

Land East of Market Harborough



LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL

FEBRUARY 2024

LDĀ DESIGN

Introduction

BRIEF

LDA Design has been appointed by Catesby Estates to undertake a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) of land to the east of Market Harborough. The study analyses the site and its context in terms of landscape and visual matters to guide the design proposals and provide a landscape strategy to ensure the proposed residential development sits appropriately within its surroundings.

This report has been prepared as part of a suite of documents to be submitted to Harborough District Council's Regulation 18 "Issues and Options" consultation and should be read in conjunction with other supporting documents submitted on behalf of Catesby Estates.

METHODOLOGY

This LVA has been prepared in accordance with the methodology recommended in Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (3rd edition, 2013). The site and surrounding area were visited in January 2024. The study comprises:

- A high-level review of Harborough District Council's Local Plan and key evidence base documents to guide the landscape strategy for the site.
- A landscape and visual appraisal of the site and its context to determine key landscape characteristics and visual sensitivities of the site and its surroundings.
- A landscape strategy to inform the site's development proposals.



THE SITE & ITS LOCATION

As shown on Figure 1, the site is located at the eastern edge of Market Harborough, immediately adjacent to the A6 bypass. The site comprises several fields of arable land and pasture, divided by hedgerows, farm tracks and woodland belts. Towards the northern boundary a tributary of the River Welland, Dingley Brook, flows westwards within a shallow valley. Towards the western boundary, off the A6, is Lodge Farm consisting of a two storey dwelling and a cluster of agricultural buildings. Two Public Rights of Way pass through the site on a broadly east-west alignment, connecting Dingley and Market Harborough. Pylons and overhead powerlines cross the eastern portion of the site on a north-south alignment.

Bordering the site to the north is Harborough Road that follows a ridge enclosing the site. To the south the A6 (Desborough Road) forms the site's southern boundary and also follows a ridge enclosing the site. South of the ridge and A6 is an area of land currently under construction for residential development (Davidsons Homes at Little Bowden). The eastern boundary is defined by high ground topped by Dingley Warren, a woodland that forms a distinguishable feature in views from the surrounding area.

Beyond the immediate confines of the site to the north, east and south is agricultural land that encompasses several small villages such as Dingley, Sutton Bassett and Braybrooke, with Market Harborough and Great Bowden occupying land to the west.

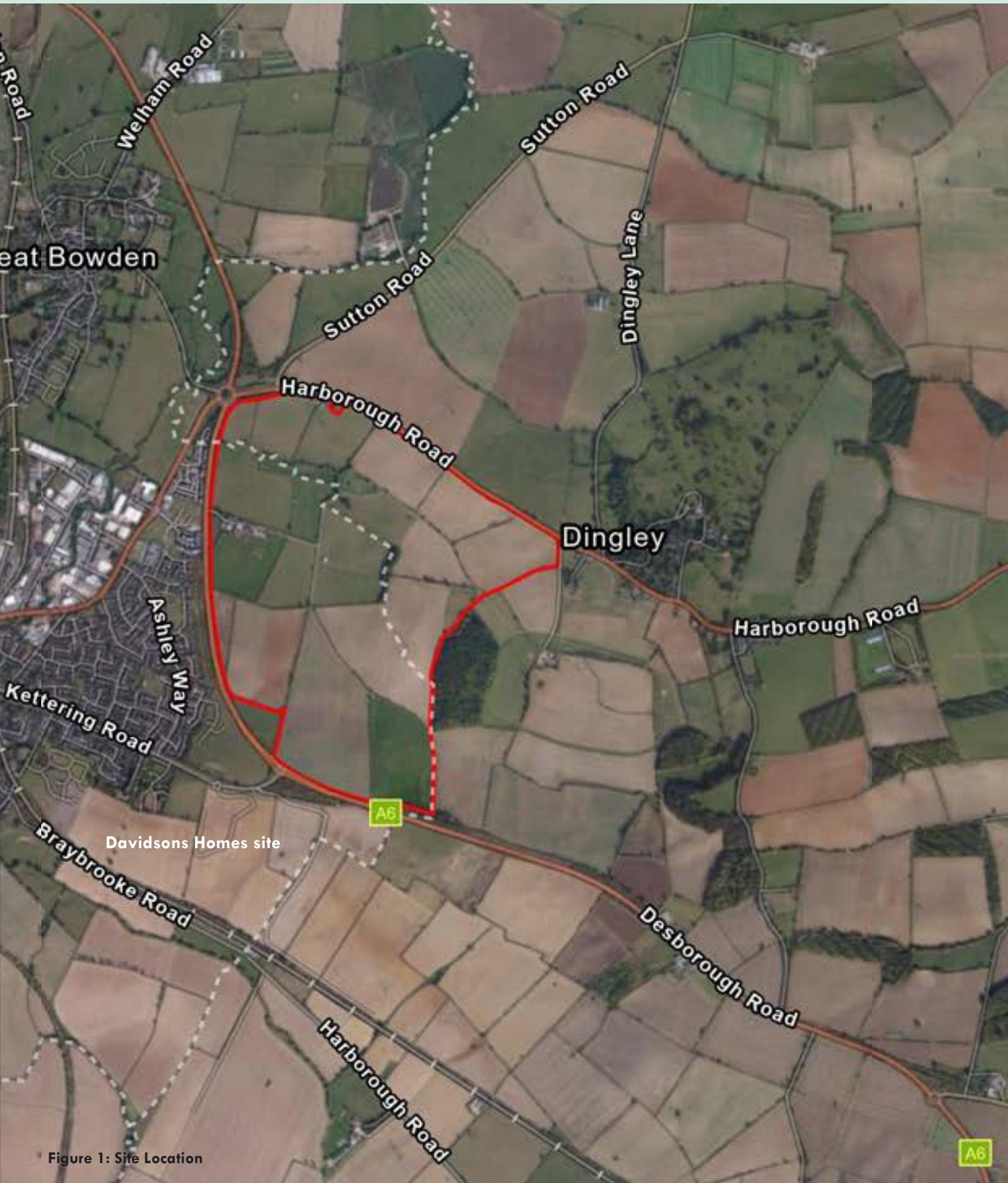


Figure 1: Site Location

Planning Context

As shown on Figure 2, the administrative boundary between Harborough District and North Northamptonshire Unitary Authority passes through the site. The proposal locates all development and associated infrastructure within Harborough District and, as such, this study predominantly focusses on Harborough District Council's Local Plan and key evidence base documents to guide the landscape strategy for the site.

The Issues and Options consultation is the first stage of public consultation on the preparation of the new Local Plan and seeks views on a range of planning issues and potential options for the future development of the District. The council's current Local Plan to 2031 was adopted in April 2019 and will continue to be used to determine planning applications until the updated Local Plan is completed. As such, the evidence used for the 2019 local plan and subsequent planning policy documents form the baseline for this assessment.

Documents and supporting evidence reviewed as part of this LVA include:

- Harborough Local Plan to 2011 to 2031 (April 2019)
- Harborough District Landscape Character Assessment (September 2007)
- Market Harborough Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Capacity Study (April 2009)
- Green Infrastructure Strategy, Volume 1, Sub Regional Framework (2010)
- Northamptonshire Current Landscape Character Assessment (January 2006)

As identified on Figure 2, there are no nationally designated landscapes in the vicinity of the Site. There are several heritage assets located within Market Harborough, Great Bowden and Dingley, none of which have a direct relationship with the area of the site in Market Harborough. Flood Zones associated with the River Welland are contained within a narrow corridor through Market Harborough, beyond the site.

