

Appendix 1: Significant Gap Appraisal

Introduction

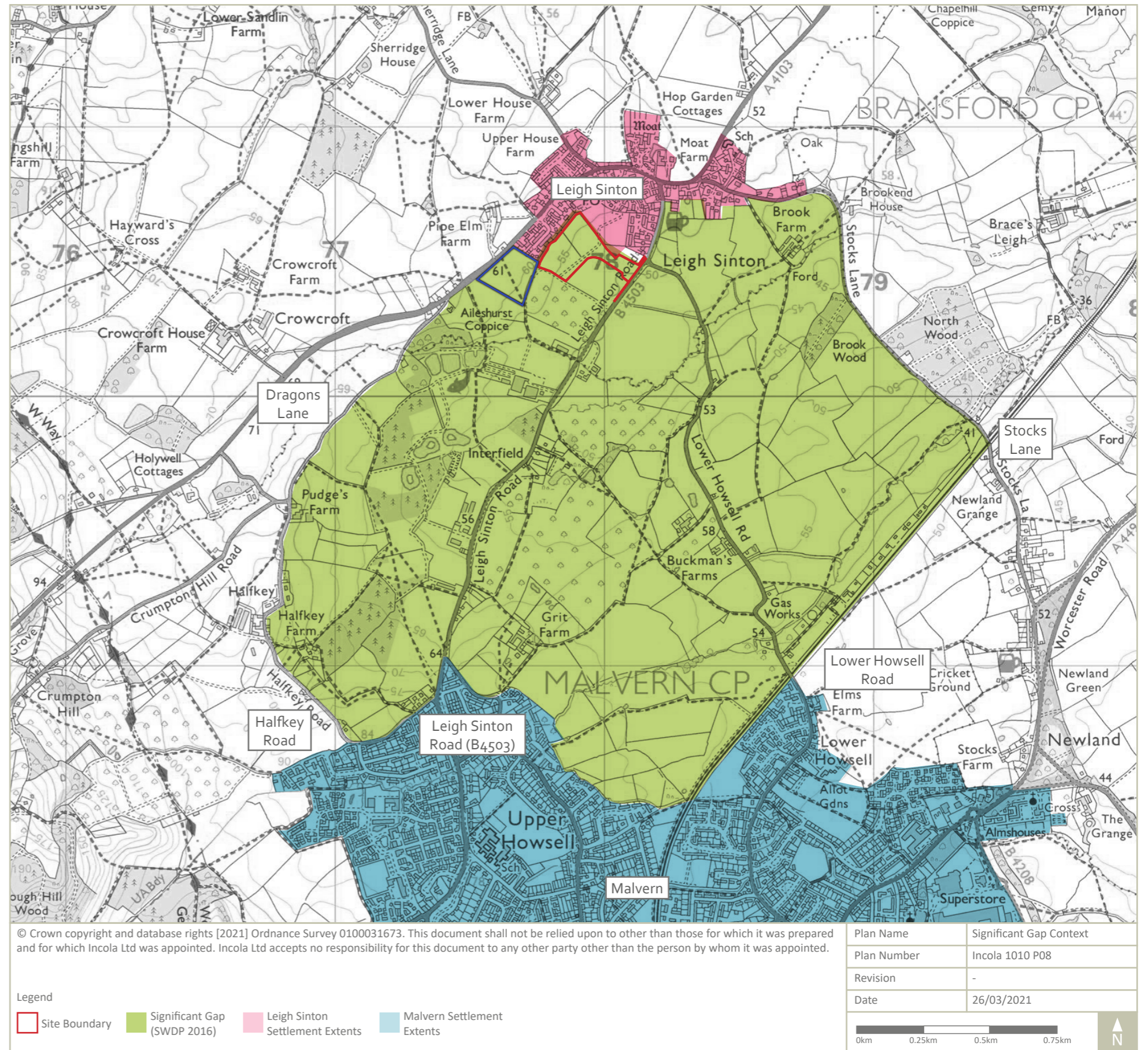
- 1.1 This report has been prepared to review the development of the site in relation to the Significant Gap designation (Policy SWDP2). The Significant Gap is located on land between Malvern and Leigh Sinton as illustrated on The Significant Gap Context Plan (Incola 1010 P08).
- 1.2 This report will consider the contribution that the site makes to the Significant Gap and the impacts that the proposed development will have to its function and purpose.

Proposals

- 1.3 As detailed within the LVA and as shown on Figure 1 below, the development of the site will involve retaining development and built form at the western part of the site adjacent to the existing settlement edge, with existing boundary vegetation retained at the southern and eastern boundaries to filter views and retain landscape connectivity.
- 1.4 The scheme involves the creation of an integrated and multi-functional landscaped edge which will soften views of the new development, provide footpath links, biodiversity enhancements and recreation opportunities. This green link will also provide connectivity to the green space to the west at Bluebell Walk and the green space within the Malvern Rise scheme to the north, providing a cohesive and well connected green link.
- 1.5 The proposed integrated landscape scheme will also serve to enhance the existing settlement edge of Leigh Sinton to provide a better integration to the landscape to the south and a betterment to views when seen from the AONB and from longer distance views from the south and west.



Figure 1: Proposed site Plan



Methodology

2.1 There is no published methodology regarding the analysis of Significant Gaps between settlements and therefore this report will consider the following:

- Planning policy context;
- Physical distance between the settlements of Malvern and Leigh Sinton;
- Perceived distance between the settlements of Malvern and Leigh Sinton.

Planning Policy Context

3.1 The policy within the adopted South Worcestershire Development Plan which relates to the Significant Gap designation is Policy SWDP 2: Development Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy.

3.2 Policy SWDP 2 identifies Leigh Sinton as being a lower category village and within a 'Rural Area'. It identifies that any proposed development should 'retain the open character of the Significant Gaps' and identifies the following with regard to their purpose:

"The purpose of maintaining these gaps, which either serve as a buffer or visual break between rural settlements and adjacent urban areas or protect the character and setting of settlements, is to provide additional protection to open land that may be subject to development pressures. The designation helps to maintain a clear separation between smaller settlements and urban areas in order to retain their individual identity. Acceptable development proposals in such areas may include the reuse of rural buildings, agricultural and forestry-related development, playing fields, other open land uses and minor extensions to existing dwellings."

3.3 The location of the Significant Gap is identified on the Interactive Policies Map of the South Worcestershire Development Plan and its extents are illustrated on Plan xxx. The plan identifies the site and its location within the Significant Gap in relation to the existing settlement edge of Leigh Sinton, and in relation to the settlement edge of Malvern.

Leigh Sinton Neighbourhood Plan

3.4 A Neighbourhood Plan is in the process of being complete by Leigh and the neighbouring parish of Bransford and the consultation version of the plan includes the following policy in relation to the Significant Gap:

3.5 Policy LB/H/3 - *"The Significant Gap between Malvern and Leigh Sinton will be retained in order to maintain the existing character of the area, including the views from and to the Malvern Hills (AONB), and to maintain the separation between Leigh Sinton and Malvern that protects their individual identities"*.

South Worcestershire Development Plan Review (SWDPR) Preferred Options Significant Gaps Appraisal (November 2019)

3.6 As part of the SWDP review, a Significant Gaps Appraisal document was produced in 2019 to assess the planning merits of the current Significant Gaps. Its aim being to assess:

- What purpose the Significant Gaps are they serving?
- Are the Significant Gaps necessary?

3.7 The review states that the overarching purpose of the Significant Gap policy is to "keep land open (not necessarily completely free of development) in order to prevent neighbouring developments from coalescing and to provide an appropriate setting for settlements."

3.8 In reviewing the current Significant Gaps, it identifies a series of questions:

- *"The importance of the (open) gap. Is it obvious that, without it development is likely to occur leading to coalescence?"*
- *Is the extent of the current SG necessary? Could physical openness and visual openness be maintained / achieved with a reduced gap? (A Local Plan examination inspector will almost certainly pose that question as it is also pertinent to Green Belt boundary considerations.)*
- *Would the land remain largely open if there was no SG policy designation? Without a SG policy for most development types one would be relying on the development boundary policy (currently SWDP2C) to control development and it clearly permits, in principle, more types of development than SWDP2D does. (It could be argued that currently SWDP2D is more onerous than SWDP2E (Green Belt), as the latter defaults to the NPPF (2019), which allows certain types of development to be permitted even if they might reduce openness to a degree.) So currently, for example, one of the SGs at Beckford is in Flood Zones 3a and 3b, so vulnerable built development, such as housing is highly unlikely to secure planning permission even on appeal.*
- *Scale: This is of course not a precise science rather, generally speaking, the smaller the current SG, the greater the likely impact of built development on its openness.*
- *Between or within settlements: The SWDP contains a mix, although the*

majority are to keep neighbouring settlements from merging. The SGs at Beckford, Pebworth, Upton Snodsbury and Whittington lie between separate built up areas within the settlement (NB Not necessarily within the settlement's development boundary). It could be argued that a continuation of open space and Conservation Area policies would have the desired effect of keeping the land open.

- *Public accessibility: It is easier to justify an SG if it straddles a main road, railway etc, as visual perception is an important factor i.e. the more enclosed the affected land is the less the justification for a SG.*
- *Development pressure: Over and above planned development, is the SG in an area likely to be the subject of speculative planning applications (the CfS gives a clear indication of this)?"*

3.9 Section 3 of the appraisal document assesses the current SWDP Significant Gaps in tabular form (as illustrated in **Table 1** below).

3.10 It identifies that there could be a limited reduction to the Significant Gap on the southern edge of Leigh Sinton and also identifies that there are a number of public footpath roads and PRoWs resulting in visibility of the Significant Gap.

3.11 The overall recommendation is that the SG between Leigh Sinton and Malvern is retained, but that there is the potential for discrete land parcels on the southern edge of Leigh Sinton to be removed should they be needed with regard to allocations through the SWDP or through Leigh and Bransford Neighbourhood Plan.

3.12 The appraisal concludes that "SGs remain a legitimate planning tool in the context of the NPPF but they need to be used in a limited and focussed way as an integral part of a positively prepared Local Plan."

3.13 It states that "It is considered that a number of SGs, typically the relatively small ones, are not necessary in order for the associated land to be kept open" and goes on to say that "Consideration needs to be given in respect of new or extended Significant Gaps should free standing settlements feature in the revised spatial development strategy. Generally it is considered good planning practice to retain an appropriate sufficient setting to settlements in order for them to retain their identity and Significant Gaps can help achieve that objective."

Significant Gap	Purpose	Within a settlement?	Are there other policy restrictions (please state) which would keep the land open?	Could the SG be reduced in extent whilst retaining its purpose?	Is the SG visible from a public place?	Are there Call for Sites within it/ them?	How likely is/are a planning application (s) to be submitted?	Is the scale of the SG significant in the context of the SWDP and SWDPR?	Recommendation (retain/ revise/ remove)
Leigh Sinton	Separates Leigh Sinton from Malvern	No	Yes- SWDP2C	Limited reduction only (on the southern edge of Leigh Sinton)	Yes from a number of public roads and PRoWs along with the railway	Yes, at the northern and southern edges.	Possible given developer interest	Yes	Retain with the possible exception of a few discrete land parcels on the edge of Leigh Sinton should they be needed i.e allocations in either the SWDPR or Leigh Sinton Neighbourhood Plan.

Table 1: Section 3, South Worcestershire Development Plan Review (SWDPR) Preferred Options Significant Gaps Appraisal (November 2019)

Other applications within the Significant Gap

3.14 The Bluebell Walk scheme is located to the south west of the site was granted at appeal in June 2014 (original outline application reference 14/00324/OUT).

3.15 Within the inspectors decision the following was noted in relation to the Significant Gap:

"The purpose of the significant gap designation is to maintain the openness and separation between Leigh Sinton and Malvern. Development of different sites within the significant gap would have differing results. The Council has recently granted planning permission for development in the significant gap and on land not adjoining the road frontage but which sits behind existing development and essentially rounds off that development. In that instance the Council considered that the development would not encroach any further into the significant gap beyond the extremities of existing development and as a result limited harm would be caused."

3.16 The inspector goes on to say:

"The settlement of Leigh Sinton is a relatively linear one running along Hereford Road. Houses are clustered around the intersections of this road with three other lanes and roads at the heart of the village. Development of the appeal site would be seen as an elongation of the settlement along the main road. The most direct connection between Leigh Sinton and Malvern is via Leigh Sinton Road which runs through the middle of the significant gap. In my view any development along this road frontage would have a greater effect in terms of any perceived reduction in the gap.

The appeal site is located on the edge of the significant gap, along Hereford Road which leads away from Leigh Sinton. It is important to note that Hereford Road does not provide a direct route between Leigh Sinton and Malvern and indeed the significant gap bounds the road for a relatively short stretch just beyond the settlement. The consequence of this is that the loss of the appeal site from the significant gap in this location would not necessarily be perceived as a material narrowing of the gap between Malvern and Leigh Sinton."

"When leaving the village the site would be viewed as a short extension of the built development which already exists. On the approach, the site would be seen at the beginning of the village which is already signalled by the road markings and change in speed limits as well as other roadside development. In essence, development of the proposed site would not be materially out of kilter with the existing settlement pattern. Views of the development from the public right of way which crosses the site would be significantly different but this would only be for a short stretch of footpath on a much wider network and views from the existing footpath are already constrained given that Christmas trees are grown across the site. I therefore agree with the conclusions in the LVIA.

16. For the above reasons, I conclude that the proposal would not be

in conformity with LP policy DS17 and emerging policy SWDP2. The proposal would result in the permanent loss of a greenfield site and loss of openness within the significant gap and some limited harm to landscape character. However, given the location of the site, on the edge of the gap and away from the more sensitive Leigh Sinton Road frontage, I conclude that the harm which would be caused to these policy objectives would be moderate. "

3.17 The development at the site at Bluebell Walk was deemed to be acceptable and identified that the development would not be detrimental to the perceived openness or narrowing of the gap between Leigh Sinton and Malvern. The inspector identifies that development located along Leigh Sinton Road would have a greater impact on the perceived gap between Leigh Sinton and Malvern and that any development fronting this road would have a more detrimental impact on the perceived reduction in gap.

Appendix 1: Significant Gap Appraisal

Physical Distance

4.1 The adjacent plan (Incola 1010 P09) illustrates the existing and proposed physical distances of the Significant Gap land, and the relationship of the site to the existing settlement edge of Leigh Sinton and Malvern. The measured distances indicated on the plan do not relate to how the landscape is experienced when travelling through it or the perception of the relationship between the settlements.

Existing Distances

4.2 The existing physical distance between the built edge of Malvern and the built edge of Leigh Sinton is as follows:

- Grit Lane to the southern settlement edge (Bluebell Walk) = 1.35 km
- Lower Howsell Road to the south eastern settlement edge (Leigh Sinton Road) = 1.62 km

Proposed Distances

4.3 The proposed distances between the settlements which area as a result of the development are as follows:

- Grit Lane to the southern development edge = 1.48 km
- Lower Howsell Road to south eastern development edge = 1.70 km

4.4 These distances result in the following change in physical distances of the significant gap:

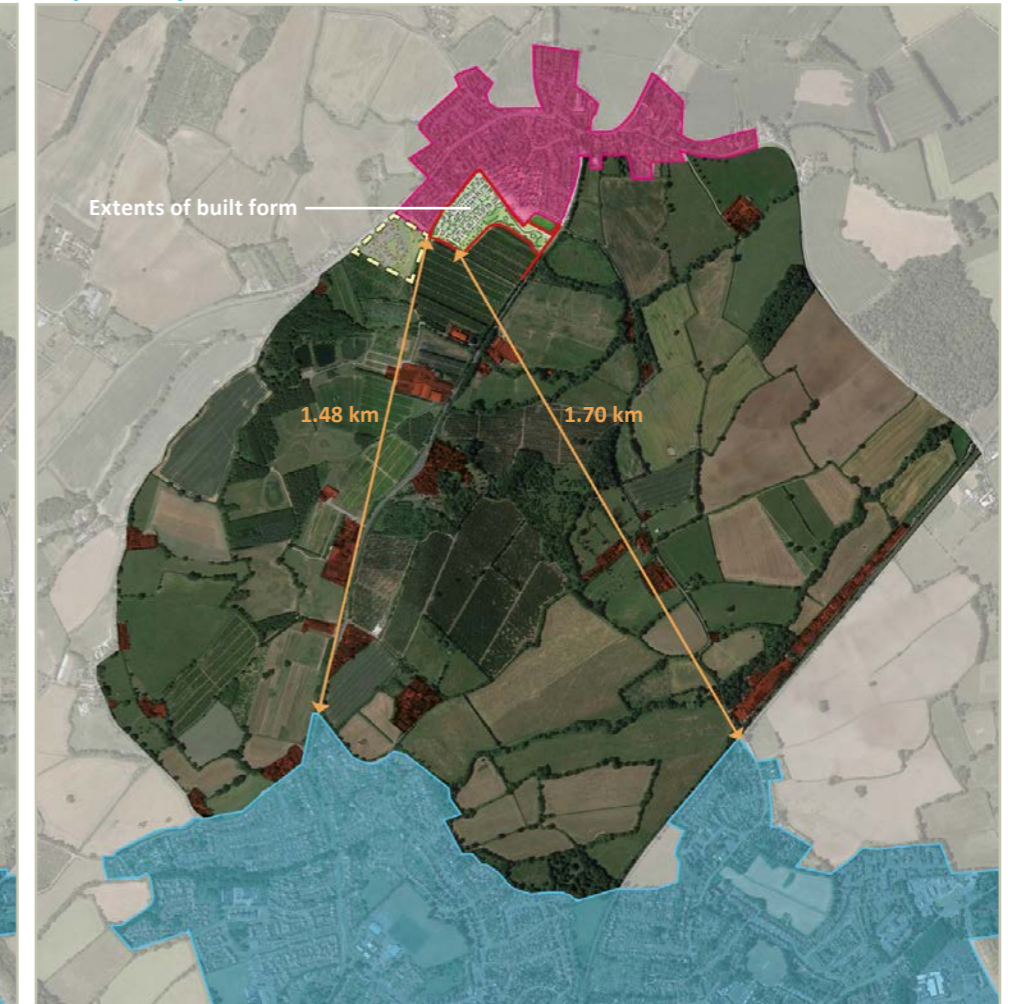
- Grit Lane to new development edge at its southern extents = no change as development is located further north from Bluebell Walk scheme by approximately 0.13km
- Lower Howsell Road to new development edge = no change as development is located further west within settlement confines of Leigh Sinton by approximately 0.08km

4.5 Overall, there will be no change in the overall physical distances between the settlements of Malvern and Leigh Sinton and the development of the site will remain to the north of the extents of the existing settlement edge.

Existing Physical Distances



Proposed Physical Distances



© Googlemaps 2021

Legend

- Site Boundary
- Significant Gap (SWDP 2016)
- Leigh Sinton Settlement Extents
- Malvern Settlement Extents
- Built Form

Proposed Distances Between Settlement Edge

Existing Distances Between Settlement Edge

Plan Name	SG Physical Distances
Plan Number	Incola 1010 P09
Revision	-
Date	06/06/2021

0km 0.25km 0.5km 0.75km

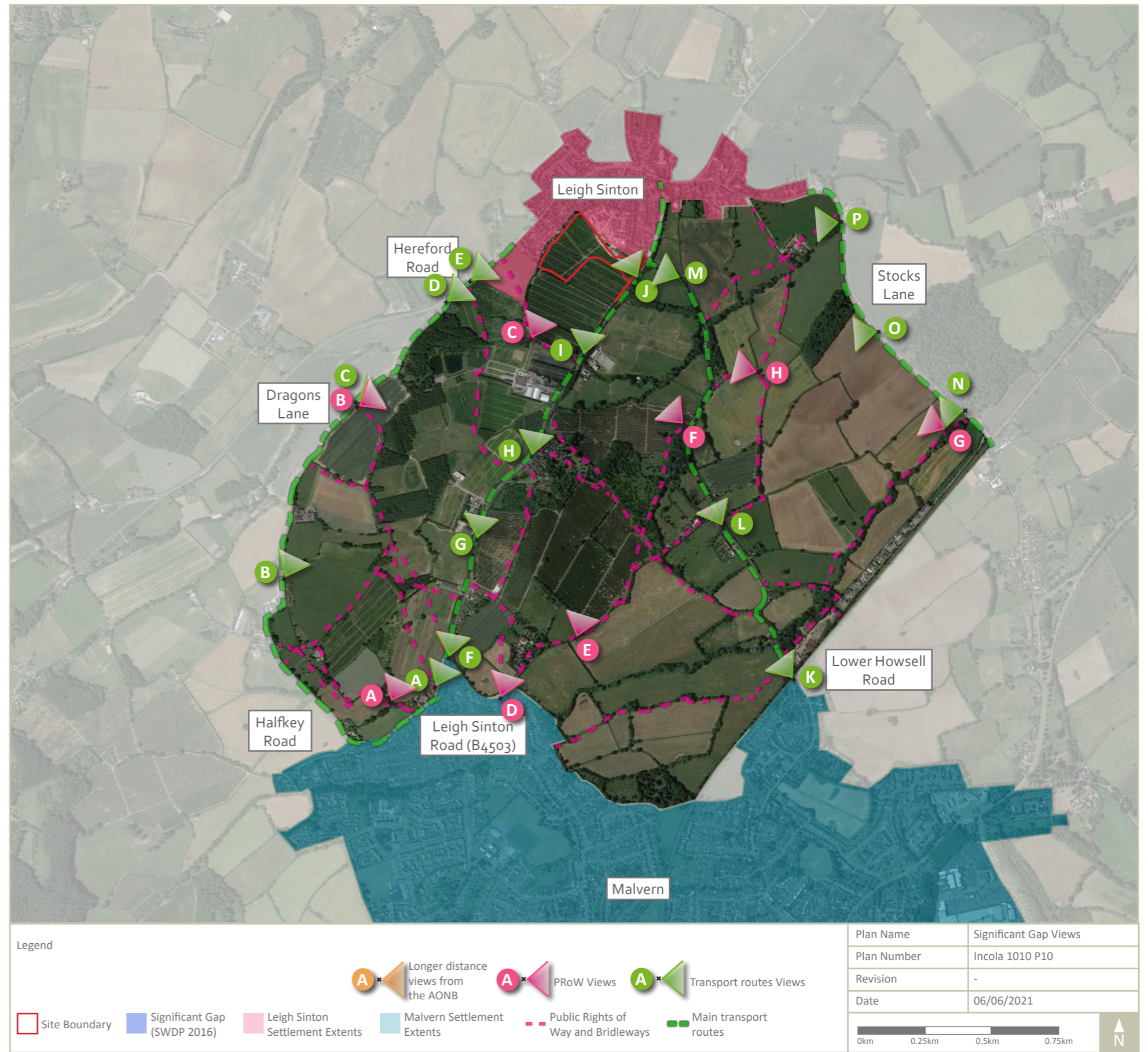
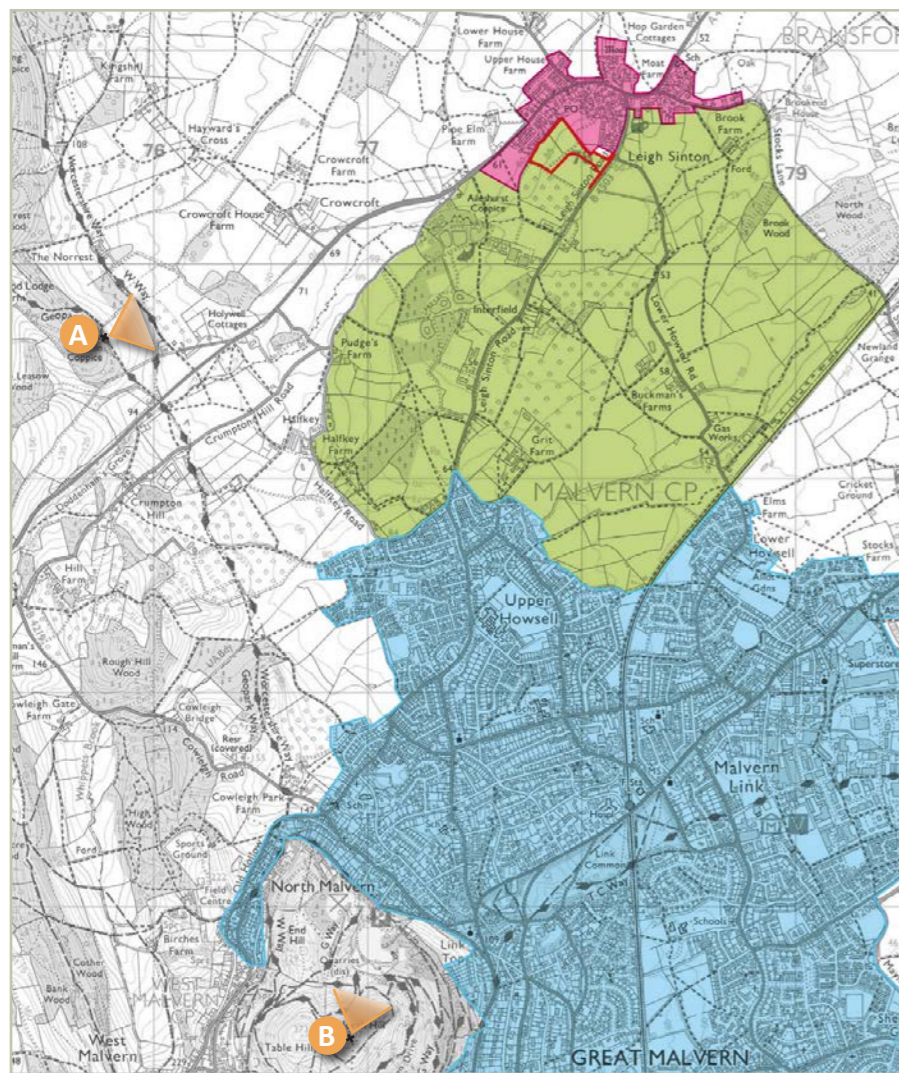


Figure 1: Aerial plan illustrating Significant Gap Land from elevated positions on the Malvern Hills

Perceived Distances Between Settlements

5.1 A number of transport and recreation routes exist within the Significant Gap between Malvern and Leigh Sinton as illustrated on the Significant Gap Views Plan (Incola 1010 P10). At the western boundary is Dragons Lane and Halfkey Road. Connecting the northern most edge of Malvern, Leigh Sinton Road runs north to connect with the southern edge of the site and the settlement of Leigh Sinton. To the east Lower Howsell Road runs north west and meets the sites eastern boundary where it adjoins Leigh Sinton Road. The boundary of the Significant Gap at its western extents is formed by the railway line running north east from Malvern. Stocks Lane crosses the railway line at Newlands Grange and runs along the north eastern edge of the Significant Gap, joining Leigh Sinton at the eastern boundary of the settlement.

5.2 In addition the routes within the significant gap which are assessed, key routes and views to the south of the site are also assessed, and in particular views from the elevated positions within the Malvern Hills AONB.



Transport Routes

- 5.3 The principle transport corridors assessed for the purposes of this Significant Gap Appraisal are as follows:
- Western transport routes - Halfkey Road, Dragons Lane and Hereford Road;
 - Central transport route - Leigh Sinton Road; and
 - Eastern transport routes - Lower Howsell Road and Stocks Lane.

Public Rights of Way and Bridleways

- 5.4 A number of recreational routes used by pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders cut across the land joining Leigh Sinton with Malvern and to the wider countryside.
- 5.5 The perception of the Significant Gap when travelling along these publicly accessible key routes is discussed and reviewed on the following pages and is sub divided by the type of route and receptors experiencing views whilst travelling along these key routes. Routes found within the significant gap are identified as the following:
- PRow routes to the west
 - PRow routes to the east
- 5.6 In addition to this users of footpaths outside of the significant gap who will experience views of the site from longer distance and more elevated positions from the south are also assessed and include the following:
- Users of the footpaths within the Malvern Hills; and
 - Users of the Worcestershire Way and Geopark Way.

Appendix 1: Significant Gap Appraisal

Western transport route - Halfkey Lane, Dragon Lane and Hereford Road

- 5.7 Sequential Viewpoints A-E are taken from the road to the west of the Significant Gap which forms its western boundary.
- 5.8 Sequential views are taken from Halfkey Lane, where it leaves Malvern at the north western boundary and travels north, joining Dragon Lane and subsequently Hereford Road (A4103) at the edge of Leigh Sinton.
- 5.9 Halfkey Lane and Dragon Lane are narrow and quiet routes with areas of clipped native hedgerow boundary planting and in places sunken and flanked by hedgebanks.
- 5.10 However, open views across the Significant Gap can be seen at field gates and agricultural access points across fields. Where these open views are possible, the site is screened from view due to the presence of evergreen and deciduous intervening vegetation.
- 5.11 Christmas tree plantations found on the land to the south of the site can be seen across the landscape, along with mature blocks of evergreen tree planting found in the vicinity of Leigh Sinton Fisharies which further filters views of the site.
- 5.12 Where this route joins Hereford Road in the north, this busy route has a more settled character with ribbon development located off Hereford Road visible and the new development of Bluebell Walk sitting along the skyline and seen forming the entrance and gateway into Leigh Sinton and the settlement edge. From Hereford Road, views of the site cannot be seen due to the falling topography and presence of built form with the site located further north than the settlement extents.
- 5.13 Any changes to the perceived separation between Malvern and Leigh Sinton when viewed from these routes will be negligible.



Sequential View A



Sequential View B



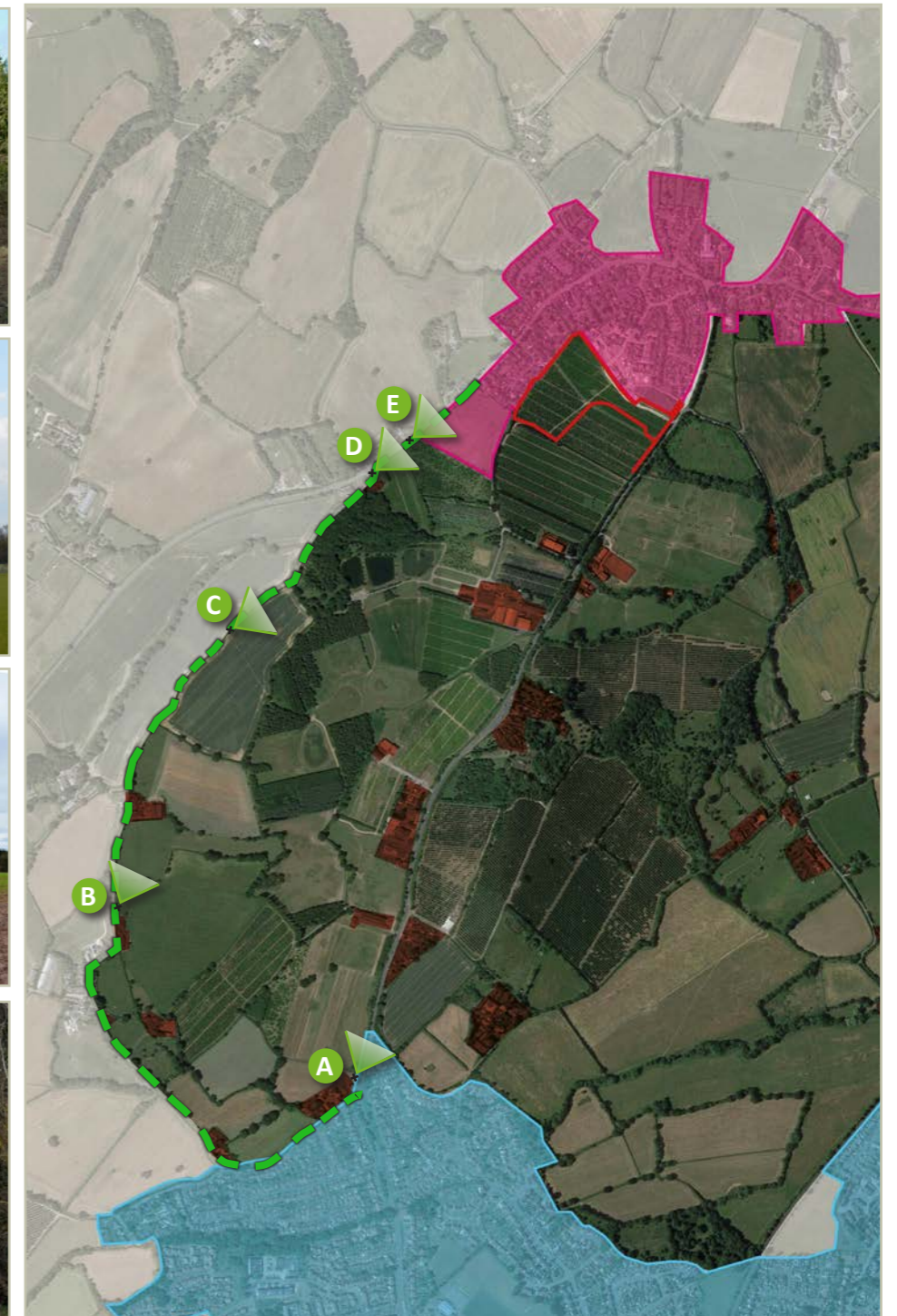
Sequential View C



Sequential View D



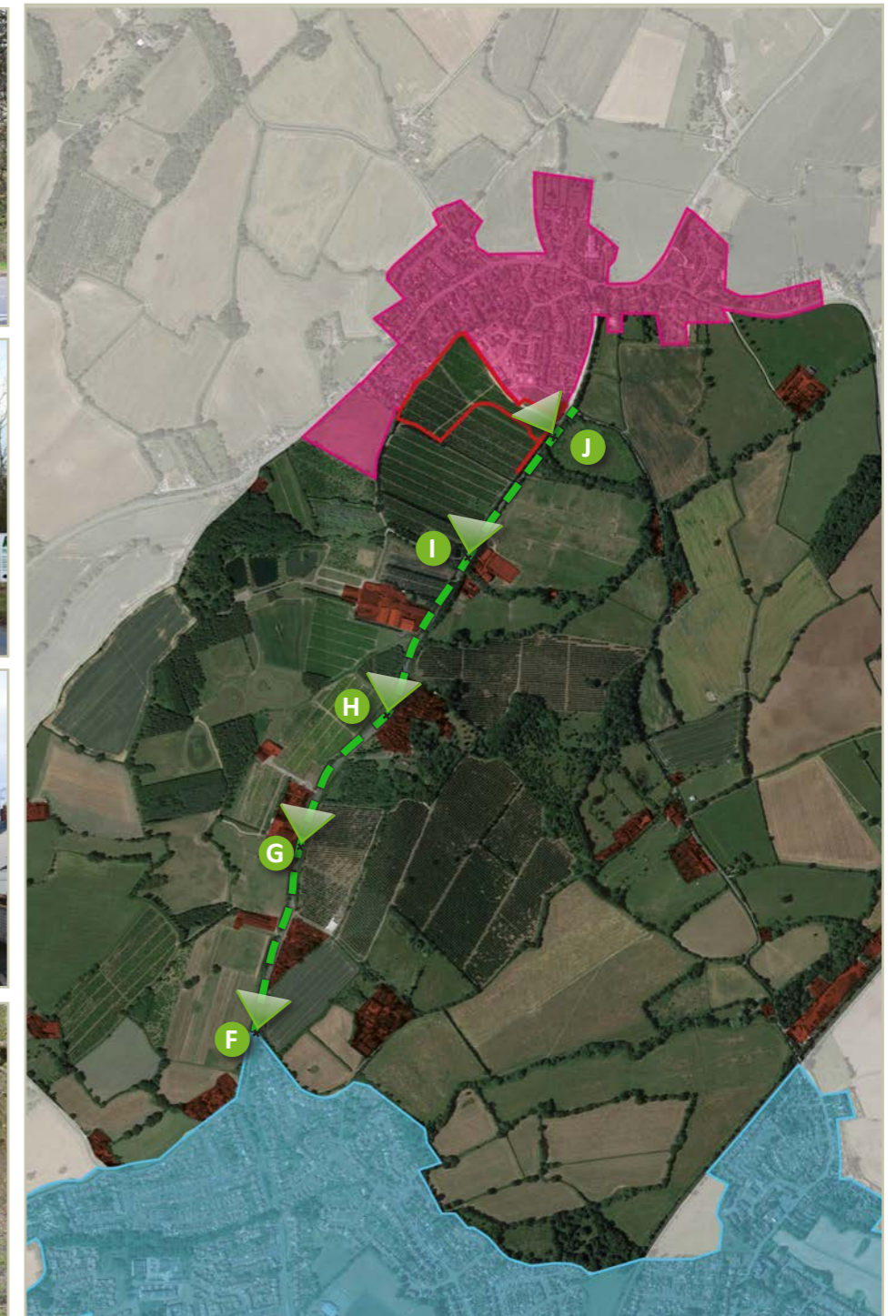
Sequential View E



Appendix 4 - Significant Gap Assessment

Central transport route - Leigh Sinton Road; and

- 5.14 Sequential Viewpoints F-J are taken from Leigh Sinton Road which runs through the significant gap and is the principle road link between the settlements of Malvern and Leigh Sinton.
- 5.15 This is a busy route which is well used, and has no pedestrian footway.
- 5.16 Travelling north when leaving Malvern at the junction of Grit Lane, native hedgerow planting can be seen running alongside Leigh Sinton Road which reduces visibility and openness of views across the landscape between Malvern and Leigh Sinton.
- 5.17 When travelling north, a number of pockets of residential dwellings front onto Leigh Sinton Road, with car parking bays a visible feature. Commercial development and agricultural buildings can also be seen along this route as illustrated on the aerial plan with built form a common feature in views when travelling north.
- 5.18 As users travel closer to the existing settlement edge of Leigh Sinton and the site itself, tree and hedgerow planting as well as the presence of evergreen planting filters views of the site with glimpsed views of the Christmas Tree plantation seen at the southern edge of the site.
- 5.19 Localised views of the site can be seen at the proposed entrance to the site boundaries where a newly planted section of hedgerow exists. From this location, views across the site can be seen to the existing settlement edge and residential dwellings found to Malvern Rise located at the northern boundary of the site. In the background, residential properties and built form located off Lynn Close can be seen overlooking the site at its western extents.
- 5.20 Overall, the presence of intervening vegetation, hedgerow planting and linear planting found along Leigh Sinton Road limit the potential for changes to occur to the perceived separation between Malvern and Leigh Sinton, and the presence of existing built form scattered along Leigh Sinton Road also reduces the perceived openness and undeveloped landscape.
- 5.21 Any change to the perceived separation between settlements will therefore be negligible for users of Leigh Sinton Road.



