

# Land at Lynchmead Farm, Weston-super-Mare

Landscape and Visual Appraisal

April 2020

On behalf of Mead Realisations Limited





Land at Lynchmead Farm, Weston-super-Mare

Landscape and Visual Appraisal

Project no. 2714

Final

April 2020

	Name	Position	Signature	Date
Prepared by:	Nigel Evers	Director	high has.	02/04/2019
Reviewed by:	Lindsey Evers	Director	UndoeyDors	02/04/2019

Revision	Description	Prepared	Reviewed	Date
А	Minor changes to text	NJE	LAE	27/06/19
В	Minor changes to text	NJE	LAE	01/04/20



# CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION1
1.1	BACKGROUND1
1.2	SCOPE OF APPRAISAL1
2	METHODOLOGY
2.1	APPROACH
2.2	DESKTOP STUDY
2.3	FIELD SURVEY4
2.4	STUDY AREA4
3	LANDSCAPE CONTEXT AND ANALYSIS6
3.1	SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION6
3.2	VEGETATION6
3.3	LANDFORM AND WATERCOURSES7
3.4	SETTLEMENT7
3.5	LANDSCAPE PLANNING CONTEXT7
3.6	LANDSCAPE CHARACTER12
4	VISUAL ANALYSIS
4.1	INTRODUCTION17
4.2	VISUAL ANALYSIS17
5	CONSTRAINTS, OPPORTUNITIES AND LANDSCAPE STRATEGY
5.1	CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES19
5.2	CONSTRAINTS19
5.3	OPPORTUNITIES
5.4	LANDSCAPE STRATEGY20
6	APPRAISAL
6.1	DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS
6.2	LANDSCAPE APPRAISAL OF THE PROPOSALS22
6.3	VISUAL APPRAISAL OF THE PROPOSALS24
7	CONCLUSIONS
7.1	CONCLUSIONS



## FIGURES

Figure L1: Topography and Viewpoint Location Plan

Figure L2: Landscape Planning Context

Figure L3: Landscape Character

Figure L4: Landscape and Visual Opportunities and Constraints

Figure L5: Illustrative Landscape Masterplan

Figure L6: Indicative Species List

## **APPENDICES**

Appendix A: Viewpoint Photographs



# 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1.1 Viridian Landscape Planning Ltd was commissioned in November 2018 by Mead Realisations Limited to undertake a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) of land at Lynchmead Farm, Weston-super-Mare in support of an outline planning application for up to 75 dwellings and associated development such as roads and open spaces.
- 1.1.2 This report presents the methodology, context and results of the landscape and visual appraisal process, including the proposed landscape strategy, which underpins the Illustrative Landscape Masterplan and in turn will underpin the detailed landscape design for the scheme. The methodology used for the appraisal is provided at Section 2. The findings of the desk study and site visit are summarised at Sections 3 and 4. Section 5 sets out the key landscape and visual constraints and opportunities, together with the resulting landscape strategy. The landscape and visual appraisal of the development proposals is set out at Section 6. Conclusions are set out at Section 7.
- 1.1.3 As part of the landscape and visual appraisal process, the following plans have been prepared:
  - Figure L1: Topography;
  - Figure L2: Landscape Character;
  - Figure L3: Landscape Planning Context;
  - Figure L4: Viewpoint Location Plan;
  - Figure L5: Landscape and Visual Opportunities and Constraints.
- 1.1.4 The viewpoints which support the visual analysis of the site are represented by stitched panoramic photographs, presented in **Appendix A**.

### 1.2 SCOPE OF APPRAISAL

- 1.2.1 This LVA has been prepared by Chartered Landscape Architects at Viridian Landscape Planning.
- 1.2.2 This landscape and visual appraisal report considers:
  - Features of the site and its context;
  - Landscape character, the character of the site, and its relationship to its surroundings;
  - Landscape-related planning designations;



- Views towards the site;
- A landscape strategy designed to provide a setting for the proposed development; and
- Changes to landscape features, landscape character and views arising as a result of the development proposals.



# 2 METHODOLOGY

#### 2.1 APPROACH

- 2.1.1 This appraisal is based on the principles of the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment: Third Edition (GLVIA3) (Landscape Institute, IEMA, 2013).
- 2.1.2 The appraisal has been informed by a desktop study, followed by a field survey visit to the site and the surrounding area.

#### 2.2 DESKTOP STUDY

2.2.1 The desktop study comprised collation and review of published background information on the site and surrounding context. This included a review of landscape planning policy and the landscape character of the site, as well as information on statutory and non-statutory landscape designations on the site or in the surrounding area.

#### SOURCES OF BASELINE INFORMATION

2.2.2 The sources of baseline data are summarised in **Table 2.1** below:

Baseline Topic	Data Source
National Landscape Planning Policy	NPPF National Planning Policy Framework (June 2019)
Local Landscape Planning Policy	North Somerset Council Core Strategy, Adopted 2017 Sites and Policies Part 1: Development Management Policies: Adopted 2016
Registered Parks and Gardens Listed Buildings Scheduled Monuments National Trust Properties Ancient Woodland Open Access Areas National Cycle Network	GIS

#### Table 2.1: Baseline Information Sources



Baseline Topic	Data Source
Unregistered Parks and Gardens	LDP
Conservation Areas	GIS / LDP
Public Rights of Way	Ordnance Survey 1:25000 Explorer Map GIS
Landscape Character	<b>National -</b> Natural England, 2014. 'National Character Areas' <b>District -</b> North Somerset Landscape Character Assessment SPD (NSC 2018)

#### 2.3 FIELD SURVEY

- 2.3.1 Site visits were undertaken by a Chartered Landscape Architect, in March 2018 and March 2019.
- 2.3.2 The purpose of the fieldwork was to:
  - Gain an understanding of the landscape character of the site and its context;
  - Determine the extent of visibility of the existing site, including any existing built structures, and the visibility of potential development on the site - the actual extent of which is determined by landform, vegetation, and existing / proposed built development; and
  - Carry out the landscape and visual appraisal.
- 2.3.3 The area surrounding the site was surveyed and photographed to assess visibility of the site and the proposals. Viewpoints were those to which the public has access, such as footpaths, bridleways, roads and other public spaces. Viewpoint photographs are included in **Appendix A**.

#### 2.4 STUDY AREA

- 2.4.1 The spatial scope of this assessment was determined by the geographical spread of the area from where the existing site can be seen, known as the Visual Envelope. However, views of the proposals may extend to greater distances.
- 2.4.2 A limit of 3km is normally set for the initial study area, beyond which our professional experience on other assessments for this type of development has shown it is difficult to discern landscape or visual effects. For this site, the field survey established that



the generally level topography, together with existing hedges and development, reduces the extent of the site's visibility from publicly accessible viewpoints across the moors, but views are available from elevated land to the south-west and north up to 2.8km from the site boundary.



# 3 LANDSCAPE CONTEXT AND ANALYSIS

#### 3.1 SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

- 3.1.1 The site is located in Wick St Lawrence on the north-eastern edge of Weston-super-Mare in North Somerset, within the administrative boundary of North Somerset Council.
- 3.1.2 The site is just less than 5.0ha in extent and comprises four parcels of grazing land on the northern side of Ebdon Road. There are no public rights of way across the site. All the field boundaries contain rhynes.
- 3.1.3 There are no buildings on the site.
- 3.1.4 The site is in two parts, to the west and east of a group of properties on Ebdon Road, linked by a small piece of land behind the properties. It is bounded to the:
  - south by hedges along Ebdon Road;
  - west and east by hedges on agricultural fields;
  - to the north by unmarked boundaries across fields; and
  - to the south-east by Oxhouse Industrial Estate.

### 3.2 VEGETATION

- 3.2.1 Most of the site vegetation consists of trimmed hedges. They occur along the boundaries of the site along Ebdon Road, part of the western boundary and along the rhynes that divide the site from north to south and along the rhynes that divides the site east to west. There are more substantial hedgerows in the south-western corner and around the land associated with Stroud and Nut Cottages where there are overgrown hedges and mature trees. The eastern boundary consists of untrimmed hedges.
- 3.2.2 It appears that the hedges and trees are managed for agricultural objectives rather than landscape or ecological reasons.
- 3.2.3 A Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment has been undertaken for the site by Aspect Tree Consultancy. Of the trees on site, the survey identified eight as being category B (moderate quality), eight as category C (low quality) and three as category U (dead, dying or very low quality). Two of the tree groups are category A (high quality) and five are category C; none are category U. Of the hedges, all 10 are categorised as C.
- 3.2.4 All trees surveyed are within the hedges.