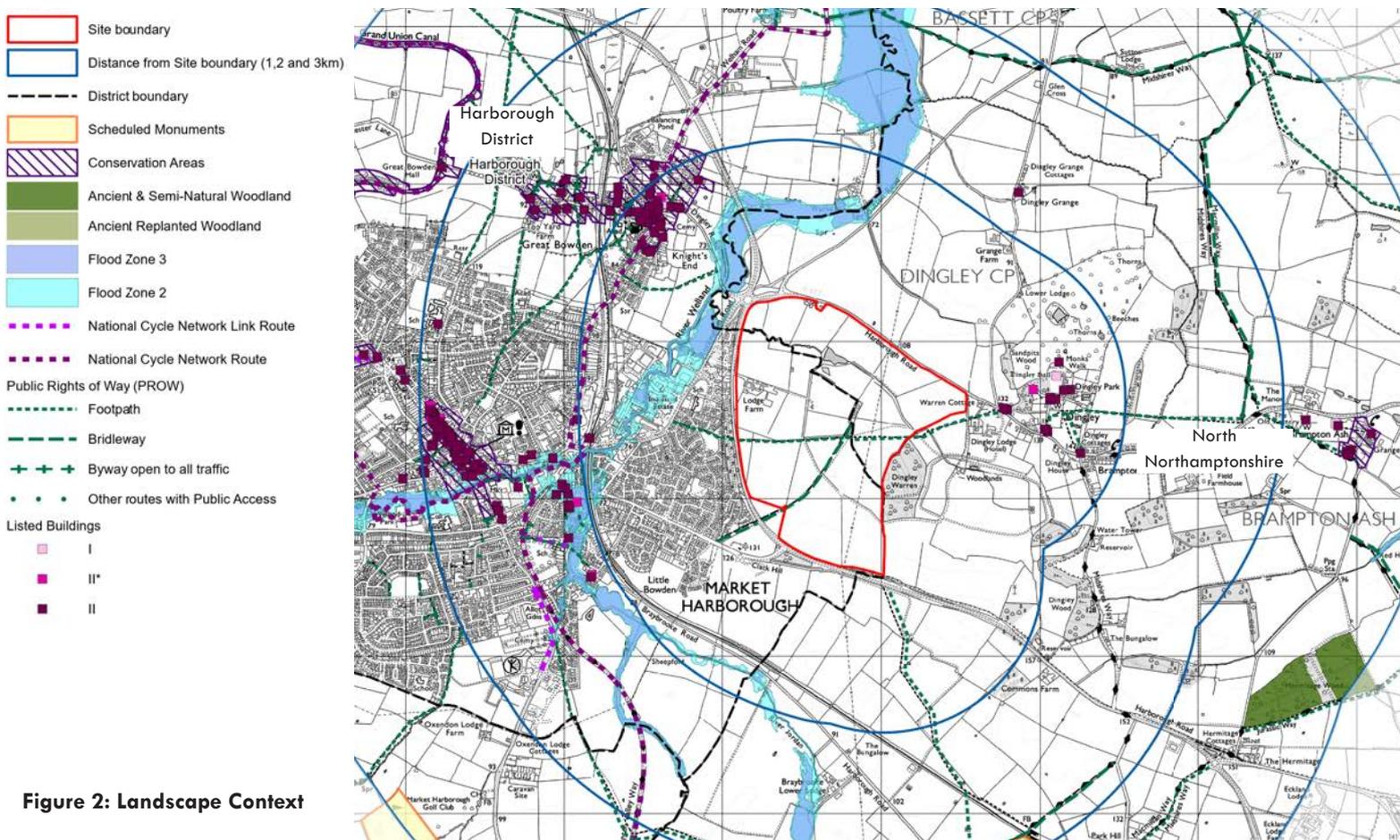


Figure 2: Landscape Context

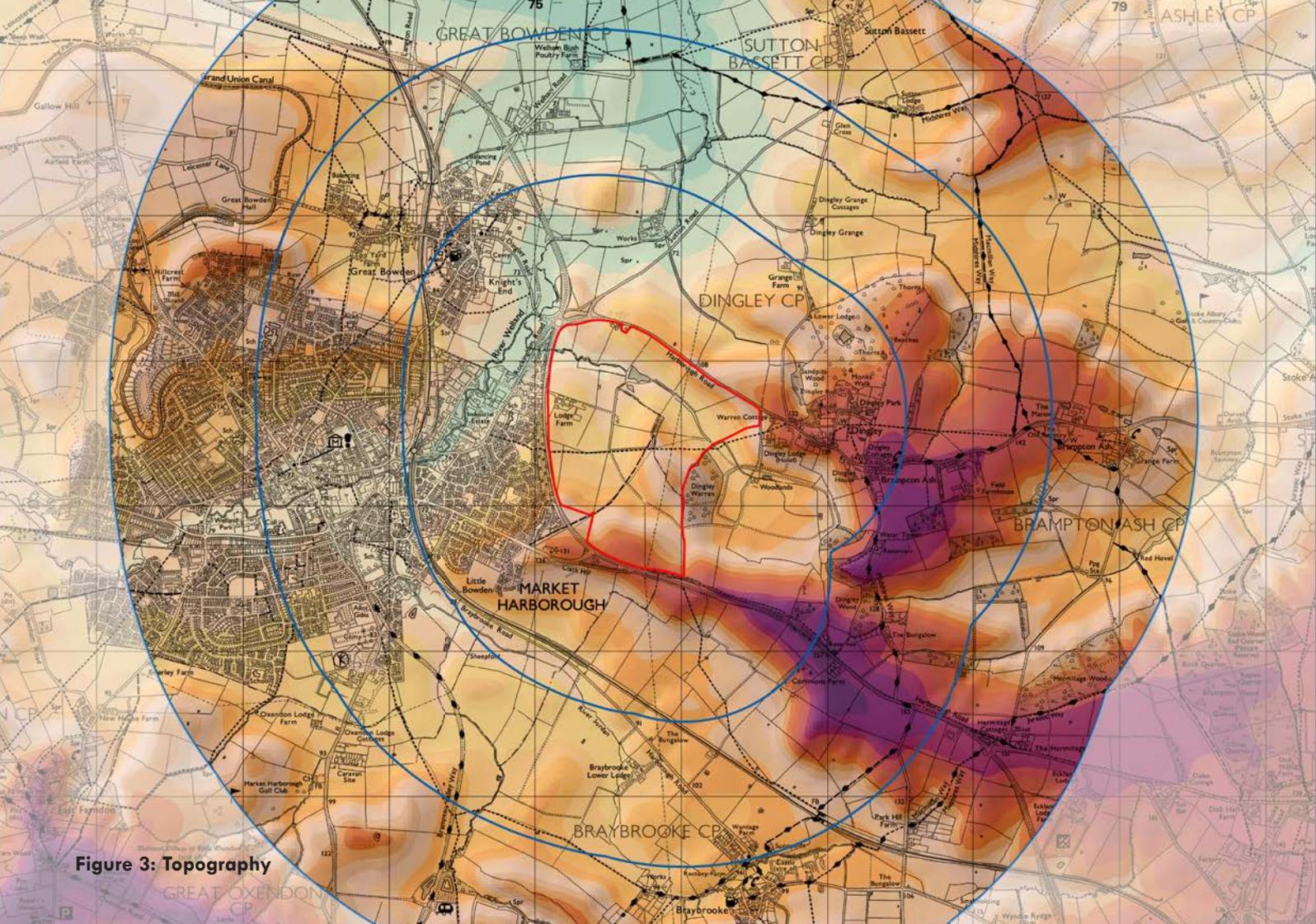


Figure 3: Topography

Landscape Context

TOPOGRAPHY

The topography of the Site and its surrounding area is shown on Figure 3.

Market Harborough is located within an undulating landscape, surrounded by ridges and hills that contain the town and through which runs the River Welland. To the north the Welland valley broadens, winding between outcrops of high ground where hilltop settlements are located above the flood zone. To the east of Market Harborough the terrain is more pronounced, rising to a high point between 150m – 155m AOD associated with the villages of Dingley and Brampton Ash. This terrain separates Market Harborough and its immediate urban fringe landscape (including the site) from the wider landscape associated with North Northamptonshire to the east.

Between Market Harborough and Dingley is the site. Two distinguishable ridges descend from high ground westwards towards Market Harborough, enclosing the site to the north and south. This terrain is further reinforced by historic routes (Harborough and Desborough Road) that follow the ridges into Market Harborough. Bounding the site to the east is a localised hill topped by Dingley Warren which encloses the site from the adjacent landscape to the east, separating the site from a distinctive topographical bowl associated with Dingley, at the base of which is Dingley Racecourse.

In broad terms, the site faces west to north-west, draining towards Dingley Brook, and forms part of valley slopes and lower lying ground associated with the Welland Valley catchment, its tributary watercourses and Market Harborough.