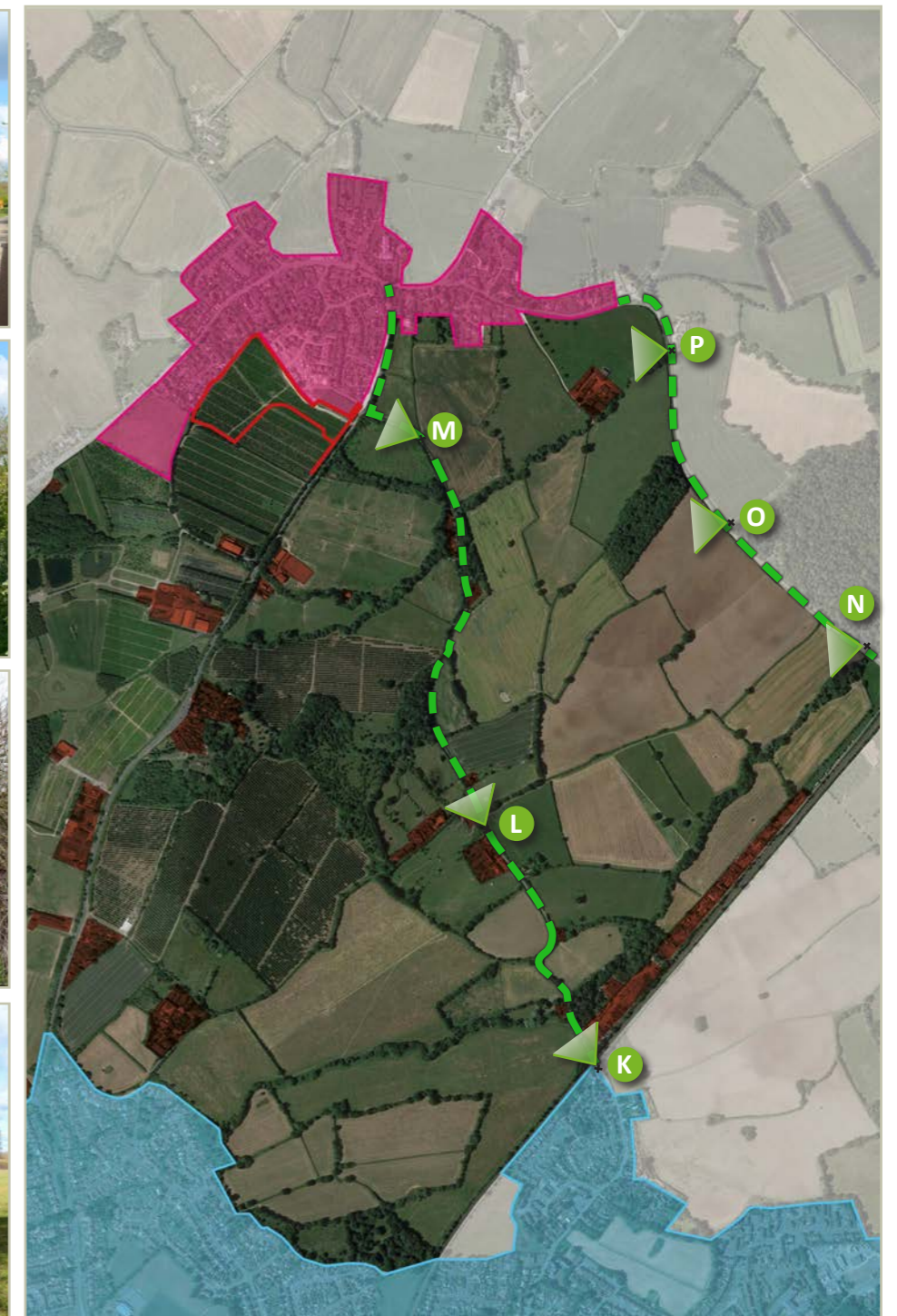
Appendix 1: Significant Gap Appraisal

Eastern transport routes - Lower Howsell Road

- 5.22 At the eastern part of the Significant Gap are two transport routes linking Malvern with Leigh Sinton. Lower Howsell Road as illustrated by sequential views K-M leaves the northern edge of Malvern where it crosses the railway line travelling north towards Leigh Sinton. This route is a 40 mph road with no pedestrian footway.
- 5.23 Native hedgerow and deciduous tree planting run along the boundaries of much of this road, and limit visibility.
- 5.24 Scattered farmsteads are also present and located alongside this route. Views of the site are only experienced from a short distance where Lower Howsell Road meets the junction of Leigh Sinton Road and from this location glimpsed views of the eastern part of the site can be seen with native hedgerow and the existing orchard planting seen beyond. The settlement edge of Leigh Sinton is seen from this location.
- 5.25 The edge of Leigh Sinton is contained by existing vegetation and the presence of Leigh Sinton Road which prevents encroachment to the east.
- 5.26 Any changes to the perception of the separation and openness will be negligible for users of Lower Howsell Road.

Eastern transport routes - Stocks Lane

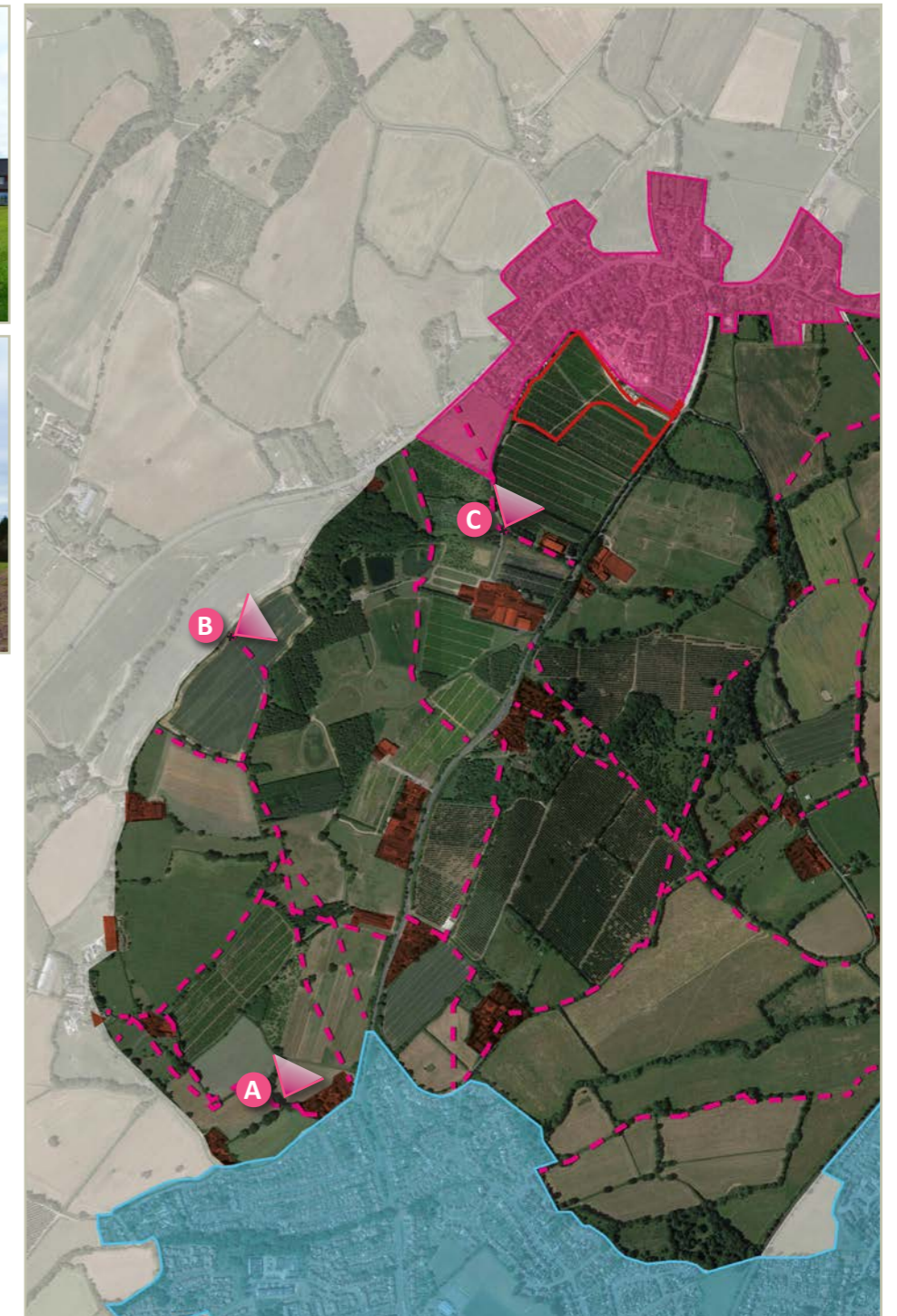
- 5.27 Sequential views N-P, taken from Stocks Lane which forms the eastern boundary of the Significant Gap illustrate more open character and views across the landscape and the perceived separation between Malvern and Leigh Sinton.
- 5.28 This route is a 40mph route with no pedestrian footway. When leaving Malvern adjacent to the railway line open views across the agricultural landscape to the west can be seen with gently undulating topography and intervening vegetation seen along the skyline in views. Although open in character the settlement edge of Leigh Sinton cannot be seen in these views due to the presence of mature tree planting found in the vicinity of Lower Howsell Road. Further north, blocks of woodland limit visibility and filter views of the settlement edge and of the site.
- 5.29 When travelling closer towards the existing settlement edge and towards the gateway of Leigh Sinton, open views across agricultural land see the existing ribbon development and settlement edge of Leigh Sinton, but views of the site cannot be seen due to the built form seen to the north east of the site.
- 5.30 Any changes to the perception of the separation and openness will be negligible for users of Stocks Lane.



Appendix 1: Significant Gap Appraisal

Western PRow Routes

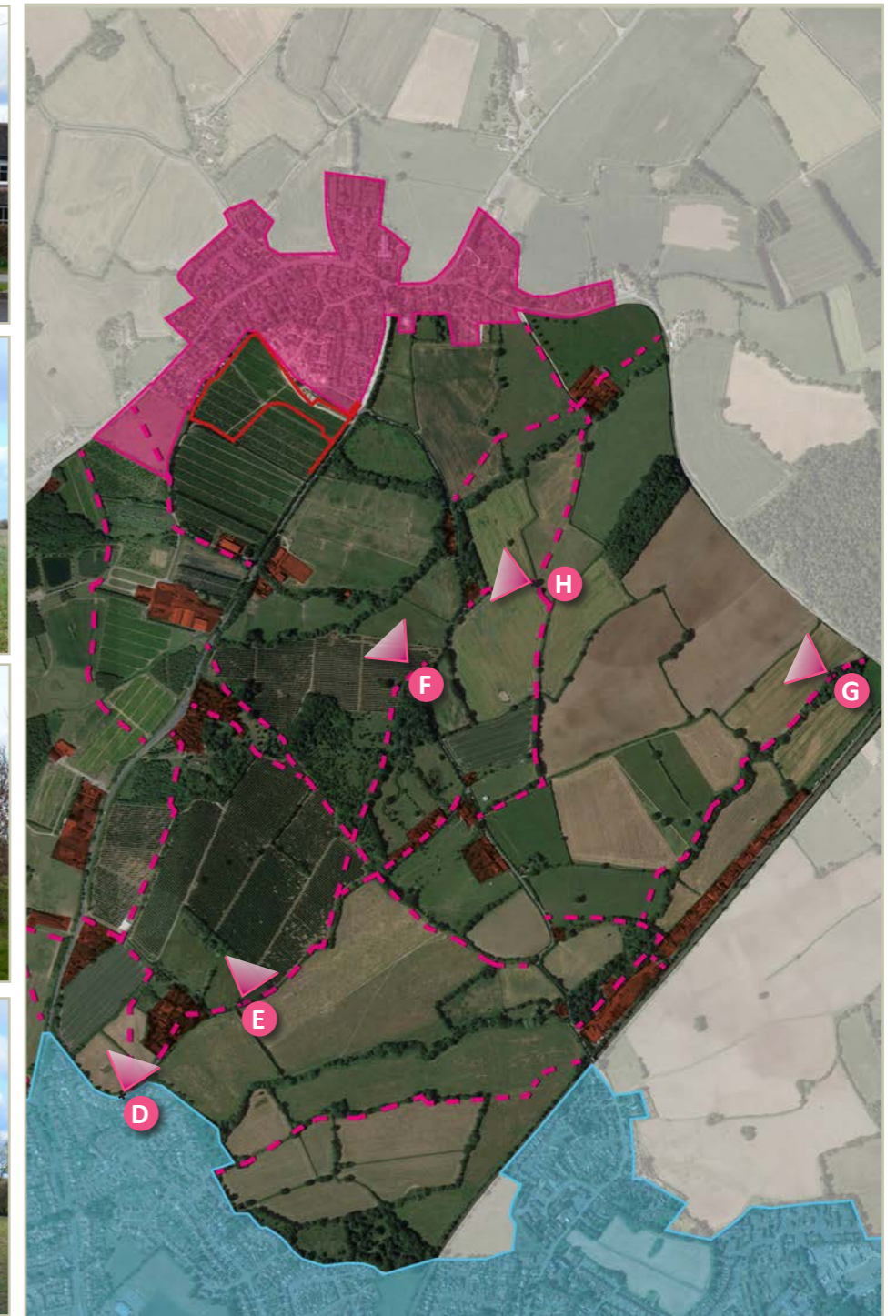
- 5.31 A series of PRow routes run from the north western part of Malvern across the Landscape and representative viewpoints A-C illustrate the perception of the significant gap for users of these routes.
- 5.32 From the edge of the north western part of Malvern the land rises slightly and views from sections of PRow are experienced on slightly elevated ground as seen on viewpoint A. From this location, the settlement edge of Leigh Sinton can be seen with rooflines of the Bluebell Walk and Malvern Rise seen amongst tree planting. The perception of the significant gap from this location sees a well treed landscape with scattered buildings seen along Leigh Sinton Road. The site is obscured from view due to the presence of the existing settlement edge.
- 5.33 Travelling along the footpaths to the south east of the site, views towards the site and across the Significant Gap are obscured by the presence of evergreen tree planting, Christmas tree plantations and blocks of plantation woodland which are a common features in this part of the landscape.
- 5.34 Further north and when users travel closer to the site, the views of the site are obscured with the existing settlement edge and rooflines of the Bluebell Walk scheme seen through gaps in tree lines.
- 5.35 The well vegetated landscape and tree lined skylines limit the sense of openness across the Significant Gap with very little intervisibility between the settlements and the site.
- 5.36 Where more open views across the significant gap are possible and where the settlement edge of Leigh Sinton can be seen, views of the site are obscured by existing built form and the site sits within the confines of the existing settlement edge on lower ground, and will therefore not be visible from these locations.
- 5.37 Any changes to the perception of the separation and openness as a result of the development of the site will be negligible for users of these footpath routes.



Appendix 1: Significant Gap Appraisal

Eastern/Central PRow Routes

- 5.38 A series of PRow routes run from the northern part of Malvern across the Landscape to the north and east and representative viewpoints D-H illustrate the perception of the significant gap for users of these routes.
- 5.39 From the edge of Malvern where a bridleway joins Gritt Lane, views across the significant gap are limited and filtered by the presence of intervening vegetation found to field boundaries.
- 5.40 Walking along this footpath route, users experience views across irregular shaped fields with established boundary hedgerows and vegetation present.
- 5.41 Users of these footpath routes experience views across areas of orchards, arable fields and through scrubby woodland. Where the land rises slightly at viewpoint F, views across to Leigh Sinton can be seen, with the development at Lynn Close seen along the skyline in views through orchard planting.
- 5.42 Deciduous planting filters views of the site for users of many of these footpath routes as seen on viewpoint H.
- 5.43 From footpaths further west as illustrated on Viewpoint G, the landscape is framed by deciduous tree planting which limits visibility of the wider significant gap land to the west.
- 5.44 The well vegetated landscape and tree lined skylines limit the sense of openness across the Significant Gap for users of these footpaths and many of this landscape at the eastern part of the significant gap is more undeveloped in its character than that of the land to the west. There is very little intervisibility between the settlements and the site for users of these footpaths.
- 5.45 Any changes to the perception of the separation and openness as a result of the development of the site will be negligible for users of these footpath routes.



Longer Distance PRow Routes and Views from the AONB

- 5.46 As identified through the LVA, panoramic views of the site can be seen from the Malvern Hills and the Significant Gap is seen within these panoramic views as providing a distinct separation between Malvern and Leigh Sinton which retains the distinctive characteristics of each settlement and prevents coalescence.
- 5.47 From these elevated positions, the site is seen against the backdrop of the existing settlement edge of Leigh Sinton as illustrated on **Figure 2**.
- 5.48 From End Hill and North Hills, the edge of Leigh Sinton is a distinctive feature within the landscape and the scheme at Malvern Rise which forms the northern edge of the site is clearly visible at the northern edge of the development.
- 5.49 Within these views from the Malvern Hills, built form can be seen within the Significant Gap land and this landscape between Leigh Sinton and Malvern is not devoid of development, with scattered farmsteads, agricultural buildings and scattered residential dwellings seen across the landscape.

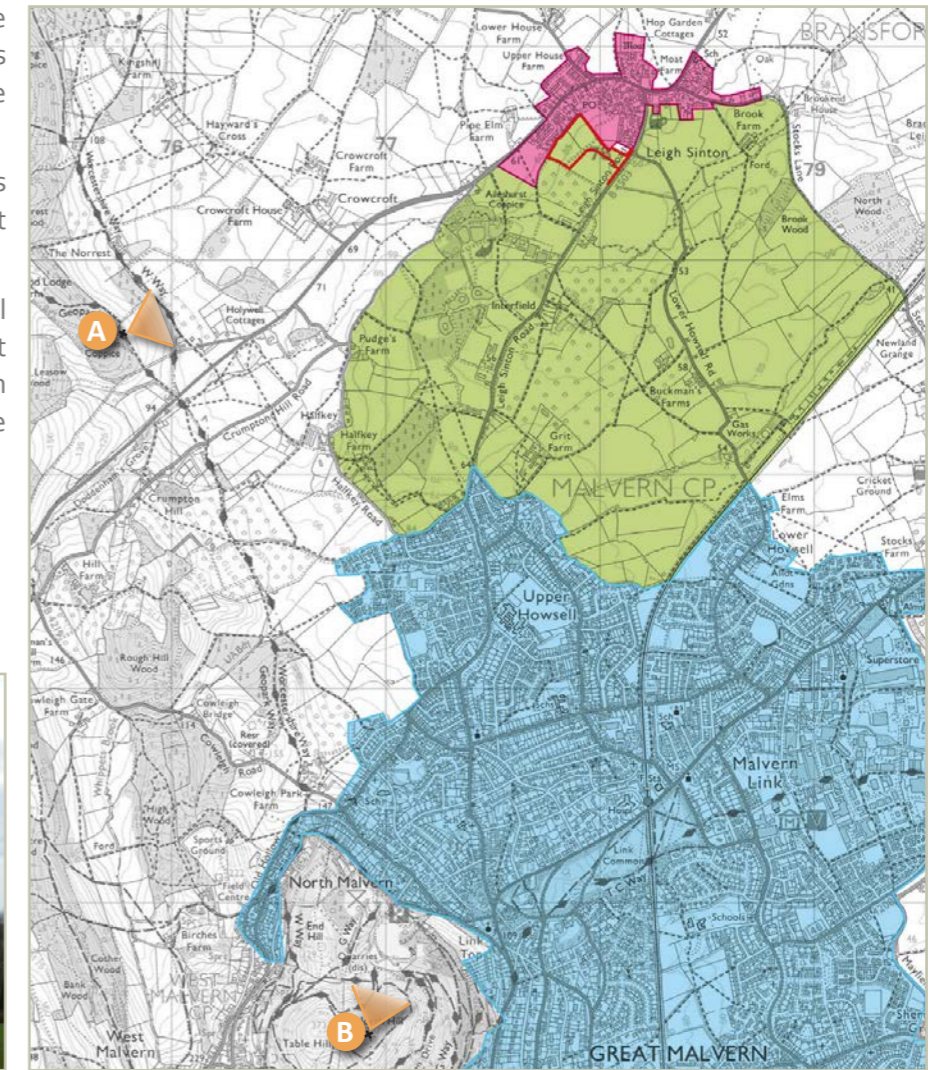
- 5.50 At the northern edge of the Significant Gap land, the Bluebell Walk scheme is seen adjacent to the edge of Leigh Sinton. On the ground, the buildings within the Bluebell Walk scheme are slightly separated from the edge of the wider settlement of Leigh Sinton by an area of open space.
- 5.51 The Bluebell Walk development when seen in wider views however, is perceived as an extension to the edge of Leigh Sinton and extends the built form south into the Significant Gap land.
- 5.52 The proposed development when viewed from these footpath routes will not cause any coalescence between the settlement or extend development into the more undeveloped Significant Gap land to the south, and can be accommodated through mitigation without being detrimental to the openness of the Significant Gap land.



Long Distance View A



Long Distance View B



Conclusion

- 6.1 This report has found that the physical distance between the settlement of Malvern and Leigh Sinton is no greater than the existing distances between the existing settlement extents, with the proposed development located to the north of the Bluebell Walk scheme which extends the settlement edge into the land to the south.
- 6.2 The development of the site will maintain the visual separation of the settlements of Malvern and Leigh Sinton. The proposed development will retain existing planting to Leigh Sinton Road and existing boundary planting along the southern boundary which will assist with providing separation from the landscape to the south and east and prevent any perception of encroachment or coalescence. Retaining development within the extents of the settlement boundary and at the western part of the site away from Leigh Sinton Road will also assist in maintaining the visual separation when seen in wider views, and from the key transport corridor running between Malvern and Leigh Sinton.
- 6.3 The proposals involve landscaping to enhance and provide a softer transition to the existing settlement edge and therefore betterment to the existing situation. Proposed tree and hedgerow planting will not only soften views of the new development but will assist in creating a softer transition between the existing settlement edge at Malvern Rise and the landscape to the south, especially in wider long distance views from the AONB.
- 6.4 The development of the site will not be detrimental to the purpose of the Significant Gap with proposed built form retained within the confines of the existing extent of the settlement edge.
- 6.5 Overall, users of local footpaths when walking through the Significant Gap do not experience views of the site due to the presence of existing planting and intervening vegetation. Where views of the site can be seen from these routes, they are experienced in the context of the existing residential edge and the site will not extend into the undeveloped and more open parts of the Significant Gap land.
- 6.6 The SWDP Review Preferred Options Significant Gap Appraisal (November 2019), identified that the significant gap between Malvern and Leigh Sinton has the potential for discrete parcels of land to the south of Leigh Sinton to be developed. The location and proximity of the site to the existing settlement edge, and negligible change in the perception of the Significant Gap as well as the lack of change in physical distance of the gap between the settlements all mean that development of the site is achievable without having undue harm to the openness or purposes of the significant gap.
- 6.7 Development of the site will not result in coalescence between settlements and separation will be maintained between Malvern and Leigh Sinton.

- 1.1 The following Assessment provides an overview of the published and recognised Key Views identified within the Malvern Hills AONB Management Plan and their relationship with the site and also identifies additional Important Key Views which have been identified through the Visual Survey fieldwork. This document should be read in conjunction with the Visual Context Section of the report.

AONB Important Views

Identification of Key Views to and from the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (March 2009 - Cooper Partnership).

- 1.1 This report identifies a number of important strategic and important 'Key' views both towards and from the Malvern Hills AONB. The study identifies that the main focus of the assessment are the Malvern Hills themselves, given their prominence within the landscape.
- 1.2 The study does the following:
- i. grades the identified views in terms of their importance, and how representative they are of the range of typical views;*
 - ii. establish criteria to describe why views are important;*
 - iii. evaluate the intervisibility and relationship between the AONB and landscapes surrounding it; and*
 - iv. establish the hinterland around the AONB that is common, and important, to the views."*
- 1.3 Key views are graded as being either 'Exceptional', 'Special' or 'Representative' and the methodology for assessing these key Views is found within the Key Views document.

Key Views Looking Out from the AONB

- 1.4 Two key views have been identified which are relevant to the site from within the AONB itself. These are Exceptional Views 47 and 48.

Exceptional View 47

"Exceptional' view 47, looking outwards from North Hill on the northern edge of the Malvern Hills spine. This view is described in the following way: "In this panoramic view from the northern end of the Malvern Hills, a large part of Worcestershire may be seen to the east and north; and a large part of the Herefordshire landscape to the west (see Plan L05). In clear weather conditions, the scarp at the edge of the Cotswold AONB can be seen on the distant horizon, stretching from Bredon Hill to behind the Worcestershire Beacon. There is a marked contrast in the character of the surrounding landscape. The Herefordshire landscape appears more rural and intact with an attractive, contrasting landform and vegetation patterns. By way of comparison, the area around Malvern is flatter and degraded by existing large scale inappropriate development around the older core of the town,

which does not fit into the surrounding landscape character. Accordingly, the north-east quadrant of the 360° view corridor is considered to be special rather than exceptional, because of the detracting elements in the view. The Worcestershire Beacon largely screens the southern peaks with its mass. At night, the lit footprint of the urban area of Malvern is particularly noticeable in the view, together with vehicular headlights on the M5, and main approach roads."

'Exceptional View 48' from Worcestershire Beacon.

View 48 is from the Worcestershire Beacon, of national reputation, at 425m AOD. This is the highest peak (Peak D) in the Malvern Hills, and overlooks the adjoining peaks. From this viewpoint there is a dramatic, panoramic 360° view extending to the Brecon Beacons National Park (Welsh Mountains) in the west, Shropshire AONB to the north-west, Clent Hills and edge of Birmingham to the north-east, Cotswold AONB to the east, and Wye Valley AONB to the south-west (see Plan L01). Again, large scale inappropriate modern development around Malvern detracts from the quality of the north-east quadrant of the view corridor, which accordingly has been downgraded from exceptional to special. At night, the lit urban footprint of Malvern is prominent in the foreground of the view, with light sources in other towns visible."

- 1.5 Through the visual fieldwork, it was determined that the site was not visible from the Worcestershire Beacon due to the presence of End Hill and North Hill obscuring views of Leigh Sinton. As such, this view has been scoped out of the study.

Key Views Towards the Malvern Hills AONB

- 1.6 Within the description of views of the Malvern Hills AONB from the north, the key views document describes the views of the hills as:

"A relatively narrow, end on profile where the three northern peaks (End Hill, Table Hill and North Hill) combine to create one solid profile, which is seen rising steeply from a relatively flat landscape. Worcestershire Beacon is often seen within and behind this grouping, and contributes to the mass of the silhouette (which is shown in dark grey, above light grey representing the surrounding lower lying land)."

- 1.7 In views from the north, it identifies that there are no Exceptional views, but a number of Special and Representative Views.
- 1.8 Of these Special Views, one key view is identified which is relevant to the site. This is Special View 1 and is from the A4103 to the north of Leigh Sinton.

Special View 1

"View 1 is from the A4103 near Leigh Sinton (2.5km), an approach road with direct and unfolding views towards the Malvern Hills. The overall view is graded as special as it shows the classic, narrow end on profile of

the northern peaks, although roadside structures and traffic detract from both the quality of the view and viewpoint. At night, traffic headlights intrude into the view and glimpses are available of light sources within the housing on the foot slopes."

Guidance on how Development can Respect Landscape in Views

- 1.9 This guidance states that:

"Whilst the areas beyond the AONB boundary are not subject to the same protections, the surrounding land constitutes the land constitutes the 'setting' of the AONB (i.e. the area within which the AONB is experienced). The importance of views in and around the Malvern Hills is fully recognised in the AONB Management Plan. The Plan emphasises that the significance of the AONB setting as well as that of the AONB itself must be considered when planning new development. It explains that if the quality of the setting declines, then the appreciation and enjoyment of the AONB diminishes. In order to help protect the views that are valued by so many people it is therefore essential that new development within the AONB and its setting is carefully considered within the context of those views."

- 1.10 This guidance document identifies how development should respect the landscape in key views and therefore ensure that development is not detrimental to the 'setting' of the AONB. The aim of the guidance is to:

"help conserve and, where possible, enhance views to and from the AONB. It sets out a number of principles which should be considered by those involved in planning new developments."

- 1.11 The guidance identifies a number of underlying principles to be applied to ensure that development respects the landscape within views. This includes, landscape character, siting and orientation of development, scale massing and layout, texture and finish, colour and tonality, and mitigation and enhancement.

Guidance on identifying and grading views and viewpoints document

- 1.12 The Malvern Hills AONB Document 'Guidance on Identifying and Grading Views and Viewpoints' has been used to inform the assessment of potential views of the site.
- 1.13 In addition to the Key Views which are already identified, any development within proximity of the AONB will be subject to identifying and grading of views.
- 1.14 The 'Guidance on Identifying and Grading Views and Viewpoints' identifies the process involved in assessing and grading viewpoints and views and identifies a five stage process which should be applied. The grading of views has used the criteria as set out within the document to assess the importance of views and grades views, viewpoints and their overall

importance as wither 'Exceptional (E)', 'Special (S)' or 'Representative (R)' views.

1.15 These are defined as being:

"Exceptional (E): Highly valued, unique, panoramic view or long distance view across intact and quintessential landscapes of Herefordshire, Worcestershire and/or Gloucestershire; allows for appreciation and understanding of wider surroundings of the AONB; does not replicate another view; allows the enjoyment of well known landmarks.

Special (S): Panoramic or long distance view including dramatic scenery and skyline; allows appreciation of the more intimate setting of the AONB and the relationship of its landscape character types; may be comparable to other views.

Representative (R): Typical view, which may be replicated elsewhere; presence of visual detractors may degrade quality of view; narrow or glimpsed view."

1.16 This assessment process is set out below:

1. Identify viewpoints and grade their importance;
2. Identify views and grade their importance;
3. Derive an overall grade for importance of viewpoint and view;
4. Decide how proposed development/land use change will alter use; and
5. Report the findings.

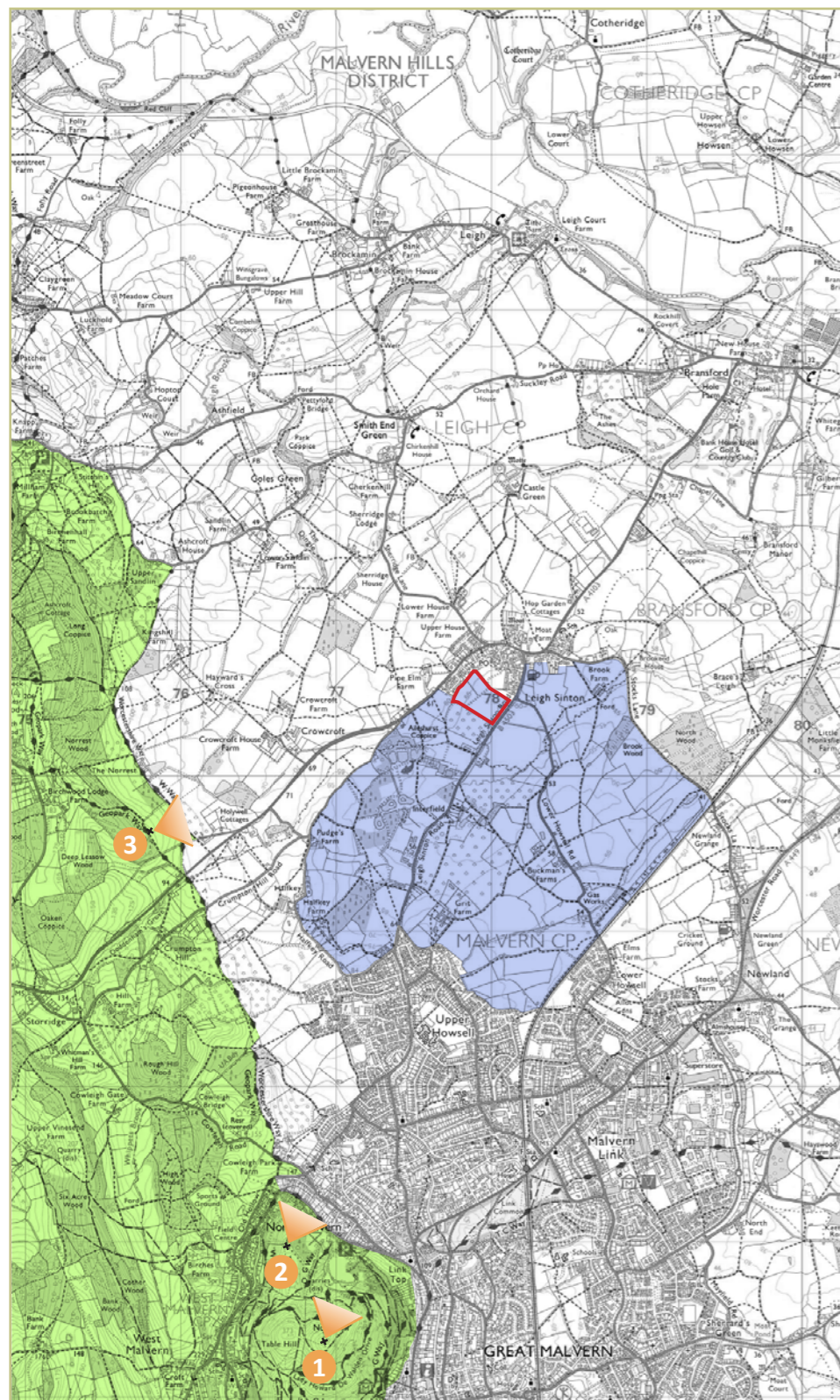
1.17 Following the site visit key views were identified and assessed using the AONB Proforma table.