- 3.2.5 In its Summary, the Arboricultural Impact Assessment concluded the following:
  - The existing tree cover on the site is of low to moderate quality with heavily degraded hedges and trees with limited viability.
  - The outline residential proposal retains the most significant trees and hedges with only the loss of a small number of minor, insignificant trees. Several sections of hedge would be removed to allow access into the site and between fields. The impact of this would be low.
  - The indicative layout shows some minor impacts arising from the layout and the proposed attenuation. There is scope to limit the impacts arising from this through the detailed design and via the production of arboricultural method statements to control operations at the construction stage.
  - The layout shows that there is ample space for new tree planting as well as opportunities to improve the quality of the retained hedgerows. This will lead to a significant positive long-term impact in the sites' vegetation cover.

#### 3.3 LANDFORM AND WATERCOURSES

- 3.3.1 The site is within a flat landscape at an elevation of approximately 6m AOD, which continues across to the edge of Woodspring Bay, 2.2km to the north. To the southwest the land rises gently to 30m AOD, before ascending steeply to a ridge at around 85m AOD at Worlebury Hill and Worle Hill.
- 3.3.2 There are rhynes (drainage ditches) along all eastern and western boundaries of the site and, in the eastern part of the site, a rhyne follows the southern boundary with Ebdon Road. In addition, there are rhynes running west to east, bisecting both parts of the site.

#### 3.4 SETTLEMENT

- 3.4.1 The site is situated to the north of Weston-super-Mare immediately adjacent to its settlement boundary and on the northern side of Ebdon Road, as shown on Figure L3: Landscape Planning Context.
- 3.4.2 On the southern side of Ebdon Road is extensive residential development beyond a narrow belt of landscape planting and verges. To the north and partly surrounded by the site but not part of it, there is a cluster of cottages and farm buildings including Nut Tree and Stroud Cottages and Lynchmead Bungalow. Further to the east along Ebdon Road, employment development at Oxhouse Industrial Estate is adjacent to the south-eastern corner of the site.

#### 3.5 LANDSCAPE PLANNING CONTEXT

3.5.1 The landscape planning context for the site is shown on Figure L3: Landscape Planning Context. The site is not within a nationally designated landscape area.



#### LANDSCAPE PLANNING POLICY

#### National Planning Policy Framework

3.5.2 National planning policy is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), June 2019. Set out at paragraph 8 are three overarching objectives to achieve sustainable development, two of which set out (inter alia):

*b) a social objective* – ... *by fostering a well-designed...built environment, with accessible...open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and* 

c) an *environmental objective* - ...to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently...

3.5.3 12: Achieving well-designed places, paragraph 127, states that planning decisions should ensure that developments:

*'a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;* 

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

c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);

d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;

*e)* optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and

*f*) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and wellbeing, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users...'.

Pre-Application Advice Reports (PAARS)

- 3.5.4 Extracts from the policies cited in the PAAR (23 January 2018) which are relevant to landscape and visual issues are set out below.
- 3.5.5 They include the following policies from the adopted **Core Strategy**.
- 3.5.6 CS4: Nature conservation. Relevant to landscape design issues are the following:



2) seeking to ensure that new development is designed to maximise benefits to biodiversity, incorporating, safeguarding and enhancing natural habitats and features and adding to them where possible, particularly networks of habitats;

4) promoting the enhancement of existing and provision of new green infrastructure of value to wildlife; and

5) promoting native tree planting and well targeted woodland creation, and encouraging retention of trees, with a view to enhancing biodiversity.

3.5.7 CS5: Landscape and the historic environment. Relevant clauses are that:

The character, distinctiveness, diversity and quality of North Somerset's landscape... will be protected and enhanced by the careful, sensitive management and design of development.

3.5.8 CS9: Green infrastructure. Relevant parts include:

The existing network of green infrastructure will be safeguarded, improved and enhanced by further provision, linking into existing provision where appropriate, ensuring it is a multifunctional, accessible network which promotes healthy lifestyles, maintains and improves biodiversity and landscape character...

Priority will be given to (amongst others):

- the promotion of the...River Banwell, North Somerset Levels and Moors...as local corridors for biodiversity and landscape enhancement; and
- the continued development of a network of green spaces, water bodies, paths and cycleways and bridleways in and around the urban areas...
- 3.5.9 CS12: Achieving high quality design and place-making Well-designed buildings and places.

The policy states that the Council is committed to:

achieving high quality...places across all of North Somerset... High quality architecture and urban design will be sought from development demonstrating a robust design process to generate solutions that have clearly considered the existing context...Proposals of all scales...should take the opportunity to enhance the sense of place and local identity...

- 3.5.10 CS28: Weston-super-Mare. The policy sets out that new development proposals at Weston-super-Mare within or adjoining the settlement boundary should take into account various objectives, which include:
  - provide high quality design;
  - support the enhancement of its green infrastructure and biodiversity, including the ridges and hinterland to the north and south, the woodland areas, the rhynes network...
- 3.5.11 From the Sites and Policies Part 1: Development Management Policies are the following policies.



- 3.5.12 Policy DM9: Trees and Woodlands. Development proposals affecting trees are required to achieve the following, amongst others:
  - demonstrate that the retention, protection and enhancement of tree canopy cover has been considered throughout the design and development process;
  - include, where practical, the introduction of appropriate new tree planting and woodland creation as an integral part of the design and landscaping of new developments, using native species of local origin wherever <u>possible</u>.
- 3.5.13 Policy DM10: Landscape. The policy requires all development proposals to:
  - Not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the designated landscape character of the district...and [to] respond to the distinctive qualities of the landscape...;
  - Be carefully integrated into the natural, built and historic environment, aiming to establish a strong sense of place, respond to local character, and reflect the identity of local surroundings, whilst minimising landscape impact;
  - *Respect the tranquillity of an area;*
  - *Include appropriate landscaping and boundary treatments in the scheme;*
  - Conserve and enhance natural or semi-natural vegetation characteristic of the area; and
  - Respect the character of the historic landscape including features such as field patterns, watercourses, drainage ditches, stone walls and hedgerows.

Where some harm to the local landscape character is unavoidable, but a development is otherwise deemed beneficial, then positive mitigation measures should be secured by a landscape condition or planning agreement (Section 106), involving works on or off-site as necessary.

3.5.14 Policy DM 19: Green Infrastructure. The policy requires that:

Large-scale proposals in locations where there is a lack of green infrastructure or opportunities to create or improve green networks, will be required to contribute to the quality of the environment, through the creation of high quality well designed and accessible green infrastructure.

3.5.15 DM32: High quality design and place-making. The policy requires that:

The design of new development should contribute to the creation of high quality, distinctive, functional and sustainable places where opportunities for physical activity and recreation are maximised. The design and planning of development proposals should demonstrate sensitivity to the local character, and the setting, and enhance the area taking into consideration the existing context. Design solutions should seek to enhance local distinctiveness and contribute to the creation of a sense of place and identity.

#### CONSERVATION AREAS

3.5.16 The site is not within a Conservation Area. The nearest is Worle Village Conservation Area, 1.34km to the south.



#### LISTED BUILDINGS

- 3.5.17 There are no Listed Buildings within or adjacent to the site.
- 3.5.18 Listed Buildings within 1.5km of the site are shown on Figure L3: Landscape Planning Context. Comprising:
  - Ebdon Bow Bridge (Grade II, 650m NE).

In Wick St Lawrence:

- Gervinia Cottage (Grade II, 1.25km NE); and
- Banksea Cottages (Grade II, 1.27km NE).

In the urban area to the south-west:

- Newtons (Grade II\*, 1km SW); and
- Ballroom (Grade II, 1km SW).

#### In Norton:

- Rose Tree Farmhouse (Grade II, 1.3km W); and
- Norton Court Farmhouse (Grade II, 1.4km W).

On Worle Hill:

• Worle Tower Observatory (Grade II, 1.37km SW).

To the south:

The Bell House (Grade II\*, 1.4km S).

3.5.19 There is no intervisibility between the site and any of the Listed Buildings.

#### SCHEDULED MONUMENTS

- 3.5.20 There are no Scheduled Monuments within or adjacent to the site. There are three within 1.5km of the site, comprising:
  - Motte at Castle Batch (680m S);
  - Wick St Lawrence village cross (1.28km NE); and
  - Cross in St Lawrence's churchyard (1.34km NE).
- 3.5.21 In addition, Woodspring Priory with its associated fishponds and field system lies 2.1km north-west, adjacent to the National Trust land at Middle Hope.