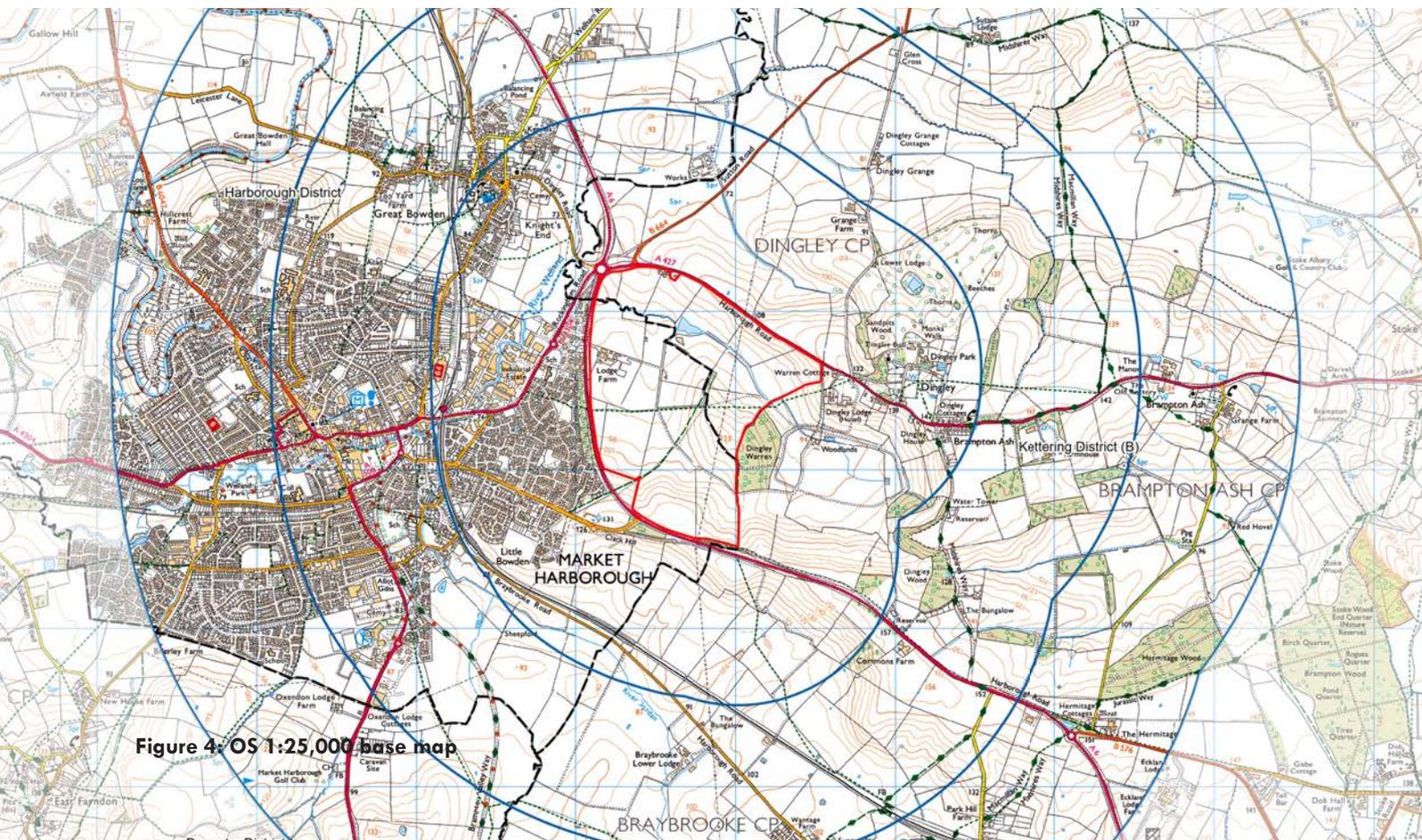
Landscape Context

VEGETATION

As shown on both Figure 4 and 5, there is a contrast in vegetation cover between Harborough District to the west and North Northamptonshire to the east. The Welland Valley, which captures Market Harborough and the site, has little in the way of established woodland. The majority of mature vegetation follows linear features such as watercourses (including the Grand Union Canal), road corridors and the railway lines (Midland Main Line and disused railway). To the east, woodland cover is more prevalent, associated with the higher ground of the Northamptonshire landscape that extends north-east towards Rockingham Forest. Particularly notable are the blocks of woodland adjacent to the site, namely Dingley Warren, situated on a localised hill and conspicuous in the views from the surrounding landscape.

Hedgerows demarcate field boundaries and contribute to the vegetation cover within the landscape, albeit hedgerow trees are less frequent within the Welland Valley than within the Northamptonshire landscape to the east. Field boundary loss has occurred across the landscape but within the site the historic field pattern is relatively intact, albeit with some loss and fragmentation. Tree blocks occur within the site, associated with Dingley Brook and further up the valley slope. This contributes to a transition to a more wooded landscape to the east, where tree cover in combination with landform adds to the perception of a more intimate landscape.

The site's historic field pattern should be retained where possible, with potential to reinstate lost hedgerow boundaries, in combination with additional blocks of woodland to provide structure for development parcels.



SETTLEMENT

The town of Market Harborough, a key location for population and employment, exerts a strong influence on the Welland Valley and surrounding environment.

As a traditional market town, Market Harborough retains many of its historic buildings and features in its centre, clustered along the River Welland and within the Conservation Area. Modern residential and employment areas have extended beyond the historic core in all directions, rising up the Welland Valley slopes. To the east of the centre, development has extended to the A6 bypass. The route of the bypass where it adjoins the site's western boundary has little relationship to the topographical framework within which Market Harborough is located, nor any discernible landscape features, and as such presents an arbitrary boundary to the settlement.

There are a range of smaller settlements in the vicinity of Market Harborough, notably Great Bowden to the north and the hill/ridge top or valley slope settlements that encircle the town to the south and east. Development of the site within Harborough District would not compromise the identity of these settlements, given intervening landscape features that provide separation between the settlements and the site.

There is potential to extend Market Harborough to the east of the A6, where terrain to the east of the site presents a clear, defensible landscape boundary to Market Harborough's expansion, retaining the identity of the town associated with the Welland Valley and villages associated with ridges of high ground.

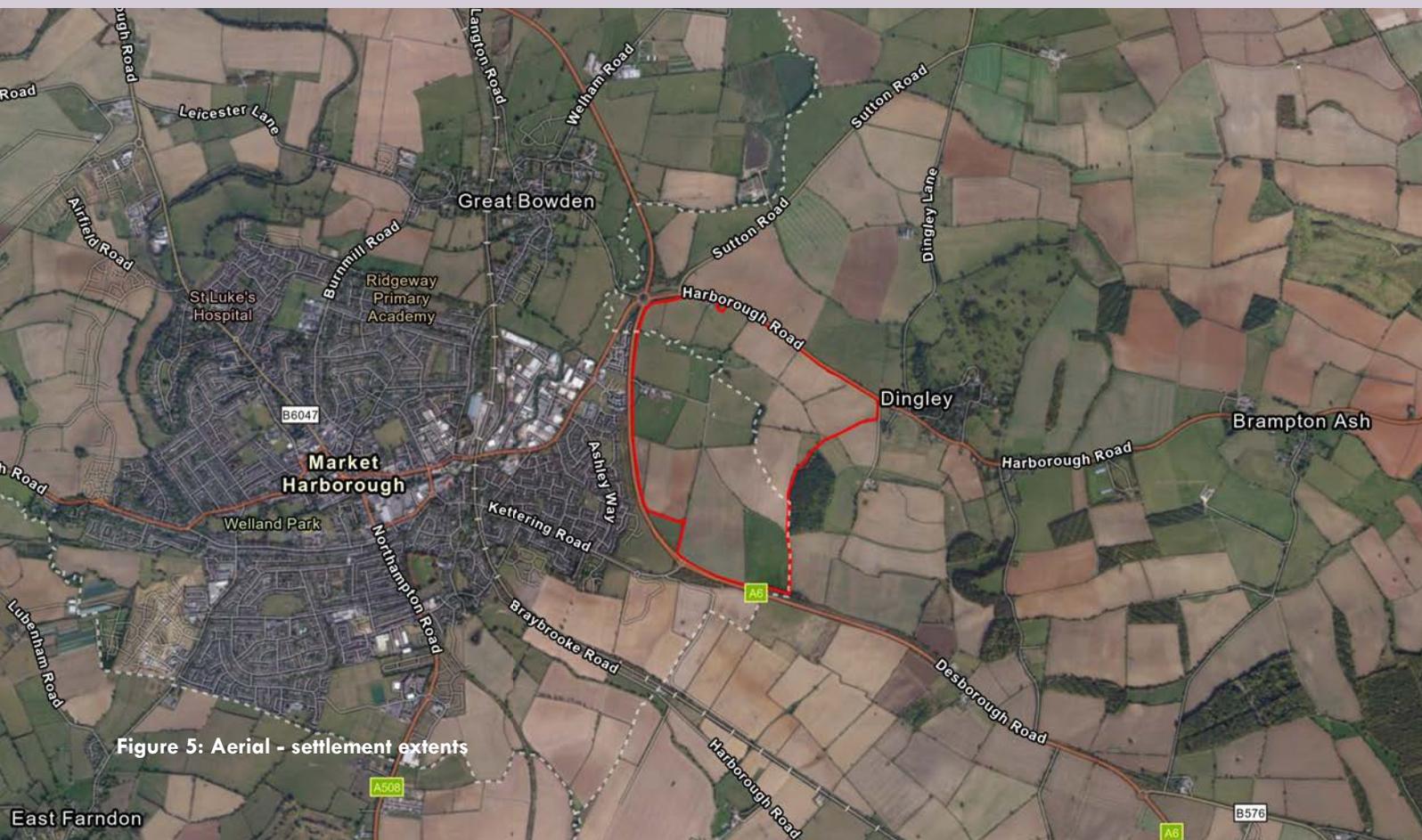


Figure 5: Aerial - settlement extents

Landscape Context

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

As Market Harborough grows, the countryside in and around the town has a high demand, and therefore need, for Green Infrastructure: a network of multifunctional greenspaces that contribute to delivering sustainable communities. There is a requirement to create new assets that link with river corridors, woodlands, urban greens and other assets, all of which play an important role in linking town and country.