1.18 Representative Photoviewpoints of views from the AONB are:

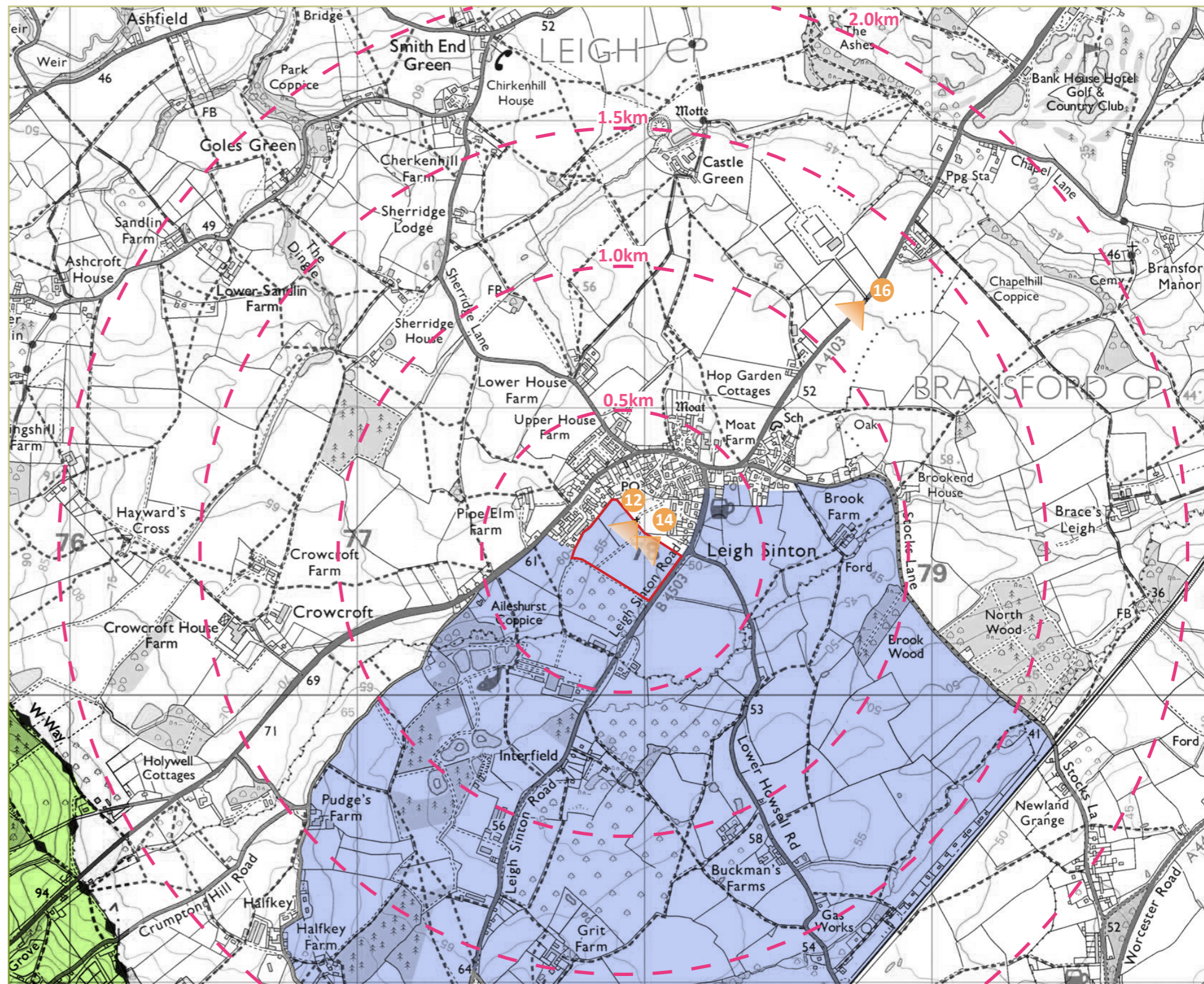
- Representative Photoviewpoint 1 - View from North Hill (identified as Exceptional View 47);
- Representative Photoviewpoint 2 - View from End Hill; and
- Representative Photoviewpoint 3 - View from PRoW (Hereford CD61) Geopark Way.

1.19 The following representative Photoviewpoints of views looking towards the AONB are also assessed and include the following:

- Representative Photoviewpoint 12a - View from Pineview Drive;
- Representative Photoviewpoint 14 - View from pedestrian footpath linking Leigh Sinton Road and Pineview Drive;
- Representative Photoviewpoint 16 - View from A4103 (identified as Special View 1).



Inset Location Plan



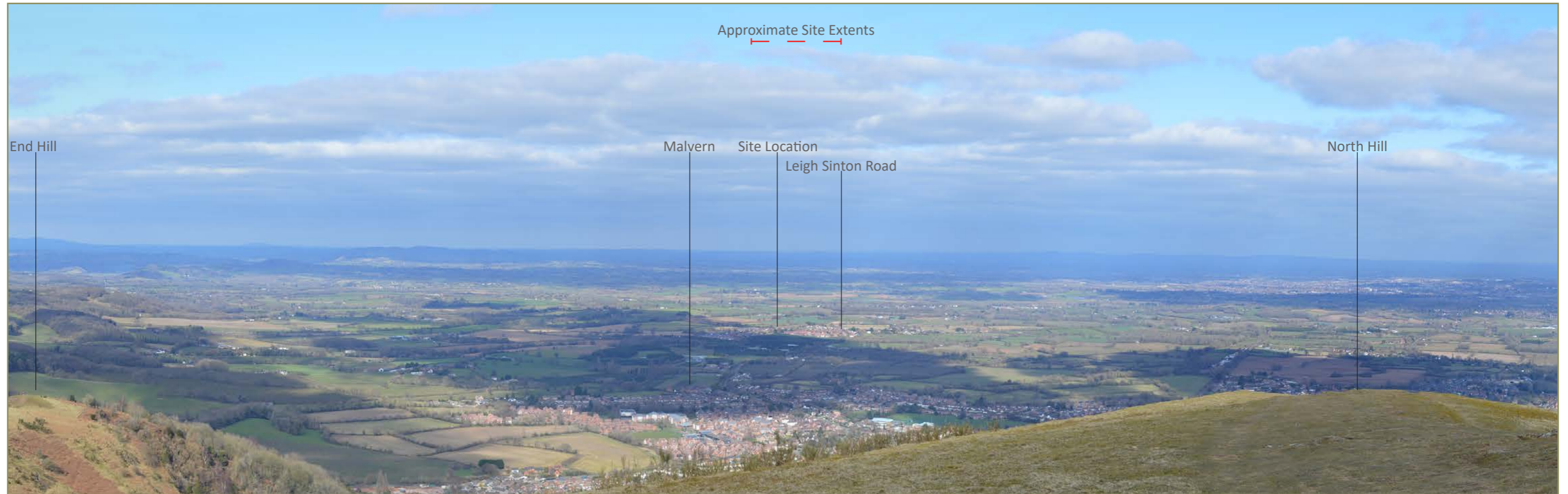
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Legend

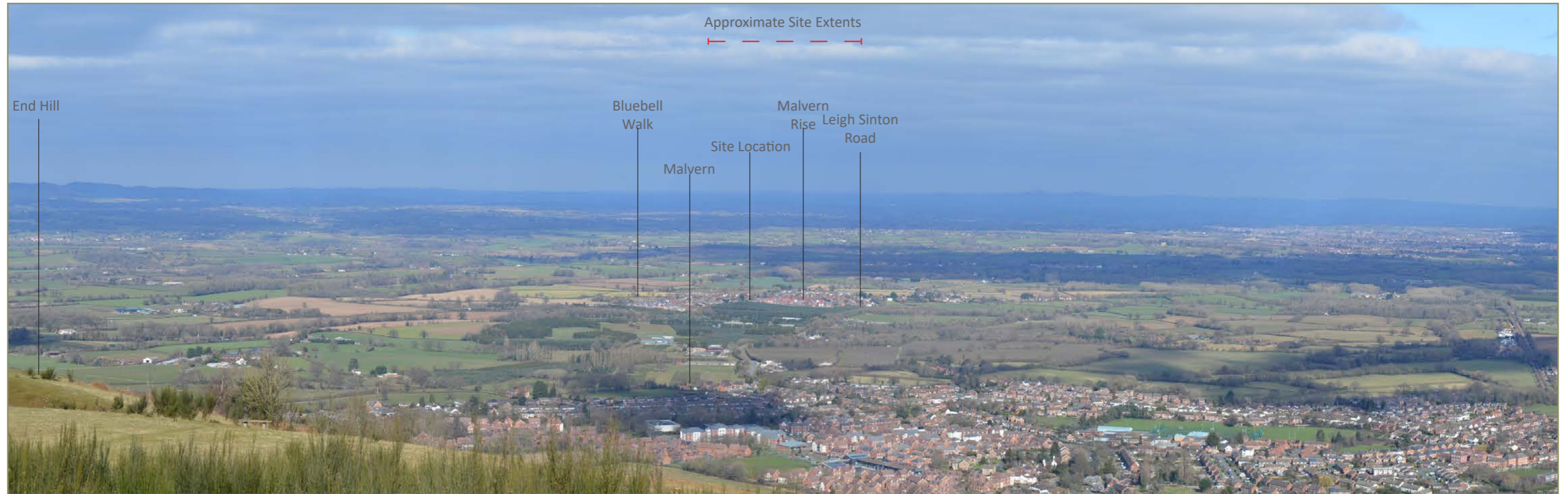
- Site Boundary
- Malvern Hills AONB
- Strategic Gap (SWDP 2016)

1 Key Views (Malvern Hills AONB-Viewpoint Locations 1,2,3,12,14 & 16)

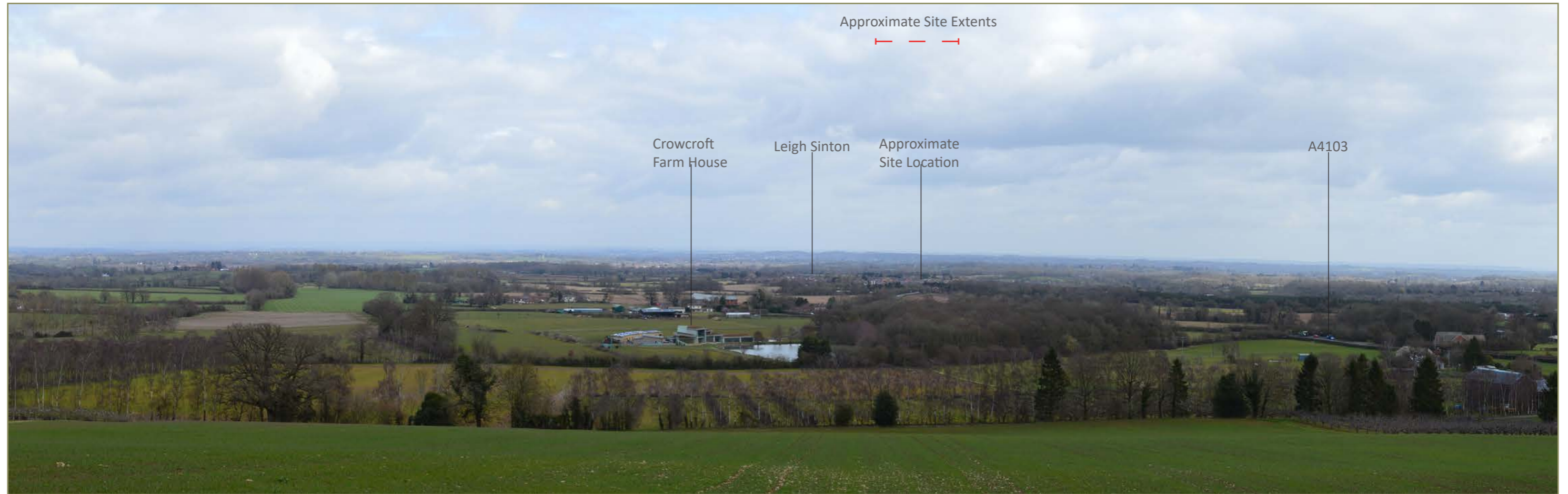
Plan Name	Viewpoint Location Plan
Plan Number	IN-P04
Revision	-
Date	26/03/2021



Photoviewpoint name and number	Location and type of viewpoint	National Grid Reference	Direction of View	Description of View	Key Components Of View	Psychological experience	Importance of View		
							View	Viewpoint	Overall
Photoviewpoint 1 (Exceptional View 47 - graded as a Special View in north-east corridor towards the site)	Taken from top of End Hill Receptors: Recreational footpath users	SO 76935 46360	360 degree and panoramic view looking to the north east	<p>Panoramic (360°) viewpoint with far reaching views in all directions.</p> <p>Views to the north of the MH spine are of a rural, sparsely settled and well wooded undulating landscape. In views to the north east, the settlement of Leigh Sinton a clear feature within the view, and the land between the edge of Malvern and Leigh Sinton comprises dense evergreen and deciduous tree planting.</p> <p>Views to the east are of a flatter and more widely settled landscape.</p> <p>No seasonal change is likely in the view.</p>	<p>Distant - The urban areas of Worcester City seen in the distance and Bredon Hill can be seen.</p> <p>Midground - Views over a The settlement edge of Malvern can be seen in middle distance views, with the gently undulating well wooded landscape to the north separating the edge of Malvern from Leigh Sinton which is a distinctive feature within the view.</p> <p>Foreground - The top of North Hill and slopes of North Hill can be seen in the foreground of the view with roofs of properties at the northern part of Malvern seen.</p>	'Sense of solitude and attracted to wider long distance views'	E	E	E



Photoviewpoint name and number	Location and type of viewpoint	National Grid Reference	Direction of View	Description of View	Key Components Of View	Psychological experience	Importance of View		
							View	Viewpoint	Overall
Photoviewpoint 2	Taken from North Hill Receptors: Recreational footpath users	SO 76692 46800	360 degree and panoramic view looking to the north east	Panoramic (360°) viewpoint with far reaching views in all directions. No seasonal change is likely in the view.	Distant - The urban areas of Worcester City seen in the distance and Bredon Hill can be seen. Midground - Views over the settlement edge of Malvern can be seen in middle distance views, with the gently undulating well wooded landscape to the north separating the edge of Malvern from Leigh Sinton which is a distinctive feature within the view. Foreground - Rooflines and buildings on the edge of Malvern are a distinctive feature in the foreground of views, with the elevated North Hill seen at the bottom of the view.	'settled in character'	S	S	S



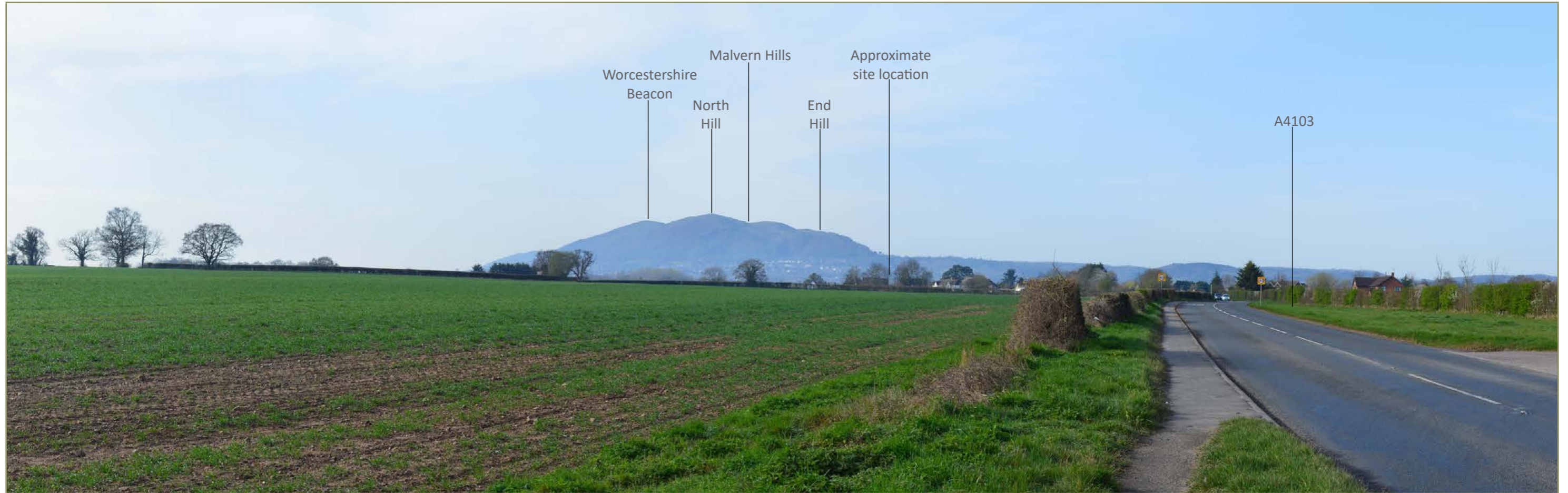
Photoviewpoint name and number	Location and type of viewpoint	National Grid Reference	Direction of View	Description of View	Key Components Of View	Psychological experience	Importance of View		
							View	Viewpoint	Overall
Photoviewpoint 3	Taken from the Geopark Way National Trail Receptors: Recreational footpath users	SO 75794 49662	East	Views from an elevated position which is panoramic and wide ranging. The existing development edge of Leigh Sinton can be seen within the view and is set amongst a well wooded and well treed landscape. There are panoramic views from this elevated position with existing scattered farm buildings and residential dwellings present. Evergreen tree planting and the presence of Christmas tree plantations in the landscape can be seen from these footpaths and within close proximity of the site, along with the presence of orchard planting seen in the foreground between Crowcroft Farm House and the Worcestershire Way. Seasonal change with increased leaf cover on trees will somewhat affect the experience of the view over summer months.	Distant - Worcester can be seen in the distance with the Midground - Middle distance views are of scattered buildings, agricultural structures and residential development set amongst a well wooded and well treed landscape with orchard, Christmas tree plantation and evergreen and deciduous woodland present. Foreground - Arable fields and tree planting to field boundaries which runs along side the Worcestershire Way seen on the lower slopes within the foreground of the view. Orchard planting is also seen extending onto the lower slopes.	A 'surprising' view at a high point enabling the user to stop and admire the wider panoramic views which are not always seen on other sections of the Geopark Way.	S	R	R



Photoviewpoint name and number	Location and type of viewpoint	National Grid Reference	Direction of View	Description of View	Where Malvern Hills are seen in view	Key Components Of View	Psychological experience	Importance of View		
								View	Viewpoint	Overall
Photoviewpoint 12a	Taken from Pineview Drive Receptors: Recreational footpath users Residents Transient road users	SO 77979 50608	South	Views of the northern part of the Malvern Hills are framed by built form and seen within the context of play area equipment and settlement edge context with boundary planting, Christmas Tree plantation and existing tree planting seen within the foreground of the view.	The northern end of the Malvern Hills are visible with the spine and length of the hills not visible from this location. The northern hills of End Hill, Table Hill and North Hill form a strong feature along the skyline.	The Malvern Hills are seen in the background with existing evergreen vegetation, a play area and associated boundary fencing filtering views of the lower slopes. Residential development is a detracting feature within the view. Lower slopes of the AONB are filtered from view by existing planting.	Malvern Hills are a focus within the view in the distance and make the user stop and look. Although not an unfamiliar view, from this location the hills are seen centrally and provide a focus for users. Sense of settled and urban edge character nearby.	S	S	S



Photoviewpoint name and number	Location and type of viewpoint	National Grid Reference	Direction of View	Description of View	Where Malvern Hills are seen in view	Key Components Of View	Psychological experience	Importance of View		
								View	Viewpoint	Overall
Photoviewpoint 14	Taken from footpath route running through Pineview Drive Receptors: Recreational footpath users	SO 78070 50558	South	Partly framed by built development seen at the right hand side of the view, views of the Malvern Hills from this location are seen in the context of a well treed landscape and one which is not devoid of development. The Christmas Tree plantation is seen as a feature within the foreground of the hills and filters views of the lower slopes.	The northern end of the Malvern Hills are visible with the spine and length of the hills not visible from this location. The northern hills of End Hill, Table Hill and North Hill form a strong feature along the skyline and glimpsed views of the lower slopes of the AONB can be seen above existing tree planting to the north.	The Malvern Hills are seen in the background with existing evergreen vegetation filtering views of the lower slopes. Fencing and existing residential development are detracting features within the view. Contrasting features within the foreground draw the eye to the hills in the distance. Glimpsed views of the northern lower slopes of the AONB can also be seen in the view.	Malvern Hills are a focus within the view and give a 'wow factor'. Sense of settled and urban edge character nearby.	S	S	S



Photoviewpoint name and number	Location and type of viewpoint	National Grid Reference	Direction of View	Description of View	Where Malvern Hills are seen in view	Key Components Of View	Psychological experience	Importance of View		
								View	Viewpoint	Overall
Photoviewpoint 16 (Special View 1 - graded as a Special View in north-east corridor towards the site)	Taken from the A4103 Receptors: Transient road users Transient pedestrians	SO 78790 51389	South	The first wide, open view of the Malvern Hills from the A4103 when travelling southbound from the south west fringe of Worcester. The Malvern Hills are seen rising above flat agricultural land in the foreground and are a prominent and distinctive feature within the view. Other than the road seen in the foreground the views from this location are mostly rural in their nature with glimpsed views of rooflines at the settlement edge of Leigh Sinton. The site is not seen within these views due to the intervening vegetation, topography and existing settlement and built form limiting visibility.	The end profile of the Malvern Hills can be seen from this movement corridor and the site is obscured from view by existing intervening vegetation and the existing settlement edge of Leigh Sinton. Lower Hills and woodlands at the northern end of the AONB can be seen spreading from the centre to right of view. Houses within the residential areas of North Malvern and Upper Howsell are visible.	"The boldness of the Malvern Hills grouping is distinctive to views from this direction. The subtle colouring/vegetation pattern on the hill slopes are repeated across to the lower hills at the northern end of the AONB. The road, telegraph poles and views of housing detract from the view slightly, but are important in setting the context of the Malvern Hills AONB."	'Wow' factor as hills suddenly appear along the road route.	S	S	S

Conclusion

1.20 The assessment of Key Views has found the following with regards views towards the site from the Malvern Hills AONB:

- **Photoviewpoint 1** - This view is identified as Exceptional View 47 (as identified within the Identification of Key Views to and from the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (March 2009 - Cooper Partnership).
- **Photoviewpoint 2** - This view has been identified as a Special View
- **Photoviewpoint 3** - This view has been identified as a Representative View

1.21 It has found the following with regards to the views towards the Malvern Hills AONB:

- **Photoviewpoint 12a** - This view has been identified as a Special View
- **Photoviewpoint 14** - This view has been identified as a Special View
- **Photoviewpoint 16** - This view is identified as Special View 1 (as identified within the Identification of Key Views to and from the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (March 2009 - Cooper Partnership) - this view has been identified as a Special View but is not relevant to the development of the site and has been scoped out).

1.22 The development of the site should ensure that the following key issues are addressed following the grading and identification of important views, as identified within the AONB guidance:

“How is the development seen within the view:

- *Changes to the existing view - how will the view change as a result of the proposed development?*
- *Prominence within the view - where does the site sit within the wider views, does it dominate the view or form part of a wider panorama?*

Context of proposed development/land use change

- *Landscape character - development should be sympathetic to the surrounding landscape and recommendations of the LCA and should be addressed in parallel to the consideration on views;*
- *Settlement pattern - development should reflect the surrounding development pattern.*

Appearance, scale and mass of proposals

- *Scale and mass - will the scale and mass significantly alter views*
- *Local vernacular - where local vernacular exists, the appearance may be more in keeping if it reflects its surroundings;*

- *Materials - use of suitable materials should be chosen to reduce visual impact.”*

1.23 Providing that the above factors are taken into consideration in the development of the site, its impact on visual amenity can be addressed

1.24 These matters should be addressed sensitively, in order to integrate the site into the surrounding landscape and setting of the existing settlement of Leigh Sinton.

Land North of Leigh Sinton Road, Leigh Sinton

Landscape And Visual Appraisal



1 Introduction	Page 3	5 Visual Context	Page 15	8 Assessment	Page 43
Site Location Plan (Incola 1010 P01)		Topography Plan (Incola 1010 P03) Zone of Theoretical Visibility Plan (Incola 1010 P04) Viewpoint Location Plan (Incola 1010 P05) Photoviewpoint 1-18			
2 Methodology	Page 5	6 Opportunities	Page 39	9 Conclusion	Page 51
		Opportunities and Constraints Plan (Incola 1010 P06)			
3 Landscape Planning Policy	Page 6	7 Proposals	Page 41	Appendices	
		Landscape Strategy Plan (Incola 1010 P07)		Appendix 1: Significant Gap Appraisal Appendix 2: Malvern Hills AONB Views Assessment	
4 Landscape Context	Page 10				
Site Specific Character Plan (Incola 1010 P02)					

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1 Introduction and Site Context

Background

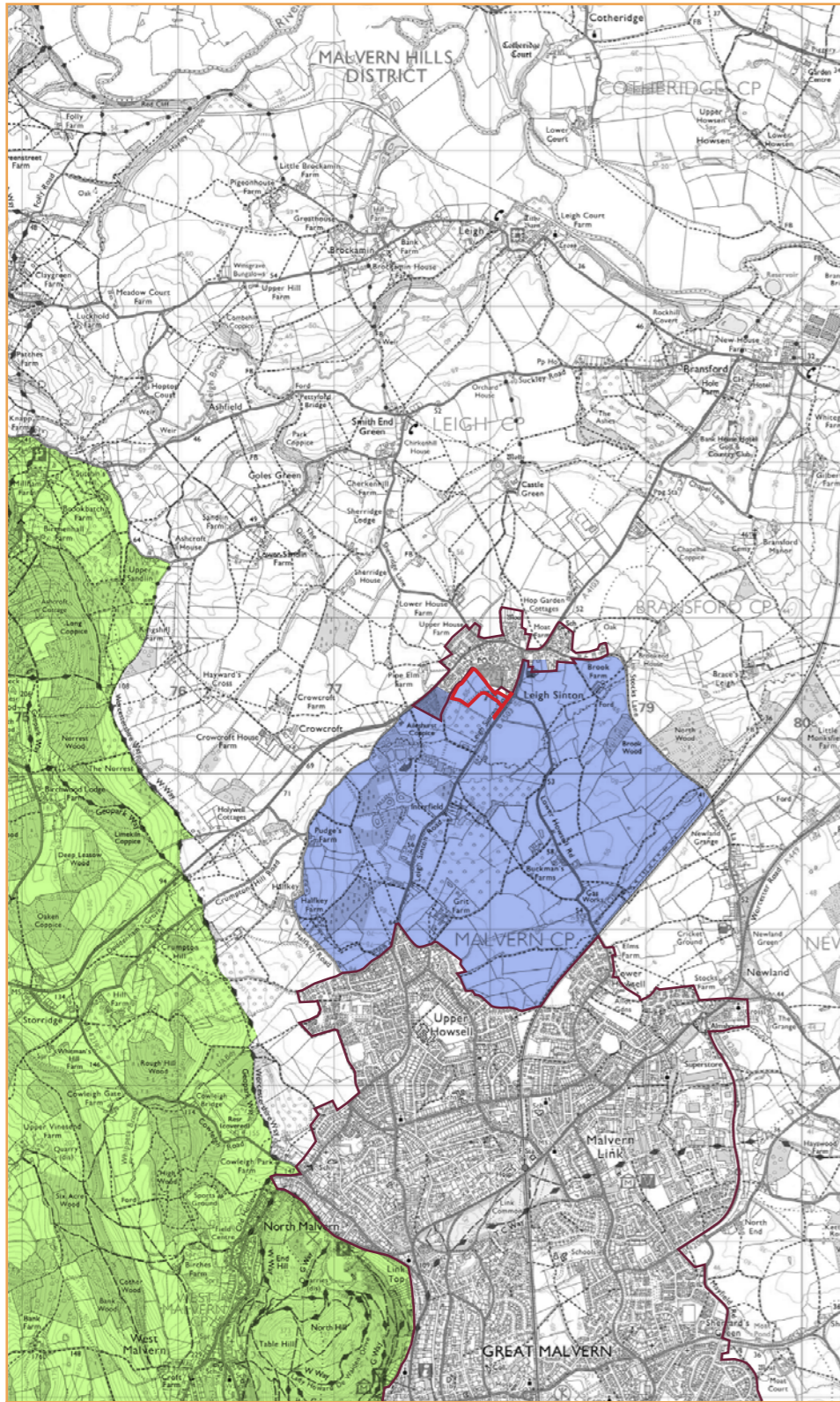
- 1.1 This Landscape and Visual Appraisal has been produced by Incola Ltd on behalf of LoneStar Land Limited to support the submission of an outline planning permission for the development of land for residential development to the north of Leigh Sinton Road, Leigh Sinton, Worcestershire.
- 1.2 The proposed development is for 45 residential units including 25 traditional builds and 20 custom / build units and associated infrastructure (all matters reserved except access).
- 1.3 This document analyses the landscape and visual context of the site and its surroundings and matters relating to visual amenity. It introduces the principle of development, and identifies the design response and resulting opportunities and constraints to inform the layout and design of the scheme.
- 1.4 An iterative approach has been taken with the design team to inform the design of the scheme from the outset, and this is outlined further within the proposals section of the report.
- 1.5 The report reviews the landscape and visual effects arising as a result of the proposed development and is produced in accordance with the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd edition (GLVIA3).
- 1.6 This report has been produced by a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute (CMLI) with over 13 years experience and reviewed by a CMLI with over 17 years experience.
- 1.7 This report is structured as follows:
 1. Introduction and Site Context
 2. Methodology
 3. Landscape Planning Policy
 4. Landscape Context
 5. Visual Context
 6. Opportunities and Constraints
 7. Proposals
 8. Assessment
 9. Conclusion
- 1.8 Other documents which support the findings of the LVA are included to the rear of this report within the appendices. These are:
 - Significant Gap Assessment - produced by Incola Ltd (**Appendix 1**);and

- Malvern Hills AONB Views Assessment - Produced by Incola Ltd (**Appendix 2**).

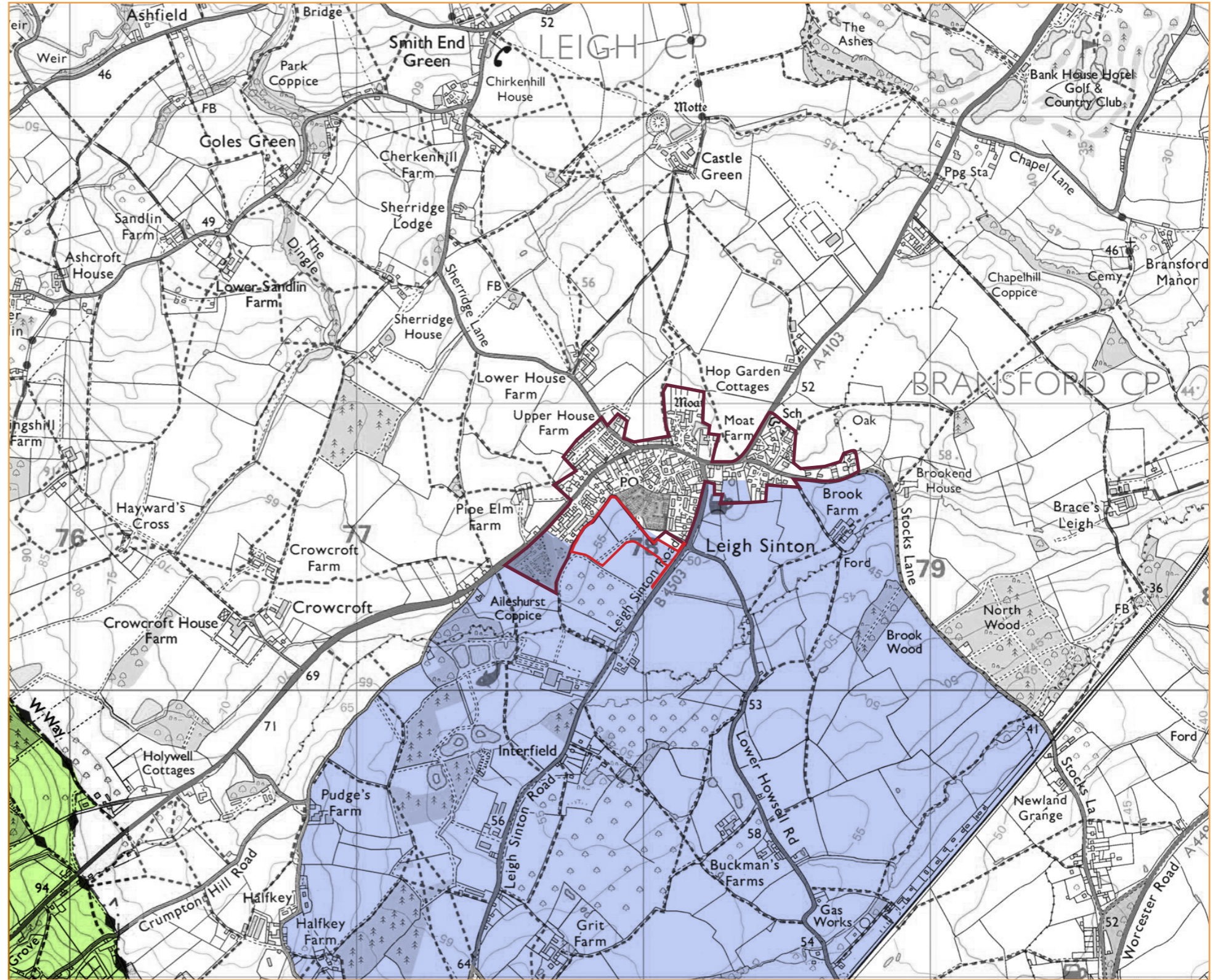
Site Context

- 1.9 The site is situated on the edge of Leigh Sinton, Worcestershire. Residential development boundary the site to the north and west, and there is under construction development located to the south west. It is located approximately 2km to the east of the boundary of the Malvern Hills AONB as illustrated on the Site Location Plan (**Incola 1010 Po1**). The Malvern Hills themselves are located approximately 4km to the south of the site.
- 1.10 The site is also located on land within the Significant Gap, which is adopted within the South Worcestershire Development Plan (2016) and separates the settlements of Malvern and Leigh Sinton. The settlement boundary of Malvern is located 1.46km to the south.
- 1.11 The site is currently used as part of Leigh Sinton Christmas Tree Farm and the entirety of the land is dedicated for the growing and harvesting of Christmas Trees.
- 1.12 Forming the north eastern boundary of the site and settlement edge of Leigh Sinton, is the residential development at Malvern Rise. The north eastern boundary of the site is formed by these residential properties, SuDS, play area and the associated infrastructure of this housing estate. Beyond this, to the north east is the wider settlement of Leigh Sinton.
- 1.13 The south eastern boundary is formed by Leigh Sinton Road, and the further adjoining land is dedicated as Christmas Tree Plantation. Further east are areas of arable land, scattered farmsteads, orchards and areas of woodland along watercourses and field boundaries.
- 1.14 The south western boundary is formed by a belt of evergreen trees and hedgerow which separates it from the adjoining Christmas tree plantation to the south. Approximately 1.46km to the south is the settlement of Malvern, separated by land-use of Christmas tree plantations, deciduous and evergreen woodland, arable land and scattered agricultural and residential buildings. The Malvern Hills are located beyond this, approximately 4km to the south.
- 1.15 The north-western boundary is formed by residential development located off Lynn Close and the A4103 (Hereford Road). Bluebell Walk, a residential development currently under construction is located just to the south west of the site. The A4103 links Leigh Sinton to Malvern and beyond this are arable fields, tree and hedgerow vegetation to field boundaries, areas of orchards and scattered farmsteads in the valley bottoms with the land rising in the east towards the Malvern Hills AONB.
- 1.16 A network of publicly accessibly footpaths are located in the landscape beyond the site, and to the west are the Worcestershire Way and Geopark Way, two long distance routes linking to the network of footpaths within with the AONB.

