 2007. For this character area the document states; “There are some areas closer to the edge of town, containing little of intrinsic landscape interest, that would offer the scope for development.” It then goes on to identify (on Figure 17 of the SKLCA) areas of “Landscape Sensitivity for Employment and Residential Development around Grantham”. Within these areas the proposed site occupies an area of Low sensitivity. In fact, it is one of only two areas identified as being of Low sensitivity and therefore most capable of being able to accommodate well planned and designed residential development. In this regard, the SKLCA clearly identifies the site as being a logical location for suitable future development in landscape terms.

7.3 The local landscape character assessment undertaken for the site and its context confirms the Low sensitivity of the landscape and its capacity to accommodate development. Consequently, at both of these scales of landscape character assessment, the proposed site represents a logical site for future well planned and designed development.
7.4 In planning policy terms, the site is identified in the adopted Local Plan for future housing led development and the most relevant policy in landscape and visual terms is Policy EN1 (Protection and Enhancement of the Environment). The proposed development does not conflict with this or any other landscape or visual related policies.

7.5 Notwithstanding the overall suitability of the site for future development there are still many landscape issues that would have to be addressed by any proposals. These include:

- the creation of a suitably robust and organising landscape framework as part of the overall layout of the scheme;
- conservation and enhancement of the limited and localised landscape and planting assets, where appropriate;
- attention to and consideration of the development boundary, particularly to the west (in the context of the adjoining farmland and the potential for logical further development in the future);
- quality of landscape and public open space proposals
- subsequent management of landscape and public open space proposals

All of these issues have been thoroughly addressed by the proposed development and are outlined and explained in greater detail in the accompanying Design and Access Statement.

7.6 The proposed development would include significant new landscape and planting proposals. The landscape framework, public open space and associated proposals would occupy approximately 25% of the total site area. Importantly, they would be designed to a high standard and would maximise opportunities for access, recreation and leisure, general amenity and landscape character and biodiversity. It would all be underpinned by a comprehensive Landscape Management Plan, to be agreed by all relevant parties in due course.

7.7 In overall terms the landscape effects arising from the proposed development have been assessed at slight adverse at the outset. In the medium and longer term there would be some localised landscape benefits arising from the establishment and maturing of the landscape and public open space proposals and from the implementation of the LMP.
7.8 In visual terms the site is relatively contained with minimal influence over the countryside to the west and north. The immediately surrounding settlement context (including the rail line on embankment) also limits available views towards the proposed development from much of the nearby settlement. Views towards the proposed development from Grantham are effectively limited to small areas of existing housing adjoining the site to the south and north.

7.9 Existing properties with the clearest views of the proposed development would comprise those fronting Balmoral Drive immediately adjoining the southern site boundary. Other properties with views towards the proposals would include those within the recent development area off Balmoral Drive (leading up to Barrowby Rd); a limited number along Barrowby Rd itself (to the west of the Muddle Go Nowhere public house and at Green Hill); some at Gonerby Hill Foot; a small number at the southern extent of Great Gonerby and two farms and a further property to the west of the site. With the exception of those properties with the clearest views fronting Balmoral Drive and potentially a very small number or properties on Barrowby Rd at Green Hill, the visual effects of the proposed development would be no worse than slight adverse at the outset.

7.10 Careful attention would be paid at the detailed design stage to minimising the visual effects upon the properties immediately fronting the site and with the closest and clearest views. This would entail detailed analysis of the massing and heights of the proposed development on the opposite side of Balmoral Drive.

7.11 Other receptors with views towards the proposed development would include users of short stretches of Barrowby Rd (A52), Grantham Rd (B1174) and the adjacent rail line. Users of the allotments, both within the site and close to the northern boundary would have some limited views towards parts of the proposed development. The only potential views from a surrounding public right of way would occur at Rectory Farm to the west of the site. Views principally to the site area fronting Barrowby Rd would also be possible from the Muddle Go Nowhere public house. For the majority of these other receptors the resultant visual effects would be slight adverse.
7.12 In the context of the visual impact assessment the potential effects are considered to be relatively limited and contained in their extent. This applies both to the overall visible extent of the proposals and to the number of receptors with views towards the proposals. Careful attention at the detailed design stage to the layout, heights, massing etc of the proposed development would seek to ensure that any potential adverse effects are further minimised. This would be particularly relevant to the proposed built development immediately adjacent to Balmoral Drive and other boundary locations.

7.13 The resultant scheme has been thoroughly assessed and considered in landscape and visual terms. The proposed development occupies a logical location, as is clearly established in adopted planning policy and landscape character assessments. There would be no overriding or significantly adverse effects that should preclude the proposed development on landscape and visual grounds. Indeed, the proposals provide the opportunity to establish a strong and high quality framework of landscape and public open space proposals as a key feature of the scheme. These in turn will offer some medium and longer term benefits.