

## Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment – Baseline Study

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**Pineapple Farm, Congresbury.**

November 2020

## Document Management

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Steele Landscape Design Consultants have been commissioned to prepare a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Baseline Study for a proposed residential development on 3.3 hectares of land that forms part of Pineapple Farm, north of Mulberry Road, Congresbury. This assessment will identify the specific impacts raised by the proposal; consider the effects of these impacts upon landscape character and the visual amenity of the area. The report outlines appropriate landscape enhancement/mitigation measures and where appropriate give meaningful input into the design of the proposal that would help minimise the impact to the physical landscape and features of the site itself as well as the landscape character and visual amenity of the Study Area.
- 1.2 This report has been prepared to support an outline planning application for a proposed residential development to be submitted to North Somerset Council.

### LOCATION

- 1.3 The context maps in the Figure Document (011\_120 Figure Sheet) show the location and context of the application site as well as the extent of the study area. The site is located to the south-eastern edge of Congresbury and is made up of one large agricultural field used for hay production and grazing sheep.

### STUDY AREA

- 1.4 The study area covers a 3km radius, radiating out from the approximate centre of the site as shown in the Figure Document

(011\_120 Figure Sheet). This distance has been defined as the furthest distance that the proposed development would be discernible and considered suitable for initial desktop study of the areas topography and to be later confirmed on site after evaluating views available within this area.

### PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 1.5 The proposals seek to develop the site from an agricultural field to a residential area with a up to 90 new homes. Access into and out of the site will be proposed from Mulberry Road, with adequate visibility splays and junction signage and markings. The new homes will be a mix of 1, 2, 3 and 4 bedrooms with a maximum ridge line height of 9.5m.
- 1.6 The dwellings will be a mix of private and affordable/rental properties housing with rear fenced gardens, patios and lawns.
- 1.7 The public realm will include pedestrian footpaths on both sides of the main access road and landscaping with tree and shrub planting. There will be some space set aside as a public play area with play equipment for toddlers and under 10's.
- 1.8 The Public Rights of Way (PRoW) within the proposed development site will be retained, diverted through the new development, although it will be enhanced and maintained so that there will be continued access into Congresbury as well as out into the wider countryside and wider footpath network.
- 1.9 Where feasible and practicable all existing hedges and trees will be retained, protected and maintained with any trees lost to development to be replaced within the new landscape plan. The

development would be designed to have a 'net gain' of landscape tree, hedgerow and shrub planting.

### **PLANNING HISTORY**

- 1.10 Previous application was dismissed on appeal in 1999 (ref: 99/1226) for Outline application for residential development of up to 25 units and associated open space and means of access.
- 1.11 The resulted of the planning appeal was a refusal due to impacts on the countryside.

## 2.0 LANDSCAPE PLANNING CONTEXT

### NATIONAL POLICY

#### National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), February 2019

- 2.1. The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It was originally published in March 2012 but was updated in July 2018, and again in February 2019 which now replaces the original version. The revision implements around 85 previous reforms and is intended to be a vital tool in ensuring that we get planning for the right homes built in the right places of the right quality at the same time as protecting our environment.
- 2.2. The NPPF states that the 'purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development'. There are three objectives in achieving sustainable development; economic, social and environmental. Those relevant in this case are [Para 8]:
- **'a social objective** – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and
  - **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, minimising

*waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.'*

It goes on to explain that '*planning policies and decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area*' [Para 9].

- 2.3. In discussing "Strategic Policies" the NPPF states that policies should '*make sufficient provision for... conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation*' [Para 20].
- 2.4. In "Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities" paragraph 91 states that '*planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which:*
- a) *promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other – for example through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres, street layouts that allow for easy pedestrian and cycle connections within and between neighbourhoods, and active street frontages;*
  - b) *are safe and accessible, so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion – for example though the use of clear and legible pedestrian routes, and high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas; and*
  - c) *enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address local health and well-being needs – for example*

*through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.'*

- 2.5. Under the heading of "Open Space and Recreation" the NPPF then goes on to emphasise that '*access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities'* and that '*planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance public rights of way and access, including taking opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including National Trails'*.
- 2.6. In "Achieving Well-Designed Places" the NPPF states that '*planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:*
- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just in 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 promotes health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users, and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.'* [Para. 127]

- 2.7. and goes on to explain that '*permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions'* [Para. 130]. Also that '*in determining applications, great weight should be given to outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in the area so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings'* [Para 131].

- 2.8. Section 14 of the NPPF sets out key considerations in respect of "Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change", stating that:
- 'The planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change. It should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure'* [Para 148].

- 2.9. With regards to new development paragraph 149 states that *'plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, taking into account the long-term implication for flood risk, coastal change, water supply, biodiversity and landscapes, and the risk of overheating from rising temperatures. Policies should support appropriate measures to ensure the future resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate change impacts, such as providing space for physical protection measures, or making provision for the possible future relocation of vulnerable development and infrastructure'*. Paragraph 150 goes on to explain that *'new development should be planned for in ways that:*
- a) avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change. When new development is brought forward in areas which are vulnerable, care should be taken to ensure that risks can be managed through suitable adaptation measures, including through the planning of green infrastructure; and
  - b) can help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as through its location, orientation and design. Any local requirements for the sustainability of buildings should reflect the Government's policy for national technical standards'.
- 2.10. Paragraph 153 explains that *'in determining planning applications, local planning authorities should expect new development to:*
- a) *Comply with any development plan policies on local requirements for decentralised energy supply unless it can be demonstrated by the applicant, having regard to the type of development involved and its design, that this is not feasible or viable; and*
  - b) *Take account of landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping to minimise energy consumption'*.
- 2.11. With regards to flood risk paragraph 155 states that *'inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from area at highest risk (whether existing or future). Where development is necessary in such area, the development should be made safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere'*.
- 2.12. Paragraph 163 explains that *'when determining any planning applications, local planning authorities should ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere. Where appropriate, applications should be supported by a site-specific flood-risk assessment. Development should only be allowed in areas at risk of flooding where, in light of this assessment (and the sequential and exception tests, as applicable) it can be demonstrated that:*
- a) *within the site, the most vulnerable development is located in areas of lower flood risk, unless there are overriding reasons to prefer a different location;*
  - b) *the development is appropriately flood resilient;*
  - c) *it incorporates sustainable drainage systems, unless there is clear evidence that this would be inappropriate;*
  - d) *any residual risk can be safely managed; and*
  - e) *safe access and escape routes are included where appropriate, as part of an agreed emergency plan'*.
- 2.13. When discussing flood risk in relation to major developments paragraph 165 states that they *'should incorporate sustainable drainage systems unless there is clear evidence that this would be inappropriate. The systems should:*



- a) *take account of advice from the lead local flood authority;*  
 b) *have appropriate proposed minimum operational standards;*  
 c) *have maintenance arrangements in place to ensure an acceptable standard of operation for the lifetime of the development; and*  
 d) *where possible, provide multifunctional benefits’.*
- 2.14. On “Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment” paragraph 170 of the NPPF states that ‘planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:  
 a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);  
 b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of tree and woodland;  
 c) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures’.
- 2.15. On the importance of designations paragraph 171 states that ‘plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries’.
- 2.16. The weight of landscape designations is discussed in paragraph 172 which states that ‘great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations in all these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads’. The scale and extent of development within these designated areas should be limited.

#### LOCAL POLICY

#### 2.17. North Somerset Replacement Local Plan Adopted March 2007

##### Policy 4: The Natural Environment

##### Policy ECH/7 – Landscape Character Areas

- 2.18. ***‘Within the Landscape Character Areas, development will be permitted if it will not adversely affect the particular character of the landscape’.***

- 2.19. Landscape Character - Point 5.30 - Other landscapes or landscape features within North Somerset are of more local significance and are of value, especially to local people. When considering planning applications, the Council will take account of the character of the landscape and will resist development that would significantly detract from the landscape character or quality of the area in which it is sited, but where improvements to the landscape may be regarded as a benefit. Where development is permitted, the

Council will ensure new development is of high-quality design and that, where applicable, landscape features are incorporated as part of such schemes.

2.20. **Chapter 8: Housing**

2.21. Policy H/3 – Residential densities Proposals for new housing will be expected to make efficient use of land by developing at a density of between 30 – 50 dwellings per hectare net, taking into account the character of the locality and other requirements of the Local Plan. In determining the appropriate density for a particular site, particular attention will be given to:

2.22. the proximity to public transport opportunities, transport corridors, cycle routes and pedestrian linkages;

2.23. the character of the locality and neighbouring buildings;

2.24. **Congresbury Neighbourhood Plan (2019-2036)**

2.25. The Neighbourhood plan was adopted July 2019 and there are several policies that reflect those issues within the site.

2.26. **Policy EH4 – Landscape and Wildlife Preservation Measures.**

2.27. a) Development proposals should maintain and enhance the connectivity of all green corridors and not result in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, including local wildlife sites, aged or veteran trees and hedges. Development proposals for new dwellings should demonstrate how they have incorporated appropriate measures to ensure the connectivity of any green corridor and the freedom of movement for species on or through the site.

2.28. b) As appropriate to their location and the scale development proposals should be designed to limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity and nature conservation.

2.29. c) As appropriate to their location and the scale development proposals should include natural landscaping using native species and incorporate existing hedgerows, wetland areas and other wildlife features where it is practicable to do so.

2.30. Development proposals should take into consideration and provide where appropriate mitigating measures against the harmful impact of noise pollution on animal life.