1 Introduction and Site Context



Wider Location Plan



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Legend

- Site Boundary
- Malvern Hills AONB
- Significant Gap (SWDP 2016)
- Settlement Boundaries

Plan Name	Site Location Plan
Plan Number	Incola 1010 P01
Revision	-
Date	06/06/2021



Assessment Methodology

- 2.1 This LVA has been undertaken in accordance with the following guidance:
- An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment, Natural England, 2018; and
 - Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA), Third Edition, Landscape Institute and IEMA, 2013.
- 2.2 This is a standalone report and does not constitute a landscape chapter in the context of an Environmental Statement (ES) required by an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).
- 2.3 Table 3.1 of the GLVIA₃ outlines what is required in this type of appraisal report, as a project outside of an EIA. This includes the following:
- Establish the existing nature of the landscape and visual environment in the study area and the baseline situation;
 - Provides a description of the proposed development, identifying the main features of the proposals and the changes that will occur; and
 - Systematically identifies and describes the effects that are likely to occur, including whether they are adverse or beneficial.
- 2.4 The approach taken in the preparation of this report is appropriate and proportional in the context of the professional guidance published by the Landscape Institute.
- 2.5 Professional judgement plays an important role in the landscape and visual analysis process where the analysis of landscape character and visual amenity is both a subjective and objective process. However, the analysis process seeks to provide a narrative to explain the judgement reached.
- 2.6 As set-out within GLVIA₃ Statement of Clarification 1/14 28-01-14 published by the Landscape Institute, when undertaking a landscape appraisal as opposed to a full Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA): *"The appraisal process is completed with a final statement of the effects identified, which may identify the relative importance of the effects, but without assessing their likely significance."*

Establishing the existing nature of the landscape/Baseline analysis

- 2.7 The starting point for the assessment is to establish the baseline situation of the site and its surroundings with regard to its landscape and visual context. This analysis considers the physical and perceptual qualities of the landscape and the value attached to it, the views from where the development of the site will result in a change and the potential people or 'receptors' whose view will experience a change in their view as a result.

- 2.8 The baseline assessment includes the following:

- An analysis of the site context;
- Consideration of the national and local planning policy context relevant to landscape matters;
- Analysis of the landscape context, the published landscape character, historic landscape context and the local and site specific character informed by the field visit; and
- Analysis of the visual context through the production of a Zone of Theoretical Visibility Plan (ZTV), topographical Plan and field visit.

- 2.9 The baseline analysis has assisted in providing a series of recommendations for the development of the site to enable design recommendations to best accommodate the scheme while considering the landscape opportunities and constraints. This design response has been fed into the scheme and has informed the masterplan and scheme proposals.

Significant Gap Analysis

- 2.10 In addition to undertaking an assessment of the landscape and visual context and identifying the likely landscape and visual effects of the proposed development, this LVA also includes a site-specific assessment of the Significant Gap designation within which the site is located. This report is located at **Appendix 1**.
- 2.11 This analysis considers the baseline situation and the implications of the development of the site on the Significant Gap land, it addresses policy, physical distance and the perceived distance of the development of the site in relation to the Significant Gap.

AONB Methodology

- 2.12 Given the location of the site in relation to the Malvern Hills AONB, an assessment has been undertaken to assess any Key or Important Views as identified within the Malvern Hills AONB Management Plan Key View Document (Malvern Hills AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 - Guidance on Identifying and Grading Views and Viewpoints).
- 2.13 In addition to including an assessment of identified Key Views, any additional views which have been identified through the baseline studies and are also included within this assessment.
- 2.14 The assessment uses the methodology as set out within the Malvern Hills AONB Guidance on Identifying and Grading Views and Viewpoints, and the standard proforma used to assess identified views. This document is found at **Appendix 2**.

Assessment

- 2.15 Using the findings of the baseline studies and inputs to the design of the proposals, the fixed scheme has been assessed for its impacts on Landscape and Visual receptors. Likely effects on identified landscape and visual receptors have been assessed and the nature of change identified as a result of the proposed development.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 3.1 The NPPF is a material consideration in planning decisions and outlines the Government's planning policies for England, setting out how these are expected to be applied.
- 3.2 At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For plan making, the presumption requires plans to positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of an area to be sufficiently flexible to adapt to change.
- 3.3 Footnote 6 of Paragraph 11 indicates designated areas where development should be restricted. These are identified as follows:
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
 - Green Belt;
 - Local Green Space;
 - Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
 - Heritage Coasts;
 - National Parks;
 - Designated Heritage Assets; and
 - Areas at Risk of Flooding or Coastal Erosion.
- 3.4 The site is not located within close proximity to, or within a nationally designated area of landscape value and is located 2.1km to the east of the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Local Planning Policy - Adopted South Worcestershire Development Plan (2016)

- 3.5 The site falls within the administrative boundary of Malvern Hills District Council, and the adopted development plan which is relevant to the site is the South Worcestershire Development Plan (2016). Key adopted policies which will be pertinent to the development of the site are as follows:

SWDP 1: Overarching Sustainable Development Principles

- 3.6 Policy SWDP 1 states:

"When considering development proposals, the Local Authority will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework".

- 3.7 It identifies "that in order to In order to achieve a sustainable end result, the SWDP (through its overall approach and policies) needs to perform a number of roles:

"An environmental role – contributing to protecting and enhancing south Worcestershire's unique natural, built and historic environment by:

- i. Helping to improve biodiversity.*
- ii. Using natural resources prudently.*
- iii. Minimising waste and pollution.*
- iv. Safeguarding and enhancing landscape character.*
- v. Protecting important historic buildings, monuments, sites of archaeological significance and the integrity of local planning designations.*
- vi. Protecting and enhancing green infrastructure.*
- vii. Mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy."*

SWDP 2: Development Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy (Including Significant Gap Policy)

- 3.8 Policy SWDP 2 identifies Leigh Sinton as being a lower category village and within a 'Rural Area'. It identifies that any proposed development should 'retain the open character of the Strategic Gaps'. It identifies the following with regard to the purpose of these gaps:

"The purpose of maintaining these gaps, which either serve as a buffer or visual break between rural settlements and adjacent urban areas or protect the character and setting of settlements, is to provide additional protection to open land that may be subject to development pressures. The designation helps to maintain a clear separation between smaller settlements and urban areas in order to retain their individual identity. Acceptable development proposals in such areas may include the reuse of rural buildings, agricultural and forestry-related development, playing fields, other open land uses and minor extensions to existing dwellings."

- 3.9 A separate assessment found at **Appendix 1** provides further information on how the site responds to the Significant Gap designation.
- 3.10 The site is located within the Significant Gap, but this designation is not identified as a landscape designation and is a local designation which is designed to prevent coalescence of settlements to maintain separation.
- 3.11 It is not identified as a designation specifically related to landscape character or landscape value.

SWDP 5: Green Infrastructure

- 3.12 Policy SWDP 5 states that:

"Housing development proposals (including mixed-use schemes) are required to contribute towards the provision, maintenance, improvement and connectivity of Green Infrastructure (GI) as follows:

- i. For greenfield sites exceeding 1ha (gross) - 40% Green Infrastructure (GI)"*

- 3.13 It identifies that the design and specific form of the Green Infrastructure will be dependant upon the local context and the priorities identified within the Worcestershire Green Infrastructure Strategy.

- 3.14 Within the Green Infrastructure Strategy, the site is located within the within Area 9 'Malvern Chase & Commons' and is identified as an area to 'Protect and Enhance' as classified on the South Worcestershire Green Infrastructure Environmental Character Area.

- 3.15 The overarching principles relating specifically to the environment within Area 9 are to "Protect and enhance acid and neutral grassland habitats and wooded landscape of orchards, woodland and scrub".

- 3.16 The Green Infrastructure Strategy states that:

"Development should not be detrimental to existing Green Infrastructure (GI) assets, and enhancements should be made to existing assets with replacement/investment in GI to provide benefits to the community and environment."

SWDP 21: Design

- 3.17 Policy SWDP 21 states that:

"All development will be expected to be of a high design quality. It will need to integrate effectively with its surroundings, in terms of form and function, reinforce local distinctiveness and conserve, and where appropriate, enhance cultural and heritage assets and their settings. New and innovative designs will be encouraged and supported where they enhance the overall quality of the built environment."

- 3.18 It also states that :

"Development proposals must complement the character of the area. In particular, development should respond to surrounding buildings and the distinctive features or qualities that contribute to the visual and heritage interest of the townscape, frontages, streets and landscape quality of the local area." and goes on to say:

"Design proposals should ensure that the prominent views, vistas and skylines of Worcester city and the towns are maintained and safeguarded, particularly where they relate to heritage assets, existing landmark buildings, and 'gateway' sites. Development at the urban edges should respect the rural setting. "

- 3.19 Policy SWDP 21 states that development 'should provide high quality hard and soft landscaping'. Species selection, and arrangements for long term management is also a key factor in the development of sites.

SWDP 22: Biodiversity and Geodiversity

- 3.20 Although not of direct relevance to landscape and visual matters, the holistic approach to Green Infrastructure across the site should be

designed to enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, conservation interests and on site ecological corridors with opportunities to enhance GI links beyond the site boundaries.

SWDP 23: The Cotswolds and Malvern Hills Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

- 3.21 Although the site does not fall within the boundaries of the Malvern Hills AONB, development should not have a detrimental impact on the natural beauty of the Malvern Hills AONB and should make reference to the relevant AONB Management Plans. Further information is provided at **Appendix 2** of this report. It states that:

"For development outwith but affecting an AONB, regard should be had to the purpose of conserving and enhancing its natural beauty."

SWDP 25: Landscape Character

- 3.22 Policy SWDP 25 states the following with regards to Landscape Character:

"A. Development proposals and their associated landscaping schemes must demonstrate the following:

i. That they take into account the latest Landscape Character and its guidelines; and

ii. That they are appropriate to, and integrate with, the character of the landscape setting; and

iii. That they conserve, and where appropriate, enhance the primary characteristics defined in character assessments and important features of the Land Cover Parcel, and have taken any available opportunity to enhance the landscape.

B. A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) will be required for all major development proposals and for other proposals where they are likely to have a detrimental impact upon:

i. A significant landscape attribute;

ii. An irreplaceable landscape feature; or

iii. The landscape as a resource.

The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment should include proposals to protect and conserve key landscape features and attributes and, where appropriate, enhance landscape quality."

SWDP 39: Provision for Green Space and Outdoor Community Uses in New Development

- 3.23 Development of over 5 dwellings should 'provide Green Space and outdoor community uses'.

- 3.24 Enhancements to encourage access to new green space is encouraged through enhancements to existing PRoW networks and recreation routes.

Neighbourhood Plan

- 3.25 The Leigh and Bransford Draft Neighbourhood Development Plan (Informal Consultation Draft 2019 to 2030/2040) details a number of policies of relevance to the development of the site. Although not yet adopted, the following policies are of relevance for consideration:

Policy LB/H/4

- 3.26 This policy details that the Significant Gap between Malvern and Leigh Sinton should be retained in order for it to maintain the existing character, including views from and to the Malvern Hills (AONB), to maintain the separation between Leigh Sinton and Malvern.

Policy LB/D/1

- 3.27 Any new development should seek to reinforce local distinctiveness.

Policy LB/HLB/1

- 3.28 Any new development should make a positive contribution to character and surroundings. It should be guided by any relevant Conservation Area appraisals, should preserve key views and enhance visual and ecological value.

Policy LB/HLB/3/4

- 3.29 Landscape proposals should take account of the latest Worcestershire Landscape Character Assessment and should maintain and enhance hedgerows, conserve ancient woodland sites and plant new woodlands with native species.

Policy LB/HLB/12

- 3.30 New development should protect and enhance green infrastructure and new multifunctional green networks should be created.

Policy LB/HLB/13

- 3.31 Proposals must evidence how specific landscape features have influenced design and layout.

Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Beauty (AONB)

Management Plan and Policies

- 3.32 Whilst the site is not situated within or adjacent to the AONB, it is located approximately 2km to the east of the boundary of the Malvern Hills AONB. The Malvern Hills themselves are located approximately 4km to the south of the site and are visible from the site and surrounding area, with Leigh Sinton and the site being visible in expansive elevated views across the wider landscape.

- 3.33 This LVA and the supporting Key Views Assessment at **Appendix 2** has considered views both to and from the Malvern Hills AONB to identify

those views and features of importance to the special qualities and wider setting of the AONB and have informed the proposals. The Malvern Hills AONB Management Plan (2019-2024) identifies that the Malvern Hills AONB has the following special qualities which are relevant to the development of the site:

- "Dramatic scenery and spectacular views arising from the juxtaposition of high and low ground;
- Open access in many places over the hills and commons, providing opportunities for bracing walks with fine views."

- 3.34 The key policies found within the AONB Management Plan which will be relevant to the development of the site are as follows:

- Loss and degradation of views (Policies LP1, LP2, LP3 and BDP4);
- Loss of tranquillity (Policies LP1, LP2, TRP2 and TRP6);
- Protecting views and setting of the Malvern Hills AONB (Policies BDP4, BDP14); and

- 3.35 The development of the site will take account of any Key Views identified within the AONB Management Plan both to and from the AONB and as detailed within the following reports:

- Identification of Key Views to and From the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (March 2009);
- Guidance on how Development can Respect Landscape in Views
- Landscape Strategy and Guidelines;
- Guidance on the Selection and Use of Colour in Development

- 3.36 A full assessment of these key views is included at **Appendix 2**.

2019 South Worcestershire Development Plan Evidence Base

County Landscape Character (Published) - Worcestershire Landscape Character Assessment

- 3.37 The Landscape Character Assessment which will be assessed as part of this appraisal is the Worcestershire County Council Landscape Character Assessment. The site is located within the Principle Timbered Farmlands Landscape Character Type (LCT). This guidance provides a series of key characteristics, Planning and Development Sheets and Landscape Types Advice Sheets for Land Management.

South Worcestershire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (March 2018)

- 3.38 Of particular relevance is Section 6, Respecting the Natural and Historic Environment which details a series of recommendations and guidance on landscape matters relevant to the development of new schemes.

Malvern Hills AONB Environs Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Study (May 2019, White Consultants)

3.39 A Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Study, completed by White Consultants in 2019 identifies the site as being located within Parcel Mog as illustrated on **Figure 1** below.

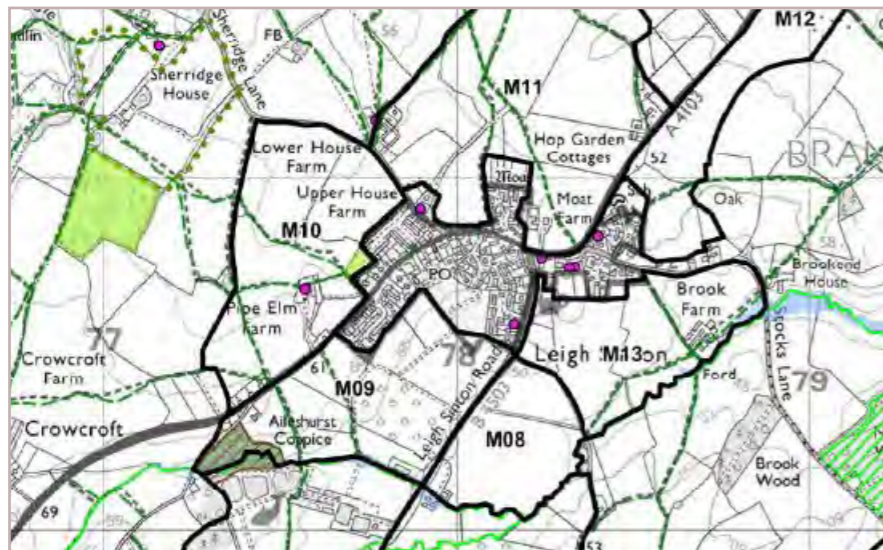


Figure 1: Extract from Malvern Hills AONB Environs Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Study

3.40 The White Consultants Report identifies that Parcel M09 extends beyond the site boundaries to the south to Ailshurst Coppice.

3.41 The parcel adjoins the southern settlement edge of Leigh Sinton at its northern extents. The parcels within the sensitivity study are assessed for their landscape and visual susceptibility and sensitivity and their capacity to accommodate development.

Review of Views from the Malvern Hills

3.42 The assessment also includes a review of views from the Malvern Hills. It states the following with regards to views from North Hill:

“View from North Hill - Overview

This view looks north and north-east from the edge of North Hill. It takes in the edges of the lower northern wooded hills to the left showing their relationship with the lower sloping land of the Severn Vale to the east. In the distance, a series of hills are visible but in the majority of views the landscape is either gently undulating or flat. Worcester is apparent although indistinct. The northern and north eastern edges of Malvern are highly noticeable extending out into the countryside. This does modify the context of the view to an extent. The railway line is a feature running north-east. The settlement of Leigh Sinton is apparent separated from Malvern by an area of dense orchards and coniferous plantations.

The landscape is of mixed agriculture with a slight emphasis on grassland/pasture. There is a fairly substantial tree cover in woodlands and hedgerow trees as might be expected for the Timbered Farmlands landscape type.

The most noticeable buildings in the view are larger buildings, including commercial units in Townsend Way and a church, white or light coloured buildings (roof or elevation), elements with a different colour e.g. artificial pitches or buildings with light blue roofs, and clear patterns of built development, such as along straight roads. These elements catch the eye and some could be termed as detractors.

3.43 It goes on to say the following with regards to the relationship with land parcels:

“The LCPs which are further away where development would be less obtrusive include 9, 11 and 19.”

Landscape Value

3.44 The study identifies that the parcel has a Medium/Low Landscape Value with the justification being that *“the value of the area lies in the Ancient Woodland/SSSI of Ailshurst Coppice, Careys Brook wildlife site and the two PROWs”*. The parcel extends beyond the site itself, with the Ancient Woodland at Ailshurst Coppice situated at its southern extent.

3.45 With regards to the inherent value indicators and in particular tranquillity, the following is stated:

“The two adjacent roads and highly visible settlement edge reduce tranquillity although it increases to the south west where the PROWs are located.”

Landscape and Visual Susceptibility and Sensitivity

3.46 The study identifies that the parcel is of Medium/Low Landscape sensitivity/susceptibility and Medium Visual susceptibility/sensitivity with an overall assessment of Medium/Low for Sensitivity for housing of between 1Ha and 5Ha in size.

3.47 The justification for this is *“The landscape susceptibility of the area to housing lies in its ancient woodland, stream corridor, traditional hedgerows and PROWs. The visual susceptibility of the area lies in its aspect falling south towards the Malvern Hills, its relative internal openness in places and users of PROWs. Overall, the LCP increases in sensitivity towards the west with the Ancient woodland acting as a strong feature. The area has least sensitivity to the north east where housing could be accommodated with existing housing on two sides.”*

3.48 The study states the following with regards to the settlement edge character and visual context:

“The existing settlement is a barely mitigated housing estate to the north west and a new housing development to the north east which will look raw for a period of time.”

3.49 It also states the following with regards to the visual relationship between the area and the settlement:

“The settlement is open to views especially in the northern part of the LCP the area and the settlement”

Overall Capacity

3.50 It states that the parcel has the capacity to accommodate residential development between 1ha-5ha in size and states that: *“In the short term the area has capacity for up to 5 ha. In the longer term the area could accommodate a further 5 ha of development but this should be balanced with the size of the settlement and whether development on other sides of the village may be more appropriate to reinforce the core.”*

Opportunities

3.51 The study identifies the following with regards to opportunities and potential for mitigation if Parcel Mog is developed:

“Location, Layout, Design - The least sensitive location is the northern part of the site which is flanked by existing housing on two sides and with a partial coniferous boundary. Part of the rest of the LCP may be able to be developed in the longer term, with an emphasis of development to the east rather than the west. However, there is an opportunity to improve the south western edge of the village.”

Landscape Mitigation - Any landscape mitigation should reinforce the existing road boundaries to provide a long-term, mainly broad leaf, buffer and in time the existing coniferous boundaries should be replaced, again with mainly broadleaf planting. There is an opportunity to improve the south western edge of the village.”

3.52 The study identifies that the most suitable location for development within the parcel is located at the north eastern part adjacent to the existing settlement edge of Leigh Sinton, where this is the least sensitive part of the parcel. It identifies that the existing settlement edge is seen in wider views and is ‘highly visible’ and that the roads and existing settlement edge ‘reduce tranquillity’.

3.53 The site is located within the least sensitive part of Parcel Mog, as identified within the sensitivity study, and has the potential to improve the existing landscape and visual situation and existing settlement edge.

Other designations

Tree Preservation Orders

3.54 There are no trees covered by TPO designations within the site boundaries. To the north east of the site is an area of fruit trees which are covered by a Group TPO (TPO Ref: 582 (2016)). This group of trees overlook the boundary of the site at the north eastern corner adjacent to Leigh Sinton Road.

Listed Buildings

3.55 One Grade II listed building is located 130m to the north east of the site along Leigh Sinton Road, but the site has not intervisibility with this building or connected physically.

3 Landscape Planning Policy

Conservation Areas

3.56 The site is not located within close proximity of any Conservation Area designation.

Ancient Woodland

3.57 Ailshurst Coppice, an Ancient Woodland and SSSI is located 260m to the south west of the site, but there is no connectivity nor intervisibility between this and the site.

Other Planning Applications

3.58 Within the vicinity of the site are two recently constructed schemes. These are:

Bluebell Walk

3.59 To the south west of the site a consented scheme for 35 dwellings is located off the A4103 (Hereford Road). The scheme was granted permission at appeal and at the time of writing this report is being built out. Further details of this appeal decision are found within the Significant Gap appraisal document at **Appendix 1**.

Malvern Rise

3.60 Immediately to the north of the site is the completed Malvern Rise scheme which comprises 53 dwellings, associated infrastructure SuDS and play area (application reference 13/00952/OUT).

Summary

3.61 The development of the site should seek to do the following in order to comply with adopted policy:

- Development should not be detrimental to the Special Qualities of the Malvern Hills AONB or key views identified within the AONB Management Plan (NPPF, Malvern Hills AONB Management Plan, and Policy SWDP 23);
- Development should not be detrimental to the Significant Gap Land and should ensure that the separation between the settlements of Malvern and Leigh Sinton is maintained and open land and the separate identities of the settlements maintained and protected (Policy SWDP 2 and Neighbourhood Plan Policy LB/D/1);
- Development should respond to local character and distinctiveness and reference the relevant Landscape Character Assessment (Policy SWDP 21, 25 and Neighbourhood Plan Policy LB/H/4 and LB/HLB/3/4);
- Development should protect and enhance Green Infrastructure (GI) and provide at least 40 % GI, with benefits for recreation and biodiversity (Policy SWDP 5 and SWDP 22 and Neighbourhood Plan Policy LB/HLB/12);

- Development should provide a positive community resource and recreational routes and facilities (Policy SWDP 39);
- Development at rural edges should respect and respond appropriately to the rural setting and context (Policy SWDP 21).

Published Landscape Character - Worcestershire Landscape Character Assessment

4.1 At a regional level the site is located within the Mid Worcestershire Forests LCA. Covering a large area this is further broken down into Landscape Character Types of which the site is located within the 'Principal Timbered Farmlands' Landscape Character Type as illustrated on **Figure 2**:

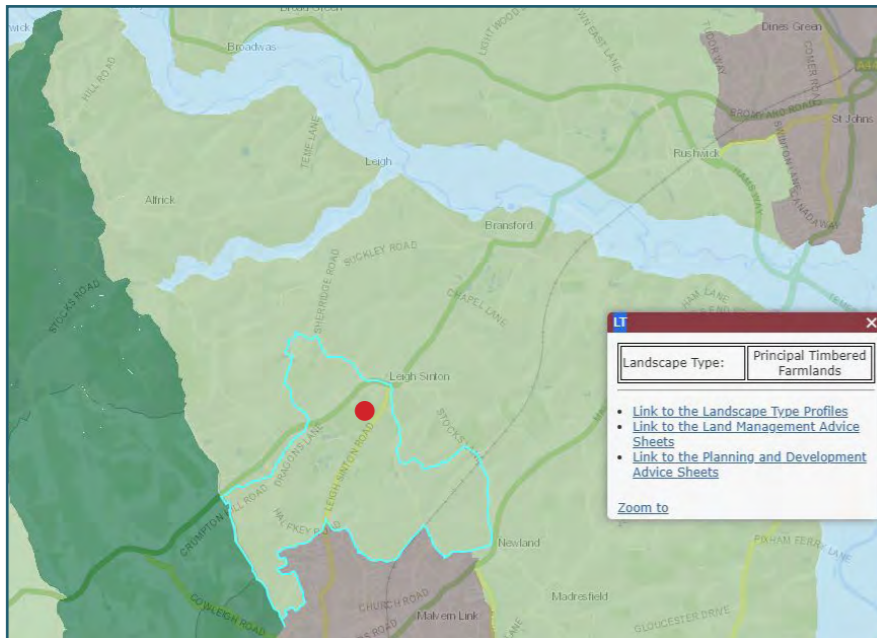


Figure 2: Principal Timbered Farmlands Landscape Character Type

4.2 The landscape within the Principal Farmlands LCT is described as:

"A small to medium-scale wooded, agricultural landscape characterised by filtered views through densely scattered hedgerow trees. This is a complex, in places intimate, landscape of irregularly shaped woodlands, winding lanes and frequent wayside dwellings and farmsteads. It is a landscape of great interest and exception, yet also one of balance."

4.3 Its primary key characteristics are:

- "Hedgerow boundaries to fields;
- Ancient wooded character; and
- Notable pattern of hedgerow trees".

4.4 Its secondary characteristics are:

- "Organic enclosure pattern;
- Small-scale landscape, hedgerow trees creating filtered views; and
- Brick and timber building styles of properties".

4.5 Its tertiary characteristics are:

- "Mixed farming land use; and
- Dispersed settlement pattern".

4.6 The Landscape Guidelines for the Principal Timbered Farmlands LCT identifies that new development should do the following:

- "Maintain the tree cover character of hedgerow oaks, and enhance the age structure of the hedgerow oak population;
- Conserve all ancient woodland sites and restock with locally occurring native species;
- Seek to bring about coalescence of fragmented relic ancient woodlands;
- Encourage the planting of new woodlands, reflecting the scale, shape and composition of the existing ancient woodland character, favouring oak as the major species;
- Conserve and restore tree cover along water courses and streamlines;
- Seek opportunities to enhance tree cover along highways and other non-farmed locations;
- Conserve and restore the pattern and composition of the hedgerow structure through appropriate management, and replanting;
- Conserve the organic pattern and character of the lane networks; and
- Maintain the historic dispersed settlement pattern".

4.7 The Planning and Development Advice Sheet contained within the Landscape Character Assessment, provides a number of recommendations for development which should be taken into account in the evolution of the design of the scheme. Of particular relevance to the site are the following:

- "There is concern over loss of scale and structure of tree cover, and notably hedgerow trees;
- There may be opportunities to create new areas of woodland reflecting characteristics of ancient woodland;
- There are opportunities to plant new hedgerows, and restore and strengthen existing hedgerows with appropriate management. Species composition will be important as well as replacing fencing with new hedgerows;
- Opportunities exist to plant new hedgerow trees and to regenerate existing hedgerows with new generation planting of Field Maple and Oak;
- The removal of existing inappropriate tree planting which is not characteristic may also be suitable (i.e. belts of poplars etc);
- Opportunities to reflect organic field patterns through areas of new planting to define boundaries and avoiding uniformity; and

- Opportunities to sub-divide larger fields and parcels of land, creating smaller parcels and avoiding regular parcels of land. Incorporating hedgerow planting and tree planting at appropriate scales can filter views and incorporating hedgerow planting within development can assist in softening the visual impacts of development and uniformity of roofscapes and built form."

4.8 The published landscape character assessment covers a much wider area than the site itself and provides a broader description of characteristics which may not necessarily be relevant to the site due to its size and scale.

4.9 In order to assess the character of the site in more detail, an assessment of the local site specific character is completed to establish the baseline situation and the landscape features which are specific to the site, its surroundings and its context.

4 Landscape Context

Site Specific Character

4.10 The site is located on the southern edge of the settlement of Leigh Sinton and is well related to the existing settlement edge which forms the north western and north eastern boundaries as illustrated on the Site Specific Plan (**Incola 1010 P02 and on Images A-K** - see images overleaf). It has settlement edge characteristics and is currently used as a Christmas Tree plantation.

Topography

4.11 The land falls gently to the east towards Leigh Sinton Road with the lowest part at approximately 50m AOD adjacent to the eastern site boundary and at 58m AOD at the western boundary adjacent to residential development located off Lynn Close.

Settlement Edge Context

4.12 The site is well related to the existing settlement edge of Leigh Sinton along the northern and western boundaries. These boundaries form an abrupt edge, with residential dwellings directly overlooking the site, and rear and side gardens and boundary treatments forming the transition at the existing settlement edge (as illustrated on **Image D, H and I**).

4.13 To the south west, the development at Bluebell Walk is currently under construction (at the time of writing this report). This residential development extends the built form of the settlement to the southwest along the A4103 (Hereford Road) and can be seen within the context of the site, and adjoining development at Lynn Close (as illustrated on **Image G**).

Internal Landscape Features/Land use

4.14 The site comprises a Christmas tree plantation which covers the entirety of the red line boundary land, with the exception of access/maintenance tracks which cut through the site (as illustrated on **Image I, J and K**).

Boundaries

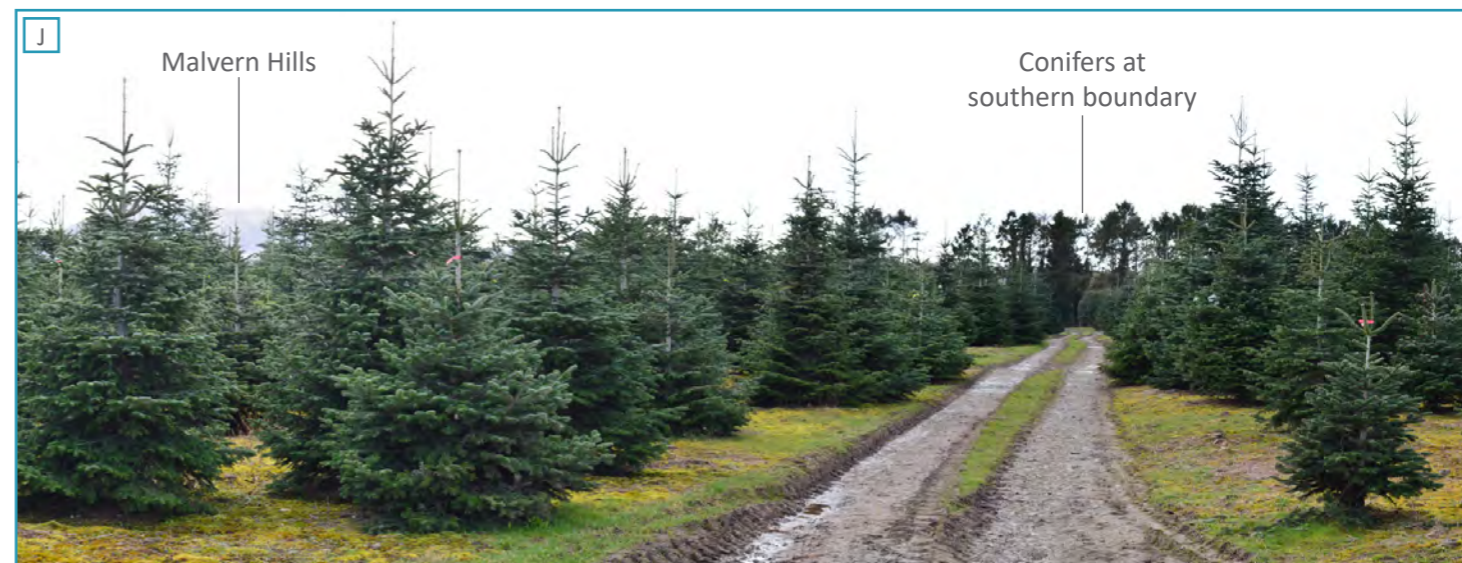
4.15 The north eastern boundary of the site is formed by the recently completed Malvern Rise residential development whose properties overlook the site (as illustrated on **Image B, F and K**). Much of the north eastern edge of the site is formed by a play area and SuDS feature which run alongside a timber post and rail fence and newly planted hedge, separating the development from the existing Christmas tree plantation (as illustrated on **Image C, D and E**). A mature Oak tree is located between the play area and the SuDS feature.

4.16 At the north eastern corner, an existing orchard is present, with new pedestrian access footpath to Malvern Rise running alongside it's north eastern edge (as illustrated on **Image A**).

4.17 Part of the eastern boundary is formed by established mature hedgerow and tree planting which runs alongside Leigh Sinton Road, separating the







4 Landscape Context

site from the wider landscape to the east (as illustrated on **Image F**).

- 4.18 At the north eastern corner, a newly planted section of hedging runs along the boundary, allowing open views across the northern part of the site.
- 4.19 The southern boundary is formed by an existing native hedgerow which joins Leigh Sinton Road to the east (as illustrated on **Image G**). At the south western part of the site, there is a field gate providing maintenance access into the site.
- 4.20 To the south west, a scrappy section of hedgerow exists and beyond this, a post and rail fence is present. Just outside of the boundary, a belt of mature evergreen conifer trees overlook the site, providing a contained and enclosed character to the south western part of the site (as illustrated on **Image H and J**).
- 4.21 There are no public rights of way present within the site boundaries, although there are a number of publicly accessible footpaths to the south of the site in the wider landscape. These include a section of newly constructed footpath connecting with Hereford Road through the Bluebell Walk development and joining the PRoW network to the south. There is also a new route within the Malvern Rise scheme to the north (as illustrated on **Image A**).

Malvern Hills

- 4.22 Although much of the site displays a contained and enclosed character, with existing boundary planting and settlement edge characteristics, the Malvern Hills are a distinctive feature within the landscape (as illustrated in **Image C and E**).
- 4.23 As described further within the Visual Baseline section and within **Appendix 2** of this report, the setting of the Malvern Hills in regards to visual amenity is an important factor in its development.

Historic Land Use

- 4.24 In order to further explore the context of the site an overview of the historical land use has been completed, and **Figure 3** and **Figure 4** illustrate how the site has changed over time.
- 4.25 The site itself remains relatively unchanged in its field patterns with the exception of a hedgerow running north south. This hedgerow route follows the route of a track which runs through the Christmas tree plantation.
- 4.26 The historical mapping data also illustrates that within the wider landscape there is evidence of orchard planting and irregular field patterns.