#### REGISTERED PARKS AND GARDENS

3.5.22 The site is not listed in the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens and there are no registered parks or gardens in the study area.



#### ANCIENT WOODLAND

3.5.23 There is no Ancient Woodland within or adjacent to the site. The nearest is Worle Hill Wood, 1.2km south-west and Ashcombe Wood, 2.8km south-west.

#### PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

3.5.24 Public rights of way are shown on **Figure L3: Landscape Planning Context.** There are none across or adjacent to the site. A public right of way, 430m north-east of the site, runs from Ebdon road north-westward, crossing Collum Lane at Woodspring Nursery.

#### NATIONAL CYCLE NETWORK

3.5.25 At its closest point, National Cycle Network Route 33 runs approximately 1.7km southeast of the site along Bourton Lane. There is no intervisibility between the site and Route 33.

#### 3.6 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

- 3.6.1 **Figure L2: Landscape Character** illustrates the published landscape character areas applicable to the site and surrounding area.
- 3.6.2 Published sources describing landscape character at the National, and County level are:
  - National Character Area Profiles (Natural England, 2014); and
  - North Somerset Landscape Character Assessment (September 2018).

#### NATIONAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

- 3.6.3 The National Character Area profiles produced by Natural England provide a nonstatutory and overarching classification of landscape character.
- 3.6.4 The site is located within National Character Area (NCA) Profile NCA 142: Somerset Levels and Moors, as shown on **Figure L2: Landscape Character**. Of the key characteristics of this NCA, the following relate to the site and its surroundings:

This is a flat open landscape of wet pasture, arable and wetland divided by ditches and rhynes, often forming a chequer-board pattern, that clearly illustrate the reclaimed, planned nature of the landscape.

The landscape is surrounded, divided and punctuated by a diverse geology of hills, ridges and islands, such as the Mendip and Polden hills, and Brent Knoll, Burrow Mump and Glastonbury Tor, which form distinctive skylines.

The centres of individual moors are often treeless, with a gradation to an increasingly 'bushy' appearance towards their edges created by occasional hedgerows and lines of pollard willows associated with ditches and rhynes.



Semi-natural unimproved grasslands, wet meadows, fen, mire and reedbeds underline the area's wetland character...

*Incremental development and industrialisation from the towns is evident, especially on the western side of the* [M5] *motorway.* 

3.6.5 The NCA profile states that:

The Somerset Levels and Moors National Character Area (NCA) is closely linked, both geographically and historically, with the adjacent Mid Somerset Hills NCAs and Mendip Hills NCA. The hills surround and divide the Levels and Moors from the east and to the north, and form a distinctive part of the skyline. Communities living on the higher ground have utilised – and continue to use – the natural fertility of the Somerset Levels and Moors since prehistoric times, as evidenced by ancient trackways and causeways leading from the higher ground, which is less prone to flooding.'

*The name Somerset comes from this relationship between the two areas – the Saxon Sumersaeta, meaning 'summer man's land'.'* 

3.6.6 The Statements of Environmental Opportunity for this NCA include:

SE01: Managing the historical network of field boundaries, including drains, ditches, rhynes and dykes, providing significant semi-natural habitats, improving water quality and preserving key landscape features.

SEO4: Promoting the use of the strong pattern of the landscape and the wealth of its natural and heritage assets as tools to inform and influence new development; protecting the remote and sparsely settled character of much of the area; creating opportunities for nature and maintaining the legibility of the historical development of the landscape; and using access to the landscape, nature and heritage to underpin design solutions.

#### DISTRICT LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

- 3.6.7 The North Somerset Landscape Character Assessment (NSLCA), September 2018, is a Supplementary Planning Document. Within the assessment the site is on the southern edge of character area A1: Kingston Seymour and Puxton Moor, as shown on **Figure L2: Landscape Character**.
- 3.6.8 Key characteristics relevant to the site and its immediate context from the NSLCA are:
  - Flat landform largely at between 5m and 10m AOD;
  - Strong sense of remoteness, ruralness and unity;
  - Pastoral landscape with cattle grazing;
  - Network of waterways with winding rivers which are embanked, and rhynes and ditches which support a rich diversity of aquatic plants and invertebrates;
  - Hedgerows intermittent with a proportion formed by regenerated scrub grown up over ditches and rhynes;
  - Frequent hedgerow trees, oaks and pollard willows;



- Semi-enclosed landscape with trees and hedgerows framing views to the wooded limestone ridges;
- Presence of the sea has limited effect on the landscape character due to the enclosure given by the hedgerows, scrub and hedgerow trees and the visual barrier of the raised sea walls;
- Scattered farmsteads with a few small villages characterised by older buildings of grey limestone, with church towers forming landmarks in the flat landscape;
- 19th and 20th century buildings rendered, or pebble dashed include farmhouses, infill at the edges of the villages and development along roads...;
- Winding rural lanes and tracks run between farmsteads and villages often with sinuous roadside ditches...; and
- Historic landscape dominated by Saxon and medieval enclosure.
- **3.6.9** The Landscape Strategy provides useful indicators of how development could help deliver local enhancement, by conserving:

...the existing landscape of strong character and good condition typified by the highly rural, remote pastoral grassland with strong networks of drainage channels and hedgerows, and winding rural roads between historic villages and farmsteads. Alongside this some elements of the landscape, which are in declining condition such as the small farm orchards and hedgerow trees and willow pollards should be restored. There is also an opportunity to enhance the character and condition of the area by reverting some areas to a more semi natural state for wildlife enhancement and conserving traditional features associated with land drainage. Some areas adjoining urban areas are in need of sympathetic enhancement.

- 3.6.10 Landscape Guidelines also include, amongst others:
  - Conserve the remote, pastoral character of the area;
  - Consider restoration of scrubbed over ditches back to open water bodies;
  - Maintain the pollarded willows and encourage local uses for the cut material;
  - Promote active management and replanting of orchards using local varieties;
  - Management of ditches and rhynes for biodiversity including regular de-silting (in sections to prevent damage to fauna);
  - Promote opportunities for creating areas of unimproved grassland and wetland habitats;
  - Encourage public access but retain sense of remoteness though careful design of routes and infrastructure;
  - Conserve the discrete small scale, nucleated form of the settlements and traditional built character; and
  - Conserve the rural character of the winding lanes and tracks and modest bridges and limit upgrading by widening, kerbing.



#### LANDSCAPE CHARACTER OF THE SITE

- 3.6.11 The site is grazed and consists of two small fields and parts of two larger fields, partly bounded by hedges with a few trees (see Site View A and Site View B).
- 3.6.12 The character of the site reflects some of the characteristics of the landscape character area, including flat landform, sense of remoteness and ruralness (especially the northern fields), pastoral character, rhynes and diches, hedgerows (although not intermittent), hedgerow trees (but not frequent), semi-enclosed with views to the limestone ridges (Middle Hope and Worle Hill).
- 3.6.13 The southern fields are open to Ebdon Road and the residential development to the south which reduces any sense of remoteness. The northern parts of the site are open, with wide views across the moors to Middle Hope and closer views to Worle Hill, although there is currently no public access to appreciate those views.
- 3.6.14 The north-eastern parcel of land has the Oxhouse Business Park along its southern boundary, which compromises its remote character, as does the view from the north-eastern corner where development at Ebdon can be seen. Nevertheless, the two northern parcels have a stronger relationship with the moors to the north than do the southern fields.
- 3.6.15 The overall character of the site is that of relatively open and grazed, urban edge moors influenced by adjacent development.

#### LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

- 3.6.16 In March 2018 North Somerset Council published a Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (LSA) of the areas surrounding selected settlements in North Somerset, in order to inform the site selection process for non-strategic growth.
- 3.6.17 In the LSA the site falls within an area around the northern edge of Weston-super-Mare, which is assessed as having high sensitivity. The approach taken in the LSA is that high sensitivity land is:

Land with a high susceptibility to change and/or which is of high value, e.g. land adjacent to or visually prominent from the AONB, land outside of the settlement pattern, land which has high visual prominence, land which contributes to heritage or ecological assets.

- 3.6.18 Within the LSA, the analysis of Weston-super-Mare states that the land is constrained to the north-west of the town by the LNR at Worlebury Hill and the LWSs at Worle Hill; and that the woodland and steep topography forms a strong edge to the town.
- 3.6.19 It goes on to say that to the north-east of the town there is a strong vegetated edge to the settlement, strengthened further by the River Banwell, which is immediately adjacent to the settlement edge. It should be noted that recent hedgerow maintenance on the site has resulted in the loss of part of the strong vegetated edge.