Green Infrastructure Strategy (Sub-Regional Strategic Framework 2010)

Forming part of the Council's evidence base for the adopted Local Plan (2019), the Green Infrastructure (GI) Strategy (Sub-Regional Strategic Framework) was adopted in 2010 by the 6C's regional body, comprising three cities - Derby, Leicester, and Nottingham and three counties - Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire. The vision for the GI Strategy seeks to embrace the multiple functions that GI can play in delivering a range of economic, environmental and social benefits.

Urban Fringe Green Infrastructure Enhancement Zones

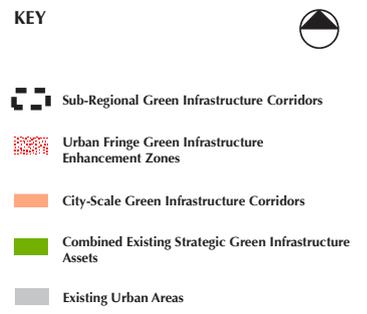
The countryside around Market Harborough, including the site, is identified in the GI Strategy as an Urban Fringe Green Infrastructure Enhancement Zone: an area that due to projected population growth has the greatest demand, and therefore need, for enhanced provision of existing and new GI.

Through investment in GI provision, the Urban Fringe Green Infrastructure Enhancement Zones have the ability and potential to deliver a range benefits related to the following GI themes or functions:

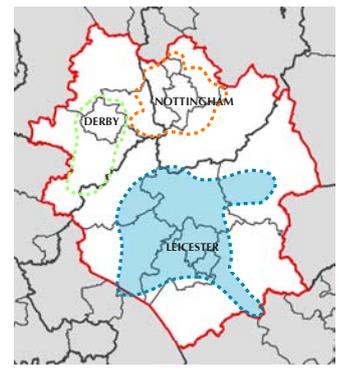
- *A bridge to the countryside from urban centres;*
- *A gateway to improve the image and experience of towns and city;*
- *Improvements to health and wellbeing;*
- *Environmental education opportunities;*
- *Sustainable living; and*
- *Strengthening biodiversity and conservation management.*

The study notes that "*Sustainable Urban Extensions will need to protect the integrity of the wider GI network, and support existing urban areas, by maintaining and enhancing GI within the Urban Fringe GI Enhancement Zones*".

Development of the site would enable the protection, enhancement and delivery of existing and new Green Infrastructure and its associated benefits for Market Harborough. By identifying local GI assets within the site, making provision to enhance and connect these to strategic assets beyond the site, and enabling the population to gain access to this resource, the objectives of the GI strategy can be met. Key to this is safeguarding and enhancing Dingley Brook; improving access to the site via existing Public Rights of Way and aligning these routes with new open space and additional links; and ensuring the wider agricultural landscape continues its function in separating settlements and acting as their setting.



Strategic GI Network Study Areas for the Three Cities within the 6Cs Sub-Region



This figure represents relevant available information provided by stakeholders at the time of the study, and may not be exhaustive. The accuracy of digital datasets received, which have been used in good faith without modification or enhancement, cannot be guaranteed. Commensurate with its intended 'strategic' focus, the Strategic GI Network Plan illustrates indicative GI assets and opportunities at a strategic level, which do not necessarily indicate a constraint on development.

0 1 2 km

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Figure 4.3
Strategic GI Network for the Leicester Principal Urban Area and the Sub-Regional Centres of Coalville, Hinckley (including Barwell and Earl Shilton), Loughborough (including Shepshed), Market Harbour and Melton Mowbray

Figure 6: Extract from Green Infrastructure Strategy (Sub-Regional Strategic Framework 2010)

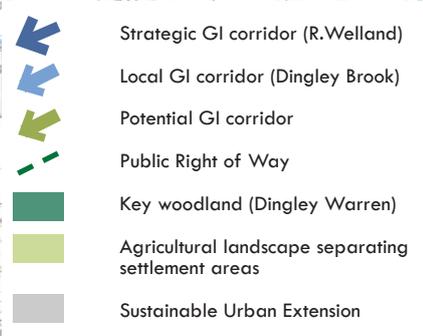
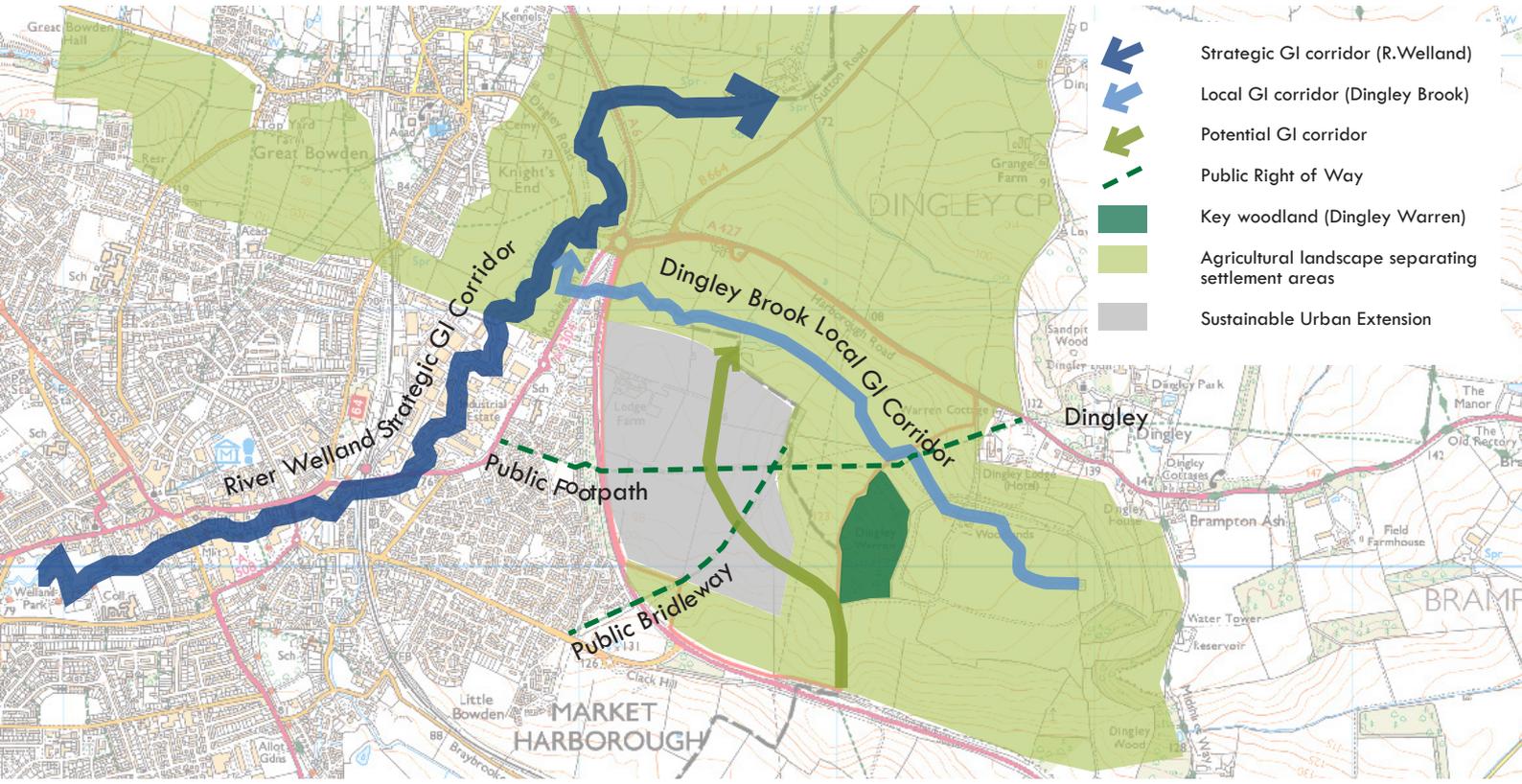


Figure 7: Local and site Green Infrastructure assets

Landscape Character

Landscape Character describes a distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another. Landscape Character Assessments are undertaken at a National and Local scale and is defined as the process of identifying and describing variation in the character of the landscape, using this information to assist in managing change in the landscape.

NATIONAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

At a national level, the site lies within the National Character Area (NCA) 89: Northamptonshire Vales which is characterised as a series of low-lying clay vales and river valleys, including the valleys of the rivers Nene and Welland and their tributaries. The area is 10 per cent urban, and settlement is often visually dominant. Major road networks that traverse the area include the M1, A45, A6 and A5. This area adjoins the Leicestershire Vales NCA to the north-west and has many similar characteristics.