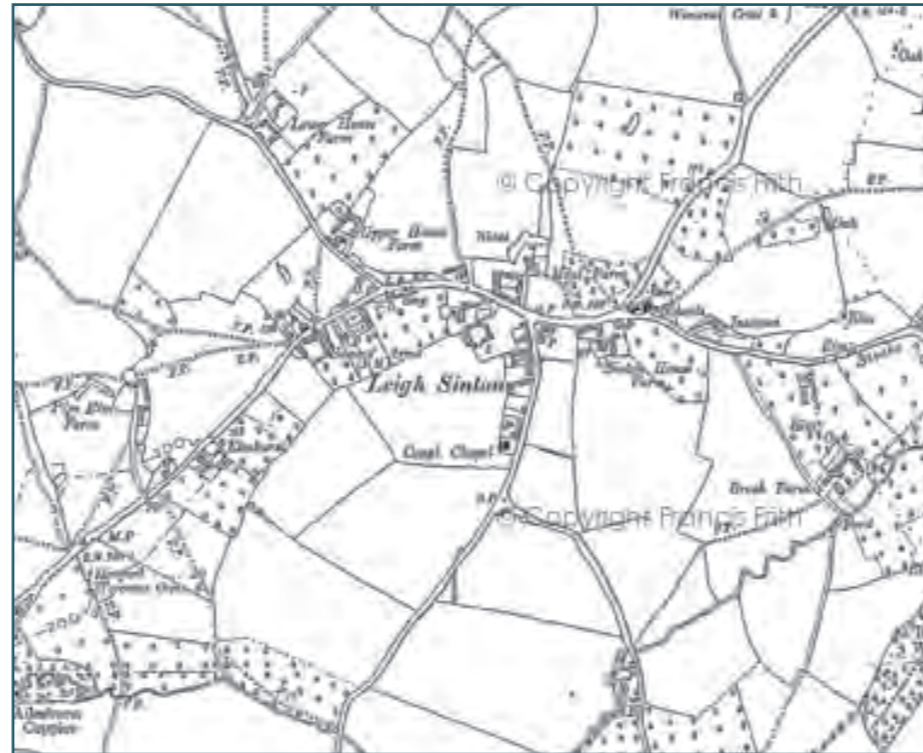


Figure 3: 1894 OS Map (sourced from <https://maps.nls.uk>)



Figure 4: 1945 Aerial Map (sourced from <https://maps.nls.uk>)

Summary

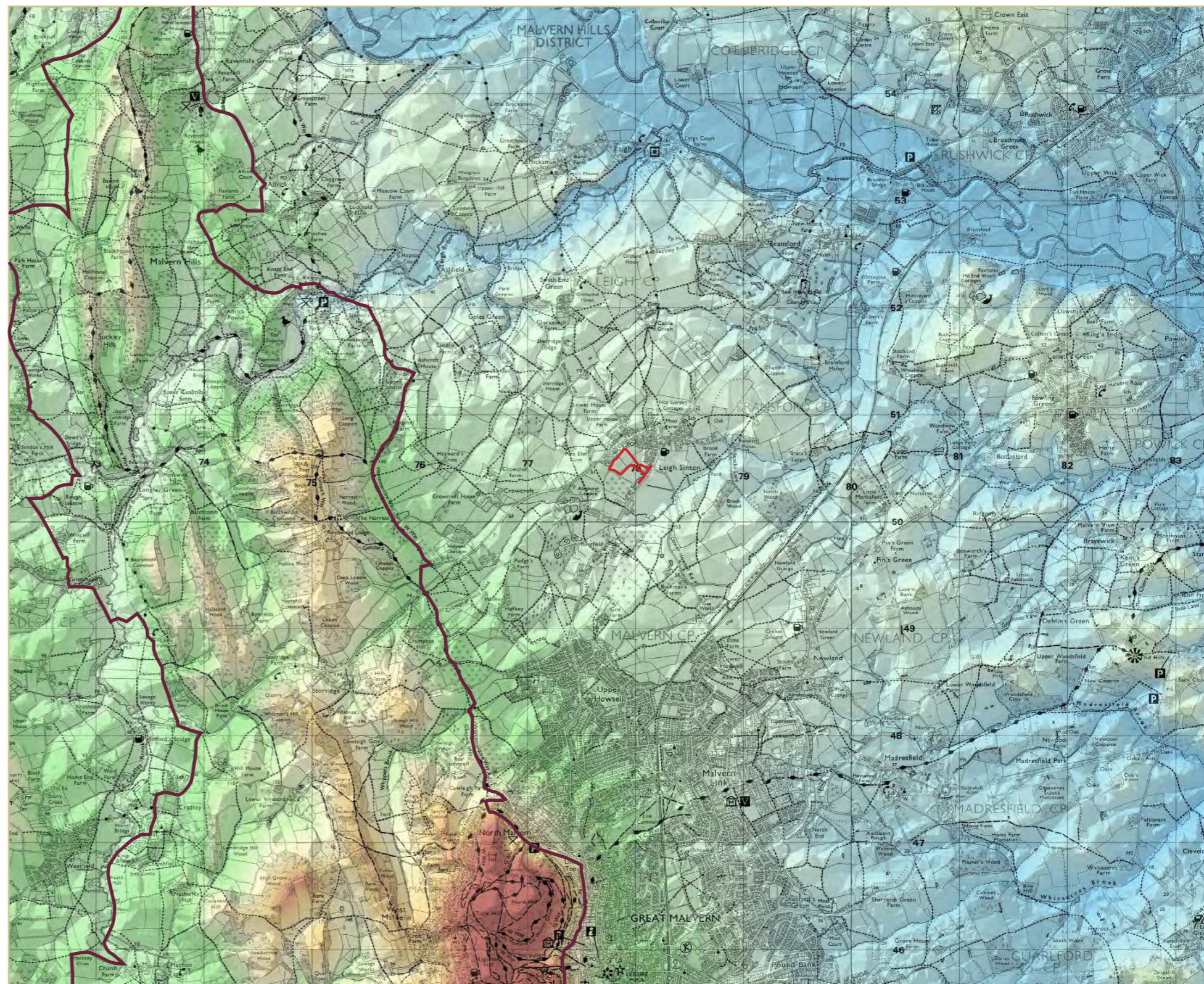
- 4.27 The assessment of the published and site specific character has found that the site shares some characteristics with the Principal Timbered Farmlands LCT. The hedgerows and hedgerow trees at the southern and eastern edges of the site are characteristic features of the wider landscape and detailed within the published character assessment.
- 4.28 However, the site is more related to the edge of Leigh Sinton and the built form found to the west and north than the wider more undeveloped landscape to the south and east. It contains very few characteristic landscape features with the exception of the boundary planting and the Christmas tree plantation is a transient landscape which is uncharacteristic of the wider landscape context.
- 4.29 As stated within the published Landscape Character Assessment, "the removal of existing inappropriate tree planting which is not characteristic may also be suitable".
- 4.30 The assessment of landscape character has identified the following which will be key to the development of the site:
- The integration of the existing built edge of Leigh Sinton and the relationship of the site to the existing settlement edge;
 - The views and visual setting of the Malvern Hills AONB;
 - The integration of the existing public open space within the Malvern Rise scheme to the north of the site into the site;
 - Opportunities to reflect the historic field pattern and historic orchards;
 - Opportunities to increase characteristic planting with hedgerows, hedgerow trees, Field Maple and Oak;
 - Removal of inappropriate planting which is not characteristic of the wider landscape;
 - Opportunities to use hedgerows to sub divide fields;
 - Opportunities to increase tree cover.

Topography and Public Rights of Way

- 5.1 The topography of the surrounding landscape is illustrated on the adjacent Topography Plan (Incola 1010 P03).
- 5.2 The site is located on land which slopes gently from its highest part at the western boundary at approximately 58m AOD to the lowest part located at the south eastern part of the site at approximately 50m AOD.
- 5.3 Within close proximity of the site the topography is relatively flat with localised undulations and changes in levels.
- 5.4 In the landscape to the north of the site, the land falls slightly towards the river corridor of the River Teme and the tributary of the Leigh Brook.
- 5.5 Approximately 4km to the south of the site are the Malvern Hills which form a distinctive topographical feature within the Worcestershire landscape. The Malvern Hills at their highest point rise to approximately 425m AOD at Worcestershire Beacon, with the closest hill to the site (End Hill) rising to approximately 329m AOD.
- 5.6 The Malvern Hills AONB and it's network of footpaths can be seen extending to the north with the Worcestershire Way and Geopark Way National Trails located on elevated positions within the AONB.

Public Footpaths

- 5.7 No public footpaths are present within the site itself, although to the north a new footpath created as part of the Malvern Rise development is located in close proximity to the northern boundary where it joins Leigh Sinton Road with Pineview Drive as illustrated on the Site Specific Analysis found within Section 4.
- 5.8 To the south west, a new footpath, which at the time of writing this report is under construction adjoins the A4103 and runs through the Bluebell Walk development to join an existing PRow to the south west of the site.
- 5.9 A network of footpath routes is present in the wider landscape to the south of the site and in the wider landscape various long distance routes and PRow can be found within the Malvern Hills AONB.



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Legend

- Site Boundary
- Malvern Hills AONB

Source: This topography plan has been modelled using GIS computer software (QGIS) and Ordnance Survey Terrain 5 data.



Plan Name	Topography Plan
Plan Number	Incola 1010 P03
Revision	-
Date	06/06/2021



Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)

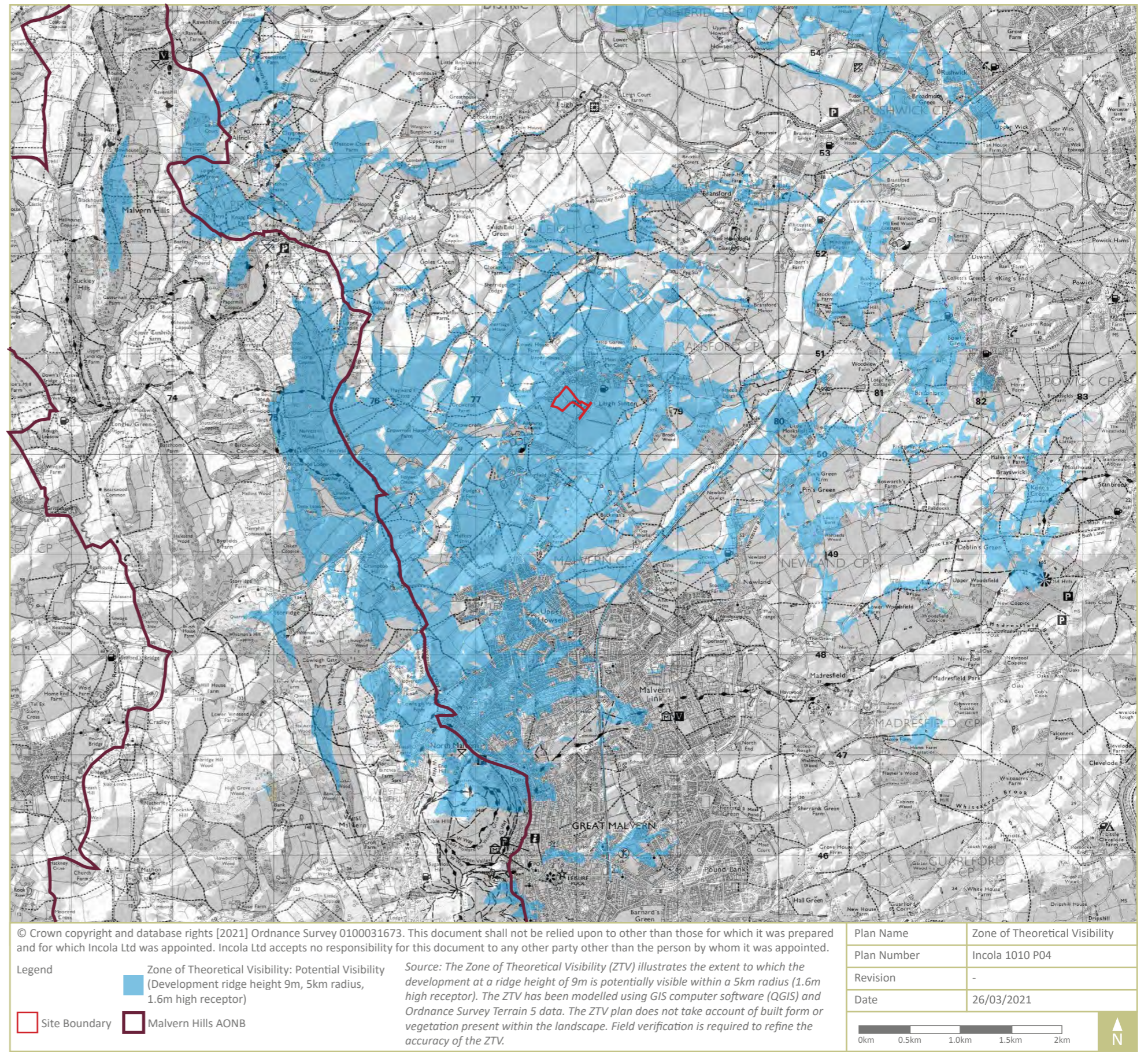
- 5.10 To assess the potential visibility of the site, representative views towards the site from the surrounding area are identified.
- 5.11 In order to identify areas where people may experience a change in their view as a result of the development, an assessment of the topography of the surrounding landscape is completed as well as the production of a GIS generated Zone of Theoretical Visibility Plan (ZTV).
- 5.12 The ZTV Plan illustrates the extent to which development of up to 9m (two storey properties) high on the site would be potentially visible within a 5km radius based on a 1.6m high receptor. This first sieve exercise has been refined and verified in the field.
- 5.13 The ZTV Plan is produced based on Ordnance Survey Terrain 5 data which provides data level data only, and does not take into account built form or vegetation present within the landscape.

Potential Visibility generated by the ZTV Plan

- 5.14 To the north, the ZTV suggests that the development of the site will be visible from Castle Green and Bransford off the A4103.
- 5.15 To the east, the ZTV suggests that the development of the site will be visible from the rising land located around Bastonford and the Old Hills.
- 5.16 To the south, the ZTV suggests that the development of the site will be visible from the network of footpaths on the slopes of the Malvern Hills, located approximately 4km to the south of the site.
- 5.17 To the west, the ZTV suggests potential visibility from the rising land within the Malvern Hills AONB and from the long distance footpaths of the Worcestershire Way and Geopark Way.
- 5.18 This initial ZTV plan has been used to inform the site visit and to identify the potential location whereby the development of the site will have an influence on views. In reality, the potential visibility of the site is substantially less than the ZTV suggests, and the development is likely to be less than the ZTV suggests due to the presence of built form and intervening vegetation.

Visual Survey Site Visit

- 5.19 Two site visits were completed in March 2021 (06.03.2021 and 16.03.2021) where photographs were taken from selected viewpoints with a digital camera with an equivalent 50mm focal length lens at eye level (approximately 1600mm above ground).
- 5.20 In total, 18 representative viewpoints have been chosen from locations surrounding the site, to enable the effects of the development to be assessed from all directions (see **Photoviewpoints 1-18**). Long distance, middle distance and short distance views are included.
- 5.21 The photoviewpoints are included within the following section with



associated descriptions, an identification of receptors likely to experience a change in their view as a result of the development of the site and an assessment of the value, susceptibility and sensitivity of views as a result of the proposed development.

- 5.22 The representative photoviewpoints have been selected to provide a representation of the visual context and likely visual receptors who will experience a change in their view as a result of the development.
- 5.23 Whilst the views are chosen to be representative of the area, they cannot provide continuous coverage of all potential locations within the vicinity of the development. The selected views will often occur as part of a wider sequence within the surrounding landscape.
- 5.24 The visual analysis is based on views from public external spaces. This excludes barely discernible views and views from private properties and spaces. However, where notable views from private properties are possible, these have been considered where relevant, for example where direct views from residential development overlook the site.
- 5.25 Where there are transient or fleeting views, these are also assessed as part of the report.
- 5.26 The following **Photoviewpoints 1-18** identify the approximate site extents and the land which is located within the red line boundary. The red line boundary includes potential development parcels as well as the potential access road located off Leigh Sinton Road. The identified approximate site extents does not specify the location of potential development parcels and built form at this stage, but merely the extent of the red line boundary which is assessed in full for the purposes of the baseline visual analysis.
- 5.27 In addition, a number of photos were taken to assess the site specific character, the impact on key views to and from the Malvern Hills AONB and the Significant Gap Designation. More detailed assessments of these specific matters are found within **Appendix 1** and **Appendix 2**.

Extent and Composition of Views

Local short distance views (up to 0.5km)

- 5.28 From the north, uninterrupted views of the site are possible from the adjoining residential development at Malvern Rise which overlooks the northern boundary (representative **Photoviewpoints 12a, 12b and 14**). Views are also possible from the pedestrian access footpath and play area located alongside the northern boundary of the site.
- 5.29 From the east, glimpsed views of the site can be seen through gaps in the hedgerow planting found along Leigh Sinton Road (representative **Photoviewpoint 18**), where a newly planted hedgerow is yet to mature. In places, there are gaps in the established hedgerow and glimpsed filtered views of the site can be seen.
- 5.30 From the south, local views are mostly filtered by the presence of evergreen trees and existing Christmas tree plantations found in the adjoining land

(representative **Photoviewpoint 6**).

- 5.31 The development at Bluebell Walk which is currently being constructed (at the time of writing this report) is likely to result in views across the site for those residents.
- 5.32 From the west, it is likely that views of the site will be possible for residents living in properties overlooking the site at Lynn Close. However, these views have not been assessed as part of the LVA due to their private nature.
- 5.33 From the A4103, glimpsed views may be possible of the south western part of the site where the new footpath route within the Bluebell Walk scheme joins the A4103 (representative **Photoviewpoint 11**).

Middle distance views (0.5-2km)

- 5.34 From the north, the presence and location of the settlement of Leigh Sinton generally limits visibility in middle distance views.
- 5.35 From the east, glimpsed views of the site can be seen from footpaths off Lower Howsell Road and views of the site are seen in the context of the existing development at Malvern Rise, Bluebell Walk and Lynn Close (representative **Photoviewpoint 5**).
- 5.36 From the south, middle distance views of the site are mostly filtered by the presence of Christmas tree plantations, the edge of the Bluebell Walk scheme and the presence of vegetation found to field boundaries and lanes. However, glimpsed views are possible where the land rises slightly at the northern edge of Malvern (representative **Photoviewpoints 4**).
- 5.37 From the west, middle distance views of the site are mostly screened by the presence of the existing development which runs along the A4103 and the new development at Bluebell Walk (representative **Photoviewpoint 7**).

Long distance views (Greater than 2km)

- 5.38 From the north long distance views of the site are not possible due to the falling ground, presence of built form of Leigh Sinton and intervening vegetation found to field boundaries and lanes.
- 5.39 From the east, although the ZTV plan identifies the potential for visibility from the high point at the Old Hills, the presence of vegetation around the common land prevents views of the site.
- 5.40 From the south, long distance and panoramic views of the site can be seen from the footpaths on the northern part of the Malvern Hills, namely End Hill and North Hill (representative **Photoviewpoints 1 and 2**). From these locations panoramic views can be seen across the landscape and the settlement of Leigh Sinton is visible from a number of locations from these elevated positions.
- 5.41 Views cannot be seen from Worcestershire Beacon and as such have been scoped out of the appraisal.
- 5.42 From the west, where the land rises towards the Malvern Hills AONB,

views can be seen from sections of the Geopark Way on elevated land (representative **Photoviewpoint 3**). From this footpath route panoramic views can be seen across the landscape through gaps in intervening vegetation.

Nature of Views

- 5.43 The visual appraisal has identified the following in relation to the nature of views:

Local Views

- In local views from the north, direct and uninterrupted views across the site from the northern edge of the site can be seen for residents and pedestrians living on and using the footpath and play area located on Pineview Drive (representative **Photoviewpoints 12a, 12b and 14**). These direct views across the Christmas Tree plantation are seen against the backdrop of residential development at Lynn Close and Bluebell Walk. The Malvern Hills are a distinctive feature within these views across the site towards the south and the play area is seen within the foreground of these views. In addition, mature evergreen planting and the Christmas tree plantation itself provides a well vegetated foreground within these views, although it is noted that the Christmas Tree plantation is a transient landscape;
- From the south, views of the site are screened and filtered for users of local footpath routes (PRoW 705(C)) by the presence of mature evergreen tree planting and the adjacent Christmas tree plantation to the south of the site (representative **Photoviewpoint 6**). The low lying land and intervening vegetation found around field boundaries sets the site amongst a well vegetated landscape and limits visibility for the users of these local footpaths;
- The existing residential development located along the A4103 and in particular the development at Bluebell Walk filter views of the site for users of local footpath routes to the west (PRoW 687(C)) (representative **Photoviewpoint 7**). Within these views residential built form can be seen along the skyline;
- Users of the A4103, when travelling into Leigh Sinton from the south will have views of the site filtered by the residential development at Bluebell Walk, with built form a common feature within these views for users of this route (representative **Photoviewpoint 8**). As users travel further along this route, the newly constructed scheme at Bluebell Walk is more apparent and the diverted footpath which adjoins the A4103 can be seen (representative **Photoviewpoint 9**). Where this footpath route provides a more open aspect, glimpsed views of the southern edge of the site can be seen against the setting of residential buildings found along Lynn Close. Lynn Close itself, sets the site against a backdrop of built form and filters views further along this route for users travelling north (representative **Photoviewpoint**

10); and

- Views of the site from Leigh Sinton Road for users travelling north towards Leigh Sinton are filtered by the presence of hedgerow vegetation found along Leigh Sinton Road (representative **Photoviewpoint 18**). Where glimpsed views are possible, the existing settlement edge is seen rising to the west with residential properties at Lynn Close and Bluebell Walk seen located on slightly higher ground (representative **Photoviewpoint 17**). Much of Leigh Sinton Road when travelling from the south does not have a pedestrian footpath, and car users travelling along this route will see glimpsed and fleeting views of the site.

Middle Distance Views

- From elevated positions at the edge of Malvern, the site is seen amongst a well vegetated landscape and the existing residential edge of Leigh Sinton and rooflines of the Bluebell Walk scheme can be seen within these views (representative **Photoviewpoint 4**); and
- In middle distance views from the east and from PRoW 563(C), where the ground rises slightly, views of the site are partially screened by intervening vegetation found along Leigh Sinton Road and to field boundaries (representative **Photoviewpoint 5**). The residential development found along the A4103 can be seen along the skyline in these views and the Bluebell Walk scheme can be seen as a distinct feature within the landscape.

Long Distance Views from the Malvern Hills AONB

- Within views from the footpaths found on End Hill and North Hill (representative **Photoviewpoint 1 and 2**), the site is seen within panoramic views across the wider landscape and is set against a backdrop of residential development and amongst a mature setting of vegetated field boundaries, and the settlement edge of Leigh Sinton.
- In these distant, elevated and expansive views the site is seen in the context of the settlement edge. The development at Bluebell Walk extends the settlement edge beyond the site at the southern edge and the site is seen located beyond this to the north; and
- In longer distance views from the west and from the elevated positions along the Geopark Way, views of the site are glimpsed and seen amongst a well vegetated landscape with field boundary planting and the residential edge of Leigh Sinton filtering views of the site (representative **Photoviewpoint 3**). Within these views, built form, agricultural buildings and scattered residential development is a common feature across the landscape.

Malvern Hills Key Views

- 5.44 The following key views have been identified at **Appendix 2** both to and from the Malvern Hills AONB. These are identified as follows, with reasoning for their selection included within the Key Views appraisal document:
- 5.45 The assessment of Key Views has found the following with regards views towards the site from the Malvern Hills AONB:
- Photoviewpoint 1 - This view is already identified as an Exceptional View
 - Photoviewpoint 2 - This view has been identified as a Special View
 - Photoviewpoint 3 - This view has been identified as a Representative View
- 5.46 A key view is identified from the Worcestershire Beacon at the highest point on the Malvern Hills by the Malvern Hills AONB Key Views document, in reality the topography of North Hill and End Hill screens views from the Beacon. This view has therefore been scoped out of the assessment.
- 5.47 The following views are identified as key views towards the Malvern Hills AONB:

Views towards the Malvern Hills AONB

- Photoviewpoint 12a** - This view has been graded as a Special View at Appendix 2)
- Photoviewpoint 14** - This view has been graded as a Special View at Appendix 2)
- Photoviewpoint 16** - (identified as a Special View within the Malvern Hills Key Views Document). From this location, views of the site cannot be seen and this has therefore been scoped out of the appraisal.

Visual Receptors

- 5.48 The following groups of people (visual receptors) have been identified as having the potential to view the proposed development and experience visual change and impacts on their visual amenity resulting from the proposed development. This is due to the proximity and nature / extent of view, as well as the activities and focus of the people likely to experience them:
- Recreational users of footpaths found on the higher slopes of the Malvern Hills around North Hill and End Hill (representative **Photoviewpoint 1 and 2**);
 - Recreational users of PRoW (Hereford CD61) Geopark Way (representative **Photoviewpoint 3**);
 - Recreational users of PRoW 536C (representative **Photoviewpoint 4**);

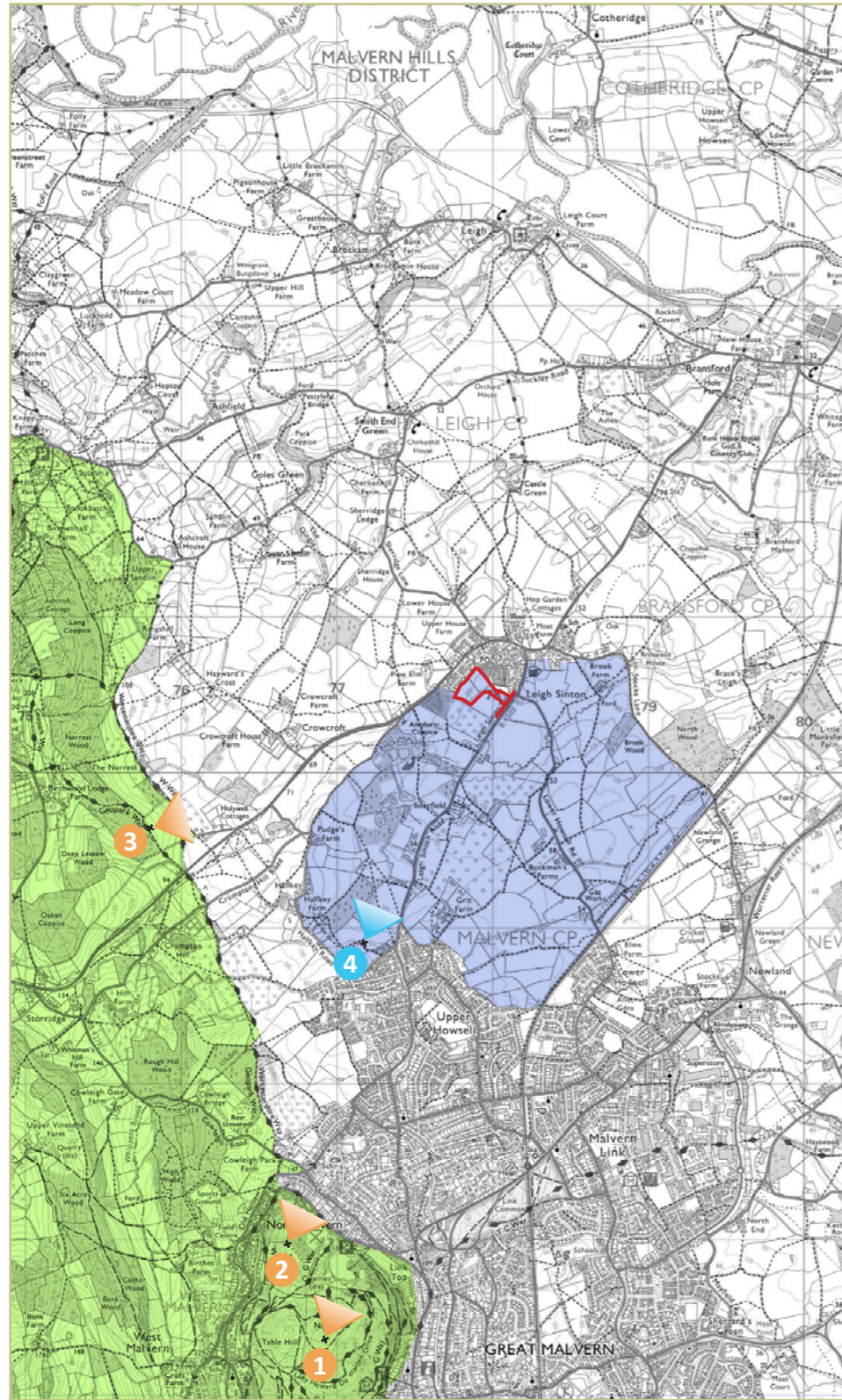
- Recreational users of PRoW 563(C) (representative **Photoviewpoint 5**);
- Recreational users of PRoW 705(C) (representative **Photoviewpoint 6**);
- Recreational users of PRoW 687(C) (representative **Photoviewpoint 7**);
- Recreational users of footpath and public open space through Pineview Drive (representative **Photoviewpoints 12a, 12b and 14**);
- Transient users of the A4103 (Hereford Road) (representative **Photoviewpoint 8**);
- Transient users of Lynn Close (representative **Photoviewpoint 11**);
- Transient users of Leigh Sinton Road (representative **Photoviewpoint 15, 17 and 18**);
- Residents of Lynn Close (representative **Photoviewpoints 11**);
- Residents of Pineview (representative **Photoviewpoints 12a, 12b, 13 and 14**); and
- Residents of Bluebell Walk.

5.49 The following receptors that have been scoped-out of this appraisal due to the limited nature of views towards. These include:

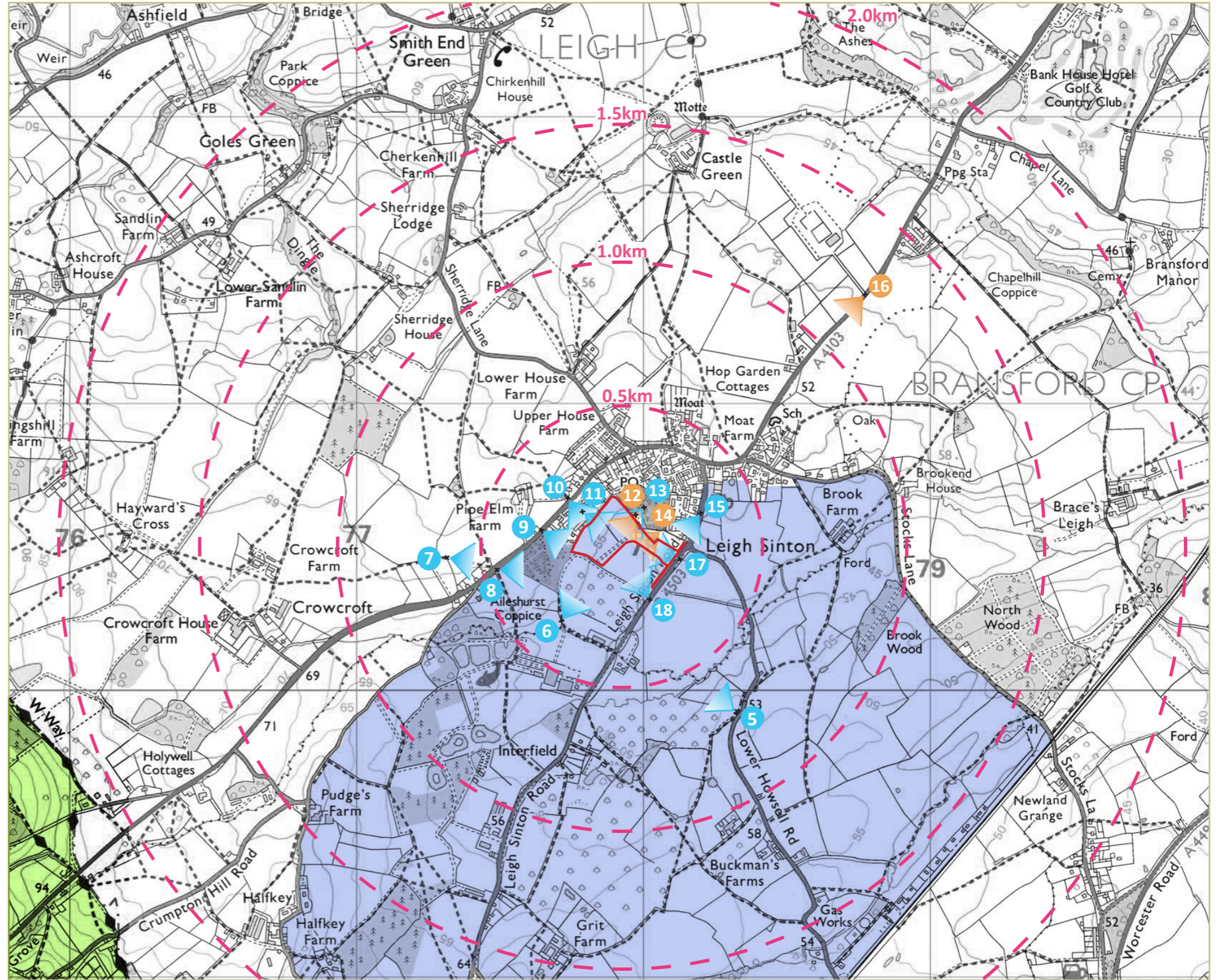
- Users of the A4103 travelling south towards the site (as identified as Key View 1 (Special View 1) within the Malvern Hills Key View document - representative **Photoviewpoint 16**); and
- Recreational users of footpaths around Worcestershire Beacon (as identified as Key View 48 (Exceptional View 48) within the Malvern Key View document).

Visual Context Summary

- 5.50 Overall, the visual survey has found that other than the panoramic views of the site which are possible from the Malvern Hills AONB, the majority of views are localised and limited to local routes, residents overlooking the site and road users on local transport routes.
- 5.51 The Key Views identified have also been assessed for their implications on development in relation to the Malvern Hills and has found that Special View 1 from the A4103, and Exceptional View 48 from the Worcestershire Beacon are not relevant and the site is not visible.
- 5.52 Where views are possible from Exceptional View 47 from End Hill, the site is seen in the context of the existing settlement edge of Leigh Sinton. These views are distant, elevated and expansive.
- 5.53 Other key views also identified through the visual survey identify that the Malvern Hills form a distinct feature within the site and the development will need to take this into account.



Inset Location Plan



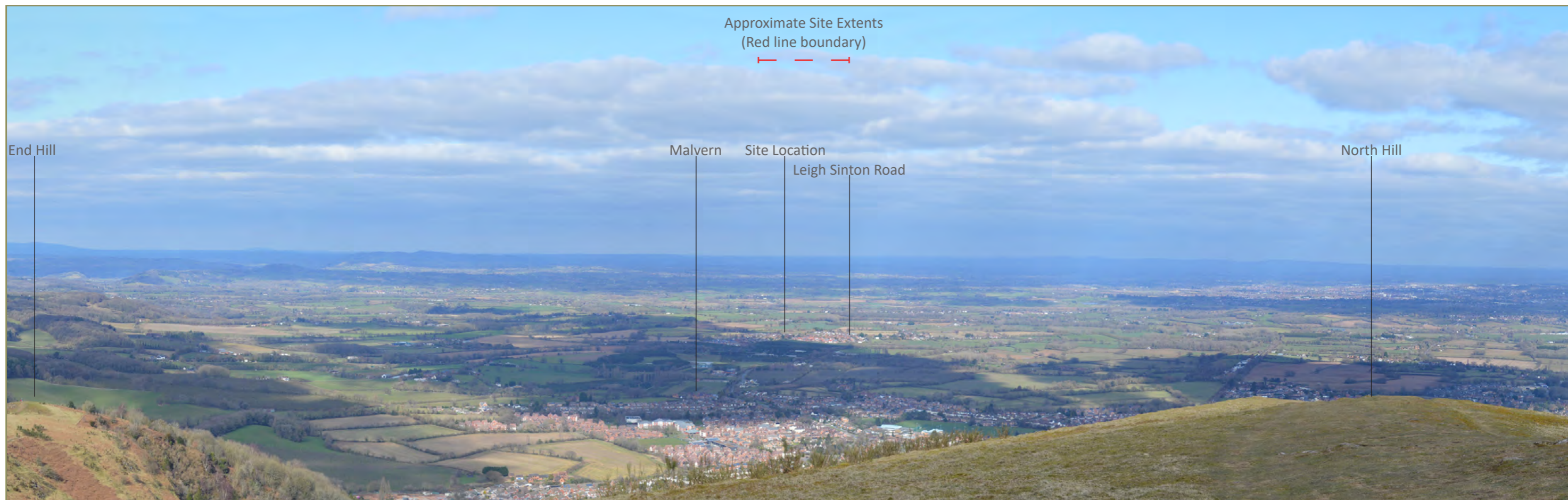
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Legend

- Site Boundary
- Malvern Hills AONB
- Significant Gap (SWDP 2016)
- 1 ▶ Viewpoint Locations
- 1 ▶ Key Views (Malvern Hills AONB-Viewpoint Locations 1,2,3,12,14 & 16)

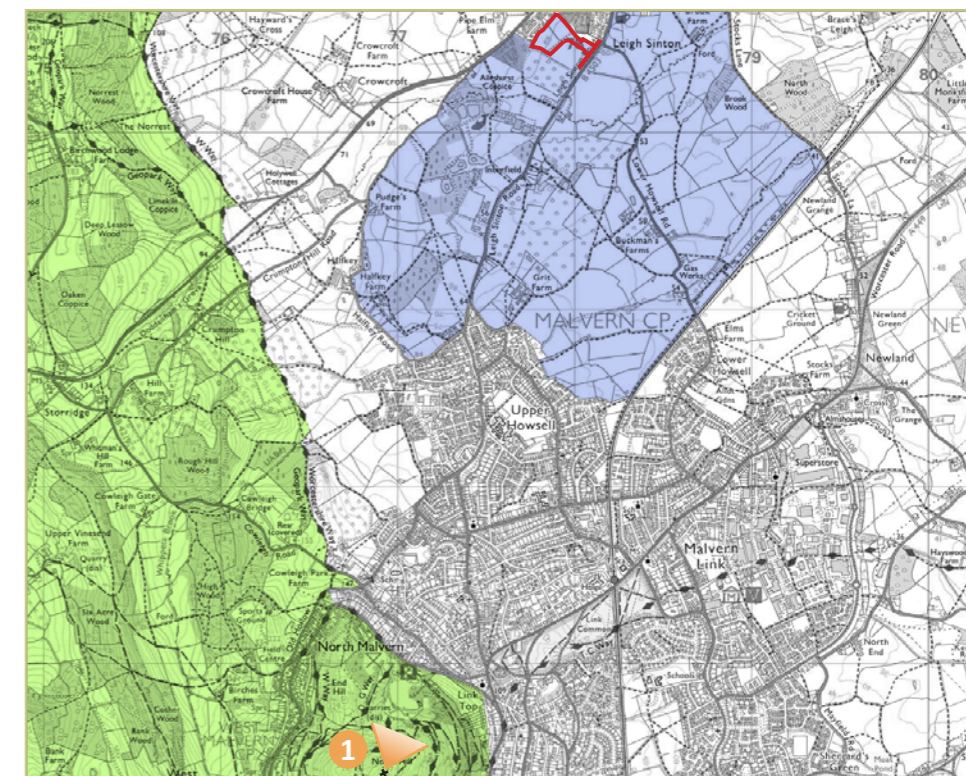
Plan Name	Viewpoint Location Plan
Plan Number	Incola 1010 P05
Revision	-
Date	06/06/2021





Orientation: North Grid Reference: SO 76935 46360 **Photoviewpoint 1**
 Distance From Site: 4.1km Date and Time: 06/03/2021 13:20

Description: View from footpaths on North Hill from within the Malvern Hills AONB.