3.6.20 It states that land to the north of the town is constrained by flood risk, with most being within Flood Zone 3. However, no landscape constraint is identified.



# 4 VISUAL ANALYSIS

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

- 4.1.1 Typical views towards the site were assessed from publicly available viewpoints, and are illustrated by the panoramic photographs from **Viewpoints 1-8** in **Appendix A**. The location of these photograph viewpoints is shown on **Figure L4: Viewpoint Location Plan**. The photographs were taken in March 2019 when there were no leaves on the trees and hedges and the screening function of the vegetation was at its minimum.
- 4.1.2 Site work showed that publicly available views of the site comprised local views, which are views up to 0.5km away from the site boundary; medium distance views (up to 1km away) and long distance views (more than 1km away). This is because of the relatively open nature of the landscape and the elevation of the viewpoints such as Middle Hope and Worle Hill. However, in views from lower levels, relatively modest hedges and tree groups can significantly reduce visibility.

#### 4.2 VISUAL ANALYSIS

- 4.2.1 **Viewpoint 1:** from the junction of Ebdon Road and The Cornfields, looking north-west and about 16m from the site. Behind the viewer are housing developments extending onto higher ground to the south. Nut Cottage and Lynchmead Bungalow face the road, and Stroud Cottage and its grounds run northwards, partly separating the western and eastern parts of the site. The trimmed hedge along Ebdon Road allows views across the landscape to Middle Hope in the distance which rises up to 48m AOD.
- 4.2.2 Viewpoint 2: also from Ebdon Road, about 15m from the site and from the roadside footpath where it is joined by the footpath linking with Azalea Road to the south. Showing the eastern part of the site, framed in this location by Lynchmead Bungalow and its hedges to the west (left) and the large buildings of Oxhouse Industrial Estate to its east (right). Across the landscape can be seen Middle Hope and, at its foot, the tower of Woodspring Priory.
- 4.2.3 Viewpoint 3: from Collum Lane, a road, 800m to the north-east of the site, looking across the moors, again with the Mendip Hills AONB forming the horizon in the middle of the view. Properties in Ebdon and along Ebdon Road form the skyline to the east (left) of the Mendips, against which can be seen the buildings of Oxhouse Industrial Estate, locating the eastern part of the site. Further to the south-east, Stroud and Nut Cottages can be seen below the houses on Ebdon Road, locating the western part of the site.
- 4.2.4 **Viewpoint 4:** from a bridleway 1.95km north-west of the site, this view shows the clearest view of the site from that bridleway, where the slight elevation of the ground allows limited views across the landscape. The Mendip Hills AONB forms the distant horizon with Worle Hill to the south. Although the site cannot be seen, the relatively



light-coloured buildings of the adjacent Oxhouse Industrial Estate can be seen, indicating the location of the site, and seen in the context of the houses along Ebdon Road.

- 4.2.5 Viewpoint 5: from the National Trust land at Middle Hope, about 2.8km north-west of the site and at an elevation of about 35m AOD, compared with the site at about 6m AOD. This is part of a 360° view which includes South Wales across the River Severn behind the viewer and to the north. The view shown looks south-east, with the Mendip Hills AONB as the horizon over much of the view, with Worle Hill as the horizon to the south (right). Oxhouse Industrial Estate and Stroud and Nut Cottages can just be seen, which assist in locating the site. The site is a barely discernible element within the vast landscape.
- **4.2.6** Viewpoint 6: from a bridleway on Worle Hill, 965m south-west of the site and at an elevation of about 78m AOD. Stroud and Nut Cottages and Oxhouse Industrial Estate locate the site on Ebdon Road. Much of the site is hidden by existing vegetation.



# 5 CONSTRAINTS, OPPORTUNITIES AND LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

#### 5.1 CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

5.1.1 Landscape and visual constraints and opportunities are shown on Figure L5.

#### 5.2 CONSTRAINTS

5.2.1 There are potential landscape and visual constraints to development within the site, which are set out in Table 5.1 below, along with how such constraints can be overcome or minimized.

#### Table 5.1: Site Constraints

Constraint	How addressed
Existing hedges with some trees are a characteristic of the site.	Proposed development minimises effects on existing boundary trees and hedges, protecting and retaining them and using them as strong structural elements of green infrastructure, influencing the layout; new planting undertaken as mitigation, underpinned by a long-term Landscape Management Plan especially where hedges are removed for access along Ebdon Road and through the site.
Existing rhynes follow all field boundaries	Rhynes retained and additional rhynes created for drainage and a basis for green infrastructure across site, managed for landscape and biodiversity reasons.
Visibility of site from Ebdon Road across low hedges.	Acknowledging change to landscape of site arising from proposed development, opportunity taken to reinforce boundaries through management of hedges and new planting to reflect landscape buffer on south side of Ebdon Road.
Site visible in local views.	The site is often seen in the context of other development, opportunity to provide mitigation for both existing and proposed development through new planting.
Relationship with adjoining landscape.	Strong boundaries, through enhancement of existing trees and hedges and new planting, will minimise effects.



#### 5.3 **OPPORTUNITIES**

- 5.3.1 Certain landscape and visual characteristics of the site lead to it being able to accommodate residential development. These characteristics include:
  - A framework of boundary vegetation comprising hedges with some trees;
  - Potential for enhancement and further strengthening of the boundaries;
  - The site viewed in the context of the adjacent development; and
  - Medium and long distance views of the site are limited by intervening vegetation and distance.

#### 5.4 LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

- 5.4.1 Taking into account the above landscape and visual opportunities and constraints, there is potential for the site to accommodate residential development without causing unacceptable harm to the setting of the site, views or the character of the area, subject to incorporating a sensitive design approach and landscape strategy.
- 5.4.2 The landscape strategy for the site is shown on plan L6, the Illustrative Landscape Masterplan, with the following features:
  - Retaining and protecting existing trees and hedges wherever practical and desirable;
  - Implementation of new landscape proposals in keeping with the setting of the proposed development;
  - Conserving and enhancing the bat corridor that divides the eastern part of the site from the western part;
  - Establishing view corridors along rhynes and north into the wider landscape and to Middle Hope on the skyline;
  - Managing and enhancing existing vegetation to strengthen boundaries to integrate the proposals into the landscape and replicate the strong vegetated edge mentioned in the sensitivity study;
  - Providing publicly accessible open space where currently there is none, based on the rhyne system;
  - Construction of new rhynes to reinforce the character of the site;
  - Establishment of species-rich grassland on open spaces;



- Planting of a new community orchard;
- Establishment of willows along the rhynes, to be pollarded according to the management plan;
- Implementation of new landscape proposals in keeping with the setting of the proposed development;
- Implementation of a long-term Landscape Management Plan; and
- Additional footpath and cycle links providing public access to and across the site.
- 5.4.3 **Figure L7** is an indicative species list that shows suggested plant types throughout the scheme which are mostly native, although it also shows ornamental species that could be planted within the curtilages of the dwellings.



# 6 APPRAISAL

#### 6.1 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

6.1.1 The proposal is for an outline planning application for up to 75 dwellings and associated infrastructure with all matters reserved for future consideration except access.

#### 6.2 LANDSCAPE APPRAISAL OF THE PROPOSALS

#### NPPF

- 6.2.1 The proposals would accord with paragraph 8 of the NPPF as they would result in a well-designed environment with accessible open spaces and enhance the natural environment by the provision of open space and rhyne network that would be planted and managed to improve biodiversity and diversify landscape.
- 6.2.2 As a result, they would also accord with paragraph 127 as they would add to the quality of the area, would be visually attractive, provide a strong sense of place by producing a distinctive development pattern within a network of semi-natural open space that will expand on the existing rhyne network. The proposals take account of the character of the site, protecting the important characteristics of existing vegetation and drainage, recognising the inherent characteristics of the site and responding to them. There would be a strong sense of place through the retention of existing features, the provision of extensive green space, responding to the character of the Illustrative Landscape Masterplan will deliver appropriate landscaping.

#### LOCAL PLAN

- 6.2.3 The proposed development would comply with Local Plan Core Strategy Policies as follows.
- 6.2.4 **CS4, Nature Conservation, and CS9 Green Infrastructure**, the development would retain hedges and rhynes as part of the green infrastructure, and they would be managed and enhanced for the benefit of biodiversity and landscape. New planting would reflect the character of native planting in the area.
- 6.2.5 **CS5: Landscape and the historic environment,** by careful and sensitive management and design to protect the character of the landscape through the retention and enhancement of the rhynes and hedges. However, there would be some adverse effects on landscape character by the loss of open agricultural land.