### **3.0 BASELINE AND EVALUATION**

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#### **STUDY AREA**

- 3.1. The site occupies a single large field, under agricultural use and currently turned over for hay production and grazing paddocks with vehicle access from Mulberry Road. There are two separate pedestrian access (PRoW) routes that both cross the site from the NW corner to SE corner and from the NE corner to SE corner.
- 3.2. The site is located on the south-eastern edge of Congresbury and east of the residential area along Park Road and north of Mulberry Road. The site is located within the River Yeo corridor but set within a flat area above the River Yeo flood plain.
- 3.3. The field boundaries are mainly well maintained hedgerows of native species cut to 2-3m high and tend to be approx. 2m wide. There are several clumps of tree within the hedgerows and these are approx. 10-14 metres tall.
- 3.4. The site is relatively flat and is located above the level of the River Yeo corridor and the associated drainage rhynes. Site levels are from approx. 13.9m AOD in the SW corner and drop to 7.84m AOD in the NE corner, adjacent to the pond.
- 3.5. There are footpaths (PRoW) that cross the site that are short local footpaths that connect the town to the regionally designated 'Two Rivers Way' footpath. The Two Rivers Way starts at Congresbury and extends into the wider landscape and terminates at Keynsham (32km).
- 3.6. There are no buildings within the site and no areas of hard standing or access tracks.
- 3.7. Beyond the site boundaries the landscape context is as follows: To the north and east, the landscape is made up of the River Yeo corridor and adjacent collection of large grassland fields. Park Farm is located at the NW corner of the site and forms part of the northern site boundary. To the north and north-east, the land rises from the River Yeo corridor where there can be found large fields with farmsteads and associated large barns/buildings such as Urchinwood Farm and Iwood Farm. Other residential buildings can be seen in the countryside and these form a linear development along Wrington Road.
- 3.8. Urchin Wood and Ball Wood grow on the southern flanks of the hillside which forms the backdrop to the River Yeo corridor, low land agricultural fields and town. These wooded hillside slopes form the south-western edge of the Bristol and Bath Greenbelt.
- 3.9. The woodlands are mature, dense with mixed tree species that covers the hillside and peaks and can range from 100-171 metres AOD. Within the woodland there are numerous tracks and PRoWs but the trees screen any scenes looking out onto the local countryside. The hill forms a backdrop to the north of Congresbury and also creating an enclosed landscape with limited views in and out.
- 3.10. The site is located within the south-eastern edge of Congresbury which itself is split into two by the River Yeo. The town's older parts and conservation area can be found in the southern half of the town. The town has grown out from the historical core and along

the High Street/Brinsea Road corridor (south) and Bristol Road to the north.

- 3.11. Further north again and passed the northern built edge of Congresbury, rises Cadbury Hill with footpaths that lead to an open area at the top, some 81 metres AOD. Vantage points from the top of Cadbury Hill are restricted to a single location that has views over the town and countryside to the south-west.
- 3.12. The land to the east of the site consist of the low-lying River Yeo corridor and adjacent large fields with tall and mature hedge boundaries. These hedges are well managed many of which are large and tall trees that are spread throughout the network of hedgerows. There are very few roads or lanes that cross the river floor with the exception of Iwood Lane. Long distance views are restricted by the hillside of Ball Wood (north) and framed by the local tall hedgerow trees to give short-distance views within the flat river corridor.
- 3.13. To the south and west of the site there are the residential areas along Park Road, and Mulberry Road. These are mainly terrace housing with large linear rear gardens. Along the southern boundary of the site there are mostly semi-detached housing with large rear gardens.
- 3.14. The residential development forms a physical and visual screen from the majority of Congresbury but the proposed development would be seen from rear aspect of these adjacent properties.
- 3.15. Further to the south and passed the edge of town the landscape is gently undulating with agricultural land and also two large scale

ground-mounted solar farms. There are relatively few roads and tracks and this restricts access into this wider landscape. Further to the south the land gently rises toward Brinsea at 28 metres AOD.

- 3.16. In order to establish the degree of change arising from the proposed development and the extent to which that change will affect the area, it is important to understand the existing situation in terms of the local landscape character and its value.
- 3.17. A desktop review of the study area was undertaken including analysis of Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) data sets and North Somerset Council Local Plan. The review identified that the following receptors and statutory landscape designations fall within the 3km radius study area. Locations are shown in 012\_120 Pineapple Farm Viewpoint Figure Sheet.

## LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

### National Landscape Character

- 3.18. The 'Character of England Landscape, Wildlife and Cultural Features Map' was produced in 2005 by The Countryside Agency. This map subdivides England into Joint Character Areas (JCA's) providing a picture of the differences in landscape character at the national/regional scale. These have since been reviewed and updated by Natural England (2012-2015) and categorised into National Character Area (NCA) Profiles. These profiles do contain Key Characteristics but at this broad scale the site proposals would have little effect on NCA 118, so will not be taken forward into the assessment. They have been included for reference.
- 3.19. The site, Congresbury town and land to the north and east of the study area are located within NCA 118 Bristol, Avon Valleys and Ridges. The land within the wider study area to the south and west of Congresbury forming part of NCA 142 Somerset Levels.

### Regional Landscape Character

- 3.20. The North Somerset Landscape Character Assessment (2018) divides North Somerset into 11 Landscape Character Types (LCT's) which share key characteristics. The relevant LCT's that are located within the study area are listed below;

3.21. **Name: J2 – River Yeo Rolling Valley Farmland**

The site is located solely within this LCT and it also makes up around a quarter of the study area to the south-east.

**Description:** The River Yeo Rolling Valley Farmland is an extensive but interrupted area of intermediate undulating land which forms a valley enclosed by ridges to the (north) and north east. The Yeo runs through the centre of the area to the east with many small tributary streams joining it from the east and south. The presence of the waterways is signalled by the tree lines of willow along the rivers and streams and in the small bridge crossings. This peaceful, wide valley is pastoral and rural with sheep, cattle and horse grazing. The hedges are thick and well maintained with a large number of mature hedgerow trees including willow pollards in the valley floor and oaks.

**Effected: YES**

The development on site would cause direct changes to the landscape character of this Regional LCT, in particular to the undulating farmland which forms the floor to this enclosed valley. The site would fundamentally alter and would be perceived to be developed to a similar level as that of the adjoining residential areas of Congresbury. However, the scale, massing and size of the proposed housing units would be seen in greater context with that of the neighbouring housing in Park Road and Mulberry Road.

**Receptor Type:** Landscape

**Susceptibility:** MEDIUM

The proposed development may/likely has undue consequences on the existing site and surrounding LCA.

**Value:** Local

No formal landscape recognition or landscape designation for the site or surrounding landscape. The site and the surrounding landscape of the study area are a good example of the landscape character description in the Regional LCA profile.

**Sensitivity to Change:** **MEDIUM**

- 3.22. **Name:** **A1 – Kingston Seymour and Puxton Moor**  
**Approx. distance from Site:** 500m north-west of the site and covering a quarter of the wider study area.

**Description:** Kingston Seymour and Puxton Moors is a flat lowland landscape at 5m to 10m AOD. The area is predominantly pasture, consisting of improved grassland and marshy grassland grazed by cattle, sheep and ponies, but there are also some small areas of arable farming. Draining into the rivers is a network of channels, ditches and rhynes crossed by modest bridges of stone or wood with metal handrails. There are frequent hedgerow trees of oak, ash and willow, the latter often pollarded. These frame the views to the distant enclosing ridges giving variety and a human scale to the flat landscape.

**Effectuated:** **NO**

From field observations it has been established that the landscape character of this LCA would not be effected by the proposed development as the two areas are separated by local topography

and vegetation as well as intervening buildings within Congresbury.

**Therefore, this LCT will not require further impacts assessment.**

- 3.23. **Name:** **A4 – Locking and Banwel Moors**  
**Approx. distance from Site:** 500m south-west of the site and covering a small part of the study area

**Description:** The Locking and Banwell Moors comprise a belt of low-lying beach and tidal deposits forming a flat pastoral/wetland landscape. The north eastern section of the area towards Congresbury is perceived as remote and exposed. The majority of the ditches/rhynes are associated with mixed hedgerows that have grown up over them; the larger channels have however remained open. Mature trees along the field boundaries are a prominent feature of this character area, with willow (both pollarded and not) and oak present giving rough textured feel to the landscape. The variety in vegetation scale and height breaks the unity and regularity of the field patterns. The area east of the M5 is crossed only occasionally by straight rural roads, with a large proportion, east of Drove Way to Congresbury, only accessible by foot. This lack of activity gives a remote rural feeling similar to other areas in the Moors type.

**Effectuated:** **NO**

From field observations it has been established that the landscape character of this LCA would not be affected by the proposed development as the two areas are separated by local topography and intervening vegetation as well as screening buildings within Congresbury.

**Therefore, this LCT will not require further impacts assessment.**

3.24. **Name:** E6– Cleeve Ridges and Combes  
**Approx. distance from Site:** 500m north-east of the site and covering a small part of the study area

**Description:** The Cleeve Ridges and Combes forms a broad ‘L’ shaped ridge that wraps around an elevated plateau at 150m AOD. A large expanse of semi-natural broadleaved woodland (much of it ancient) covers the majority of the area, creating an intimate environment with occasional wide views out over the surrounding lowland areas of the moors, valleys and to the distant Bristol Channel. Access to the woodland is largely limited to footpaths and steep rural roads rising up the shady wooded combes. The limited vehicular access to the area adds to the remote peaceful nature of the area.

**Effected:** NO

From field observations it has been established that the landscape character of this LCA would not be affected by the proposed development as the two areas are separated by local topography and screened by the vast woodland along its flanks and peaks.

**Therefore, this LCT will not require further impacts assessment.**

### Local Landscape Character

- 3.25. The study area encompasses a number of towns and villages that are covered by the North Somerset Council Landscape Sensitivity Assessment 2018.
- 3.26. The aim of the study is to prepare a Landscape Sensitivity Assessment that will be capable of providing a context for the allocation of sites for housing development. The report covered

the main towns and a number of the smaller towns/villages to give sensitivity of the surrounding landscape to development

3.27. **Name:** Congresbury

**Description:** Land to the south-east of Park Farm, is generally flat and is well-enclosed by hedgerows and trees. In addition, there is an allocated development to the south of this land.

Owing to the above, this land is of **LOW Sensitivity**.