Users of Footpaths on the Malvern Hills within the Malvern Hills AONB (Key View - Exceptional View 47)

Description

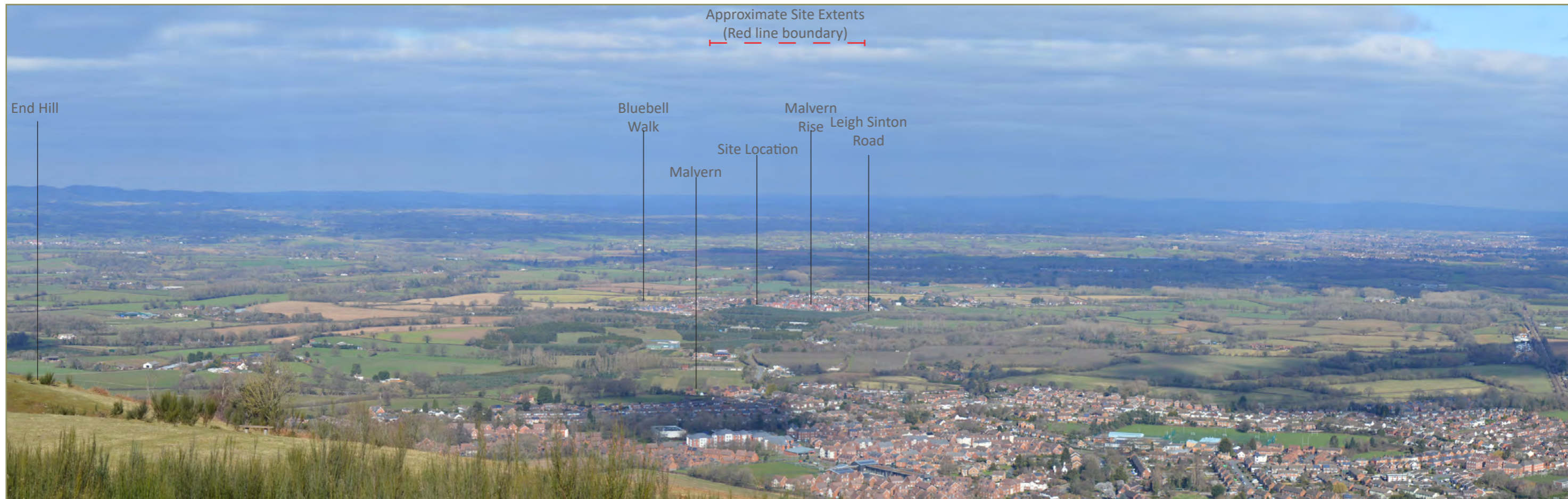
- 5.54 Photoviewpoints 1 and 2 illustrate the panoramic views possible from the elevated footpaths located within the Malvern Hills AONB. In these views, receptors experience wide ranging, open and expansive views across Worcestershire. A network of footpaths and open access land are present across the Malvern Hills.
- 5.55 The settlement of Malvern can be seen in the foreground within these views with ridges and roof lines of the northern part of Malvern seen at the foot of the hills.
- 5.56 The new development at Bluebell Walk off Hereford Road is also visible for users of these footpaths.
- 5.57 From these elevated positions, views can be seen of the irregular field patterns, belts of tree planting and hedgerow planting forming boundaries to fields, along with blocks of evergreen planting located between Malvern and Leigh Sinton.

5.58 The site is seen in the context of the wider panoramic view, surrounding landscape and settlement patterns which are all seen within these wide ranging views.

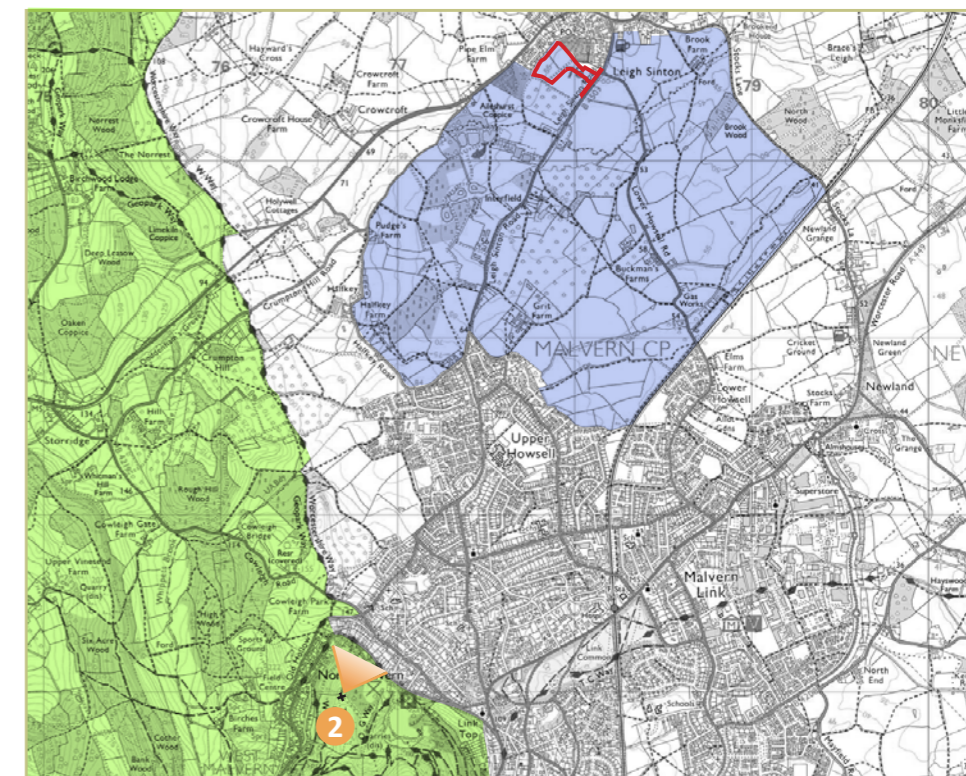
5.59 Representative Photoviewpoints 1 is identified as a key view within the Malvern Hills AONB Key Views document has been assessed in more detail within **Appendix 2**.

Receptors

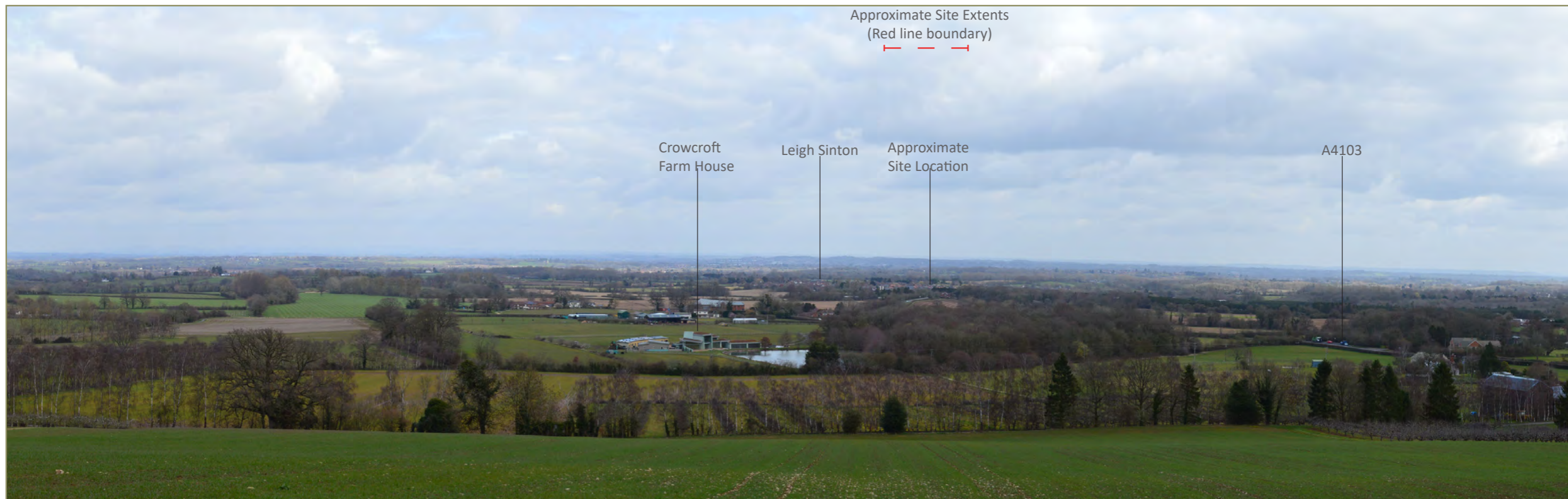
- Recreational users of various footpaths within the Malvern Hills AONB



Orientation: North Grid Reference: SO 76692 46800
 Distance From Site: 3.8km Date and Time: 06/03/2021 13:34
 Description: View from End Hill from within the Malvern Hills AONB. **Photoviewpoint 2**



Value	High	-Photoviewpoint 1 is identified as a recognised important view from the Malvern Hills for its scenic qualities
Susceptibility	Low	-Recreational users will have a low susceptibility to change due to the scale and distance within the site is seen -Views for these users set the site amongst the context of existing built form and the existing settlement edge of Leigh Sinton -Existing built form is already a common feature within these views
Overall Medium Sensitivity		



Orientation: East Grid Reference: SO 75794 49662
 Distance From Site: 2.1km Date and Time: 15/03/2021 11:47
 Description: View from the Geopark Way (Hereford CD61). **Photoviewpoint 3**

Users of PRow (Hereford CD61) Geopark Way (Key View - Representative)

Description

5.60 Photoviewpoint 3 taken from the Geopark Way (Hereford CD61) National Trail to the south west of the site illustrates the panoramic and wide ranging views across the landscape. Views from these footpaths are from within the Malvern Hills AONB located approximately 2.1km to the southwest of the site, and receptors using these footpaths experience panoramic views across the landscape from higher ground.

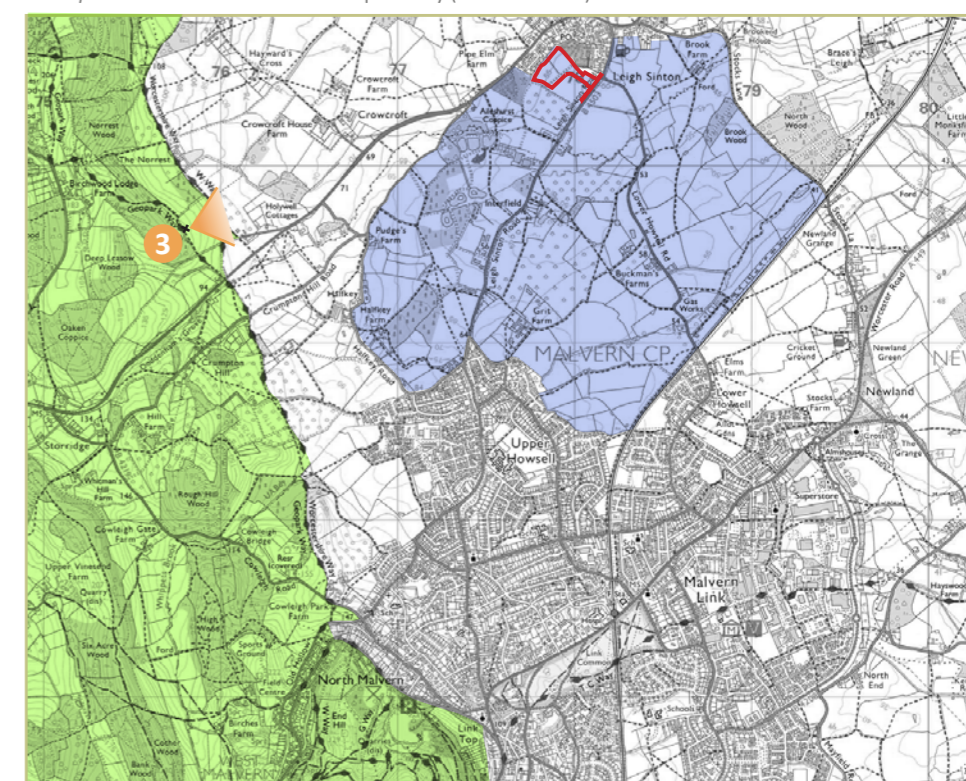
5.61 The existing development of Bluebell Walk and Malvern Rise which form the settlement edge of Leigh Sinton can be seen sitting amongst existing deciduous and evergreen tree planting. There are panoramic views from this slightly elevated position with existing scattered farm buildings and residential dwellings present.

5.62 Evergreen tree planting and the presence of Christmas tree plantations in the landscape can be seen from these footpaths within close proximity of the site, along with the presence of orchard planting seen in the foreground between Crowcroft Farm House and the Worcestershire Way.

Receptors

- Recreational users of PRow (Hereford CD61) Geopark Way

Value	Medium	-Not a recognised view although from a designated landscape and of local value
Susceptibility	Low	-Recreational users will have a low susceptibility to change due to the distance and scale of the site when seen within these panoramic views -The site will be seen within the context of existing built form and scattered residential and agricultural buildings across the landscape
Overall Low Sensitivity		





Orientation: North
 Distance From Site: 1.6km
 Grid Reference: SO 77181 48919
 Date and Time: 16/03/2021 10:24
Photoviewpoint 4
 Description: View from ProW 536C.

Users of PRoW 536C

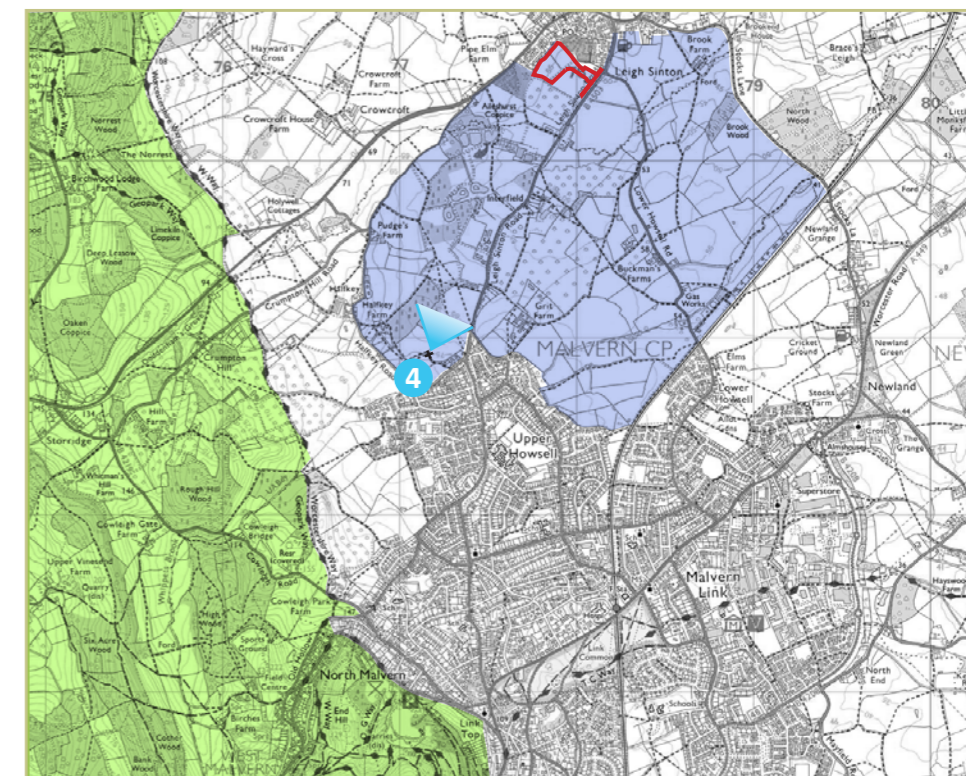
Description

- 5.63 Taken from PRoW 536C to the south west of the site, receptors using this footpath experience views from a slightly elevated position from the edge of Malvern which is located approximately 2km to the south of the site.
- 5.64 The site can be seen within the setting of the existing residential development of the Malvern Rise scheme, whose rooflines form the backdrop to views of the site.
- 5.65 Within the foreground of the view a newly planted Christmas tree plantation can be seen against the backdrop of farm buildings located off Leigh Sinton Road. Much of the view is dominated by mature deciduous and evergreen tree planting, with glimpsed views of Christmas tree plantations and rooflines of scattered building located off Leigh Sinton Road.

Receptors

- Recreational users of PRoW 536C

Value	Low	-Not a recognised view and is of local value
Susceptibility	Low	-Recreational users will have a low susceptibility to change due to the scale and distance within which the site is seen -The site is seen within the context of a well vegetated landscape and against the setting of the existing settlement edge of Leigh Sinton -Existing built form is already seen within these views for these receptors
Overall Low Sensitivity		





Orientation: North West Grid Reference: SO 78340 49929 **Photoviewpoint 5**
 Distance From Site: 0.5km Date and Time: 15/03/2021 14:10

Description: View from ProW 563(C) adjacent to Lower Howsell Road.

Users of ProW 563(C) adjacent to Lower Howsell Road

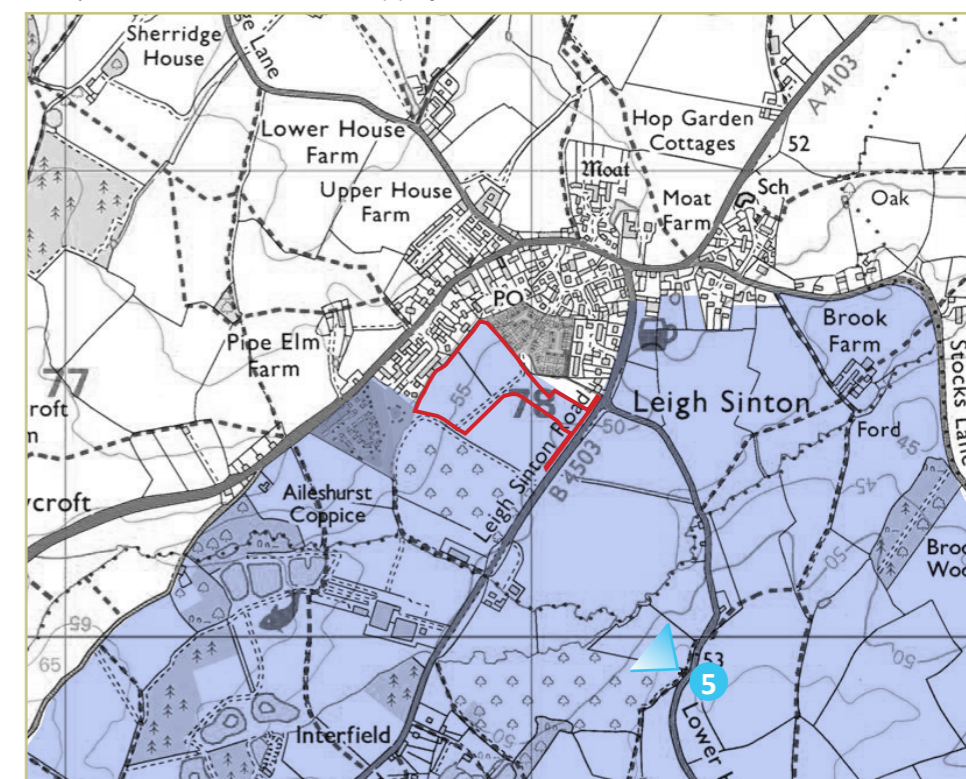
Description

- 5.66 Users of PRoW 563 (C) to the south east of the site, users of this footpath experience views of the site which are seen against the backdrop of existing residential development found along Lynn Close.
- 5.67 Glimpsed views of the development at Bluebell Rise can be seen in the left of the view sitting along the skyline with the rising ground above the site to the west forming the backdrop to the views.
- 5.68 Glimpsed views of the site can be seen, with the tops of the existing Christmas trees seen within the site. Planting along Leigh Sinton Road and at the field boundaries to the east of the site filters most views of the site.
- 5.69 Intervening vegetation found at field boundaries also limits visibility for users of these footpaths.

Receptors

- Recreational users of PRoW 563(C)

Value	Low	-Not a recognised view and is of local value
Susceptibility	Low	-The site will be seen within the context of the existing settlement edge of Leigh Sinton -Existing built form is already seen within these views -The development lies below the skyline
Overall Low Sensitivity		





Orientation: North Grid Reference: SO 77718 50233 **Photoviewpoint 6**
 Distance From Site: 0.24km Date and Time: 15/03/2021 12:56
 Description: View from ProW 705C.

Users of PRoW 705(C)

Description

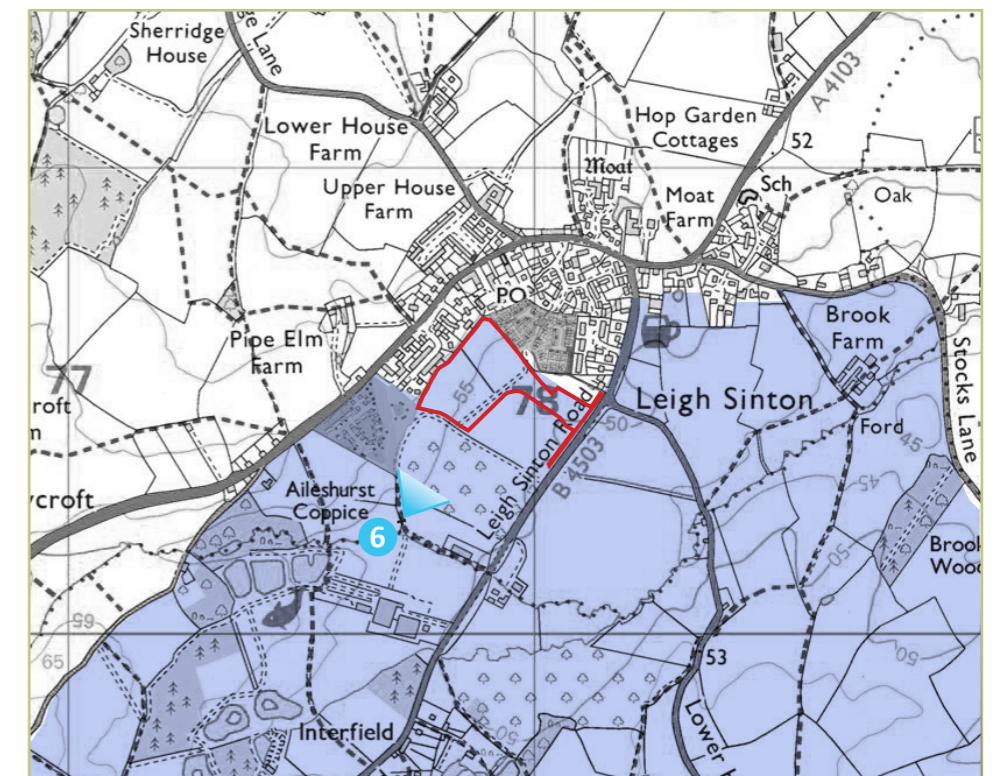
5.70 Views of the site for users of PRoW 705(C) are filtered by the presence of evergreen trees which are located along the southern edge of the site. The adjacent land use and Christmas tree plantation also filters views across the site for these users.

5.71 From these footpaths to the south of the site, glimpsed views of the residential development located at Bluebell Walk can be seen to the left located behind Christmas trees and mature deciduous trees.

Receptors

- Recreational users of PRoW 705(C)

Value	Low	-Not a recognised view and is of local value
Susceptibility	High	-Recreational users are within close proximity to the site but the existing evergreen planting separates the site from views
Overall Medium Sensitivity		





Orientation: East Grid Reference: SO 77307 50474 **Photoviewpoint 7**
 Distance From Site: 0.45km Date and Time: 16/03/2021 11:33
 Description: View from PRoW 687(C).

Users of PRoW 687 (C)

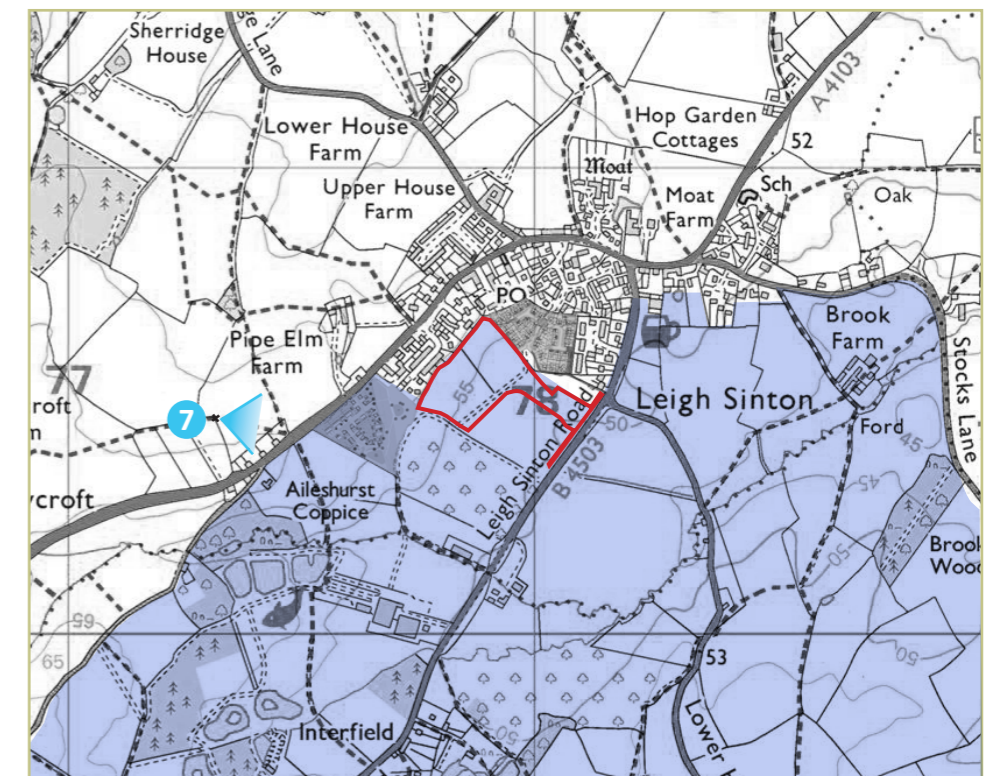
Description

- 5.72 Views of the site for users of PRoW687(C) to the west are filtered by the presence of vegetation and residential buildings found along the A4103.
- 5.73 The Bluebell Walk residential development can be seen located along the skyline within the view and views of the site are obscured.
- 5.74 Within the foreground an arable field is seen running alongside the A4103.
- 5.75 The falling topography to the east also limits the potential visibility of the site.

Receptors

- Recreational users of PRoE687(C)

Value	Low	-Not a recognised view and is of local value
Susceptibility	Low	-The site is situated to the rear of the existing development at Bluebell Walk, seen along the skyline within views -Much of the site is obscured from view by existing built form and intervening vegetation
Overall Low Sensitivity		





Orientation: East Grid Reference: SO 77481 50417
 Distance From Site: 0.23km Date and Time: 16/03/2021 11:39
 Description: View from A4013 (Hereford Road) **Photoviewpoint 8**

Users of A4103 (Hereford Road)

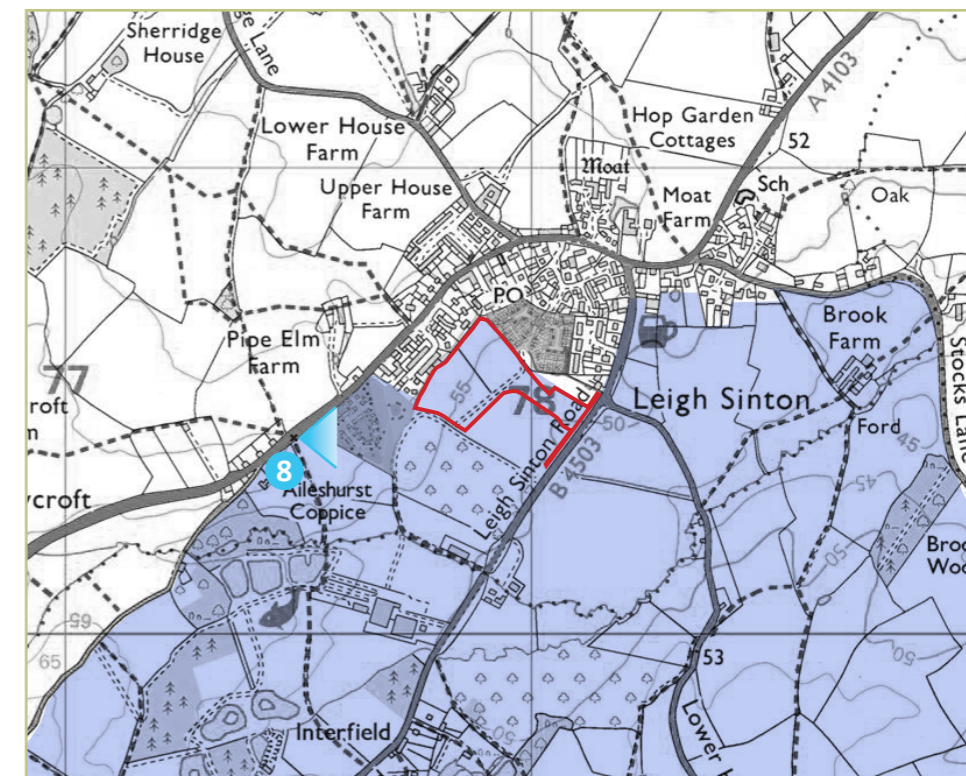
Description

- 5.76 Travelling along the A4103 (Hereford Road) views of the site are obscured by the presence of the Bluebell Walk development and further built form along the A4103.
- 5.77 The rooflines of Bluebell Walk and the wider buildings within Leigh Sinton filter views of the site for transient and recreational users of the A4103.
- 5.78 The falling topography towards the site also limits visibility of the site.

Receptors

- Transient users of the A4103 (Hereford Road)

Value	Low	-Not a recognised view and is of local value
Susceptibility	Low	-Transient users of the A4103 will be concentrating on the road ahead and not views -The site is not obvious and set behind existing built form located along the A4103
Overall Low Sensitivity		





Approximate Site Extents
(Red line boundary-located behind residential development)

New pedestrian footpath route
created as part of Bluebell Walk scheme

A4103

Orientation: East Grid Reference: SO 77642 50544 **Photoviewpoint 9**
Distance From Site: 0.12km Date and Time: 16/03/2021 11:41
Description: View from A4013 (Hereford Road) at entrance to new footpath through Bluebell Walk.

Users of A4103 (Hereford Road)

Description

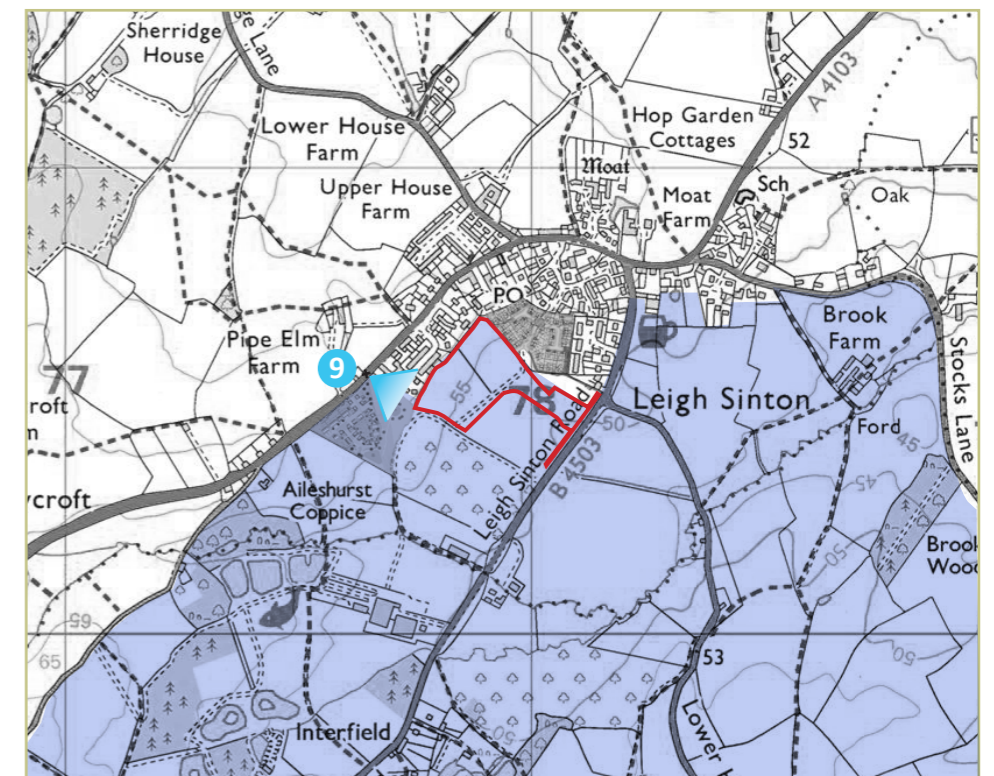
5.79 Views of the site for transient users of the A4103 are filtered by the presence of residential development located off Lynn Close and the A4103 itself. Built form seen in the foreground limits views of the site.

5.80 Within the centre of the view the new footpath which adjoins the A4103 can be seen running through the Bluebell Walk scheme to the south west of the site.

Receptors

- Transient users of the A4103 (Hereford Road)

Value	Low	-Not a recognised view and is of local value
Susceptibility	Low	-Transient users of the A4103 will be concentrating on the road ahead and not views -The site is not obvious and set behind existing built form located along the A4103
Overall Low Sensitivity		





Approximate Site Extents
(Red line boundary-located behind residential development)

Lynn Close

A4103

Orientation: East Grid Reference: SO 77754 50658 **Photoviewpoint 10**
 Distance From Site: 0.11km Date and Time: 16/03/2021 11:45
 Description: View from A4013 (Hereford Road) at junction with Lynn Close.