- 6.2.6 **CS12:** Achieving high quality design and place-making, by employing a robust and multi-disciplinary design process taking account of the context of the site with development to the south and open landscape to the north and by using significant areas of open space to accommodate new and existing rhynes and appropriate planting.
- 6.2.7 **CS28: Weston-super-Mare** by providing high quality spaces and enhancing green infrastructure and biodiversity.
- 6.2.8 The development would accord with Sites and Policies Part 1: Development Management Policies as set out below.
- 6.2.9 **DM9: Trees and Woodlands** by the retention of the few trees on the site and significant new tree planting within the existing hedges and across open spaces, including a high proportion of native species.
- 6.2.10 **Policy DM10: Landscape** by according with all of the relevant criteria including not having an unacceptable impact on landscape character and through landscape design that is an integral part of the scheme.
- 6.2.11 **DM 19: Green Infrastructure** by the design of high quality and accessible green infrastructure.
- 6.2.12 **DM32: High quality design and place-making** by responding to local character with opportunities for physical activity.

#### PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

- 6.2.13 There would be no direct adverse effects on public rights of way as there are none on the site.
- 6.2.14 Visual effects on the public rights of way are addressed in the Visual Appraisal below.

### OTHER DESIGNATIONS

- 6.2.15 There are no National Cycle Network routes, Listed Buildings or Ancient Woodland within the site; it is not within a Conservation Area or Registered Park and Garden. Therefore, there would be no direct landscape effects on any of these.
- 6.2.16 Although there are Listed Buildings within the study area, they have no intervisibility with the site.

### LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

6.2.17 Although the development would change the character of the site from grazed fields to residential development, the proposals would retain most of the existing hedges and rhynes as well as provide new rhynes, new planting and accessible open space where currently there is none. All retained landscape features and new landscape



works would be subject to a management plan, agreed with the local authority, that would enhance and ensure the long-term viability of those features. As a result, the development would be contained within compartments in the existing landscape structure which would ensure integration into that landscape.

- 6.2.18 In accordance with the Landscape Guidelines from the NSLCA, the landscape design and enhancement proposals would result in:
  - restoration of scrubbed over ditches back to open waterbodies;
  - Plant and manage new willows for pollarding;
  - Plant and manage a new orchard using local varieties;
  - Manage ditches and rhynes for biodiversity, including regular de-silting (in sections to prevent harm to fauna);
  - Create areas of unimproved grassland and wetland habitats; and
  - Encourage public access but retain a sense of remoteness though careful design of routes and infrastructure;
- 6.2.19 Given the adjacent urban edge, any remote, pastoral character of the site has already been compromised but the development would nevertheless accord with the other guidelines.

#### VEGETATION

- 6.2.20 There would be some loss of small lengths of hedgerow for the provision of vehicular access to and across the site, but additional hedge planting would be undertaken, and the existing and proposed hedges would be managed for landscape and biodiversity objectives, rather than for agricultural functions.
- 6.2.21 New planting proposed within the site would be of appropriate species, in character with the existing vegetation.

#### 6.3 VISUAL APPRAISAL OF THE PROPOSALS

- 6.3.1 The viewpoint photographs are presented in **Appendix A** and the viewpoint locations are shown on **Figure L4**.
- 6.3.1 **Viewpoint 1,** from the junction of Ebdon Road and The Cornfields, looking north-west and about 16m from the site. There would be a new vehicular access at this point from the existing roundabout, which would lead to some hedge loss but that would be compensated by additional hedge planting through the site. Houses would extend across the side to the west (left) of the site entrance and through the full depth of the site. A band of open space would extend along the existing rhyne along the boundary with Stroud and Nut Cottages, allowing views through the site and to the open countryside beyond, including Middle Hope on the horizon, subject to detailed design. There would be new tree planting within the hedges to provide diversity and filtering of views.



- 6.3.2 **Viewpoint 2**: also from Ebdon Road, about 15m from the site and from the roadside footpath the south. There would be a further site entrance in this location, with a wide area of open space extending the full depth of the site, with rhynes either side and an orchard near to Ebdon Road. To the west (left) new houses would extend through the full depth of the site, broken by the existing rhyne, hedge and new planting. There would also be housing behind Oxhouse Industrial Estate. New housing would be clearly visible within a landscape framework, changing the view but still allowing visual links with the landscape beyond.
- 6.3.3 Viewpoint 3: from Collum Lane, a road 800m to the north-east of the site, looking across the moors. The upper parts of new houses would be visible across fields immediately adjacent to and in front of Oxhouse Industrial Estate and Stroud and Nut Cottages, with the lower parts hidden by the existing hedges and supplemented with new tree planting which would become more effective as the new planting matures. Existing houses are clearly visible in the view and the new development would provide a new edge to the settlement without significantly increasing the effect of development in the view.
- 6.3.4 **Viewpoint 4:** from a bridleway 1.95km north-west of the site, this view shows the clearest view of the site from that bridleway. Given the distance and the intervening hedges and trees, it is unlikely that the development would be clearly visible in this view. Any effects would be reduced as the planting on the site matures.
- 6.3.5 **Viewpoint 5:** from the National Trust land at Middle Hope, about 2.8km north-west of the site. As with Viewpoint 4, distance and the structure of the landscape mean that the development would not be clearly visible, despite the elevation of the viewpoint above the surrounding land. The site is a barely discernible element within the vast landscape.
- **6.3.6** Viewpoint 6: from a bridleway on Worle Hill, 965m south-west of the site. The proposal would be seen to extend the existing settlement a little further onto the moors, although it would be mostly hidden behind existing trees.