NCA's provide useful context but for sites of this scale, District or Local Character Assessments are more helpful in understanding local influences.



Figure 8: Extract from Harborough Landscape Character Assessment - Welland Valley LCA

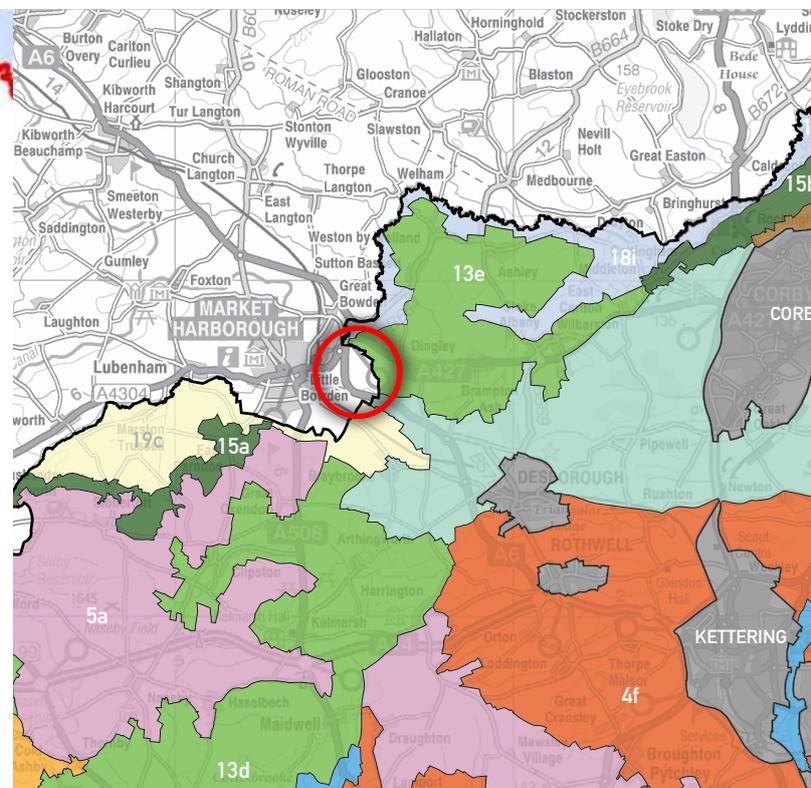


Figure 9: Extract from Northamptonshire Current Landscape Character Assessment

DISTRICT LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Harborough Landscape Character Assessment (September 2007)

In order to assist with policy development, Harborough District Council commissioned a Landscape Character Assessment of the whole district, which was completed in September 2007. This study identifies five different Landscape Character Areas (LCA). The site is located within the **Welland Valley LCA** which *“follows the gently meandering course of the River Welland, and its wide flat river valley, passing through Market Harborough, the largest settlement in the District. The Welland Valley’s key characteristics are defined by the wide valley form that has pasture on floodplain areas and arable farming on the valley sides. It is notable that there is little tree cover. Market Harborough is the only urban influence within the character area.”*

The study defines the following Key Issues relating to the Welland Valley LCA:

- *The relatively flat and open landscape is vulnerable to adverse visual and landscape impacts of development.*
- *The immediate landscape setting to Market Harborough is very vulnerable to inappropriately sited development, both in the valley base to the east, above the ridgeline to the north and adjacent to enclosing landscape features to the west and south. It is important that care is taken to prevent further new development that impacts on the ridgeline and valley base, as well as views from the wider landscape setting of Market Harborough.*
- *The generalised lack of woodland cover across the landscape character area means that new development must be well mitigated to minimise impacts. Opportunities for new woodland screen planting should be encouraged alongside any new development proposals.*

The study also includes an indication of the capacity for each landscape character area to accommodate change without unacceptable adverse effects on its character. The capacity of the Welland LCA is judged to have a Medium capacity to accommodate small scale development. The study notes that *“within the areas immediately surrounding Market Harborough, development is possible with consideration of issues related to its layout, natural extents and envelope, defined in the main by topographical features”*.

The study provides a more focussed analysis of the landscape around selected urban fringe/settlement edge areas across the District, including a capacity of these areas to accommodate potential change and development. The focussed assessment, which included Market Harborough, is superseded by a more recent and in depth study undertaken in 2009: **Market Harborough Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Capacity Study**, which formed part of the Council’s evidence base for the adopted Local Plan (2019) and contributed to determining its policies. Analysis of this study is provided in the following pages.

Northamptonshire Current Landscape Character Assessment (2006)

The eastern edge of Market Harborough and the site adjoins the boundary between Harborough District and North Northamptonshire. Northamptonshire County Council (prior to the formation of the Unitary Authority) carried out the Current Landscape Character Assessment (January 2006) for the whole county, identifying four character types and areas to the south, north and east of the site. Of most relevance to the site and adjoining its eastern boundary is LCA 13e, *Stoke Albany and Ashley*, part of the Undulating Hills and Valleys Landscape Character Type, characterised by expansive views from hill top locations over the Welland valley, occasional copses of broadleaved woodland such as Dingley Warren and clusters of settlement, such as Dingley and Brampton Ash.

Landscape Character

LOCAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Market Harborough Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Capacity Study (2009)

The purpose of the study was to assess the local landscape character around Market Harborough, identify landscape character sub-areas within the wider Welland Valley LCA, and undertake a detailed analysis of the sensitivity of land in and around the edge of Market Harborough to assess its capacity to accommodate future development, particularly residential. As shown in Figure 10, two sub character areas encompass the site within Harborough District as follows:

- Area 4, Lodge Farm Valley Slopes
- Area 5, Clack Hill Ridge

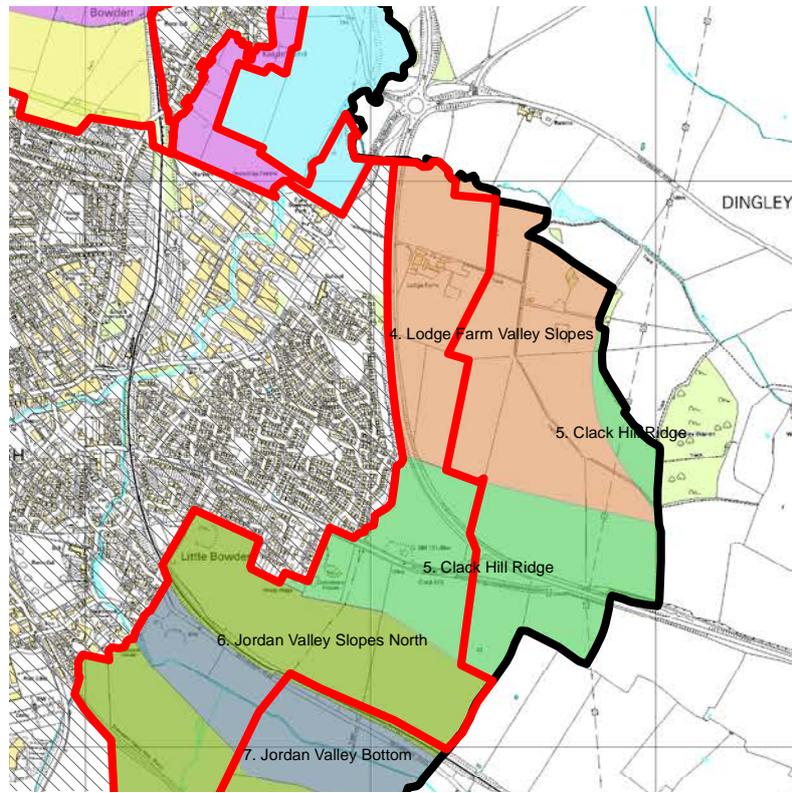


Figure 10: Extract from Market Harborough Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Capacity Study - Local Landscape Character Areas