### Landscape Character Summary - SITE

- 3.28. The site is located on the eastern edge of Congresbury and on flat land above the adjacent River Yeo corridor which is described as being enclosed by ridges to the north. The site is agricultural land used as animal grazing and has identifiable features that are strongly associated with the landscape character of this area. The site is typical of surrounding landscape including the following: large agricultural field pattern with dense and mature hedges with mature hedgerow willows and some oaks.
- 3.29. As the site location is adjacent to the existing residential area of Congresbury, therefore, the proposed development would be perceived to be a continuation of the eastern edge of Congresbury, infilling the ‘gap’ between Park Farm and the residential properties of Mulberry Road.

## INDIVIDUAL LANDSCAPE RECEPTORS

### Greenbelt

3.30. **Name: Bristol and Avon Greenbelt**

**Size: 15,532 hectares**

**Approx. distance from Site:** 735 metres to the north-east.

**Description:** The very south-western extent of the Bristol and Bath Greenbelt runs along the northern edge of Wrington Road. The area of greenbelt within the study area is made of the wooded hillside of Urchin Wood and Ball Wood.

However, Congresbury and the site are separated from the Greenbelt by the wide plain of the River Yeo with significant lowland fields edged with mature and tall hedges/trees.

The woodland and fields to the north of Wrington Road form the edge to the greenbelt which is approx. 750 metres to the NE of the site. There are no locations from along the woodland footpaths where there are vantage points to experience the greenbelt edge in conjunction with the wider countryside.

**Effected: NO**

From field observations it has been established that the landscape character of the Bristol and Bath Greenbelt would not be effected by the proposed development as the two areas are separated by local topography and screened by local vegetation including the woodland hillsides and peaks.

**Therefore, this LCT will not require further impacts assessment.**

## Settlement Pattern

3.31. **Name: Congresbury**

**Size: Small Town**

**Approx. distance from Site:** Directly adjacent to western and southern boundaries.

**Description:** Congresbury is a town separated into two by the River Yeo. The site is located in the southern half and at the south-east edge of the town. The town is confined by the local hillside to the NE and has built out from the major roads including Bristol Road and High Street/Brinsea Road.

**Effected: YES**

Although the majority of residential properties within Congresbury will not be affected by the proposed development on the site due to intervening buildings and tall vegetation etc. There will be a number of properties along the eastern edge of Congresbury with partial views of the site that are likely be seen from the rear gardens of these properties.

**Receptor Type:** Landscape

**Susceptibility:** MEDIUM

**Value:** LOCAL

**Sensitivity to Change: MEDIUM**



**Access Local Footpath**

- 3.32. **Name:** PRow – NW corner to SE corner of the site  
**Length:** approx. 490 metres in length of which 260 metres travels across the site.

**Description:** The route of the PRow runs from Park Road, along a short access track between houses and across the site. The footpath exits the site at the SE corner and continues onto the wider landscape and also to Yew Tree Farm before terminating at Venus Street.

**Effected:** YES

The development of up to 100 new homes would be built over most of the site and include access roads, footpaths and open green space.

**Receptor Type:** Landscape

**Susceptibility:** MEDIUM

**Value:** LOCAL

**Sensitivity to Change:** MEDIUM

- 3.33. **Name:** PRow – NE corner to SE corner of the site  
**Length:** approx. 296 metre in length of which 152 metres travels across the site.

**Description:** The route of the PRow runs from the Yeo River across fields and into the site before terminating at the NE corner.

**Effected:** YES

The development of up to 100 new homes would be built over most of the site and include access roads, footpaths and POS.

**Receptor Type:** Landscape

**Susceptibility:** MEDIUM

**Value:** LOCAL

**Sensitivity to Change:** MEDIUM

**SITE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER****Use/Land Cover**

- 3.34. At the time of writing the LVIA, the single field was being used for hay production.

**Receptor Type:** Landscape (site)

**Susceptibility:** HIGH

Due to the proposed development on site that is likely to cause undue consequences arising from a noticeable new and uncharacteristic 'residential development' layout in the landscape and therefore, stopping any agricultural activities.

**Value:** LOCAL

No formal recognition of value through landscape designations but the site contributes to what is currently a good example of the character described in the Landscape Character Assessments and forms part of the wider setting of the '**J2 – River Yeo Rolling Valley Farmland LCT**'.

**Sensitivity to Change:** **MEDIUM-HIGH**

**Topography/Landform**

- 3.35. The site is located on a relatively flat area of land set above the River Yeo corridor with adjacent fields that are similarly open and flat and used as grazing land. The relatively flat river corridor extends mainly to the east and is flanked to the north by the low and wooded hillside of Ball Wood and the urban edge of Congresbury to the west and south.

- 3.36. The site has identifiable features that are strongly associated with the landscape character of this area such as undulating land which forms a valley enclosed by ridges

- 3.37. **Receptor Type:** Landscape (site)

**Susceptibility:** LOW-MEDIUM

The proposed development plan should seek to build on the flat site and provide housing, infrastructure (roads and footpaths), amenity and open public areas. The attenuation pond will be situated in the low area within the north east corner.

Therefore, there would be very little change to the topography of the site.

**Value:** LOCAL

No formal recognition of value through landscape designations and the existing landscape features of the site contribute to what is currently a good example of the character described in the '**J2 – River Yeo Rolling Valley Farmland LCT**'.

**Sensitivity to Change:** **LOW-MEDIUM**

**Landscape Features**

- 3.38. Site boundaries to the west, east and south consist of hedgerows with a varied mix of local species and managed well, typically 2m high and dense/compact. There are only a few mature trees (10 - 12m high) within the western boundary hedgerow. The boundary hedge to the north and adjacent to the A357 consists of tall (14-20m high) multi-stemmed tree line and is in need of some management.

**Receptor Type:** Landscape (site)

**Susceptibility:** MEDIUM

The relatively few landscape features that currently exist on site should be retained, protected and maintained within the emerging development layout.

**Value:** LOCAL

No formal recognition of value through landscape designations and the existing landscape features of the site contribute to what is currently a good example of the '**J2 – River Yeo Rolling Valley Farmland LCT.**'

**Sensitivity to Change: MEDIUM**

#### **LANDSCAPE SUMMARY: CONDITION, VALUE & SENSITIVITY**

##### **CONDITION**

- 3.39. As noted from the field survey the landscape features locally and within the site, tend to be in good condition and contribute to the local landscape character. The site is located on a relatively flat area of land set above the River Yeo corridor with adjacent fields that are similarly flat and open grazing land. The site is private land with vehicle access by track from Mulberry Road and Park Road.
- 3.40. There is currently very little vegetation contained within the site, as it is currently under agricultural use and is covered with improved grass. All field boundaries are defined by native hedgerows that have been maintained as part of the agricultural use.
- 3.41. Soilscales (<http://www.landis.org.uk/SoilScapes/index.cfm>) describes the landcover of the site and immediate local area is identified as '**Soilscape 18: Slowly permeable seasonally wet**

slightly acid but base-rich loamy and clayey soils. The Agricultural Land Classification has a 'Good to Moderate' grade for the land within the site.

##### **VALUE**

The character of the study area is in general representative of the agricultural landscape described in the Landscape Character Assessments carried out by North Somerset Council. The mature hedgerows and grass fields combined with the glimpsed views of surrounding gently rolling and undulating hillsides. The site and surrounding landscape are typical of the '**J2 – River Yeo Rolling Valley Farmland LCT.**'

Although Congresbury is within the study area, the main vantage points are from rear gardens of the adjacent properties or from the public footpaths that cross the site and from the local footpath network in the wider countryside. There are no viewpoints from within Congresbury that view the site in conjunction with the town and local countryside.

- 3.42. The PRoW footpaths that run across the site have open and wide views over the site and local countryside. Depending in which direction of travel the views are markedly different. If the traveler is walking and emerging out of the build-up edges of Congresbury, the view would be of open fields leading down into the River Yeo corridor with a back drop of wooded hillside. Conversely, the walker travelling from the River Yeo footpath would see open fields with a back drop of residential housing forming the built-up edge of Congresbury.
- 3.43. Within the study area there are is the historic Scheduled Monument sites at Cadbury Hill. There are several Listed

buildings (mainly Grade II) within 500m of the site and also the Congresbury conservation area. However, all these elements are separated from the site and obscured by local topography and intervening trees and hedges.

- 3.44. There are several detractors within the landscape, including the farm buildings of Urchinwood Manor Farm and Iwood Farm. These are large and utilitarian sheds in the fields to the north-east of the site.
- 3.45. It is considered that the site and study area is part of a landscape of **MEDIUM** Value.

### Sensitivity

- 3.46. Sensitivity is categorised as high, medium, or low, according to the degree to which a particular landscape or area can accommodate change arising from a particular development without detrimental effects on its character and visual amenity. This is judged by considering the susceptibility of receptors against the value placed on it. Refer to methodology Table 'B' in the Appendix of the document for sensitivity levels and definitions. The general judgement on sensitivity given below is a result of the combined individual judgements established during the Baseline and Evaluation.
- 3.47. Character is based on the following factors: landform, sense of openness, field pattern and scale, land cover, perceptual qualities, historic landscape character, distinctive landscape features and scenic quality.

### Landscape Character Summary - Study Area

The site and the local landscape character of the study area do not have any recognised landscape designation either for its scenic quality or beauty. The application site forms part of '**J2 – River Yeo Rolling Valley Farmland** LCT.

North Somerset Council has commissioned a Landscape Sensitivity Assessment, 2018 (Wardell Armstrong) and has detailed the landscape sensitivity for the land surrounding Congresbury.

The Landscape Sensitivity Assessment has determined the following for the site;

**Point 6.3.48:** *Land to the south-east, at Park Farm is generally flat and is well-enclosed by hedgerows and trees. In addition, there is an allocated development site to the south of this land.*

*Owing to this, the land is of **LOW Sensitivity**.*

- 3.48. The receptors that are most relevant to the proposed development in Landscape Character terms are:
2. '**J2 – River Yeo Rolling Valley Farmland** LCT.
    - PRowS through site
    - Settlements of Congresbury (south-eastern edge)

### Site Characteristics/Features Summary

- 3.1. The receptors that make up the site character have a general **Medium Sensitivity** due to its grassland/grazing character and is experienced in the same context as the surrounding landscape.
- 3.2. The topography of the site is consistent with and contributes to the character of the wider study area. The fields of the site are generally flat and could accommodate development with little alterations so has a **Low-Medium Sensitivity**.
- 3.3. The vegetation (hedges and trees) on site have a **Medium Sensitivity** make a positive contribution to the character to the site and as part of the local area. Any proposed development should seek to protect and integrate these landscape features into the layout design.
- 3.4. The PRowS that cross the site have a **Medium Sensitivity**. Any proposed development should seek to protect and integrate the PRow and continue to allow local walkers from Congresbury to access the wider countryside for recreation.