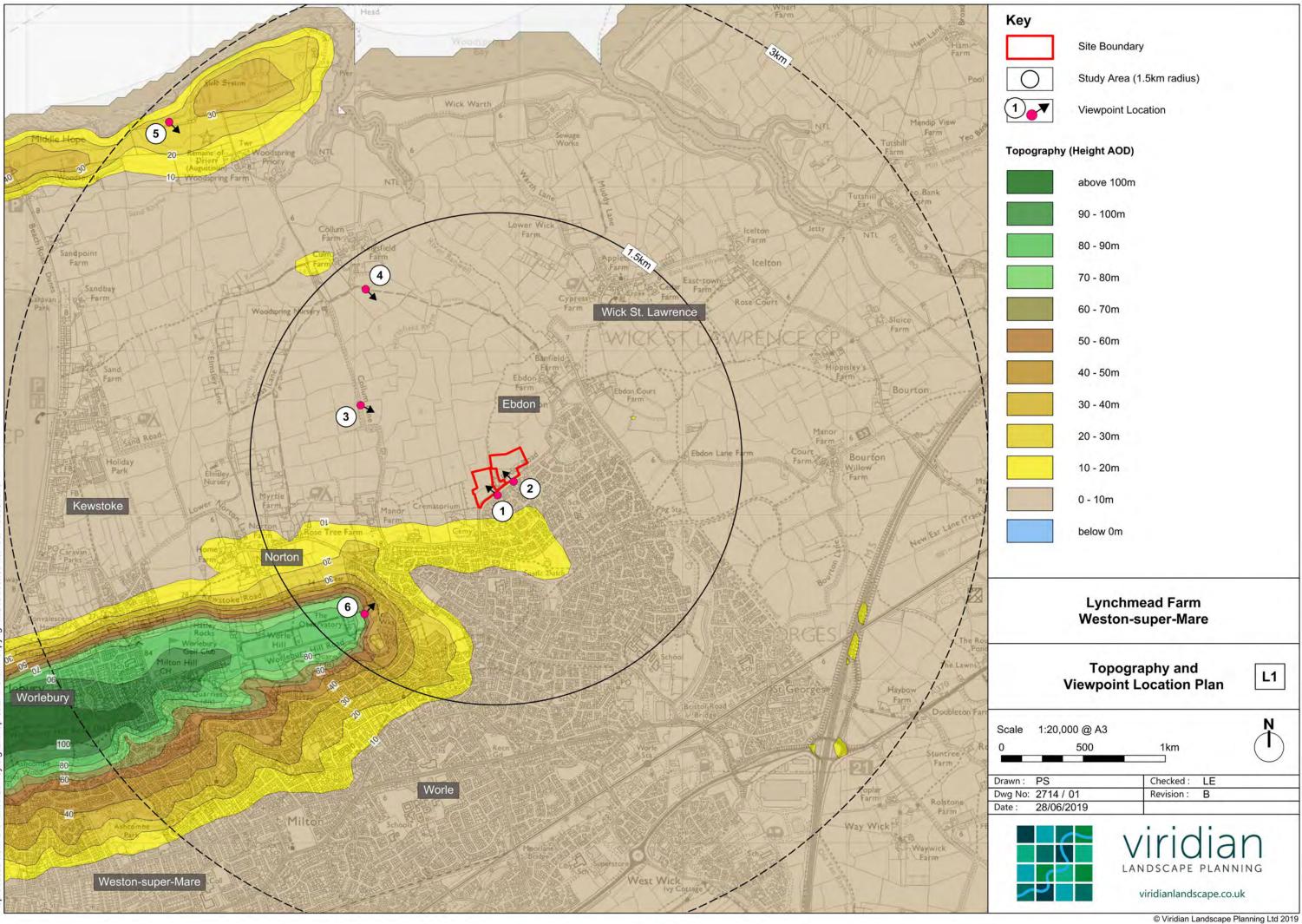
# 7 CONCLUSIONS

### 7.1 CONCLUSIONS

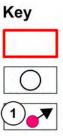
- 7.1.1 The site has a framework of hedges, some with trees, with the potential for enhancement and further strengthening of those boundaries. Clear views of the development would be limited to local views, mostly from Ebdon Road, owing to the framework of substantial mature tree cover and the landform. In the more distant views, such as from Worle Hill and Collum Lane, the development would be barely visible.
- 7.1.2 Residential development on the site would be viewed in context with adjacent residential development to the south.
- 7.1.3 Adverse effects would be minimised by the implementation of a detailed landscape design based on the Illustrative Landscape Masterplan, underpinned by a long-term Landscape Management Plan, which would ensure the retention and enhancement of the landscape of the site and, in particular, the boundary trees and hedges.