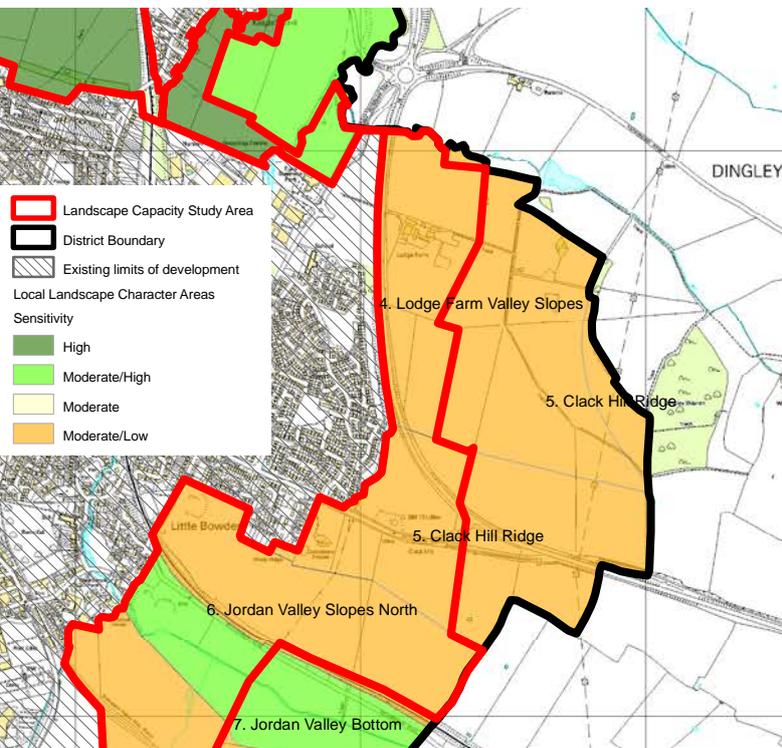


Figure 11: Extract from Market Harborough Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Capacity Study - Local Landscape Character Areas Sensitivity

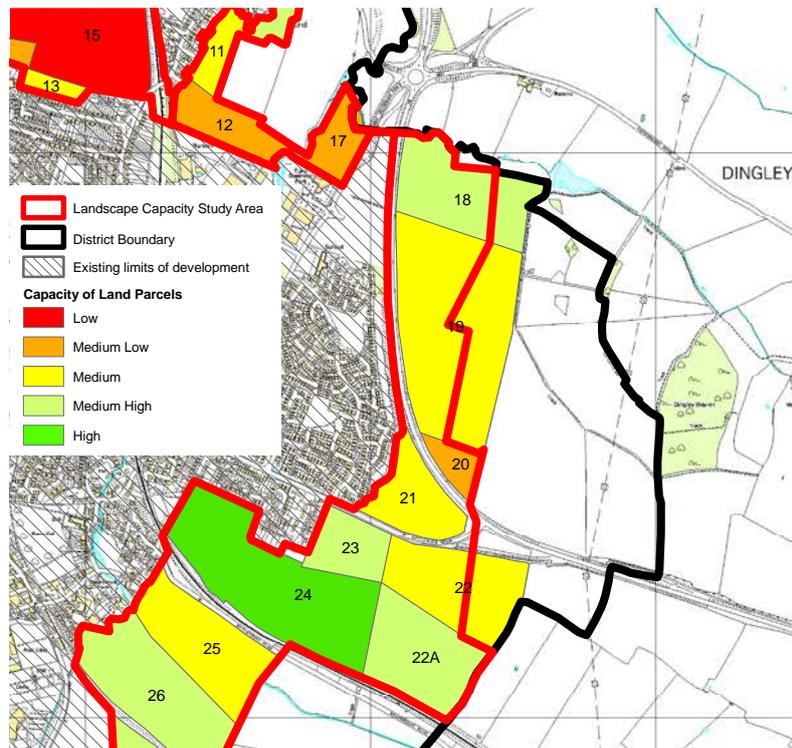


Figure 12: Extract from Market Harborough Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Capacity Study - Individual Land Parcels Capacity

Area 4, Lodge Farm Valley Slopes

Key Characteristics: *Predominantly arable landscape; gently sloping towards a tributary of the River Welland; pasture along banks of river, grazed by sheep; hedgerows are heavily clipped or have been removed and replaced with post and wire fences; large farm buildings and associated clutter are a noticeable intrusion; A6 and Market Harborough generally screened by planting from within the area.*

Distinctive Features: *Poplars around Lodge Farm; A6 corridor; tributary of the River Welland; ridge and furrow.*

Area 5, Clack Hill Ridge

Key Characteristics: *Elevated ridgeline and views towards Market Harborough and High Leicestershire; small to medium pastoral fields with evidence of ridge and furrow; large arable fields further from Market Harborough; large woodland blocks a feature, particularly as the ridgeline enters Northamptonshire; number of ponds; more domestic scale with ornamental planting immediately adjacent to Market Harborough.*

Distinctive Features: *Triangulation point on top of Clack Hill; ridge and furrow; overhead power lines; area of former quarrying north of Kettering Road; A6; Overstone House*

Sensitivity of Local Landscape Character Area 4 and Area 5

Both Area 4 and 5 are noted as having a Poor Condition and Moderate Strength of Character, leading to a Moderate/Low sensitivity for the landscape character areas, the same judgement as for land to the south of the site encompassing character Area 6 and land to the south of the A6, currently under construction for residential development (Davidsons Homes at Little Bowden).

Detailed Sensitivity & Capacity of Land Parcels

As shown on Figure 12, the scale of landscape units used for the study was reduced from the LCA work with smaller scale 'Land Parcels' being assessed, enabling a more detailed consideration of sensitivity and capacity. To determine a finer grain of sensitivity, an assessment of landscape features combined with visual sensitivity resulted in an Overall Landscape Sensitivity. In order to assess the Overall Landscape Capacity of a Land Parcel, 'landscape value' was added to the equation, as follows.

"Overall Landscape Sensitivity + Landscape Value = Overall Landscape Capacity".

The landscape value of land parcels was judged considering proximity to the now defunct Area of Particularly Attractive Countryside (APAC) designation. This designation was removed from the local plan in favour of Landscape Character Assessment, in accordance with best practice. Further detailed analysis of landscape value is required to take into account the removal of this designation, which would likely increase the capacity of those land parcels that fall within the former designation.

Landscape Character

CAPACITY ANALYSIS

Parcel 18 and 19

As shown on Figure 12, two lower lying land parcels within the site (18 and 19) are assessed as having Medium High and Medium capacity respectively, comparable to parcels associated with the Davidsons Homes development to the south of the A6. The study notes that given the proximity to the A6, both parcel 18 and 19 could be suitable for either commercial or residential development, subject to several mitigation measures as follows:

- Retention of existing planting along the A6 and Dingley Brook
- Additional planting is likely to be necessary to reinforce the existing hedgerows, particularly to the east of the site. Substantial additional planting would be required to the east to create a new planted edge to Market Harborough.
- Vegetation along Dingley Brook should be suitable for a river environment and would enhance the wildlife corridor along the watercourse. A new green buffer to the east would be required and provide links to Dingley Brook.
- Any development should be designed to suit the interface with the rural location.
- Built form could include either residential at 2-2.5 storeys or commercial up to 3 storeys, to relate to the development west of the A6.
- The public footpath and bridleway that run through the site should be retained.
- Any development in this location would be accessed from the A6.



Viewpoint 1: Dingley Warren, Public Bridleway A71, looking west (within site)

Parcel 20

Parcel 20 falls within Area 5 (Clack Hill Ridge) between the site and the A6 and is assessed as having Medium Low capacity to accommodate development. Capacity within parcel 20 is lower than parcel 18 and 19 due to the visual sensitivity of higher ground and sloping terrain. The study states that it is not considered appropriate to develop parcel 20. Whilst the parcel does not form part of the site and will remain undeveloped, it is similar to land parcels within the site further east along the A6.

Site land parcels beyond the Capacity Study Area

Where the site falls within Local Landscape Character Area 5 – Clack Hill Ridge, as with parcel 20, it is recommended that these areas are kept free from development. This area broadly coincides with the 110m contour.

In the area of land beyond parcel 19 to the east and within Local Landscape Character Area 4 – Lodge Farm Valley Slopes, where terrain begins to rise, land parcels become increasingly sensitive to development. Similar mitigation measures noted for Parcels 18 and 19 equally apply to these land parcels. A landscape framework using the footpath network and field boundaries (both historic and current) should be used to provide structure for the development parcels, ensuring the proposals are contained by a landscape edge to Market Harborough.



Visual Analysis

ZONE OF THEORETICAL VISIBILITY (ZTV) STUDY

To aid the identification of receptors likely to be most affected by development of the site and those which are unlikely to have visibility, a Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) study was generated, based on buildings located within Landscape Area 4 - Lodge Farm Valley Slopes, and modelled at 10m above ground level (between 2 and 2.5 storey) to cover maximum heights. The analysis was carried out using a topographic model including settlements and woodlands as visual barriers in order to provide a more realistic indication of potential visibility. However, areas shown as having potential visibility may have visibility of the development screened by local features such as trees, hedgerows, embankments, or buildings.

The ZTV (Figure 13) shows theoretical visibility contained by ridges of high ground immediately to the north and south of the site. Visibility is absent in tributary valleys of the River Welland to the north and south before higher ground approximately 1 km from the site gives rises to theoretical visibility of the proposals. Theoretical visibility extends to the east encompassing Dingley before wooded hills associated with the village prevent views further eastwards. To the west, theoretical visibility extends across Market Harborough and Great Bowden before localised areas of high ground approximately 3km to the west of the town restrict wider visibility.

VIEWPOINT ANALYSIS

The actual visibility of the site from the surrounding landscape was established during a site visit in January 2024.