### **VISUAL RECEPTORS WITHIN THE STUDY AREA**

- 3.5. It is also important to understand and identify the existing users (or visual receptors) of the landscape within the Study Area to establish the potential changes to the visual amenity of those users as a result of the proposed development.
- 3.6. The existing visibility of the application site was initially assessed by a desktop study of Ordnance Survey explorer map in order to establish the extent to which the proposals would affect the visual amenity of the study area. This work was based around the production of a Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV), a computer-generated map using landform data to project the greatest extent that proposal would be visible from. This was tested over a 3km radius using a multiple point set at 9.5m high across the field to indicate the location of the proposed dwellings. The ZTV was used as a desktop tool as it uses bare ground data and Terrain 5 Data to map large blocks of woodland and housing areas and is therefore used a 'worst case scenario' for desk top analysis. The ZTV is not able to include any of the existing smaller features such as intervening hedges, woodlands and buildings within the surrounding landscape.
- 3.7. To ensure a complete and accurate representation of the possible effects of the development a field survey was undertaken on 11 August 2020. The fieldwork analysis of the visibility of the site from the surrounding landscape takes into account all those existing landscape features (hedges, woodlands, buildings, topography) that could considerably reduce visibility of the site.

- 3.8. A comprehensive number of viewpoint locations were tested and a photographic record was taken from each relevant location. The object of the field study was to determine which locations offer the clearest views of the site and are most accessible to the public.
- 3.9. The Zone of Visual Influence (ZVI) has been defined as the extent of where elements of the proposed development are predicted to be visible based on topography and existing landscape features and coloured orange on the ZVI. The ZVI shows that there are a limited number of publicly accessible vantage points that will have either, a full or partial view of the land/development buildings within the application site. Vantage points with views of the site are from a very few locations either from the PROW or local highpoints/landmarks.

### **Visual Environment and Nature of Views**

- 3.10. The ZTV is shown within 011\_120 Figure Sheet. This has been used to assist the process of identifying the broad extent of site visibility and subsequently the location of potential views of the proposals. Field work has then been used to confirm the nature of any visual barriers and their influence on the sites actual visibility from the surrounding area, which gives us the Zone of Visual Influence (ZVI).
- 3.11. The photographic survey is shown within 011\_120 Figure Sheet. The overall visibility of the application site can be summarised as:
- 3.12. Within the site, the PROWs that cross the site have uninterpreted views over the field with views that extend out of the site into the wider study area to the north, as well as views of the eastern built edge (Park Road) of Congresbury. Also, long distance views are also

restricted by local topography and mature, tall and dense hedges and trees.

From the wider study area, the site is screened from public views from the north, east and south by a combination of low-lying topography and/or vegetation.

The majority of views of the site from the local countryside are from along local footpaths and within approx. 250m. These are views of the site and are seen in context with the wider countryside and housing along Park Road and Mulberry Road.

- 3.13. Further descriptions of the views are given on 011\_120 Figure Sheet, photo-panels 1-5.

### Settlements

- 3.14. **Name: Congresbury**
- 3.15. Views from public spaces (greens, squares, parks etc.) within Congresbury are not available due to intervening buildings, topography and tall trees and hedges.
- 3.16. Views from individual residential properties are not covered by the LVIA as they are private and not available to the public.
- 3.17. **Local Roads – Park Road and Mulberry Road**
- 3.18. Views from public roads within Congresbury including Park Road and Mulberry Road are not available due to intervening buildings.
- 3.19. There are few other public local roads within the study. The two identified roads that are within the study area are Wrington Road and Iwood Lane. There are no views from these as the local

topography and roadside hedge/tree screen all views toward the site.

## Recreational Routes (011\_120 Figure Sheet)

### Long Distance Walking Routes

3.20. **Name:** Two Rivers Way – north and north-east of the site

**Length:** 32km – Congresbury to Keynsham

**Approx. distance from Site:** Between 285 meters to the north

**Description:** To the north of the site the long-distance footpath begins and follows the low laying land adjacent to the River Yeo. As both the river and footpath exit the built-up area of Congresbury, the views area guided by local vegetation to those scenes along the river corridor. However, there are oblique views across adjacent fields with views north of the elevated wooded slopes of Ball Wood.

Occasionally there are oblique views to the south toward the site where there are glimpsed and filtered views of the boundary hedge/trees and the houses along Park Road.

This view is only from a short section (20-30 metres) of the footpath and the view quickly diminishes as adjacent trees and vegetation obscure any views.

**Effectuated:** YES

Along this section of the Two Rivers Way, there are several locations where the northern and eastern edges of the site development would be visible. Typically, only the roof from eaves to ridge line would be visible and would be seen in context of the existing development within Park Road and Mulberry Road.

However, these short sections of footpath (approx. 20-30 metres) should be considered against the entire 32 kilometre length of the recreational footpath.

**Receptor Type:** Visual

**Value:** NATIONAL

**Users:** Recreational walkers with plenty of opportunity to linger and/or pause to appreciate the limited views of the surrounding wooded hillside including the residential area of Congresbury (eastern edge).

**Sensitivity to Change:** **MEDIUM-HIGH**

### Public Rights of Way (PRoW)

3.21. **Name:** Footpath within the site - NW corner to SE corner

**Length:** 360 metres - entire route length

**Description:** The footpath is mainly used by local residents to walk their dogs and as part of a circular walk. The footpath enters the site at the NE corner and heads toward and exists the site at the SE corner to crosses several fields and into the wider countryside.

**Effectuated:** YES

The site would be visible along all of this route way as it passes through the proposed development. However, views of the site cease as the footpath crosses into adjoining fields to the SE.

**Receptor Type:** Visual

**Value:** LOCAL/COMMUNITY

**Users:** Recreational walkers with plenty of opportunity to linger and/or pause to appreciate views of the surrounding landscape.

**Sensitivity to Change:** **MEDIUM**



- 3.22. **Name:** Footpath within the site - NE corner to SE corner  
**Length:** 155 metres  
**Description:** The footpath runs through the site and is located along the eastern boundary of the site and joins into the wider countryside to both the north and south-east.  
**Effectuated:** YES

Walkers entering the development site from Park Road would see a continuation of the existing residential area of Congresbury with new homes and streets before exiting to the SE and into the countryside beyond.

**Receptor Type:** Visual  
**Value:** Local/Community  
**Users:** Recreational walkers have plenty of opportunity to linger and/or pause to appreciate views of the surrounding landscape.

**Sensitivity to Change:** MEDIUM

- 3.23. **Name:** Footpath from River Yeo toward the NE corner of the site.  
**Length:** 130 metres - entire route length  
**Description:** This footpath connects with the Two Rivers Way/River Yeo into the site (NE corner) and then onward to local footpath network either terminating at Yew Tree Farm, Venus Street or Park Road  
**Effectuated:** YES

Walking from the River Yeo the eastern edge of the site the development would be partially visible. Typically, only the roof from eaves to ridge line would be visible. The development would

be seen in context of the existing development within Park Road and Mulberry Road.

The footpath would then enter the development site with new homes and streets before exiting to Park Road.

**Receptor Type:** Visual  
**Value:** LOCAL/COMMUNITY  
**Users:** Recreational walkers have plenty of opportunity to linger and/or pause to appreciate views of the surrounding landscape.

**Sensitivity to Change:** MEDIUM

- 3.24. **Name:** Footpath from River Yeo toward the SE corner of the site.  
**Length:** 130 metres - entire route length  
**Description:** This footpath connects with the Two Rivers Way/River Yeo into the site (SE corner) and then onward to local footpath network either terminating at Yew Tree Farm, Venus Street or Park Road

**Effectuated:** YES

Walking from the River Yeo the eastern edge of the site the development would be partially visible. Typically, only the roof from eaves to ridge line would be visible. The development would be seen in context of the existing development within Park Road and Mulberry Road.

The footpath would then enter the development site with new homes and streets before exiting to Park Road.

**Receptor Type:** Visual  
**Value:** LOCAL/COMMUNITY

**Users:** Recreational walkers have plenty of opportunity to linger and/or pause to appreciate views of the surrounding landscape.

**Sensitivity to Change: MEDIUM**

**SENSITIVITY OF VISUAL AMENITY WITHIN THE STUDY AREA**

**Visual Amenity SUMMARY**

- 3.25. The ZVI in the accompanying 011\_120 Viewpoint Figure Sheet document illustrates the extent that which views of the site are mostly restricted to small ‘sections’ of publicly accessible footpaths located within 250 metres from the site boundary.
- 3.26. In summary, views from short sections of the publicly accessible Two Rivers Way (long distance footpath) that runs to the NE of the site and will have **MEDIUM-HIGH Sensitivity**.
- 3.27. Views from publicly accessible local footpath that are located directly adjacent (within 250 metres) to the site would have **MEDIUM Sensitivity**.
- 3.28. Views from the publicly accessible local footpath that are located within the site and throughout the wider study area would have **MEDIUM Sensitivity**.