Users of A4103 (Hereford Road)

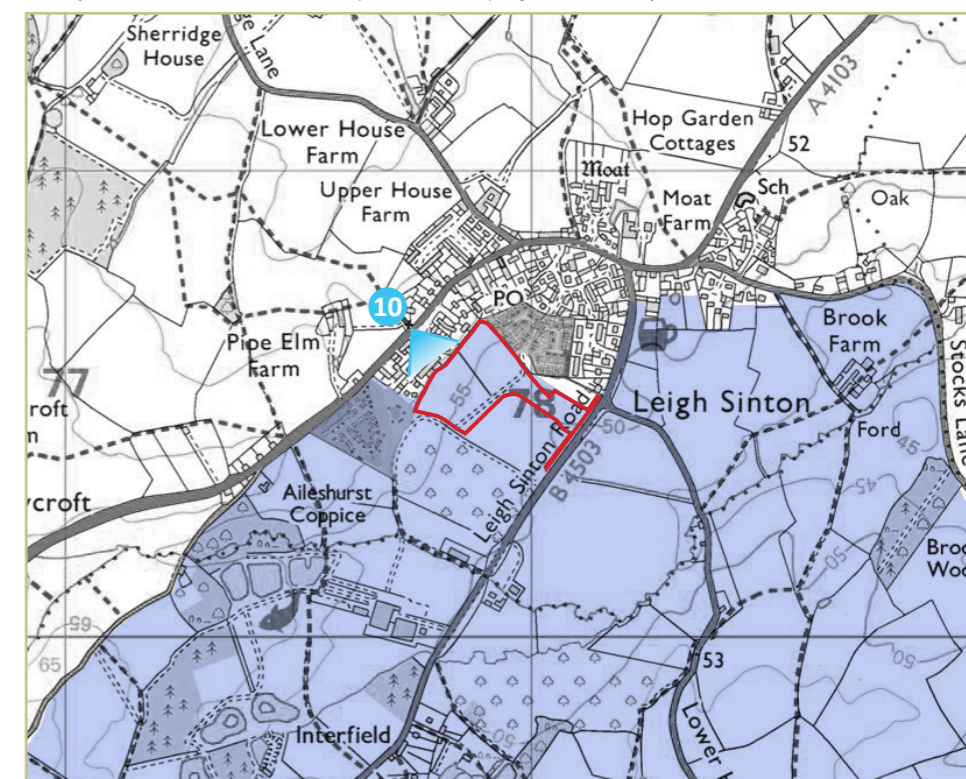
Description

5.81 Views if the site are seen in the context of existing residential development found at Lynn Close and along the A4103. This residential development is seen in the foreground of the view, with the site seen through gaps of existing residential development.

Receptors

- Transient users of the A4103 (Hereford Road)

Value	Low	-Not a recognised view and is of local value
Susceptibility	High	-Residents overlooking the site have direct views across the site and are in close proximity
Overall Medium Sensitivity		





Approximate Site Extents
(Red line boundary located behind residential development)

Lynn Close

Orientation: East
Distance From Site: 0.03km
Grid Reference: SO 77796 50615
Date and Time: 16/03/2021 11:48
Photoviewpoint 11
Description: Taken from Lynn Close.

Users of Lynn Close

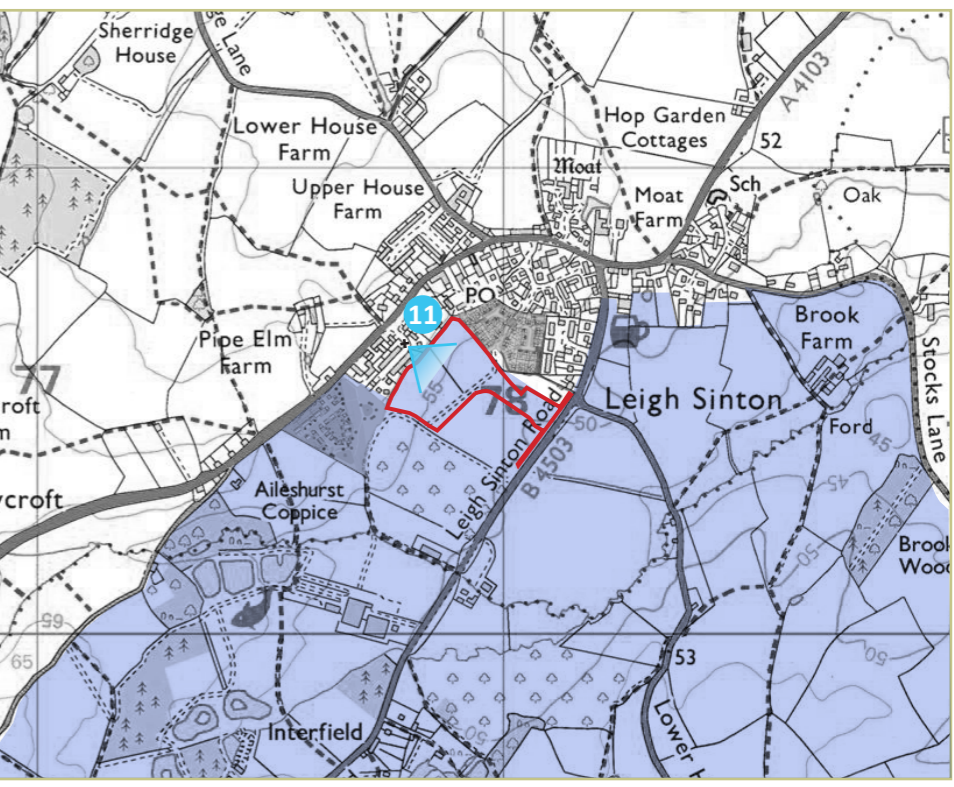
Description

5.82 Views of the site for transient users of Lynn Close are seen in the context of existing residential development which overlooks the western boundary of the site. The site is seen behind existing residential dwellings which are located on a slightly elevated position above the site.

Receptors

- Transient users of Lynn Close
- Residents of Lynn Close

Value	Low	-Not a recognised view and is of local value
Susceptibility	High	-Residents overlooking the site have direct views across the site and are in close proximity
Overall Medium Sensitivity		





Orientation: South West Grid Reference: SO 77979 50608 Photoviewpoint 12a
 Distance From Site: 0km Date and Time: 15/03/2021 12:25
 Description: View from Pineview Close.

Users of Pineview Drive (Key View - Special)

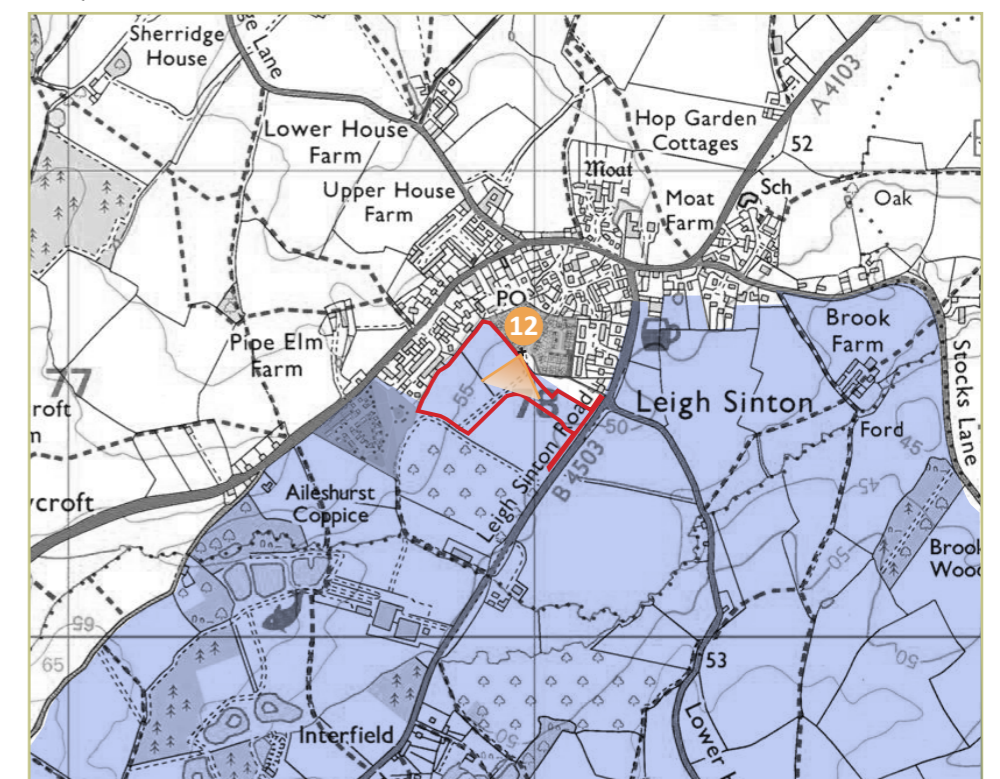
Description

- 5.83 Photoviewpoint 12a and 12b illustrate the direct views across the site for transient and recreational users of Pineview Drive.
- 5.84 Photoviewpoint 12a shows the play area located within the Malvern Rise development at the northern boundary of the site, with a newly planted hedgerow planting running alongside the boundary fence.
- 5.85 Much of the view is dominated by the presence of the existing Christmas tree plantation, with the fruit trees and boundary planting found along Leigh Sinton Road seen to the left of the view at the western site boundary.
- 5.86 Residential properties located along Pineview Drive can be seen overlooking the site within this view.
- 5.87 Within these views the Malvern Hills dominate the skyline and open views of the hills can be seen across the site. To the right of the Malvern Hills, the footpath routes located on the edge of the Malvern Hills AONB can be seen on the open land. The Malvern Hills form a distinctive feature within the landscape for users of Pineview Drive.

Receptors

- Recreational users of footpath through Pineview Drive
- Recreational users of play area
- Residents of Pineview Drive

Value	Medium	-Although not a recognised key view, a locally important view across towards the Malvern Hills for local people
Susceptibility	High	-Users of this footpath will be focussing on the landscape when walking this route Users of play area will be concentrating on the activity of play but also enjoying the view -Residents overlooking the site have direct views across the site and are in close proximity
Overall High Sensitivity		





Orientation: South West Grid Reference: SO 77979 50608 Photoviewpoint 12b
 Distance From Site: 0km Date and Time: 15/03/2021 12:25
 Description: View from Pineview Close.

Users of Pineview Drive

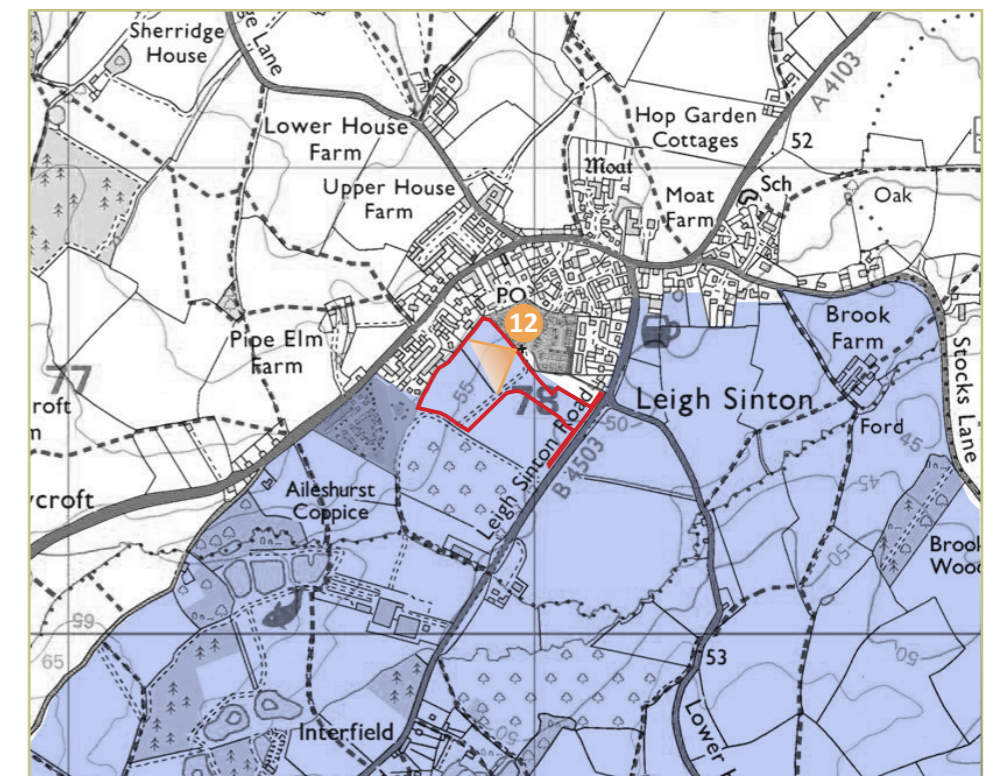
Description

- 5.88 Photoviewpoint 12b from Pineview Avenue overlooks the site at the northern boundary. Views of the site are direct, with the existing play area, fencing and new planting seen in the foreground of the view.
- 5.89 To the right, residential development located off Lynn Close can be seen overlooking the western boundary of the site on slightly elevated ground. To the rear of this housing, glimpsed views can be seen of the Bluebell Walk development seen at the south western corner of the site.
- 5.90 At the south western boundary of the site, mature conifer trees can be seen above the Christmas tree plantation forming the backdrop to the site. Residential development located off Pineview Drive can be seen in the foreground of the view directly overlooking the northern boundary of the site.
- 5.91 These views set the site in a developed context, with the existing settlement edge being a clear feature within the landscape and within the view. The lower slopes of the AONB can be seen in the backdrop of the view from this location

Receptors

- Recreational users of footpath through Pineview Avenue
- Recreational users of play area
- Residents of Pineview Avenue

Value	Medium	-Although not a recognised key view, a locally important view across towards the Malvern Hills for local people
Susceptibility	High	-Users of this footpath will be focussing on the landscape when walking this route -Residents overlooking the site have direct views across the site and are in close proximity
Overall High Sensitivity		





Approximate Site Extents
(Red line boundary-located behind residential development)

Conifers at south western
boundary of the site

Orientation: South West Grid Reference: SO 77995 50620 **Photoviewpoint 13**
Distance From Site: 0.03km Date and Time: 15/03/2021 12:24

Description: View from Malvern Rise at the junction of Spruce Close and Pineview Drive.

Users of Pineview Drive

Description

5.92 Views of the site as illustrated by representative Photoviewpoint 13, are seen along Pineview Avenue towards the northern boundary of the site. Residential development within the Malvern Rise development is seen in the foreground of the view and obscures much of the site from view.

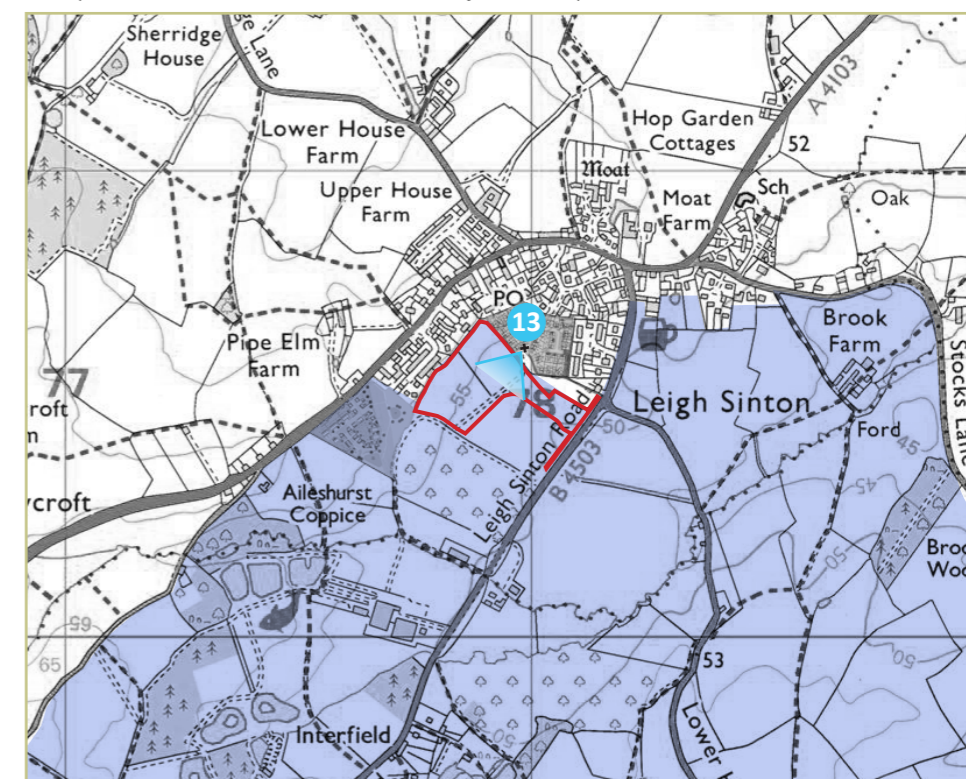
5.93 From these roads, parts of the site are visible, with the planting at the southern boundary seen in the backdrop of the view. The play area can be seen located between the northern boundary of the site and the existing development at Malvern Rise.

5.94 Much of the view of the site from this location comprises the Christmas tree plantation, with boundary planting to the south forming the backdrop, and beyond that the rising ground and edge of the Malvern Hills AONB seen forming the backdrop to the view.

Receptors

- Residents of Pineview Avenue

Value	Medium	-Although not a recognised key view, a locally important view across towards the Malvern Hills for local people
Susceptibility	High	-Residents overlooking the site have direct views across the site and are in close proximity
Overall High Sensitivity		





Orientation: South West Grid Reference: SO 78070 50558
 Distance From Site: 0.05km Date and Time: 15/03/2021 12:30 **Photoviewpoint 14**

Description: View from pedestrian footpath linking Leigh Sinton Road and Pineview Drive

Users of footpath located off Leigh Sinton Road (Key View - Special)

Description

5.95 Representative photoviewpoint 14 is taken from the pedestrian access point off Leigh Sinton Road which runs into the Malvern Rise development to the north of the site. From this footpath site, direct and uninterrupted views of the site can be seen.

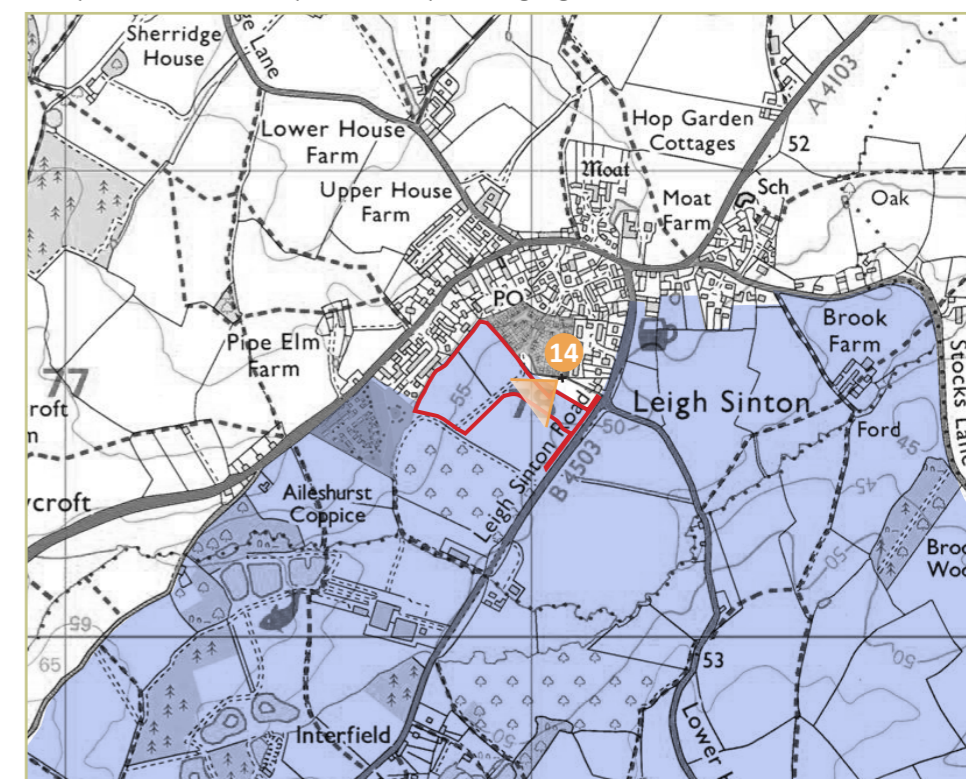
5.96 Within the foreground of the view the SuDS scheme associated with the Malvern Rise scheme is seen, with boundary fencing separating the site from the adjoining land. The Christmas tree plantation is a marked feature within the view, and beyond this the Malvern Hills are seen forming the backdrop and sitting along the skyline within the view.

5.97 To the right, the existing development along Lynn Close and the construction site/development at Bluebell Walk is seen overlooking the western part of the site. Views of rooflines, windows and gable ends are clearly visible on the slightly elevated land to the west of the site. The evergreen trees located at the south western boundary can also be seen within this view, with the canopy line breaking the skyline and an obvious feature within the landscape.

Receptors

- Recreational users of footpath through Pineview Avenue
- Recreational users of play area
- Residents of Pineview Avenue

Value	Medium	-Although not a recognised key view, a locally important view across towards the Malvern Hills for local people
Susceptibility	High	-Users of this footpath will be focussing on the landscape when walking this route -Residents overlooking the site have direct views across the site and are in close proximity
Overall High Sensitivity		





Orientation: South Grid Reference: SO 78201 50607
 Distance From Site: 0.01km Date and Time: 16/03/2021 11:58 **Photoviewpoint 15**

Description: View from Leigh Sinton Road.

Users Leigh Sinton Road

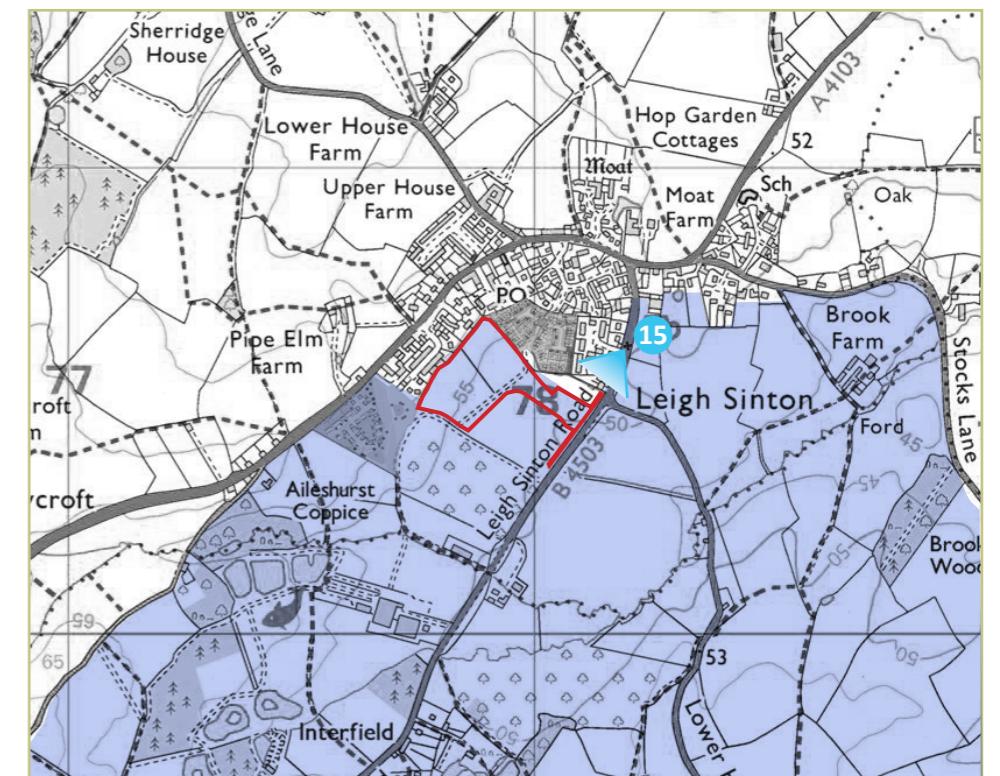
Description

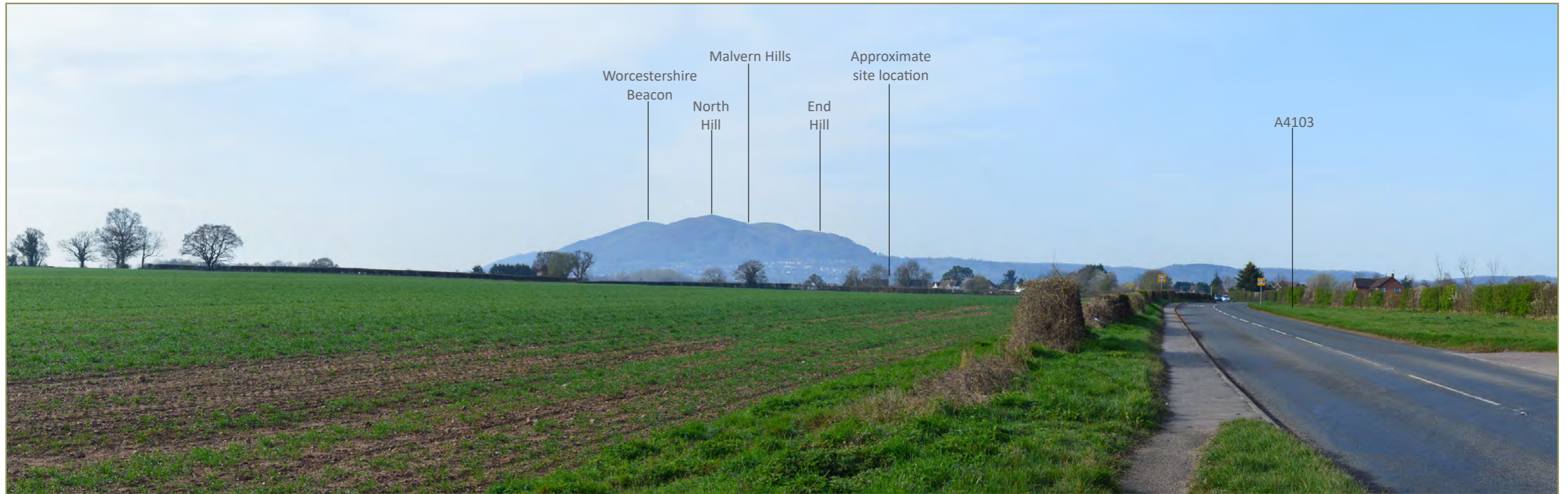
5.98 Representative Photoviewpoint 15 is taken from Leigh Sinton Road to the north east of the site. Views of the site are obscured by the presence of residential development located off Leigh Sinton Road and Chapel Close. To the centre of the view the Malvern Hills can be seen forming the backdrop to the views. Intervening vegetation found within gardens also filter views of the site and limit potential visibility.

Receptors

- Transient users of Leigh Sinton Road

Value	Medium	-Not a recognised key view but local views of AONB
Susceptibility	Low	-Users travelling at speed along Leigh Sinton -Site located to the right of the hills behind existing built form -Users concentrating on the road ahead and not the view
Overall Low Sensitivity		





Orientation: South
 Distance From Site: 1.1km
 Grid Reference: SO 78790 51389
 Date and Time: 30/03/2021 12:20
Photoviewpoint 16
 Description: View from A4103 towards the Malvern Hills.

Users of the A4103 (Key View - Special View 1)

Description

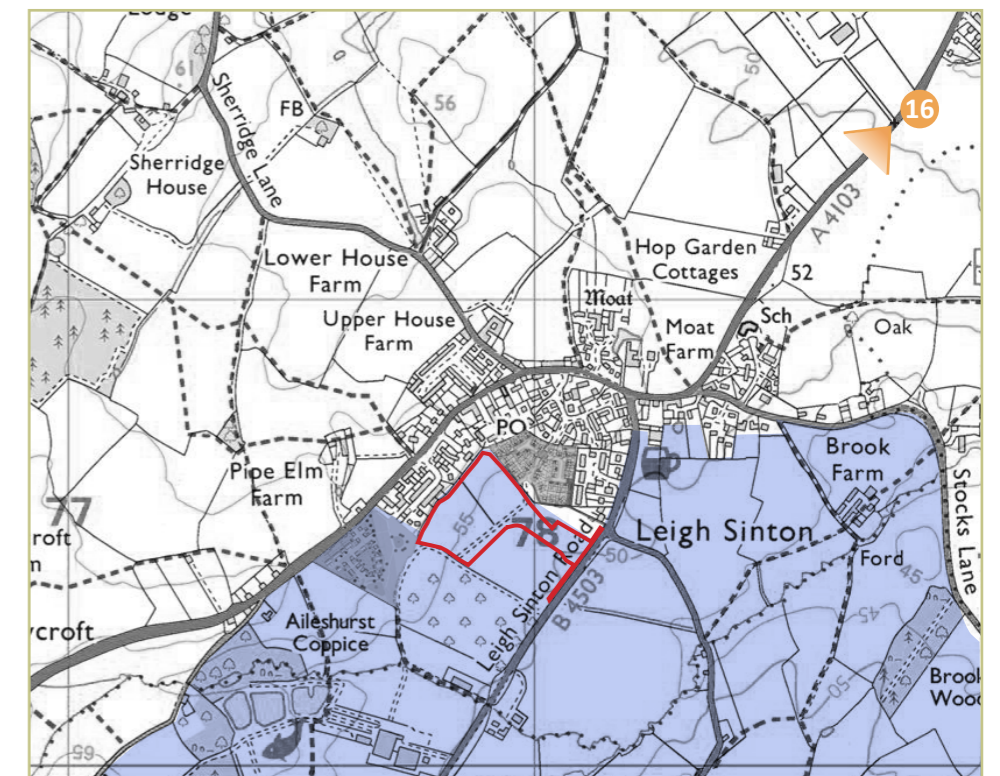
5.99 Representative photoviewpoint 16 is taken to the north of the site from the A4103 and is an identified key view within the Malvern Hills AONB Key Views document, as detailed further within **Appendix 2** of the report.

5.100 From this location, users of the A4103 do not see the site due to the presence of intervening tree planting found to field boundaries and within the curtilage of residential development located at the northern edge of Leigh Sinton. The Malvern Hills are a dominant feature within the view and seen rising above the settlement of Malvern.

Receptors

- Transient users of A4103

Value	High	-Recognised key View within the Malvern Hills AONB Management Plan
Susceptibility	Low	-Users travelling at speed along A4103 with the site located at the foot of the Malvern Hills -Users concentrating on the road ahead and not the view
Overall Medium Sensitivity		





Orientation: West Grid Reference: SO 78135 50460 Photoviewpoint 17
 Distance From Site: 0km Date and Time: 15/03/2021 12:39
 Description: View from Leigh Sinton Road.

Users of Leigh Sinton Road

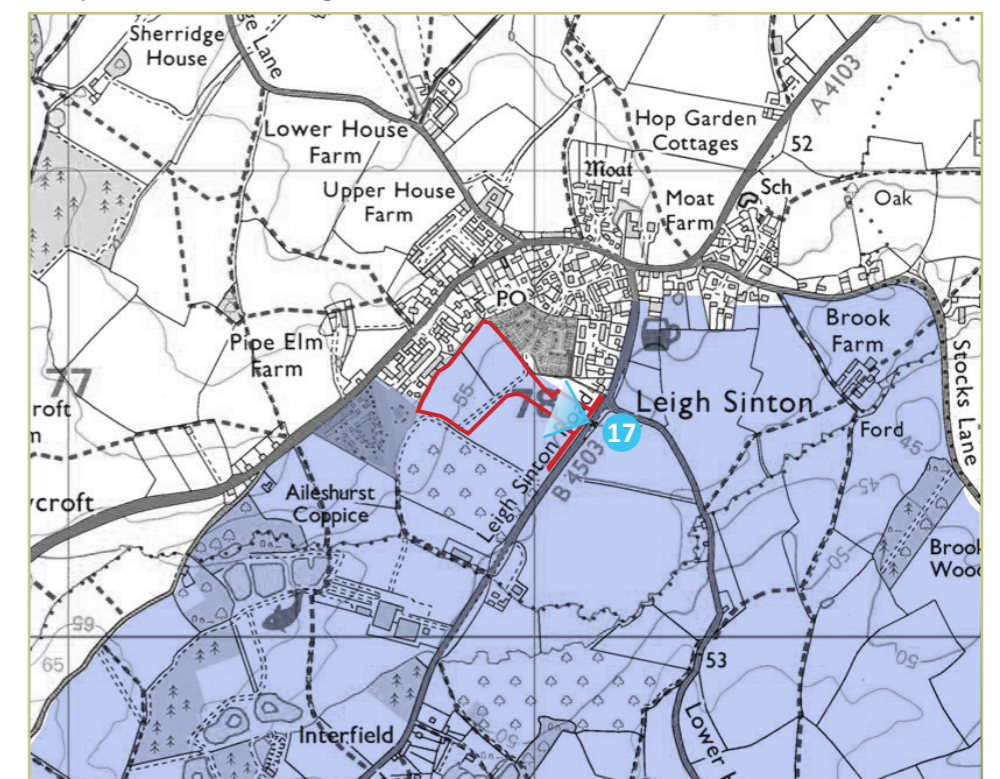
Description

- 5.101 Representative Photoviewpoint 17 is taken from Leigh Sinton Road at the north eastern corner of the site. A relatively newly planted hedgerow can be seen in the foreground of the view affording more open views across the site.
- 5.102 Adjoining this new hedgerow planting is the established belt of tree and hedging located along the length of Leigh Sinton Road, which filters views of the site. Direct views of the site can be seen at the gap through the hedging, and within these views the development at Malvern Rise can be seen along the skyline with the existing fruit tree plantation seen locate at the north eastern boundary of the site.
- 5.103 To the west, and within the backdrop of the view the residential development at Lynn Close can be seen overlooking the western boundary of the site. The existing mature oak tree located just to the northern boundary of the site is also seen within this view.

Receptors

- Transient users of Leigh Sinton Road

Value	Low	-Not within any recognised or locally important view -View of the site is limited by the presence of vegetation
Susceptibility	Low	-Users travelling at speed along Leigh Sinton Road -Users concentrating on the road ahead and not the view -No pedestrian footpath along Leigh Sinton Road
Overall Low Sensitivity		





Orientation: West
 Distance From Site: 0km
 Grid Reference: SO 78029 50318
 Date and Time: 15/03/2021 12:44
Photoviewpoint 18
 Description: View from Leigh Sinton Road.

Users of Leigh Sinton Road

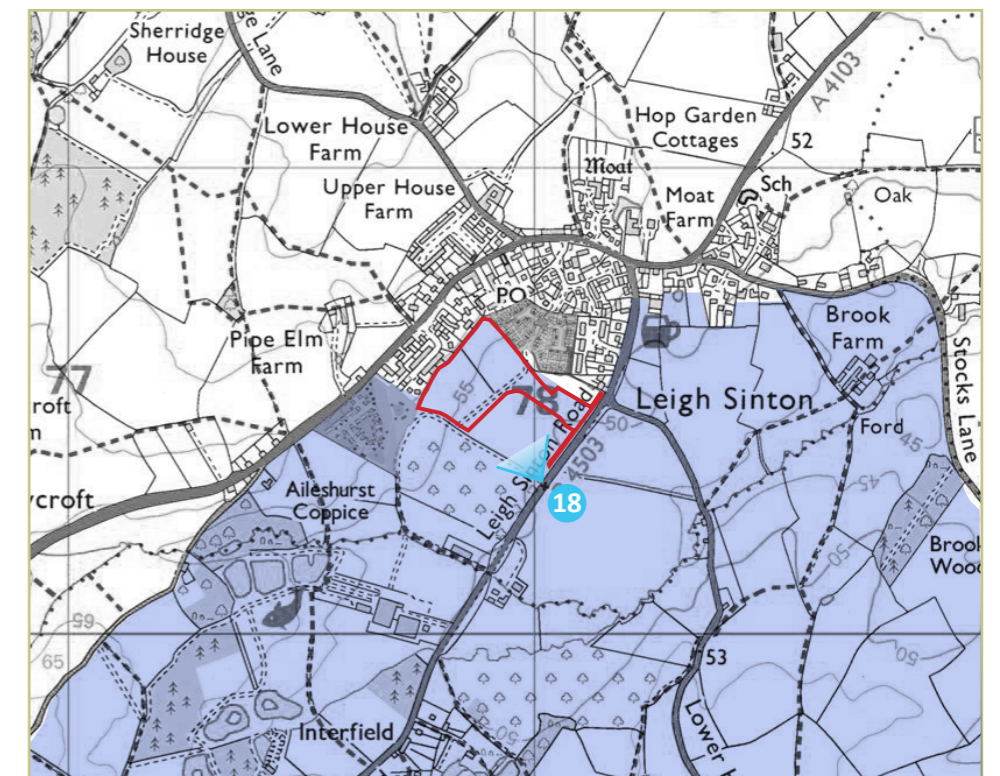
5.104 Representative Photoviewpoint 18 is taken to the south east of the site at a field gate off Leigh Sinton Road. From this location, views of the site are filtered by the presence of the existing vegetation found along Leigh Sinton Road. The overgrown hedgerow which flanks this transport route filters views across the site, although slight glimpsed views of the Christmas tree plantation can be seen through gaps in the planting.