Site observations confirm that, realistically, views of proposed development would be confined to areas within 1 km of the site. Ridges of high ground and undulating terrain within the surrounding environment substantially restrict views towards the site. Views are further restricted by vegetation associated with the A6 and the A427 / Harborough Road; by vegetation along the River Welland corridor; along the Brampton Valley Way; and by vegetation associated within urban areas, none of which is modelled in the ZTV Study.

The proposals would be visible from the footpath network that runs through the site, extending to the edge of Dingley, where views are available from the valley slopes and higher ground westward across the site towards Market Harborough. Views of the proposals on the southern and eastern rising slopes of the site would be possible from the edge of Great Bowden, but would be seen in the context of development on rising ground associated with Little Bowden. Glimpsed views from higher ground within Market Harborough between buildings and vegetation would be possible.

From more distant locations, such as the network of footpaths around Sutton Bassett to the north between approximately 2 – 3 km of the site, views of the proposals would be likely but would be seen at a distance and in the context Market Harborough. Views from the south of the A6 would be unlikely due to the terrain and vegetation associated with the A6 and bounding the site.

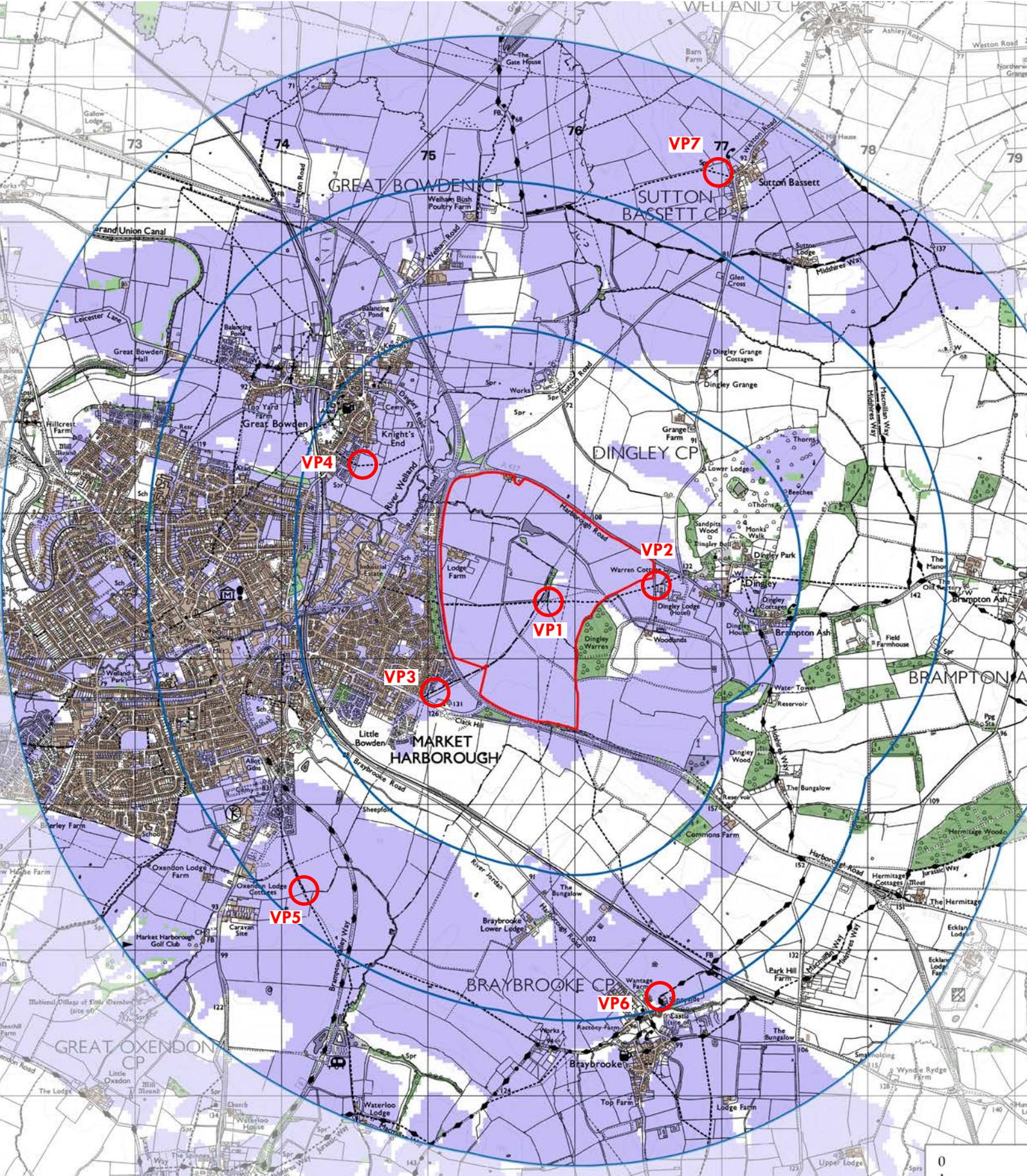
Figure 13, identifies locations of representative viewpoints, with accompanying photos and descriptions provided below.

- Site boundary
- Distance from Site boundary (1,2 and 3km)
- Urban Area
- Woodland
- Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) (computer generated based on proposed building heights at 10m)
- Viewpoint location

This drawing is based upon computer generated Zone of Theoretical Visibility studies produced using the viewshed routine in the ESRI ArcGIS Suite. It shows the maximum theoretical visibility, taking into account topographic woodlands and settlements, which have been included in the model with data obtained from Nextmap 25. It should be noted that in some areas woodland within the ZTV may comprise active forestry, resulting in the felling and regrowth of some areas modelled in the ZTV study. The ZTV study reflects this pattern specific point in time, as it is based on real height information. Whilst the model will alter the heights of different areas of forestry over time, altering local effects, the wider pattern will remain relatively constant.

The model does not take into account any localised features such as small hedgerows or individual trees and therefore still gives an exaggerated impression of the extent of visibility. The actual extent of visibility on the ground will be less than suggested by this plan.

Figure 13: Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) Study and Representative Viewpoint Locations



Viewpoints

Viewpoint 1: Dingley Warren, Public Bridleway A71

This viewpoint, located on Public Bridleway A71 leading from Clack Hill (Little Bowden) towards Dingley, looks south-west to north across the site towards Market Harborough. The viewpoint is from an elevated location at the top of a localised hill associated with Dingley Warren wood, that forms part of the Clack Hill Ridge Local Character Area. The ridge descends from the south (left hand side of the view) towards the town. Roof tops associated with Little Bowden are visible beyond the ridge (and A6). A subtle valley is located between the ridge and the hill, leading to Lodge Farm and continuing to Dingley Brook at the northern reaches of the site. The ridge associated with the A427 can be seen containing the site to the north. Market Harborough is clearly visible to the centre of the view beyond the A6 which is marked by vegetation. A “green gap” is distinguishable between Market Harborough and Great Bowden and connects with the site and Dingley Brook. The proposals should be set below high ground associated with the ridge and upper valley slopes.

Viewpoint 2: Dingley, Public Footpath GH1

This viewpoint, located on Public Footpath GH7 (joining Footpath A57), is from the edge of Dingley at similar orientation to Viewpoint 1, albeit at a higher elevation. The localised hill associated with Dingley Warren restricts views of the southern portion of the site. Market Harborough is visible beyond the hill and between tree belts and vegetation associated with the site and Dingley Brook. The proposals should be located beyond the tree belt and hillside, with woodland planting located at the development edge to separate development areas from retained farmland to the north of the brook.

Viewpoint 3: Little Bowden, Public Bridleway A71

This viewpoint is located from a recently constructed residential development adjacent to Clack Hill. The view is from Public Bridleway A71 at an elevated location that provides distant views across the Welland Valley to the north. In the middle ground the ridge associated with the A427 forms the middle ground of the view, just beneath which is Lodge Farm. The majority of the site is screened by intervening features (A6, housing, Clack Hill). Development should be kept off the A427 ridge and be located no higher than housing associated with Clack Hill and Little Bowden.

Viewpoint 4: Great Bowden, Public Footpath A54

This viewpoint is located on Public Footpath A54 at the edge of Great Bowden. It looks across the “green gap” that separates the village from Market Harborough, towards the A6, business and employment areas associated with the town. Beyond these areas rising ground associated with the site can be seen, with the horizon marked by Dingley Warren. To the south, residential development adjacent to Clack Hill (Little Bowden) is visible beneath the ridge line. The proposals should reflect this development pattern, keeping roof tops below the ridge line, beneath a backdrop of woodland that can be planted to accentuate the terrain.