**3. Table 1: Summary of Receptor Sensitivity (Landscape and Visual)**

- 3.1. The receptors in the study area that are most relevant to the proposed development in Visual Amenity terms are:
  - Two Rivers Way/River Yeo - NE of the site
  - PRow leading from Two Rivers Way/River Yeo - NE of the site
  - PRow leading from Two Rivers Way/River Yeo - SE of the site
  - Prow within the site – NW to SE
  - Prow within the site – NE to SE

**Table 1: Summary of Receptor Sensitivity (Landscape and Visual)**

Receptor	Sensitivity
<b>Study Area – Landscape</b>	
J2 River Yeo Rolling Valley Farmland LCT	MEDIUM
<b>Site</b>	
Use/Land Cover	MEDIUM-HIGH
Topography/Landform	LOW-MEDIUM
Landscape Features	MEDIUM
<b>Study Area - Visual</b>	
Two Rivers Way (long distance footpath)	MEDIUM-HIGH
On Site Footpath NW to SE corner	MEDIUM
On Site Footpath NE to SE corner	MEDIUM
PRow from River Yeo to NE corner of site	MEDIUM
PRow from River Yeo to SE corner of site	MEDIUM

## 4.0 ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

### DESIGN APPROACH

- 4.1. The outline application seeks permission to develop the agricultural land within Pineapple Farm and proposes a residential development.
- 4.2. The proposal includes residential dwelling (up to 90 new homes), Access roads from Mulberry Road, street lighting, drainage pump house, individual gardens (front and back), Public Open Space, Ecological buffer zones, Public Play Ground 'up-graded PRow's, Trees and Shrub planting.
- 4.3. The new homes will be a mix of 1, 2, 3 and 4 bedrooms with a maximum ridge line height of 9.5m. The dwellings will be a mix of private and affordable/rental properties housing with rear fenced gardens, patios and lawns.
- 4.4. As the application is for outline planning permission there is limited information provided about the detail of the proposals. Therefore, the judgements being made are based on the general mass, size, scale and height of the proposed development. Although no detail is provided certain assumptions have been made such as the form/architectural style of the buildings and use of appropriate materials that respect the surrounding character and context.

### MITIGATION MEASURES

#### Primary Mitigation

- 4.5. Primary mitigation measures have been incorporated into the scheme to limit the potential effects of the proposed developments; these include:

- Retain and protect the existing boundary hedgerows and trees.
- Retain and protect the on-site drainage system and agricultural pond (NE corner of the site).
- Retain and protect the two Public Rights of Way (PRow's) that currently cross the site.
- As the site is relatively flat there is no requirement to significantly alter the site topography. The only exception would be the construction of the attenuation area toward the (NE corner of the site).

#### Secondary Mitigation

- 4.6. The following secondary mitigation measures have been incorporated into the scheme in order to further reduce any effects of the proposed development:
  - Significant tree planting with trees of 4-5m high positioned at critical locations on the boundary and within the site to screen the effects of the proposed development on views from sensitive locations.
  - In fill planting to boundary hedgerows to screen the effects of the proposed development on views from sensitive locations.
  - Construction of a hard wearing and durable footpath set within a safe and landscaped route that provides continued pedestrian access through the site and on to the surrounding network within the local countryside.
  - Public Open Space (POS) that has been landscaped to encourage and give opportunity for new residents to benefit from the effects of direct contact with nature. The landscaped POS within the proposed development will provide a 'stepping stone' into the wider countryside for young and old.

- Play Ground will provide a local facility to encourage families with younger children to get out of their homes and socialise with other families whilst their children play together within a safe and well-maintained play facility.

## POTENTIAL EFFECTS

### Construction Effects

- 4.7. The following activities and operations are likely to arise as a result of the construction phase of the project:
- On site construction machinery
  - Upgrade of the existing access to make suitable for construction vehicles as well as the future vehicles intended to use the on-site car park provision for the construction staff and visitors
  - The creation of suitable access roads to accommodate the traffic generated by the proposals, to and from the building plots
  - Areas set aside for construction materials as well as earth storage mounds that will be used and re-spread back on the site (gardens and POS etc.)
  - Scaffolding and construction of dwelling structures
  - Protection measure (Heras fencing) to ensure continued pedestrian access along the onsite PRow's.
  - Protection measures (Heras fencing) for existing vegetation throughout the field.
- 4.8. It is accepted that the scale of effects during construction are likely to be higher than those at completion and the ongoing residual effects due to the construction activities being more prominent

and visually intrusive. These would however be for a short-term duration so overall would result in a lesser impact to the wider landscape character and visual amenity of the area. Therefore, the effects during construction will not be assessed further.

### Effects at Completion

- 4.9. The following will result in short term effects once construction is complete:
- A larger and landscape entrance from Mulberry Road
  - Presence of numerous buildings within the development site
  - Augmenting and supplementing existing boundary vegetation of the site with native species
  - New native tree planting within the overall site and the creation of a landscaped area along the north (ecological buffer) hedge and along the eastern boundary of the site providing screening and increasing the biodiversity of the site
  - Provision of a new and durable footpath set within its own landscape corridor away from the road network
  - Provision of a playground for use by the new residents and existing local residents.
  - Provision of street lighting to appropriate highway lighting standards and lighting style / design fitting for the proposed local housing character. Also, the 'light spill' from the street columns would not negatively impact on the ecological buffer along the northern boundary
  - New landscapes front and rear gardens as well as planting and off-road parking.

### **Permanent Effects/Effects during Operation**

4.10. Many of those identified above (4.9) will remain, so the focus here is on the changes arising through the establishment and growth of vegetation. The following will result in permanent effects:

- landscaped entrance from Mulberry Road
- Reduced perception of vehicles within the proposed development due to maturing on site native trees and shrub planting
- New native tree planting within the overall site and the creation of a landscaped area along the north and eastern site boundary would (within 15 years) provide substantial screening. This would have the positive perception of reducing the effects of the proposed housing as well as increasing the biodiversity of the site
- The durable footpath set along the boundary edge of the proposed development would retain some of its previous character and continue uninterrupted the walk from town into countryside within its own landscape corridor away from the road network
- The landscaped area around the playground would be continue to provide a valuable social space as well as a practical, fun and physically challenging resource for use of the new residents and existing local residents.
- Street lighting would continue to provide a road/footpath space that was safe and inviting. Also, the 'light spill' from street columns would not negatively impact on the ecological buffer along the northern boundary

## **5.0 LANDSCAPE IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

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- 5.1. This section identifies impacts caused by the proposed development on the landscape. The significance of effects is considered at the operational phase.
- 5.2. The impact assessment is conducted in accordance with the definitions/criteria described in this document, and follows the report structure by assessing impacts on:
- Receptors including landscape designations, if required;
  - Landscape Character;
  - Landscape elements, feature and characteristics;

**Table 2: Summary of Predicted Effects on Landscape**

Receptor	Sensitivity to Change	Magnitude of Change	Mitigation	Significance of Effect (Residual)
<b>Site Character</b>				
<b>Use / Landcover</b>	<b>Med-High</b>	<p><b>HIGH</b></p> <p>Due to the large scale, permanent effect across the majority of the site.</p> <p>The current use (grazing land) could not continue within the site. Although the proposed development (up to 90 homes) would construct up to 90 homes, they would be in-keeping with the properties within Park Road and Mulberry Road and continued to be experienced as part of the settlement edge to Congresbury.</p> <p>The agricultural landscape setting of Congresbury would remain while the landscape mitigation proposals would help the settlement's integration into the surrounding landscape.</p>	<p><b>MEDIUM - HIGH</b></p> <p>Residual effects- after mitigation measures have matured</p> <p>Mitigation principles have been indicated in the Illustrative Landscape Arrangements Plan (MR50001_Masterplan) that would respect and contribute to the character of the site and the wider local study area.</p> <p>The mitigation measures would reduce the magnitude of change with the addition of the following measures;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stands of trees planted to screen views of the proposed development from sensitive locations/receptors.</li> <li>• New hedges and shrubs areas</li> <li>• Ecological Buffer (northern boundary) and attenuation basin/wildlife refuge that in conjunction with the existing on-site pond would enhance and diversify the wildlife habitats.</li> <li>• Provision of landscaped public open space areas with play provision etc.</li> </ul>	<p><b>MODERATE – HIGH, Adverse</b></p> <p>This significance of effect is due to the presence of the proposed development which would change the agricultural use of the site to residential use.</p> <p>The new development would introduce a 'residential massing' into a landscape that already has similar scale residential housing of Park Road and Mulberry Road.</p>

Receptor	Sensitivity to Change	Magnitude of Change	Mitigation	Significance of Effect (Residual)
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A high quality landscaped route for the existing PRow footpaths.</li> </ul> <p>The magnitude of change would reduce as the building materials age/settle and the proposed/existing trees establish and mature. The proposed development would in time become integrated and be in-keeping with the existing surrounding context.</p>	
<b>Landform</b>	<b>LOW-MED</b>	<p><b>LOW</b></p> <p>Due to the small-medium scale, permanent effect to a localised part of the site.</p> <p>The existing landform is relatively flat and there is anticipated to be no or very localised re-grading to accommodate the proposed development. At this indicative stage it is assumed that there will be some works required to provide vehicle access into the site and attenuation basin.</p> <p>The development site is located above the surrounding river valley landform and would be recognised in the same context as the adjacent housing within Park Road and Mulberry Road.</p>	<p><b>LOW</b></p> <p>Illustrative Arrangements Plan (MR50001_Masterplan) indicate that the layout will work with the existing contours of the site as much as possible.</p> <p>No construction or excavation activities will take place within the ecological buffer zones and around the hedgerows and pond.</p>	<p><b>SLIGHT, Adverse</b></p> <p>Anticipated worse case (Illustrative Arrangements Plan) affect, resulting from changes to the landform required to accommodate development across the site.</p> <p>The overall nature of the landform would still be recognisable contributing to the character of the site and the surrounding area within the river corridor valley.</p>