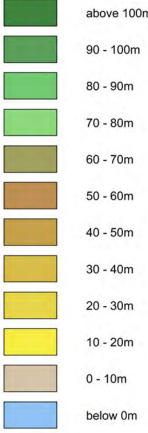


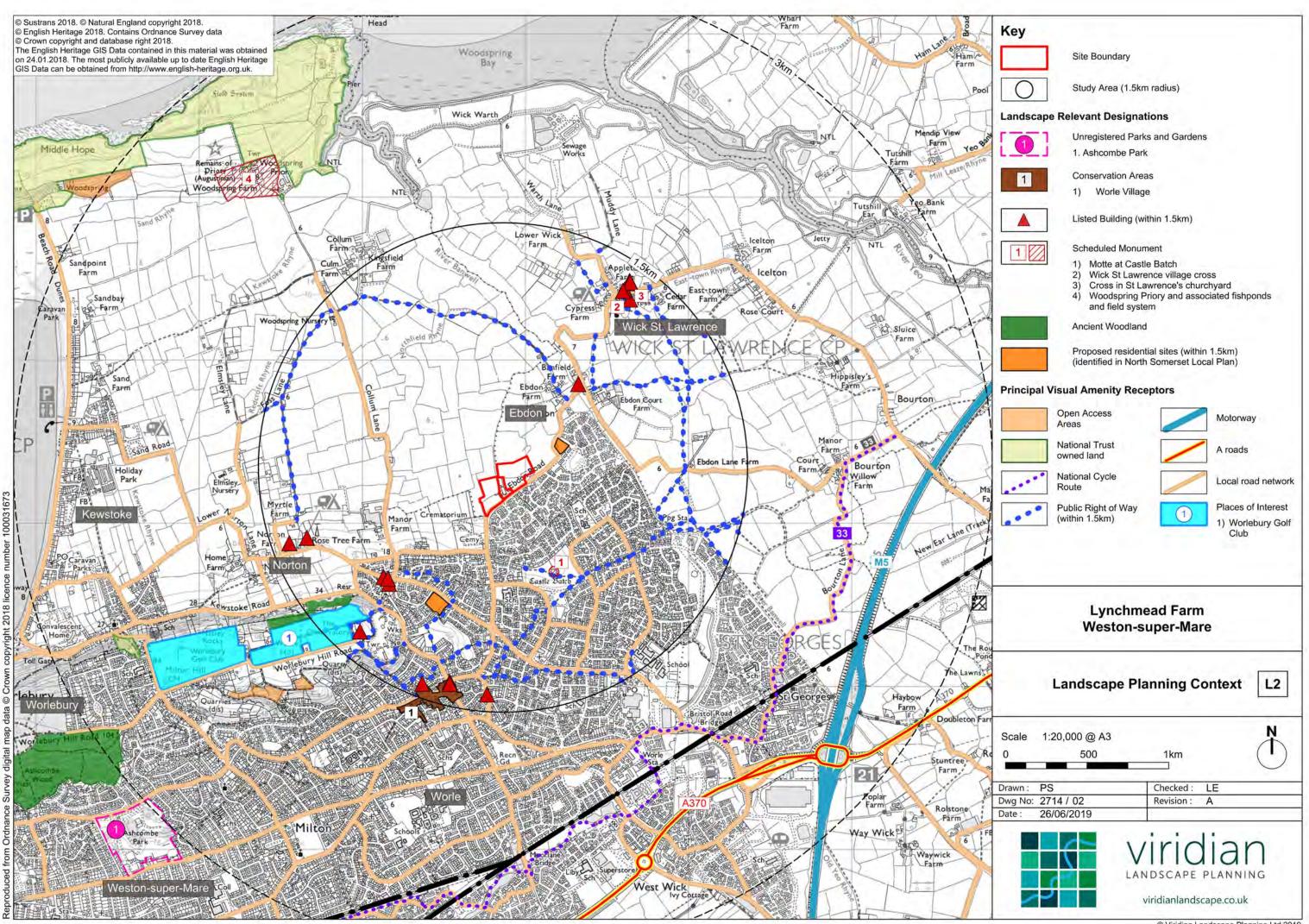
# **FIGURES**

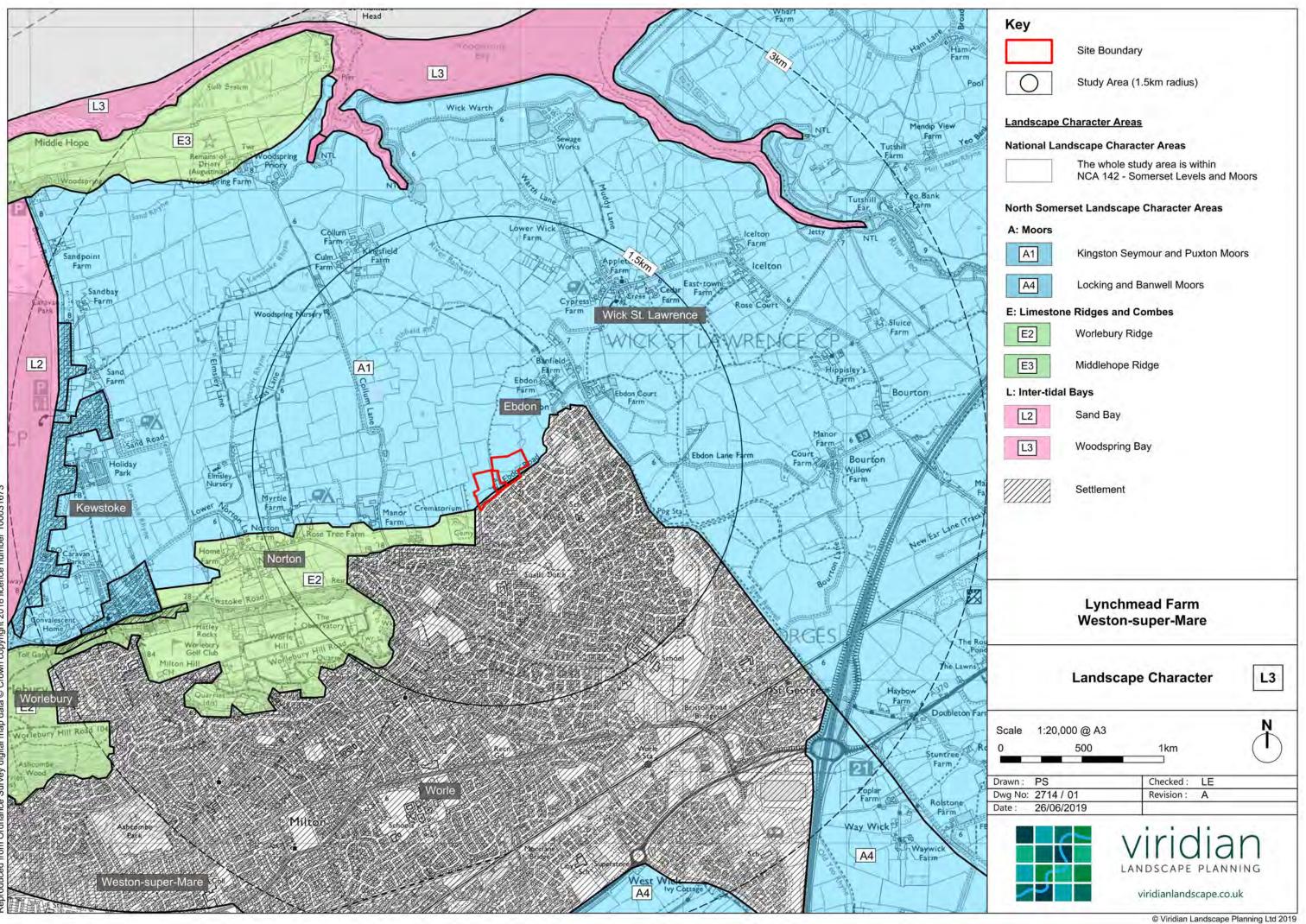


00031673 pyright 2018 licer

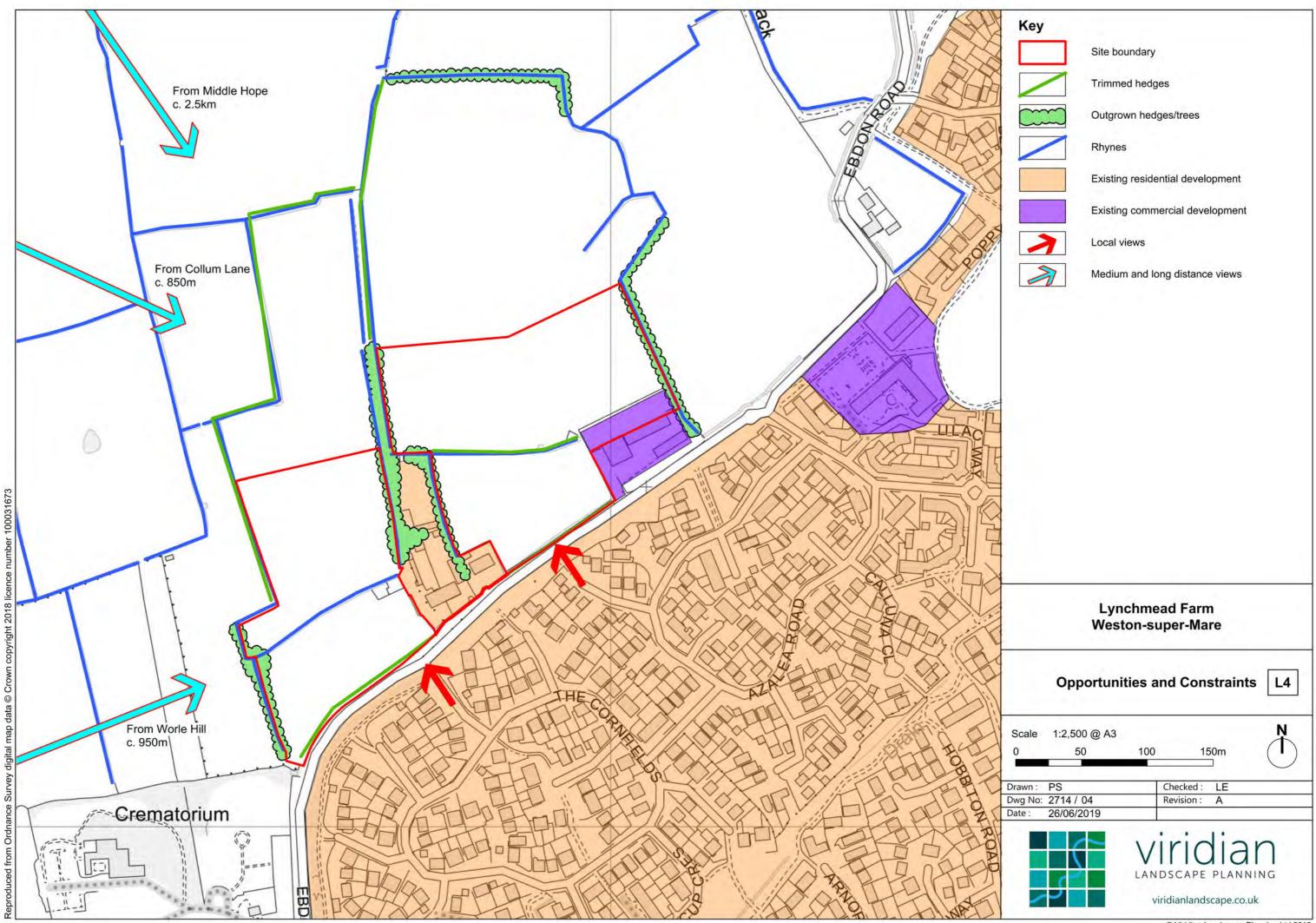








Reproduced from Ordnance Survey digital map data © Crown copyright 2018 licence number 100031673





# LYNCHMEAD FARM: INDICATIVE SPECIES LIST

### **TREES**





Salix fragilis: Crack willow

Juglans regia: English walnut



Prunus padus: Bird cherry

Prunus avium: Wild

cherry



Quercus robur: Engish oak

#### SHRUBS for domestic curtilages

Amelanchier canadensis - Amelanchier

Berberis thunbergii - Japanese barberry

Ceanothus thyrsiflorus 'Repens' -Creeping blue blossom

Cornus alba 'Elegantissima' - Dogwood

Cornus stolonifera 'Flaviramea' - Dogwood

Cornus stolonifera 'Kelseyi' - Dogwood

Cotoneaster dammeri -Bearberry cotoneaster

Euonymus europaeus - Spindle

Hebe 'Midsummer Beauty' -Shrubby Veronica

Hebe pinguifolia - Shrubby Veronica

Hydrangea quercifolia -Oak-leaved hydrangea





Acer campestre - Field maple

Malus sylvestris - Crab apple

Quercus robur - English oak

Trees







Lavandula angustifolia 'Hidcote' -

Lonicera pileata - Box-leaved honeysuckle

Olearia macrodonta - New Zealand holly

Potentilla fruticosa - Shrubby cinquefoil

Pyracantha 'Orange Glow' - Firethorn

Ribes sanguineum - Flowering currant

Rosmarinus officinalis - Rosemary

Viburnum opulus - Guelder rose

Rosa rugosa 'Alba' - White Japanese Rose

Viburnum lantana - Common wayfaring tree

Symphoricarpos x chenaultii 'Hancock' - Snowberry

English lavender





# WILD FLOWER MEADOW



## ORCHARD



## NATIVE HEDGEROW and NATIVE SHRUBS

## Shrubs

Acer campestre – Field maple Corylus avellana - Hazel Crataegus monogyna - Hawthorn *llex aquifolium* - Holly Prunus spinosa - Blackthorn Rosa canina - Dog rose Sambucus nigra - Elder Viburnum lantana - Common wayfaring tree

Viburnum opulus - Guelder rose

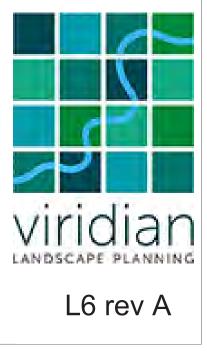






Emorsgate seed mix EM2 - standard general purpose meadow mixture or similar.