Viewpoint 5 & 6: Viewpoints to south of the Midland Main Line

These viewpoints are located to the south of the railway line, looking north towards the ridge and A6 that form the southern boundary to the site. From Viewpoint 5, the view looks towards the Davidson Homes development on south facing slopes of Clack Hill, where rooftops breach the ridgeline. From viewpoint 6, at the edge of Braybrooke village along Bridleway GC3 / Midshires Way, the ridge separating the site from the valley to the south clearly defines the horizon. In views from the south, proposals should be set beneath the ridgeline, with woodland planted on the upper slopes to reinforce the legibility of the terrain.

Viewpoint 7: Sutton Bassett, Public Footpath HB9

This viewpoint is located to the western edge of Sutton Bassett, a village located on the valley side of the River Welland. Views south-west towards Market Harborough and the site are interrupted by the undulating terrain and ridges of high ground, in particular the ridge associated with A427 which bounds the northern site boundary, preventing views of lower-lying parts of the site. The north facing slopes of Clack Hill are visible beyond the A427. Houses should be kept off higher parts of the slope and roofs should not breach the ridgeline.



Dingley Warren

Tree belt (on site)

Market Harborough

Great Bowden

Dingley Brook

Viewpoint 2 - Dingley, Public Footpath GH1, looking west (50m east)



Great Bowden

Lodge Farm

Dingley Manor (A427)

A427 ridge

Tree belt (on site)

Clack Hill

Viewpoint 3 - Little Bowden, Public Bridleway A71, looking north-east (250m south-west)



A427

Dingley

Tree belt (on site)

Dingley Warren

Euro Buisness Park (Joules)

Clack Hill (Little Bowden)

Viewpoint 4 - Great Bowden, looking south-east (650m, north-west)



Market Harborough

Davidsons Homes (Little Bowden)

Clack Hill (site beyond)

Dingley Warren

Brampton Valley Way

Midland Main Line

Viewpoint 5 - Public Footpath A62, looking north-east (1.95km, south-west)



Davidsons Homes (Little Bowden)

The Site (beyond ridge)

Midland Main Line

Viewpoint 6 - Braybrooke, Public Bridleway GC3, looking north-west (1.91 km south-east)



A6

Dingley Warren

Clack Hill

A427/Ridge (site beyond)

Market Harborough

Viewpoint 7 - Sutton Bassett, looking south-west (2.42km north-east)

Landscape Strategy

Figure 14 illustrates the proposed landscape principles for the site, intended to inform the proposed development strategy and ensure proposals respond to and integrate with the site's landscape context. The approach seeks to deliver a range of Green Infrastructure benefits by enhancing biodiversity and improving access to nature, open space and all the associated health and wellbeing benefits.

Key considerations are as follows:

- Enhance Dingley Brook Local GI corridor, feeding into River Welland Strategic GI corridor. Brook corridor to be buffered by areas of accessible open space, to include play areas, SuDS features and amenity space.
- Create secondary GI corridor (Greenway) associated with shallow valley that runs through the core of the site. This would contain retained hedgerows and ditches, SuDS features, pedestrian and cycle network and local amenity space.
- Retain Public Rights of Way on existing alignments and improve access across A6 via dedicated pedestrian/cycle crossing associated with PRow A57.
- Locate key Public Open Space at the intersection of Public Footpath A57 and secondary GI corridor. This local park would be located on lower lying, level terrain to accommodate play space, sports pitches and community events.
- Locate development areas within Lodge Farm Valley Slopes character area, approximately up to the 110m contour, to preserve the legibility of higher slopes, Clack Hill and the ridge along the site's southern boundary.
- Buildings on the lower lying ground to be predominantly two and 2.5 storey, with occasional three storey elements. Buildings located on slopes above the 95m contour to be two storey, in keeping with adjacent developments associated with Clack Hill.
- Hedgerow framework should be retained where possible, with development areas set within the framework to provide structure to the new neighbourhood. There is potential to reinstate lost hedgerows, particularly within the southern portion of the site, enhancing ecological networks.
- At the eastern and southern edges of proposed development areas, hedgerows (existing and proposed) can be enhanced, acting as tree belts to visually contain the outer edges of the settlement, stitching in to existing woodland and providing a transition to countryside.
- Retain agricultural land within the site, beyond Harborough District boundary, creating a rural buffer between Market Harborough and Dingley.
- At the southern edge of the site associated with the ridge of higher ground, field parcels would become grassland meadow slopes, contributing to the site's Biodiversity Net Gain requirements. The boundary between the A6 and development edge would also serve as a peripheral landscape connecting to Dingley Brook. These areas would contain an informal path network, providing residents access to natural open space.

Incorporation of the above considerations would limit impacts on landscape and visual receptors and, as such, the landholding would be able to accommodate development whilst providing a range of green infrastructure benefits.

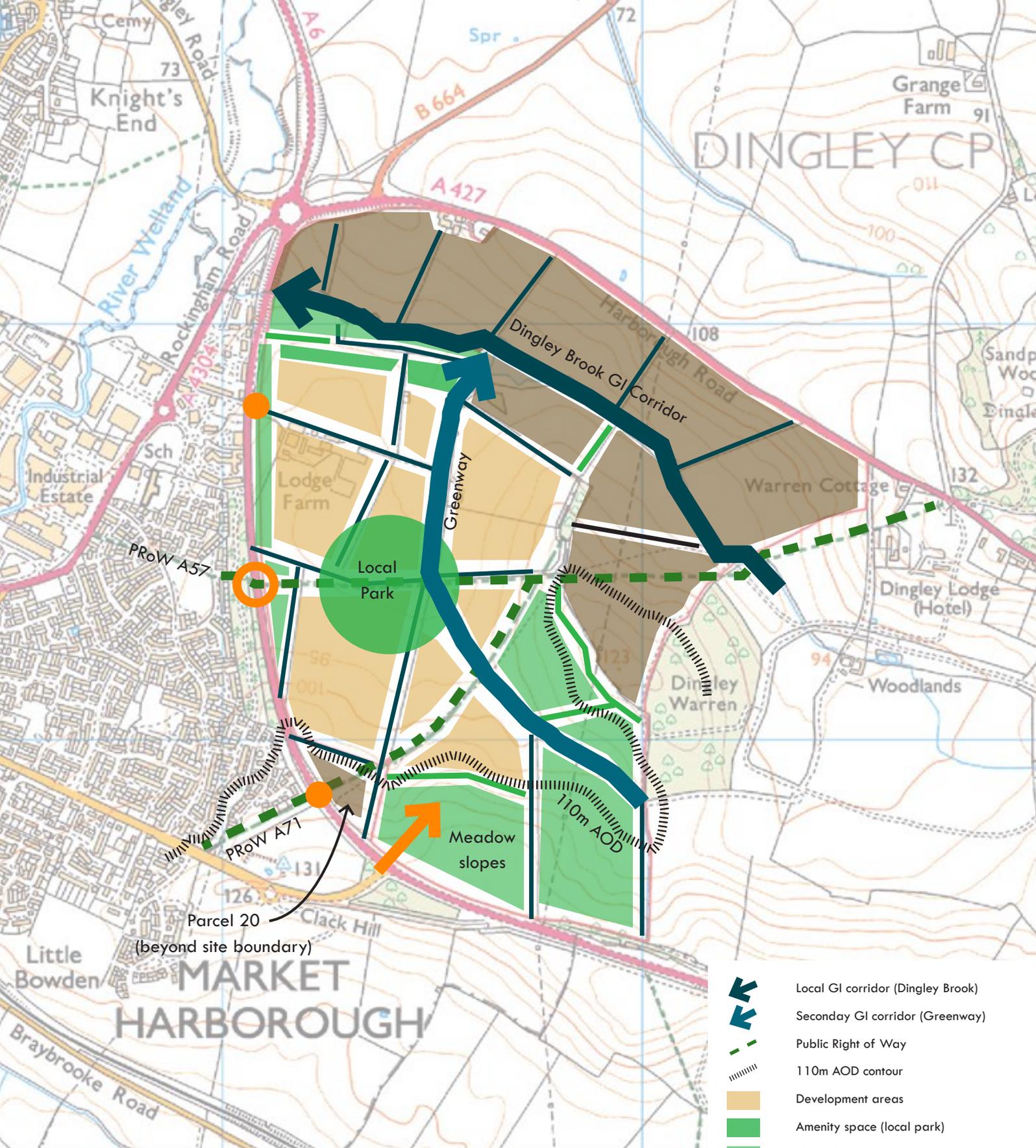


Figure 14: Landscape Strategy

-  Local GI corridor (Dingley Brook)
-  Secondary GI corridor (Greenway)
-  Public Right of Way
-  110m AOD contour
-  Development areas
-  Amenity space (local park)
-  Natural open space
-  Retained agricultural land
-  Proposed primary vehicular access
-  Key (improved) pedestrian / cycle access
-  Secondary access points (existing)
-  Existing hedgerow
-  Proposed hedgerow / tree belt

Land East of Market Harborough

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