Receptor	Sensitivity to Change	Magnitude of Change	Mitigation	Significance of Effect (Residual)
<p><b>Landscape Features</b></p>	<p><b>LOW-MED</b></p>	<p><b>LOW</b></p> <p>Due to the small scale, permanent effect on local parts of the site.</p> <p>The Illustrative Arrangements Plan seeks where appropriate to retain and protect the existing landscape features these include the following;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• boundary hedgerows with mature trees</li> <li>• the small pond at the NE corner of the site</li> <li>• drainage ditch and bank running along the western boundary with several ‘headwalls’</li> </ul> <p>At this indicative stage it is assumed that there will be some works required to provide the vehicle access route.</p>	<p><b>LOW</b></p> <p>Due to the small scale, permanent effect on local parts of the site.</p> <p><b>Existing boundary hedgerows and trees</b> – these would be retained and protected as well supplemented with ‘infill’ hedgerow planting to any ‘hedge gaps’ as well as new trees to replace the elm trees that are dead/dying/diseased.</p> <p><b>MEDIUM</b></p> <p>Due to the medium scale, permanent effect throughout the site.</p> <p><b>Proposed landscape mitigation measures</b> (as described in the Illustrative Arrangements Plan) - these would reduce the magnitude of change with the provision of addition new landscape features;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stands of trees planted to screen views of the proposed development from sensitive landscape locations.</li> <li>• New hedges and shrubs areas</li> <li>• Ecological Buffer (northern boundary) and attenuation basin that in conjunction with the existing on-site pond would enhance and diversify the wildlife habitats.</li> <li>• A high-quality landscaped route for the existing PRow footpaths.</li> </ul>	<p><b>SLIGHT, Adverse</b></p> <p>Due to the potential of works to provide the new access road to residential areas.</p> <p><b>MODERATE, Beneficial</b></p> <p>Due to the Illustrative Arrangements Plan that support a strong landscape structure to the development site. The existing and proposed features which would by in-keeping with the characteristic of the area.</p>

Receptor	Sensitivity to Change	Magnitude of Change	Mitigation	Significance of Effect (Residual)
<b>Study Area</b>				
<p><b>Landscape Character Area: J2 River Yeo Rolling Valley Farmland LCT</b></p>	<p><b>MEDIUM</b></p>	<p><b>LOW-MEDIUM</b></p> <p>Due to the small scale, permanent effect on local area.</p> <p>The proposed development will be a recognisable new feature in this LCA. The proposed development would only be visible from the local and near-by PRow footpaths as the topography and local hedges/trees screen all other public views.</p> <p>The proposed development would be regarded as a continuation of the settlement edge to Congresbury which is an accepted feature that is characteristic of the area.</p> <p>The proposed development would contribute to the growth of Congresbury which is identified as a force for change and would add to the edge of the settlement but not be experienced as a prominent feature in its own right.</p>	<p><b>LOW</b></p> <p>Due to the small scale, permanent effect on local area.</p> <p>The existing boundary hedgerows and trees would be retained and protected as well supplemented with ‘infill’ hedgerow planting to any ‘hedge gaps’ as well as new trees to replace the elm trees that are dead/dying/diseased.</p> <p>The mitigation measures as described in the Illustrative Arrangements Plan would reduce the magnitude of change with the provision of addition new landscape features;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Layout of the housing would be set back from the boundary of the site enabling the housing to be in-keeping with the surrounding house along Park Road and Mulberry Road.</li> <li>• Stands of hedges, trees and shrubs planted to screen views of the proposed development from sensitive locations.</li> <li>• A high quality landscaped Ecological Buffer (northern boundary) and attenuation basin that would enhance and diversify wildlife habitats.</li> <li>• A high-quality landscaped route for the existing PRow footpaths.</li> </ul>	<p><b>SLIGHT, Adverse</b></p> <p>This significance of effect is due to the presence of the proposed development which would change the agricultural use of the site to residential use.</p> <p>The new development would introduce a ‘residential massing’ into the landscape. The proposed development would be similar in scale as the existing residential housing of Park Road and Mulberry Road.</p> <p>The proposed development would add to the edge of the settlement but not be experienced as a prominent feature in its own right.</p>

## **6.0 VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

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- 6.1. This section assesses visual impacts on visual receptors grouped using the receptor sensitivity established in the Baseline against the Magnitude of Change in views from these receptors.
- 6.2. This starts by using summarising the scale of effects of specific viewpoints throughout the study area which are then used as visual aids to judge the effect on visual receptors. These viewpoints provide a 'sample' of potential effects, representing a wide range of receptors – including not only those actually at the viewpoint, but also those nearby, at a similar distance and/or direction.

### **Visual Impacts**

- 5.3. As can be seen by the ZTV (see document 011\_120 Pineapple Farm ZTV Figure Sheet), the development site is visually well contained by the settlement of Congresbury including to the west, north and south. The main visual receptors will be from the River Yeo Valley and locations to the east. However, as determined by the field survey there are all but a small handful of locations where the development site is seen from. This is mainly due to the local low-lying topography of the river corridor and the existing mature trees with over grown hedges that all contribute and aid in the screening of the development site.
- 5.4. The prominent wooded hillside of Urchin Wood and Ball Wood are accessed by several public footpaths however, the mature trees have dense canopies that restrict any outward looking views.
- 5.5. Therefore, views of the site are from locations within approx. 250 metres of the site boundary and from locations along the River Yeo footpath and the footpaths running through the site.

**Table 3: Scale of Effects on Viewpoints**

VP no.	Viewpoint Location	Distance	Scale of Effect		Rationale
			At Completion	Residual	
<b>VP 1</b>	<b>PRoW, NW corner to SE corner of the site</b>	Within site boundary	Medium - Large	Medium	<p>As the walker enters the site from the Park Road PRoW, the proposed development would affect the majority of the foreground view. The style and layout of the proposed development would be in-keeping with the existing residential housing along Park Road and Mulberry Road.</p> <p>The existing PRoW would be up-graded and integrated and form part of a landscape enhanced ecological buffer located along the northern boundary. There wouldn't be any housing in the buffer and this would enable walkers to carry along the new PRoW route and continue on into the adjoining countryside.</p> <p>On completion of the development the mitigation proposals would help in the development's integration into the surrounding landscape.</p> <p>Over time the maturing trees within the site and along the boundary hedge will increase in canopy size and density to ensure that the proposed development will soften the effects of the proposed housing and help to integrate it into the adjoining countryside.</p>
<b>VP 2</b>	<b>PRoW, NE corner to SE corner of the site</b>	Within site boundary	Medium - Large	Medium	<p>As the walker enters the site from the Park Road PRoW, the proposed development would affect the majority of the foreground view.</p> <p>The style and layout of the proposed development would be would be seen as an extension to the settlement edge that would be in-keeping with the existing residential housing along Park Road and Mulberry Road.</p> <p>The existing PRoW would be up-graded and integrated into the landscape enhanced buffer located along the eastern boundary. There wouldn't be any housing in the buffer and would enable walkers to carry along the new PRoW route and continue on into the adjoining countryside.</p>

VP no.	Viewpoint Location	Distance	Scale of Effect		Rationale
			At Completion	Residual	
					<p>These proposals would help the development’s integration into the surrounding landscape.</p> <p>Over time the maturing trees within the site and along the boundary hedge will increase in canopy size and density to ensure that the proposed development would soften the housing layout and help to integrate it into the adjoining countryside.</p>
<b>VP 3</b>	<b>Two Rivers Way</b>	285 metres of site boundary	Medium	Low - Medium	<p>Views from the long-distance footpath are mainly seen by walkers living and working in Congresbury and by dog walkers on a circular route. The view from this location is representative of the views along a short length of footpath (approx. 325m).</p> <p>From this viewpoint the proposed houses would be seen in the mid-distance, beyond the waterway, extensive open grass field and mature hedgerow. The buildings would be approx. the same height as Park Farm (right of the photo). Only the upper parts of the proposed housing would be seen as the boundary hedge and tree line obscure all ground level activities. The proposed buildings would be seen to spread eastward and to approximately the same extent as the existing homes along Mulberry Road.</p> <p>The proposed development would add to the edge of the settlement but not be seen as a prominent feature in its own right.</p> <p>The height of the proposed buildings is similar to the existing adjacent houses and no higher than 9.5 metres. In order to ensure that the massing of the proposed housing is reduced, the indicative layout housing has been set back from the boundary and extensive mitigation trees will be planted to break up and screen the small groups of houses.</p>

VP no.	Viewpoint Location	Distance	Scale of Effect		Rationale
			At Completion	Residual	
					Over time the maturing trees within the site and along the northern boundary hedge will increase in canopy size and density to ensure that the proposed development will soften the housing layout and help to integrate it into the adjoining countryside.
<b>VP 4</b>	<b>PRoW from River Yeo toward the NE corner of the site.</b>	135 metres of site boundary	Medium	Low - Medium	<p>Views from the footpath are mainly seen by walkers living in Congresbury and by dog walkers on a circular route. From this viewpoint the proposed buildings would be seen in the mid-distance, beyond the grass field but mostly screened by the mature hedgerows (3-4 m tall) and hedgerow trees (12-18m high).</p> <p>The proposed housing would be mainly seen through the 'gap' in the hedge line, directly in front of the viewer. To either side of the view the retained trees and hedgerow conceal the massing of the proposed buildings.</p> <p>The extent of the proposed development would be similar to that of the existing dwellings in Mulberry Road (left of the photo) and Park Farm (right of the photo). The proposed development would add to the edge of the settlement but not be seen as a prominent feature in its own right.</p> <p>The height of the proposed buildings is similar to the existing adjacent houses and no higher than 9.5 metres. In order to ensure that the massing of the proposed housing is reduced, the indicative layout housing has been set back from the boundary and extensive mitigation trees will be planted to break up and screen the small groups of houses.</p> <p>Over time the maturing trees within the site and along the boundary hedge will increase in canopy size and density to ensure that the proposed development will soften the housing layout and help to integrate it into the adjoining countryside.</p>

VP no.	Viewpoint Location	Distance	Scale of Effect		Rationale
			At Completion	Residual	
VP 5	PRoW from River Yeo toward the SE corner of the site.	204 metres of site boundary	Medium	Low - Medium	<p>Views from this footpath are mainly seen by walkers living in Congresbury and by dog walkers on a circular route. The view from this location is representative of the views along a short length of footpath (approx. 255m).</p> <p>From this viewpoint the proposed buildings would be seen in the mid-distance, beyond the grass field and mostly screened by the mature hedgerows (3-4 m tall) and hedgerow trees (12-18m high). Only the upper parts of the proposed housing would be visible as the retained mature hedge line, directly in front of the viewer, screens all ground level activities in the proposed site. The extent of the proposed development would be similar to that of the existing dwellings in Mulberry Road (left of the photo) and Park Road (right of the photo).</p> <p>The proposed development would add to the edge of the settlement but not be seen as a prominent feature in its own right.</p> <p>The height of the proposed buildings is similar to the existing adjacent houses and no higher than 9.5 metres. In order to ensure that the massing of the proposed housing is reduced, the indicative layout housing has been set back from the boundary and extensive mitigation trees will be planted to break up and screen the small groups of houses.</p> <p>Over time the maturing trees within the site and along the boundary hedge will increase in canopy size and density to ensure that the proposed development will soften the housing layout and help to integrate it into the adjoining countryside.</p>