Malus domestica: Apple Prunus domestica: Plum Prunus domestical institia: Damson Pyrus communis: Pear





# APPENDIX A: VIEWPOINT PHOTOGRAPHS



Site photograph A: western part of site, looking south-east





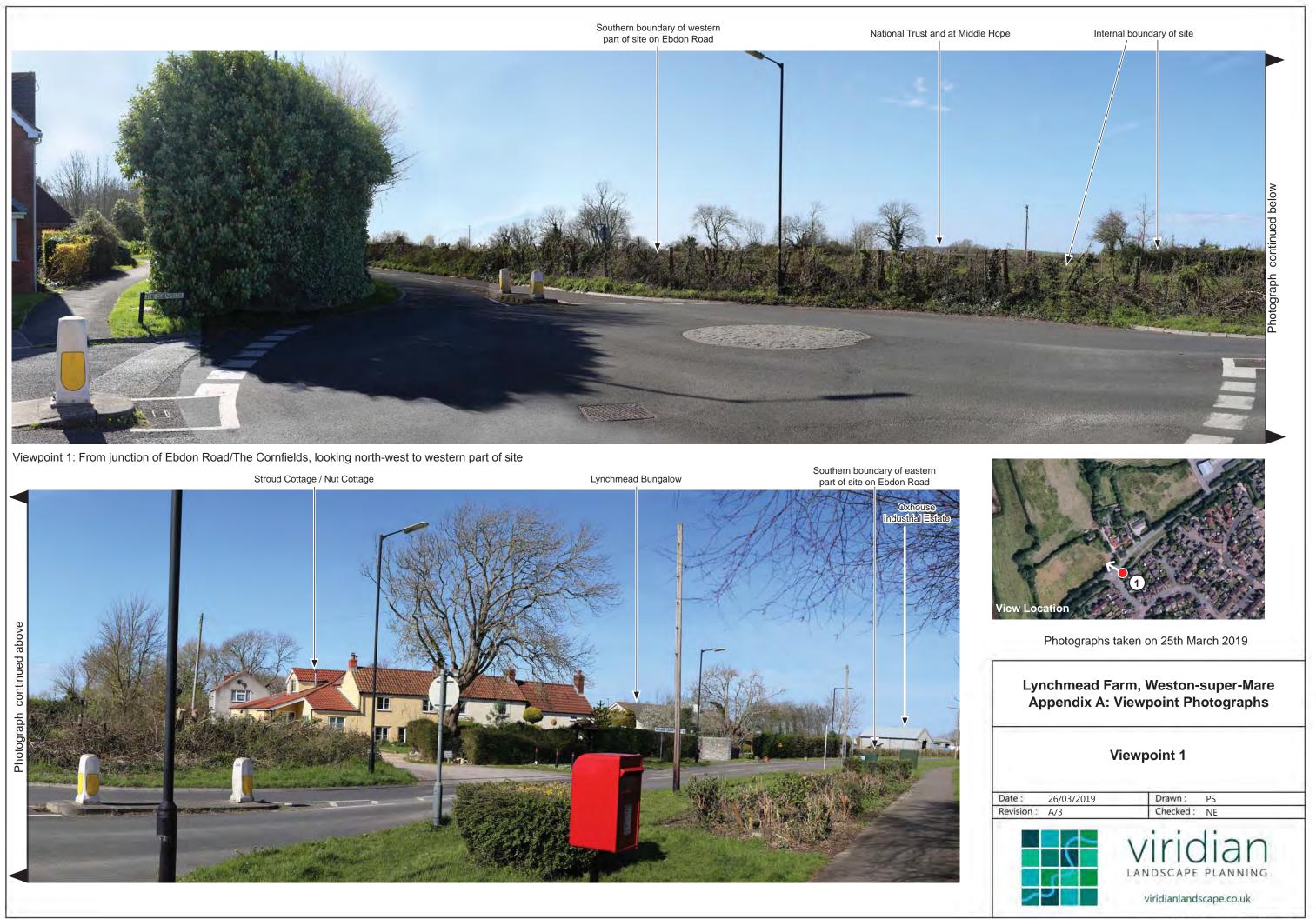
<sup>©</sup> Viridian Landscape Planning Ltd 2019



Site photograph B: eastern part of site, looking north-east











Viewpoint 3: From Collum Lane, looking south-east towards site







Viewpoint 4: From Bridleway north of site, looking south-east towards site

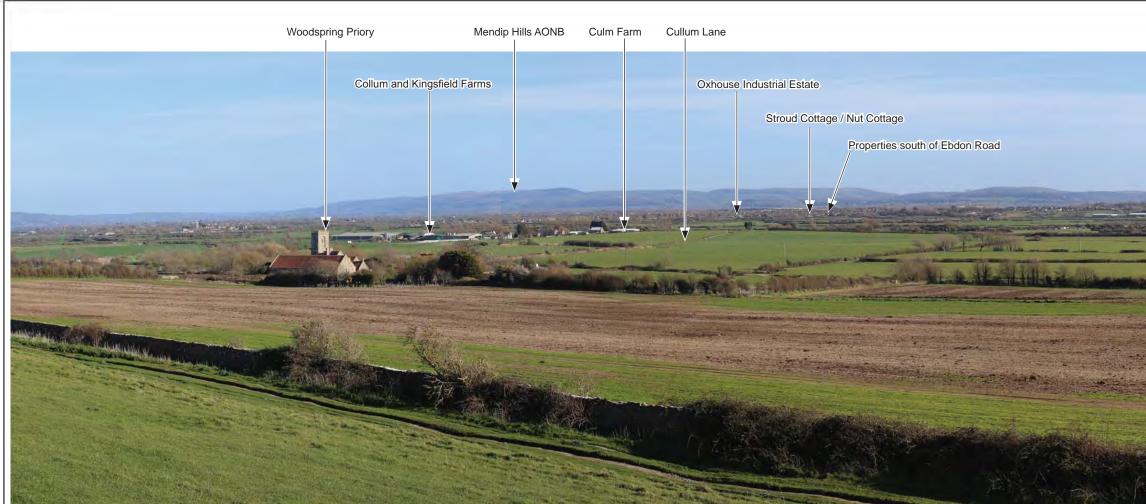


#### Photographs taken on 25th March 2019

### Lynchmead Farm, Weston-super-Mare Appendix A: Viewpoint Photographs

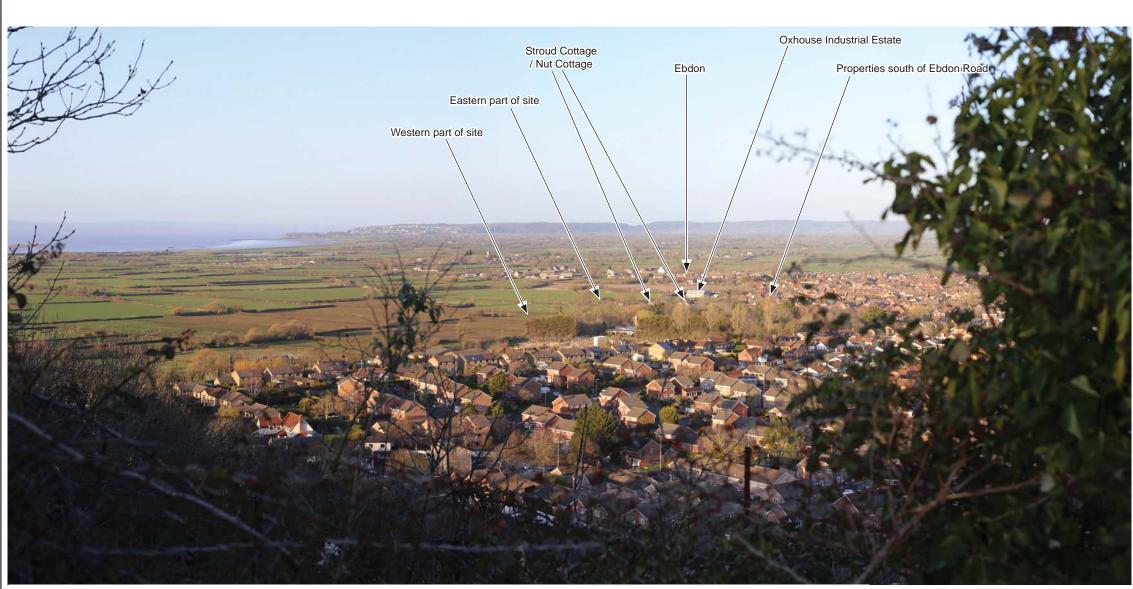
### Viewpoint 4

Date: 26/03/2019	Drawn : PS
Revision : A/6	Checked : NE
	viridian
	viruari
	LANDSCAPE PLANNING
	Construction of the second
	viridianlandscape.co.uk



Viewpoint 5: From National Trust land at Middle Hope, looking south-east towards site





Viewpoint 6: From Bridleway south-west of site on Worle Hill, looking north-east towards site



#### Photographs taken on 25th March 2019

### Lynchmead Farm, Weston-super-Mare Appendix A: Viewpoint Photographs

### Viewpoint 6

Date: 26/03/2019	Drawn : PS
Revision : A/8	Checked : NE
	, inidiana
	viridian
	LANDSCAPE PLANNING
	viridianlandscape.co.uk