**Table 4: Summary of Predicted Effects on Visual Receptors**

Receptor	Sensitivity to Change	Magnitude of Change	Mitigation	Significance of Effect (Residual)
PRoW's within site boundary (VP 1 and 2)	Medium	<p><b>= Medium – High</b></p> <p>There would be a change to the visual perception whilst travelling through the site.</p> <p>This would result in a large scale, long term effect within very local effect i.e. within the boundary of the site.</p>	<p><b>= Medium</b></p> <p>The existing hedgerow features with tall trees will be retained and protected. there will be some (where appropriate) 'infill' planting of hedgerow and trees.</p> <p>The Illustrative Arrangements Plan (MR50001_Masterplan) outlines benefits from the addition re-routing of the existing footpaths through a new landscaped corridor that should also have screening shrubs and trees planted.</p> <p>The magnitude of change would reduce. This would result in a medium magnitude of change that is -large scale, permanent effect within very local (only within the boundary of the site) effect.</p>	<p><b>Moderate Adverse</b></p> <p>Extensive views of the proposed development would be available obvious to those travelling within the proposed site boundary.</p> <p>The proposed development would add to the edge of the settlement but not be seen as a prominent feature in its own right.</p> <p>As travellers pass the site and into the wider study area the proposed development site becomes less prominent in views as distance increases.</p>
PRoW Two Rivers Way – Long Distance Footpath (VP 3)	Medium High	<p><b>= Medium</b></p> <p>The outline layout plan indicates that the northern and eastern edge of the site would be maintained as a largely public open space with no buildings.</p> <p>The proposed development would be a noticeable change when viewed across the fields from the riverside footpath.</p>	<p><b>= Low-Medium</b></p> <p>The Illustrative Arrangements Plan (MR50001_Masterplan) outlines benefits from the addition of; new boundary screening stands of trees (northern and eastern boundaries) set within the landscape enhanced ecological buffer to the north of the sit).</p> <p>The magnitude of change would reduce.</p>	<p><b>Slight Adverse</b></p> <p>Due to the proposed development, views (partial) would most likely be available to those travelling along a short (approx. 230 m) section of the riverside footpath.</p> <p>The proposed development would add to the edge of the settlement but not be seen as a prominent feature in its own right.</p>



Receptor	Sensitivity to Change	Magnitude of Change	Mitigation	Significance of Effect (Residual)
		This would result in a medium scale, long term effect to a limited and single section (approx. 230 metres) of the footpath.	This would result in a small scale, permanent effect to a limited and elevated section of the road.	
Footpath Local footpaths (VP4 and 5)	Medium	<p>= <b>Medium</b></p> <p>The proposed development would be noticeable change from these locations.</p> <p>This would result in a medium scale, long term effect to a very local extent within the footpath as walkers travel toward the site.</p>	<p>= <b>Low - Medium</b></p> <p>The Illustrative Arrangements Plan (MR50001_Masterplan) of improvements outlines benefits from the addition of; new boundary trees within the ecological buffer (north and east boundary).</p> <p>This would result in a small scale, permanent effect to a local extent within the station and its car park etc.</p>	<p><b>Slight Adverse</b></p> <p>Due to the presence of the new development, views would most likely only be available to those walking toward the site.</p> <p>The proposed development would add to the edge of the settlement but not be seen as a prominent feature in its own right.</p>

## 7.0 CONCLUSION

### LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

#### Site Character

- 7.1. The baseline concluded that the site has a **Medium Sensitivity** to the development proposed.
- 7.2. The land-use of the site would not be able to continue which currently contributes to the existing character of the River Yeo River Valley landscape. The impact to the site character as a result of the proposed residential development would be **Low - Medium Adverse**.
- 7.3. This is primarily due to the proposed development of up to 90 homes that would alter the majority of the grass field into residential housing.
- 7.4. The mitigation measures as described in the Illustrative Landscape Arrangements Plan (MR50001\_Masterplan) would reduce the magnitude of change with the provision of addition new landscape features;
  - Layout of the housing would be set back from the boundary of the site enabling the housing to be in-keeping with the surrounding house along Park Road and Mulberry Road.
  - Stands of trees planted to screen views of the proposed development from sensitive locations.
  - New hedges and shrubs areas
  - Ecological Buffer (northern boundary) and attenuation basin/wildlife refuge that in conjunction with the existing on-site pond would enhance and diversify the wildlife habitats.

- A high-quality landscaped route for the existing PRow footpaths.

- 7.5. The proposed housing layout intends to work with the contours of the site and would ensure that the site is recognisable and continue to contribute to the topographical character of the valley landscape. The suggested Illustrative Landscape Arrangements Plan (MR50001\_Masterplan) has illustrated that a good proportion of the site (norther and eastern edge) is set aside as un-developed ecological buffer and green space that will continue to contribute to the character of the river valley landscape. The significance of effect/impact to the site character as a result of the proposed residential development would be an overall **Low Adverse** due to the change to land use but this would be contained to within the site itself and would not be completely out of character with the surrounding countryside context.

#### Landscape Character

- 7.6. The baseline concluded that the landscape character of the study area has a **Medium Sensitivity** to the proposed development.
- 7.7. Views into the site are mainly from close proximity – within 300 metres and the effects on the landscape character is only experienced from the eastern quadrants of the wider study area.
- 7.8. Mitigation principles have been proposed in the Illustrative Landscape Arrangements Plan (MR50001\_Masterplan) and supports a strong landscape planting structure. Principally the retention of the boundary hedgerows and trees as well as new stands of trees that would break up the mass of the development while helping it to integrate into the surrounding landscape with characteristic features that also create a sense of place and distinctiveness within the scheme.

- 7.9. Over time the maturing trees and ‘green’ open space (northern edge of site) would contribute and help the development settle within the landscape. The impact to the landscape character of the study area as a result of the proposed development would be **Slight Adverse** once the mitigation measures have taken time to mature.

## VISUAL EFFECTS

### Visual Amenity

- 7.10. The baseline study concluded that the visual amenity of the study area has an overall **Medium Sensitivity**. The sensitivity of the footpath along the River Yeo is High due to the recognition of it being a long distance public recreational route. The assessed impact to the visual amenity of receptors varies throughout the study area, as follows.
- 7.11. Users of the Two Rivers Way (long distance footpath) to the north-east of the site, the effect would be graded as Low-Medium. This is achieved after the mitigation proposals have taken effect including, maturing structural tree planting within the ecological buffer and eastern boundary which soften the massing of the built development. The visual experience would only be along a short section of walk before views of the proposed development become screened by the urban edge of Congresbury and hedges and trees in the local countryside.
- 7.12. Users of the on-site footpaths that cuts through the site from the NW, NE and SE corner, the effect would be graded as Medium. Housing would not be constructed within the ecological buffer / footpath route and this would enable walkers to continue along the footpath into the adjoining countryside. Over time the maturing trees within the site and along the boundary hedge will increase in canopy size and density and would ensure that the proposed development will soften the housing layout and help to integrate it into the adjoining countryside.
- 7.13. Users of the PRoW from River Yeo to NE corner of site, the effect would be graded as Low-Medium. The proposed development would add to the edge of the settlement but not be seen as a prominent feature in its own right. Over time the maturing trees within the site and along the boundary hedge will increase in canopy size and density to ensure that the proposed development
- 7.14. Users of the PRoW from River Yeo to SE corner of site, the effect would be graded as Low-Medium. The extent of the proposed development would be similar to the existing dwellings in Mulberry Road and Park Road. The proposed development would add to the edge of the settlement but not be seen as a prominent feature in its own right. Over time the maturing trees within the site and along the boundary hedge will increase in canopy size and density to ensure that the proposed development will soften the housing layout and help to integrate it into the adjoining countryside.
- 7.15. The effects of the development on the visual amenity of the study area are assessed as Medium due to the close proximity of publicly accessible footpaths. However, the opportunity to obtain these views of the proposed development are restricted to short sections (300 linear metres) of the Two Rivers Way and footpaths within the site boundaries. These effects quickly diminish to slight/neutral as local mature tree belts along the River Yeo restrict all views of the site.

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- 7.16. The emphasis within the Illustrative Landscape Arrangements Plan (MR50001\_Masterplan) advocates mitigation measures that provide a strong landscape structure and includes additional landscape features that would contribute to the character of the area.
- 7.17. The proposed development would be regarded as a continuation of the settlement edge to Congresbury which is an accepted feature that is characteristic of the area.
- 7.18. The proposed development would contribute to the growth of Congresbury which is identified as a force for change and would add to the edge of the settlement but not be experienced as a prominent feature in its own right.
- 7.19. It is therefore considered, that in the main the impacts of the proposed development are restricted to users of the PRoW's both on site and PRoW's in very close proximity of the site. In the wider study area and over time (10-15 years) the development site could accommodate the proposed development without significant effects within the wider study area.

Table A: Landscape Character Index – Key Characteristics/Special Qualities Evaluation Tables

<b>County: North Somerset Landscape Character Assessment (2018)</b>	
<b>J2 – River Yeo Rolling Valley Farmland</b>	
<b>Relevant Key Characteristics</b>	<b>Relevance to study area</b>
undulating land which forms a valley enclosed by ridges to the (north) and north east.	Within the study area the River Yeo has developed a wide and curving valley floor/flood plain with flat open meadows. The development site forms part of the higher land that is outside the flood plain. The wooded ridgeline to the north of the valley is typical of this character type
The presence of the waterways is signalled by the tree lines of willow along the rivers and streams and in the small bridge crossings. This peaceful, wide valley is pastoral and rural	The development site is set back from the River Yeo and the existing trees along the rivers edge and field boundaries restrict long distance views along the valley floor. This creates a peaceful rural backdrop to Congresbury.
The hedges are thick and well maintained with a large number of mature hedgerow trees including willow pollards in the valley floor and oaks.	The hedges at the boundary of the development site and within the wider study area are consistent with his characteristic and there are numerous large trees growing within the hedgline.
<b>County: North Somerset Landscape Character Assessment (2018)</b>	
<b>A1 – Kingston Seymour and Puxton Moor</b>	
<b>Key Characteristics</b>	<b>Representation on site and study area</b>
flat lowland landscape at 5m to 10m AOD.	The development site and surrounding landscape is low lying. The development site is not located within this landscape type and separated by the built environs of Congresbury.
The area is predominantly pasture, consisting of improved grassland and marshy grassland grazed by cattle, sheep and ponies, but there are also some small areas of arable farming.	The development site and surrounding landscape is predominantly pasture and is currently used as grazing / hay production.
Draining into the rivers is a network of channels, ditches and rhynes crossed by modest bridges of stone or wood	The development site and surrounding landscape also feature a drainage channels and ponds.

There are frequent hedgerow trees of oak, ash and willow, the latter often pollarded. These frame the views to the distant enclosing ridges giving variety and a human scale to the flat landscape.	The surrounding hedgerows both within the development site and within the surrounding landscape are mature, broad and well maintained. The trees within the hedgerows are also mature and tall and screen views along the river valley. The wooded hillside to the north raises to approx. 170m AOD and provides a backdrop to Congresbury and the local countryside.
<b>County: North Somerset Landscape Character Assessment (2018)</b>	
<b>A4 – Locking and Banwel Moors</b>	
<b>Relevant Key Characteristics</b>	<b>Relevance to site and study area</b>
The north eastern section of the area towards Congresbury is perceived as remote and exposed.	The development site and surrounding landscape is low lying. The development site is not located within this landscape type and separated by the built environs of Congresbury.
The majority of the ditches/rhynes are associated with mixed hedgerows that have grown up over them.	The development site and surrounding landscape also feature a drainage channels and ponds are also over grown by adjacent hedges.
Mature trees along the field boundaries are a prominent feature of this character area, with willow (both pollarded and not) and oak present giving rough textured feel to the landscape. The variety in vegetation scale and height breaks the unity and regularity of the field patterns.	The surrounding hedgerows both within the development site and within the surrounding landscape are mature, broad and well maintained. The trees within the hedgerows are also mature and tall and screen views along the river valley.
The area east of the M5 is crossed only occasionally by straight rural roads, with a large proportion, east of Drove Way to Congresbury, only accessible by foot. This lack of activity gives a remote rural feeling similar to other areas in the Moors type.	The development site and surrounding countryside have few roads but contain numerous footpaths and walkers. The countryside around the development site is mostly farmed land with a number of active farms and horsiculture giving the river valley a moderately busy feeling
<b>County: North Somerset Landscape Character Assessment (2018)</b>	
<b>E6– Cleeve Ridges and Combes</b>	
<b>Relevant Key Characteristics</b>	<b>Relevance to site and study area</b>
The Cleeve Ridges and Combes forms a broad ‘L’ shaped ridge that wraps around an elevated plateau at 150m AOD.	The development site is separated from this character landscape by the built-up area of Congresbury and the lack of vantage points from within this area further adds to lack of inter-connectedness between the two areas.

<p>A large expanse of semi-natural broadleaved woodland (much of it ancient) covers the majority of the area, creating an intimate environment with occasional wide views out over the surrounding lowland areas of the moors, valleys and to the distant Bristol Channel.</p>	<p>The elevated woodland slopes are markedly different to the open and grassland features of the development site.</p>
<p>Access to the woodland is largely limited to footpaths and steep rural roads rising up the shady wooded combs. The limited vehicular access to the area adds to the remote peaceful nature of the area.</p>	<p>There are similar footpath networks within these two areas and the lack of surrounding roads with vehicles provides to a more peaceful countryside feel.</p>

## METHODOLOGY

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The landscape and visual impact assessment deals with the separate but related issues of:

- **Landscape Character:** the effects of the development upon discrete character areas and/or character comprising features possessing a particular quality or merit: and
- **Visual Context:** the effects of the development on views from visual receptors, and upon the amenity value of the views.

This landscape and visual impact assessment has been carried out by the means of desktop and field studies. Initial analysis of maps studying existing landforms was undertaken to identify potential viewpoints. Panorama Digital Topographical Data was used to establish approximate heights within the application sites. Viewpoints and any other views identified during the fieldwork were then visited and assessed for their sensitivity to the proposed development.

The application site and surrounding area were visited during August 2020 where a series of photographs were taken from representative viewpoints. The viewpoint locations are shown on in 011\_120 Viewpoint Figure Sheet.

All viewpoints were photographed using a Nikon D40 Digital SLR camera. The nature of the views are of relatively wide panoramas and it was therefore considered beneficial to present of the photographs in this way. The panoramic views consist of a number of photographic frames merged together. (All photographic technical information can be found alongside each individual viewpoint.)

## Landscape Assessment

The sensitivity of a landscape is the degree to which change is able to be accommodated without unacceptable adverse effects upon character or change of character. The GLVIA guidelines indicate, however, that landscape sensitivity is not an absolute criterion and depends upon the nature of the development. Thus the assessment of sensitivity is not strictly part of the initial baseline study of landscape character. Landscapes of high sensitivity are at risk of having their key characteristics fundamentally altered by a particular development.

The magnitude of landscape effects depends upon the extent to which the landscape changes are perceptible in the wider context, whilst assessing the degree to which the fundamental elements of the landscape that give it its unique characteristics are affected.

Direct effects are those that actually change the physical characteristics of the identified elements that make up the landscape, such as the landform and land cover, whereas indirect effects are those which alter the perceptual characteristics of the landscape character, such as the tranquility and sense of remoteness.



**Landscape Sensitivity**

Sensitivity is categorised as high, medium, or low, according to the degree to which a particular landscape receptor can accommodate change arising from a particular development without detrimental effects on its character. This is judged by combining the **susceptibility** of individual landscape receptors to the type of change or development proposed with the **value** attached to that receptor through protection by designations or contribution at a local to national level.

**Susceptibility** indicates the ability of a receptor (landscape or visual) to accommodate the proposed development ‘*without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies or strategies*’. The susceptibility of a receptor is influenced by key characteristics, special qualities, purpose for designation and/or activity likely to be taking place. It is judged as:

- **High** – undue consequences are likely to arise from the proposed development.
- **Medium** – undue consequences may arise from the proposed development.
- **Low** – undue consequences are unlikely to arise from the proposed development.

**Landscape/Receptor Value** is ‘*the relative value that is attached to different landscapes by society*’. It is judged as:

- **National/International** – Designated landscapes which are nationally or internationally designated for their landscape value – including National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), World Heritage Sites, Heritage Coasts and National Scenic Areas.

- **Local** – Locally or regionally designated landscapes such as Areas of Great Landscape Value (AGLV). Also, areas which local evidence indicates as being more valued than the surrounding area.
- **Community** – ‘everyday’ landscape which is appreciated by the local community but has little or no wider recognition of its value.
- **Limited** – despoiled or degraded landscape with little or no evidence of being valued by the community.

**Table B:** Sensitivity Levels and Definitions.

Sensitivity Level	Landscape Resources
<b>High</b>	The key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are highly susceptible to change from the type of development being assessed.
<b>Medium-High</b>	The key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are susceptible to change from the type of development being assessed.
<b>Medium</b>	Some of the key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are susceptible to change from the type of development being assessed.
<b>Low-Medium</b>	Few of the key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are susceptible to change from the type of development being assessed.
<b>Low</b>	Key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are robust and are less likely to be adversely affected by the type of development being assessed.

It is also important to consider the value of the general wider landscape outside of landscape designations particularly where they are not present within the study area or to test their relevance to the specific site and/or study area in question. Judgments on landscape value consider the following factors:

- **Landscape Quality** (including physical state, visual intactness, functional intactness, ecological intactness and state of repair)
- **Scenic Quality** (primarily but not wholly visual sense)
- **Rarity**
- **Representativeness** (key characteristics as identified in the relevant landscape character assessment that are contained within the site and the surrounding area)
- **Conservation Interests** (features of wildlife, earth science, archaeological, historical and cultural interest)
- **Recreational Opportunity**
- **Perceptual Aspects** (such as wildness and tranquility)
- **Associations** (with particular people/events in history)

Table C: General Landscape Value.

Value	Typical Criteria	Typical Example
High	A clear composition of valued landscape components in a robust form and health, free of disruptive detractors and with a strong sense of place. Areas containing a strong, balanced structure with distinct features worthy of conservation. All landscape elements remain intact and in good repair. No or limited potential for substitution.	World Heritage Site, National Park, AONB, Heritage Coast

Medium-High	Primarily containing valued landscape components combined in an aesthetically pleasing composition and lacking prominent disruptive visual detractors. Areas containing a strong structure with noteworthy features or elements, exhibiting a sense of place. Most landscape elements remain intact and in good repair. Limited potential for substitution.	National Park, AONB, Heritage Coast, AGLV
Medium	Consisting primarily of valued landscape components combined in an aesthetically pleasing composition with low levels of disruptive visual detractors, exhibiting a recognisable landscape structure. Some landscape elements remain intact and in good repair. Limited potential for substitution.	Undesignated, but value perhaps expressed through non-official publications or demonstrable use
Low-Medium	Containing some features of landscape value but lacking a coherent and aesthetically pleasing composition with frequent detracting visual elements, exhibiting a distinguishable structure often concealed by mixed land uses or development. Few landscape elements remain intact and in good repair.	Areas identified as having some redeeming features and possibly identified for improvement
Low	Lacking valued landscape components or comprising degraded, disturbed or derelict features, lacking any aesthetically pleasing composition with dominance of visually detracting elements, exhibiting mixed land uses which conceal the baseline structure. No landscape elements remain intact and in good repair.	Areas identified for recovery