5.105 The southern boundary hedgerow can also be seen in the left of the view and limits visibility of the site. Beyond this, the mature evergreen trees at the south western corner of the site can be seen along the skyline. The development at Bluebell Walk, can also be seen in this view in the background above the existing Christmas tree plantation.

Receptors

- Transient users of Leigh Sinton Road

Value	Low	-Not within any recognised or locally important view -View of the site is limited by the presence of vegetation
Susceptibility	Low	-Users travelling at speed along Leigh Sinton Road -Users concentrating on the road ahead and not the view -No pedestrian footpath along Leigh Sinton Road
Overall Low Sensitivity		



6 Opportunities and Constraints

Landscape Principles and Opportunities

6.1 In response to the landscape and visual baseline analysis, a series of landscape objectives, and opportunities and constraints have been identified to inform the development of the site. The design response and rationale ensures that the development of the site reflects the local circumstances and context, and as been derived from the detailed desktop studies, baseline analysis and field studies. The opportunities also take into account policy compliance and published landscape character.

Significant Gap

6.2 The development of the site should respond to the Significant Gap designation (as identified within **Appendix 1**) through the following objectives and recommendations:

- Maintain development within the envelope of the existing settlement edge to ensure that the perception of the openness of the Significant gap is maintained and coalescence of settlements prevented;
- Provide opportunities for enhancements to the retained undeveloped land within the site for increased ecological networks, and opportunities for increased recreation;
- Maintain and enhance the boundary hedgerow planting along the southern and eastern boundaries to provide visual enclosure and containment in views when travelling along Leigh Sinton Road and along public footpaths to the south of the site;
- Maintain the sense of openness and retain views across towards the Malvern Hills to the south; and
- Provide increased characteristic planting within the site to increase ecological and recreational links outside of the site boundaries.

Malvern Hills AONB Key Views Assessment

6.3 The development of the site should respond sensitively to the special qualities of the Malvern Hills AONB and identified key views (as identified within **Appendix 2**) through the following objectives and recommendations:

- Retention of views from Pineview Drive at the northern boundary of the site across towards the Malvern Hills to the south;
- Proposed landscaping and enhanced hedgerow planting located along the northern boundary of the site to be maintained in the long term to an overall height of 1.2-1.3m, ensuring visibility across the open space and retained undeveloped land towards the Malvern Hills;
- Proposed central open space within site to be planted with scattered trees which are to be located strategically to ensure the retention of key views;

- Views from the Malvern Hills to the north of the new and existing settlement edge should be enhanced with additional characteristic tree and hedgerow planting to soften the settlement edge and built form;
- Retention of new development within the envelope of the existing settlement edge of Leigh Sinton to ensure that the proposals are integrated into existing built form when viewed from elevated positions and within panoramic views;
- Provision of new internal street scene planting to soften the rooflines of the new development in wider longer distance views;
- A soft edge provided to the new development, with tree and hedgerow planting and careful siting and orientation of buildings to ensure a soft and informal edge is created to the new development;
- Choice of materials and colours carefully considered to ensure that the proposals are not out of character or setting with the adjacent settlement edge; and
- Retention of existing evergreen tree planting at the south western corner of the site to maintain filtering of views from lower land within AONB.

Design Response

6.4 Taking into account the recommendations in relation to the Significant Gap Designation and the Malvern Hills AONB Key Views findings, the following recommendations for the development of the site are proposed which should be read in conjunction with the Opportunities and Constraints Plan (**Incola 1010 P05**):

1. Existing hedge and tree planting supplemented and enhanced with additional native shrubs with the planting maintained to a height of 1.2-1.3m to retain views of Malvern Hills to the south and increase ecological corridor through site east to west;
2. New areas of scattered tree planting to soften development edge and increase characteristic vegetation to provide additional green infrastructure. Proposed tree planting to be placed strategically to ensure views of the Malvern Hills are maintained to the south;
3. New orchard planting to increase characteristic planting and links to adjacent existing orchard, providing opportunities for community growing and increased ecological habitats;
4. Existing hedgerow maintained and supplemented at eastern and southern boundaries with additional native tree and shrub planting to maintain green corridor and characteristic planting. Where gaps in hedgerow are present, these should be gapped up with a double staggered native hedgerow and hedgerow trees, characteristic of the Principal Timbered Farmlands Landscape Character Type;

5. Publicly accessible green space should be maintained and planted with strategically located scattered native trees to ensure wide ranging views of the Malvern Hills to the south are retained. Opportunities exist to increase the ecological habitats through this space with the creation of wildflower meadow planting, scrub and native tree species, along with increased opportunities for informal recreation routes and opportunities for informal play;
6. Development to be maintained behind the existing evergreen tree planting found along the southern boundary, and adjacent to the existing settlement edge and houses off Lynn Close;
7. Opportunities to increase recreation and green links across the site with the existing Malvern Rise and Bluebell Walk developments with increased green infrastructure, biodiversity and recreation enhancements. This can include additional publicly accessible footpath routes to increase the connectivity to the wider network of recreation routes outside of the site boundaries;
8. Development plots to include internal streetscene planting and plot frontage landscaping to soften built form and integrate development into the surrounding landscape and soften development forms when seen in wider views; and
9. Development maintained within extents of existing settlement edge with opportunities for betterment to new settlement boundary and softer transition at edge of site with the remaining undeveloped landscape outside of the site boundaries;
10. Access off Leigh Sinton Road to include streetscene planting to soften views of the settlement edge and provide increased landscape features through the site; and
11. Opportunity to create new hedgerow along plot frontages to reference historic hedge lined route, increase characteristic hedgerow planting and create additional Green Infrastructure links and connections across the site.

6.5 Overall, the site presents opportunities to enhance the landscape character and setting of the site and can be accommodated through a careful and sensitive approach to the landscape and visual baseline.

6.6 Opportunities exist to develop the site and provide additional benefits for the community and wildlife with additional recreational routes, areas of accessible public open space and diverse wildlife habitats and ecological corridors.

6 Opportunities and Constraints



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Plan Name	Opportunities and Constraints
Drawing Number	Incola 1010 P06a
Revision	-
Date	22/06/2021

0km 0.05km 0.1km

 Site Boundary
 Potential developable area
 Opportunity for new orchard planting
 Retain and enhance existing native hedgerow planting
 Retain and enhance existing native hedgerow planting, to 1.2-1.3m high, ensuring views of the Malvern Hills are maintained across open space
 Opportunity for new hedgerow planting to reference historic hedgeline and increase GI links

Development to front onto open space
 ▶ Opportunities for new pedestrian access
 Areas of scattered native tree planting

Proposals

7.1 The proposed development will provide the following:

- 45 residential units including 25 traditional builds and 20 custom / build units
- Associated parking and infrastructure;
- Access off Leigh Sinton Road;
- New pedestrian footpaths linking to Malvern Rise, Bluebell Walk and Leigh Sinton Road;
- New areas of accessible public open space;
- SuDS and attenuation;
- Retained boundary planting and landscape features; and
- Retained field access to adjacent Christmas tree plantation.

7.2 In response to the opportunities and constraints which have been identified through the baseline studies a Landscape Strategy Plan has been developed. This Landscape Strategy Plan (Incola 1010 P07) will provide the following:

- 1. Development located adjacent to settlement edge and within extents of built form to reduce impacts of Significant Gap and landscape character.**
 - The proposed built form is located adjacent to the existing settlement edge and is within close proximity to the buildings found along Lynn Close to the west of the site. Retaining development at the western extent will ensure that views of the site are seen in the context of the adjacent settlement. The built form is proposed away from Leigh Sinton Road which forms the principle route between Leigh Sinton and Malvern to ensure that implications on the openness of the Significant Gap are minimised.
- 2. Proposed development parcel located at the western part of the site on land which is smaller than site extents to reduce impacts on views.**
 - The proposed development parcels are maintained and limited to the western part of the site to minimise the implications on views across towards the Malvern Hills. Maintaining development on only part of the site extents within this area will ensure that the Key Views both to and from the Malvern Hills AONB are retained.
- 3. Hedgerows maintained to a height of 1.2 metre to maintain views across towards Malvern Hills.**
 - To increase characteristic planting and Green Infrastructure across the site in addition to providing characteristic planting and providing an increase in this landscape feature within the site areas of native hedgerow are proposed. These species rich hedgerows will be located

and maintained to ensure that views of the Malvern Hills are retained and hedgerow trees placed strategically.

- 4. Proposed fruit trees/orchard to extend existing orchard located to the north and increase characteristic planting along entrance into the site;**
 - New areas of fruit trees are proposed adjacent to the existing TPO orchard at the north eastern corner of the site to increase diversity and provide additional community benefits and ecological resources. The proposed orchard will also assist in filtering views of the development when seen from Leigh Sinton Road to the east of the site.
- 5. Existing hedgerow along Leigh Sinton Road maintained and enhanced with additional native trees and shrubs;**
 - The hedgerow planting which runs along Leigh Sinton Road is to be retained and managed to filter views across towards the site. Where necessary areas of this hedging will be removed to accommodate visibility splays, but any removal of hedgerow will be mitigated and areas of new hedgerow created through the site elsewhere.
- 6. Proposed native hedgerow and hedgerow trees to form boundary of the site to increase landscape connectivity and characteristic planting. Proposed hedgerow to be managed at a height of 1.2 metres to maintain views across towards the Malvern Hills to the south;**
 - Additional areas of hedgerows are to be created which will increase characteristic planting. These species rich hedgerows will be located and maintained to ensure that views of the Malvern Hills are retained and hedgerow trees placed strategically.
- 7. Proposed wildflower margins to open space to provide transition to site edges and increase ecological habitats;**
 - Areas of wildflower meadows will be created at the margins of the site to create a varied and diverse habitat and landscape. These wildflower margins will also provide increased opportunities for wildlife habitats and wider connectivity of Green Infrastructure.
- 8. Proposed native scattered trees within open space to soften the edge of the development, filter views and provide increased characteristic planting and ecological habitats;**
 - The proposed landscape buffer and public open space which runs along the eastern and northern parts of the site will include areas of scattered native tree planting with Oak and Field Maple the predominant species characteristic of the wider landscape. Proposed native tree planting will replace the more uncharacteristic Christmas tree planting and create a softer transition to the new settlement edge to enhance visual amenity and improve the southern edge of Leigh Sinton when seen in wider longer distance views from the AONB.

9. Proposed marginal planting to SuDS and attenuation to provide ecological habitat;

- Two areas of SuDS/attenuation are proposed within the open space which will include a diverse mix of native marginal species to provide interest and colour and increase ecological habitat and diversity. The location of the SuDS will also be within close proximity of footpath routes to provide added interest for pedestrian users.
- 10. Proposed pedestrian footpath routes through open space to link to wider PRoW and open space to the north and south west;**
 - New footpath routes are proposed through the open space which will link to the footpath and open space within Malvern Rise to the north and to the redirected footpath to the south west at Bluebell Walk. These additional footpath routes will increase opportunities for active travel and sustainable walking routes through the southern part of Leigh Sinton and will provide a car free route linking Leigh Sinton Road in the east with the A4103 in the west. The proposed footpath routes will provide opportunities for dog walking, informal recreation, play, opportunities to admire the view and place to stop and rest through a beneficial and accessible green open space.
 - 11. Proposed areas of play integrated into landscape buffer with proposed tree and shrub planting;**
 - Within the public open space, proposed areas of play are included to provide additional benefits for the community and residents. These areas of play will compliment the existing facilities found at the north of the site within the Malvern Rise scheme and will be located amongst areas with landscape features and new planting.
 - 12. Retention and additional area of hedgerow along southern boundary to increase connectivity and maintain visual containment; and**
 - Gaps in the hedgerow along the southern boundary of the site will be gapped up and planted with additional native trees and shrubs to provide strong green connections and maintain visual containment when seen from the south.
 - 13. Proposed tree and shrub planting at plot frontages to soften built form and increase planting within development plots.**
 - Within the development plots, the scheme will propose tree and shrub planting at plot frontages with tree species appropriate for their location and setting. Trees will soften the appearance of built form, will over time break up the appearance of rooflines in wider views and will increase diversity and green infrastructure.
- 7.3 Overall the proposals respond to the landscape and visual context and their surroundings to provide beneficial green spaces and a sensitive response and provide increased opportunities for recreation and ecological enhancement for the local community.

1. Development located adjacent to settlement edge and within extents of built form to reduce impacts of Significant Gap and landscape character;
2. Proposed development parcel located at the western part of the site on land which is smaller than site extents to reduce impacts on key views;
3. Hedgerows maintained to a height of 1.2 metre to maintain views across towards Malvern Hills;
4. Proposed fruit trees/orchard to extend existing orchard located to the north and increase characteristic planting along entrance into the site;
5. Existing hedgerow along Leigh Sinton Road maintained and enhanced with additional native trees and shrubs;
6. Proposed native hedgerow and hedgerow trees to form boundary of the site to increase landscape connectivity and characteristic planting. Proposed hedgerow to be managed at a height of 1.2 metres to maintain views across towards the Malvern Hills to the south;
7. Proposed wildflower margins to open space to provide transition to site edges and increase ecological habitats;
8. Proposed native scattered trees within open space to soften the edge of the development, filter views and provide increased characteristic planting and ecological habitats;
9. Proposed marginal planting to SuDS and attenuation to provide ecological habitat;
10. Proposed pedestrian footpath routes through open space to link to wider PRoW and open space to the north and south west;
11. Proposed areas of play integrated into landscape buffer with proposed tree and shrub planting;
12. Retention and additional area of hedgerow along southern boundary to increase connectivity and maintain visual containment; and
13. Proposed tree and shrub planting at plot frontages to soften built form and increase planting within development plots.



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Legend

- Existing vegetation retained and enhanced
- Fruit Trees/ Orchard
- Open Space Trees
- Street Trees
- Hedgerow Trees
- Native Hedge/ Shrubs
- SuDS/Marginal Planting
- Grassland/ Meadow
- Amenity Grass
- Play Facilities

Fruit Trees
Indicative Species:
Worcestershire Pearmain
Lord Hindlip
Doddin




Native Hedgerow
Indicative Species:
Corylus avellana
Crataegus monogyna
Ilex aquifolium
Prunus spinosa
Viburnum opulus



Open Space Trees
Indicative Species:
Acer campestre
Alnus glutinosa
Betula pendula
Carpinus betulus
Quercus robur



Street Trees and Plot Frontage Trees
Indicative Species:
Amelanchier lamarkii
Carpinus betulus
Prunus avium
Sorbus aria
Quercus palustris



Grassland/Meadow
Indicative Species:
EM3 - Emorsgate Special General Purpose Meadow Mix



SuDS/Marginal Planting
Indicative Species:
EM8 - Emorsgate meadow mixture for wetlands



Plan Name	Landscape Strategy Plan
Drawing Number	Incola 1010-P07
Revision	-
Date	
Scale	Not to scale

Introduction

- 8.1 Having identified the landscape and visual context, including key characteristics, features and the extent and composition of views, this section provides a summary of the potential landscape and visual effects of the proposed development.
- 8.2 This assessment is based on the design parameters and proposals and the Landscape Strategy Plan (Incola 1010 P07) in addition to the opportunities and constraints identified within the baseline studies.
- 8.3 The assessment initially provides an overview of the findings of the Significant Gap Appraisal (Appendix 1) and goes on to provide an overview of the Malvern Key Views document found at Appendix 2.

Significant Gap Appraisal (Appendix 1 - Incola 1010 R02)

- 8.4 As identified, the Significant Gap Policy is a spatial designation and not one which addresses landscape character or landscape value.
- 8.5 The purpose of the Significant Gap is detailed as the following within Policy SWDP2 of the adopted South Worcestershire Development Plan:

"The purpose of maintaining these gaps, which either serve as a buffer or visual break between rural settlements and adjacent urban areas or protect the character and setting of settlements, is to provide additional protection to open land that may be subject to development pressures. The designation helps to maintain a clear separation between smaller settlements and urban areas in order to retain their individual identity."

- 8.6 Through a desktop review, the appraisal found the following with regards to the SWDP Review, Preferred Options Significant Gap Appraisal (November 2019):

"The SWDP Review Preferred Options Significant Gap Appraisal (November 2019), identified that the significant gap between Malvern and Leigh Sinton has the potential for discrete parcels of land to the south of Leigh Sinton to be developed."

- 8.7 The review highlights that distinct parcels at the southern edge of Leigh Sinton have the potential to be developed within the Significant Gap. In addition to this, the development at Bluebell Walk to the south west of the site lies within the Significant Gap and was granted permission at appeal.

Existing Physical Distances



Figure 5: Physical Distances of Significant Gap (Extract from Incola 1010 P09 as found within Appendix 1)

Proposed Physical Distances



Figure 6: Proposals and Settlement Edge

Physical Distance

- 8.8 An assessment was completed on the impact of physical distances between the settlement edges of Malvern and Leigh Sinton and as identified within at paragraph 4.5,

"There will be no change to the physical distances between the settlements of Malvern and Leigh Sinton and development of the site will remain to the north of the extents of the existing settlement edge."

- 8.9 The appraisal identifies that the development of the site can be accommodated without reducing the physical distances between the settlements and reducing any potential for coalescence. This is illustrated on (Incola 1010 P09), an extract of which is included at Figure 5.
- 8.10 Retaining the development at the western edge of the site, as illustrated on Figure 6, adjacent to the existing settlement edge of Leigh Sinton will ensure that the physical distances between the settlements are no greater than the existing situation.
- 8.11 In addition to this, Figure 6 illustrates the location of the Bluebell Walk

scheme in relation to the site. This development extends the settlement edge 0.13km further south west than the proposed built form within the site and is located within the Significant Gap.

8.12 The appraisal concludes that the development of the site will not be detrimental to the physical gap between the settlements of Malvern and Leigh Sinton.

Perception of the Significant Gap

8.13 In addition to the assessment of physical distances, an assessment was completed of how the development of the site would affect the perception of the Significant Gap, and its purpose of retaining the separate identities of Malvern and Leigh Sinton and reducing the potential for coalescence between the settlements.

8.14 The appraisal identified key transport routes, footpaths and how the development of the site may impact on the users of these routes and their experience of travelling between Leigh Sinton and Malvern. It also assessed the perception of the gap for users of the footpaths within elevated positions from the northern hills of the Malvern Hills AONB. An assessment of the key transport routes identified the following:

Western transport routes - Halfkey Road, Dragons Lane and Hereford Road

8.15 At paragraph 5.12 the appraisal states that:

"From Hereford Road, views of the site cannot be seen due to the falling topography and presence of built form with the site located further north than the settlement extents."

8.16 The presence of evergreen tree planting and the existing settlement edge reduces visibility and therefore the development of the site will not be perceived as being detrimental to the Significant Gap.

Central transport route - Leigh Sinton Road;

The appraisal at paragraph 5.20, identified that:

"The presence of intervening vegetation, hedgerow planting and linear planting found along Leigh Sinton Road limit the potential for changes to occur to the perceived separation between Malvern and Leigh Sinton, and the presence of existing built form scattered along Leigh Sinton Road also reduces the perceived openness and undeveloped landscape."

8.17 Paragraph 3.17 of the appraisal states the following with regards to the appeal decision of the Bluebell Walk scheme:

"The development at the site at Bluebell Walk was deemed to be acceptable and identified that the development would not be detrimental to the perceived openness or narrowing of the gap between Leigh Sinton and Malvern. The inspector identifies that development located along Leigh Sinton Road would have a greater impact on the perceived gap between

Leigh Sinton and Malvern and that any development fronting this road would have a more detrimental impact on the perceived reduction in gap".

8.18 A new access point will be created off Leigh Sinton Road which will result in infrastructure and changes to the gateway along Leigh Sinton Road, however, the retained hedgerow and additional proposed internal planting will reduce the visual impacts and limit any perceived reduction in the Significant Gap. For these users, views of the settlement edge are already experienced as stated at paragraph 5.19:

"Localised views of the site can be seen at the proposed entrance to the site boundaries where a newly planted section of hedgerow exists. From this location, views across the site can be seen to the existing settlement edge and residential dwellings found to Malvern Rise located at the northern boundary of the site. In the background, residential properties and built form located off Lynn Close can be seen overlooking the site at its western extents. "

8.19 Therefore the perception of any potential narrowing of the gap will be barely discernible for users of this transport route.

Eastern transport routes -Lower Howsell Road and Stocks Lane.

8.20 For users of the eastern transport routes, the development of the site will be barely discernible in views as states at paragraph 5.23:

"Native hedgerow and deciduous tree planting run along the boundaries of much of this road, and limit visibility".

8.21 Where views of the site can be seen from these transport routes, they are seen within the context of the existing settlement edge and there will be limited changes to the perception of the separation and openness for users of these routes.

Footpath Routes

8.22 For footpath users of the routes between Malvern and Leigh Sinton, the presence of intervening vegetation limits the perception of openness

and reduces the visibility of the site. For users of the footpath routes at the eastern part of the Significant Gap, the appraisal found that the development of the site would result in no change to the perception of the significant gap, as identified at paragraph 5.43:

"The well vegetated landscape and tree lined skylines limit the sense of openness across the Significant Gap for users of these footpaths and many of this landscape at the eastern part of the significant gap is more undeveloped in its character than that of the land to the west. There is very little intervisibility between the settlements and the site for users of these footpaths. "

8.23 It identified the following at paragraph 5.35, that for users of the footpath routes within the western part of the significant gap:

"The well vegetated landscape and tree lined skylines limit the sense of openness across the Significant Gap with very little intervisibility between the settlements and the site. Where more open views across the significant gap are possible and where the settlement edge of Leigh Sinton can be seen, views of the site are obscured by existing built form and the site sits within the confines of the existing settlement edge on lower ground, and will therefore not be visible from these locations."

8.24 Where glimpsed views of the site are possible from these footpaths they are limited, filtered by vegetation and seen within the context of the existing settlement edge. There will be limited changes to the perception of the separation and openness for users of these footpath routes.

Long distance routes

8.25 With regards to long distance views from the Malvern Hills AONB and the perception of the development of the site from these elevated positions (as illustrated by Figure 7, the appraisal states at paragraph 5.51 that:

"The proposed development when viewed from these footpath routes will not cause any coalescence between the settlement or extend development into the more undeveloped Significant Gap land to the south, and can



Figure 7: Long Distance View B (taken from North Hill)

be accommodated through mitigation without being detrimental to the openness of the Significant Gap land."

8.26 It goes on to say that:

"From End Hill and North Hill, the edge of Leigh Sinton is a distinctive feature within the landscape and the scheme at Malvern Rise which forms the northern edge of the site is clearly visible at the northern edge of the development. Within these views from the Malvern Hills, built form can be seen within the Significant Gap land and this landscape between Leigh Sinton and Malvern is not devoid of development, with scattered farmsteads, agricultural buildings and scattered residential dwellings seen across the landscape."

8.27 Development of the site will provide an improved settlement edge and will assist in maintaining the separate identities of Malvern and Leigh Sinton.

8.28 The appraisal concludes by saying the following:

"The SWDP Review Preferred Options Significant Gap Appraisal (November 2019), identified that the significant gap between Malvern and Leigh Sinton has the potential for discrete parcels of land to the south of Leigh Sinton to be developed. The location and proximity of the site to the existing settlement edge, and negligible change in the perception of the Significant Gap as well as the lack of change in physical distance of the gap between the settlements all mean that development of the site is achievable without having undue harm to the openness or purposes of the significant gap."

8.29 Development of the site will not result in coalescence between settlements and separation will be maintained between Malvern and Leigh Sinton.

Malvern Key Views Assessment (Appendix 2 - Incola 1010 R03)

8.30 The assessment of Key Views identified key views which were graded as Representative, Special or Exceptional views to and from the Malvern Hills AONB. The grading of these views was completed using the guidance set out within the Malvern Hills AONB Grading of Guidance on identifying and grading views and viewpoints document.

8.31 In addition to the specific grading of Views completed by Incola Ltd, Key views which were identified through the review produced by the Cooper Partnership in 2009 (Identification of Key Views to and from the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (March 2009 - Cooper Partnership)), was also included and these views have been highlighted where relevant.

8.32 The following definitions are provided for Representative, Special and Exceptional Views:

"Exceptional (E): Highly valued, unique, panoramic view or long distance view across intact and quintessential landscapes of Herefordshire,

Worcestershire and/or Gloucestershire; allows for appreciation and understanding of wider surroundings of the AONB; does not replicate another view; allows the enjoyment of well known landmarks.

Special (S): Panoramic or long distance view including dramatic scenery and skyline; allows appreciation of the more intimate setting of the AONB and the relationship of its landscape character types; may be comparable to other views.

Representative (R): Typical view, which may be replicated elsewhere; presence of visual detractors may degrade quality of view; narrow or glimpsed view."

8.33 As identified within **Appendix 2**, the following views were identified as being key views to and from the Malvern Hills AONB:

- **Photoviewpoint 1** - This view is identified as Exceptional View 47 (as identified within the Identification of Key Views to and from the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (March 2009 - Cooper Partnership). This view is taken from North Hill looking north towards the site and identifies the following:

"In views to the north east, the settlement of Leigh Sinton a clear feature within the view, and the land between the edge of Malvern and Leigh Sinton comprises dense evergreen and deciduous tree planting."

- **Photoviewpoint 2** - This view has been identified as a Special View. This view is taken from End Hill and identifies the following:

"Views over the settlement edge of Malvern can be seen in middle distance views, with the gently undulating well wooded landscape to the north separating the edge of Malvern from Leigh Sinton which is a distinctive feature within the view." It also identifies that the landscape from this location is "settled in character".

- **Photoviewpoint 3** - This view has been identified as a Representative View. This view is taken from the Geopark Way on the lower slopes of the Malvern Hills AONB and identifies the following:

"The existing development edge of Leigh Sinton can be seen within the view and is set amongst a well wooded and well treed landscape. There are panoramic views from this elevated position with existing scattered farm buildings and residential dwellings present."

8.34 The following key views were identified towards the Malvern Hills AONB from close proximity of the site:

- **Photoviewpoint 12a** - This view has been identified as a Special View. This view was taken from Pineview and identifies the following:

"Malvern Hills are a focus within the view in the distance and make the user stop and look. Although not an unfamiliar view, from this location the

hills are seen centrally and provide a focus for users. Sense of settled and urban edge character nearby."

- **Photoviewpoint 14** - This view has been identified as a Special View. and was taken from Pineview Avenue and identifies the following:

"The Malvern Hills are seen in the background with existing evergreen vegetation filtering views of the lower slopes. Fencing and existing residential development are detracting features within the view.

Contrasting features within the foreground draw the eye to the hills in the distance.

Glimpsed views of the northern lower slopes of the AONB can also be seen in the view."

8.35 Both key views to and from the Malvern Hills AONB have informed the development of the site, how the site responds to the visual setting of the Malvern Hills AONB, and how users experience views.

Landscape Effects

8.36 As identified, the site is located within the Principal Timbered Farmlands Landscape Character Type as set out within the Worcestershire County Council Landscaper Character Assessment. The key principal characteristics as identified include:

- Hedgerow boundaries to fields;
- Ancient wooded character; and
- Notable pattern of hedgerow trees.

8.37 These key sensitivities and characteristics cover a much larger area than the site itself and are not specific to the site, although the site does share some characteristics with these key characteristics as identified through the site specific assessment.

Landscape Sensitivity

8.38 In order to understand the nature and extents of effects upon the landscape, it is necessary to establish the sensitivity of the site and the receiving landscape to the proposed development and associated landscape mitigation and design response.

8.39 As set-out in GLVIA3, Landscape Sensitivity is a combination of judgements of value and susceptibility to a specific type of change or proposed development.

8.40 Landscape value is defined by GLVIA3 as being: *"The relative value that is attached to different landscapes by society. A landscape may be valued by different stakeholders for a whole variety of reasons."*

8.41 The site is not identified as a valued landscape, and the Malvern Hills AONB is located 4km to the south of the site. The Malvern Hills are a common feature within the landscape and are a valuable asset in views and setting.

8.42 The site and immediate surrounding landscape are not designated for their qualities or value and are not a valued landscape under the provisions of paragraph 170 of the NPPF. The value of the landscape is therefore limited to being of local importance.

8.43 As a more detailed level, value can be assessed using the factors as set-out at Box 5.1 of GLVIA. This is an approach that is widely used and considered as an accepted method.

8.44 The technical guidance note on assessing Landscape Value outside National Designations published recently by the Landscape Institute (TGN 02/21) also provides further guidance on assessing the value of the landscape and how the factors which may determine value are presented and may be indicated. The technical guidance note is intended to be read in addition to, and is complimentary to GLVIA3. The technical guidance note also identifies a further factor for assessing value, with function added to the list of factors below.

8.45 The factors are as follows:

- Landscape quality (condition);
- Scenic quality;
- Rarity and Representativeness (distinctiveness);
- Conservation Interests (Natural heritage and cultural heritage);
- Recreation Value;
- Perceptual aspects; and
- Associations;
- Function.

8.46 The susceptibility of the landscape is defined by GLVIA3 at paragraph 5.40 as: *"the ability of the landscape receptor (whether it be the overall character or quality/condition of a particular landscape type or area, or an individual element and/or feature, or a particular aesthetic and perceptual aspect) to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of planning policies and strategies."*

8.47 The indicators of value are to be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, taking into account what they contribute (whether this is positively or negatively) to a specific landscape. The importance of these factors and indicators will vary across landscapes, and an overall judgement is made to assess the site and the contribution it makes to these factors in determining its value.

8.48 The assessment of the proposals considers not only the site itself but its relationship with the context of the site, and the role the specific features play within this context. In assessing value, it is important to appreciate value at the scale within which the landscape is perceived.

8.49 The greater the understanding of the type, scale, extent and location of development, the more of an understanding of susceptibility of a landscape to the proposals can be.

8.50 For each of these indicators, this assessment has made a judgement on the site in relation to each of these factors. Judgements are made with reference to the observable landscape features, which can include components such as landform, vegetation, housing, roads, boundary treatments etc.

Landscape Quality (condition)

8.51 The site is located adjacent to the settlement edge of Leigh Sinton which has a strong influence over its setting and context. The northern and western boundaries of the site are seen within the context of the adjacent built form which are detracting features within the landscape, creating a harsh edge to the settlement boundaries of Leigh Sinton.

8.52 There is a lack of diverse internal landscape features with the site devoted to growing Christmas trees. Boundary hedgerows found along the eastern

and southern boundaries are established but are gappy in places but generally intact and providing a strong linear feature within the landscape.

8.53 The land use of the site is temporary, with Christmas Trees harvested periodically over time, and the landscape is therefore transient in its nature.

8.54 There are no other internal landscape features within the site itself, and the field pattern is intact based on a study of historic mapping with historic boundaries still remaining intact within the site, with the exception of a previous hedge running north south across the site which no longer exists.

8.55 The built edge of Leigh Sinton is influential to the site and provides the site with settled and urban edge characteristics. The site is influenced by human activity, with residential development and the Christmas Tree land use influencing the quality and condition of the landscape.

Scenic quality

8.56 Although there are no distinctive features within the site itself which contribute to scenic quality there are strong associations with the Malvern Hills to the south of the site with views across towards the AONB from the site and from the adjacent development at Malvern Rise. The Malvern Hills have strong aesthetic qualities, as identified within the Key View document to the rear of the report (**Appendix 2**). The distinctive views of the Malvern Hills is a key factor in the development of the site and contributes to a distinctive landscape.

8.57 Although the Malvern Hills are a distinctive features within the landscape, the site itself does not display characteristics contributing to scenic quality. It is influenced by built form and in wider views from the Malvern Hills is seen within this settlement edge context with built form a common feature in the landscape.

Rarity and Representativeness (distinctiveness)

8.58 The site does not include any rare or notable features of particular significance which are characteristic of any particular place or contributing to any sense of identity.

8.59 The site does not provide a particular important gateway or approach into Leigh Sinton to contribute to the settlement, or display a strong sense of character or sense of place.

Conservation Interests (Natural heritage and cultural heritage)

8.60 The site is not located within or within close proximity to any protected wildlife habitats or include any distinctive geological features. It does not make a contribution to part of a green recovery network or is located within any identified Green Infrastructure networks.

8.61 There are no historical landmarks or structures within or within close proximity of the site, nor are there any registered historic parks or gardens designated as historical assets which may contribute to heritage assets.

8.62 There are no features within the site which suggest any natural time depth, ruins of historic field patterns.

Recreation Value

8.63 The site is not publicly accessible and currently offers no recreational value. There are no publicly accessible paths within the site boundaries themselves.

8.64 However, to the north an existing play area located within the Malvern Rise development lies adjacent to the northern boundary of the site, and a pedestrian footpath link joins this with Leigh Sinton Road to the east. To the south west a relocated PRow runs through the Bluebell Walk scheme and adjoins the wider network of footpaths to the south and the A4103 to the west.

8.65 The site is not open access land, however the location of the adjacent play area affords good views across towards the Malvern Hills to the south.

Perceptual aspects

8.66 The site is not perceived as being particularly scenic nor tranquil in its nature or characteristics. It does not display particular characteristics associated with remoteness and is perceived as being an edge of settlement site.

8.67 The Malvern Hills AONB Environs Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Study (May 2019, White Consultants) reiterates this by saying that *"the two adjacent roads and highly visible settlement edge reduce tranquillity."*

8.68 There are however, perceived aspects associated with tranquillity and scenic beauty within the wider landscape with the perception of the Malvern Hills located to the south and seen in views from the site.

Associations

8.69 The site does not share any associations with any notable events, people of cultural events.

Function

8.70 The site does not form part of a multi-functional Green Infrastructure network, nor does it present indicators which suggest it contributes to a healthy functioning landscape. There are not undisturbed soils, or areas of flood plains, and the land use of the site itself does not provide a functioning or diverse landscape, and is a monoculture of Christmas Trees. There are no areas providing additional ecological pollinating habitat such as wildflower meadows.

8.71 Having said this, there is a visual connection with the Malvern Hills, located to the south of the site, for which this designated landscape and its special qualities are experienced in views looking south from within the site and at its surrounding existing built edges.

Summary

8.72 The assessment of value above has identified that the site overall is of an 'Ordinary' landscape value and has therefore been assessed as being of **Low, local value**.

8.73 The Malvern Hills AONB Environs Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Study (May 2019, White Consultants) as detailed within the planning policy section of this report, also identified that the site is of Medium/Low Sensitivity for housing of between 1Ha and 5Ha in size.

8.74 The specific parcel assessed (Parcel Mog) covered a larger area than the site itself and the assessment identified that the *"the value of the area lies in the Ancient Woodland/SSSI of Ailshurst Coppice, Careys Brook wildlife site and the two PROWS"*.

8.75 The ancient woodland is located to the south of the site and no PRow exist within the site boundaries.

Landscape Susceptibility

8.76 GLVIA3 defines susceptibility to change as: *"... the ability of the landscape receptor... to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and / or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies."* (GLVIA3, paragraph 5.40, pages 88 and 89).

8.77 The susceptibility of the landscape needs to be determined for the specific proposals. This is important, as it allows the assessment to take account of the local context and how the proposed development fits within it.

8.78 In relation to the susceptibility, the levels of Susceptibility as defined within GLVIA3 are described as being:

- High Susceptibility - The landscape is such that changes in terms of the development proposed would be entirely at odds with the character of the local area, related to matters including pattern, grain, use, scale and mass.
- Medium Susceptibility - The proposed development has a degree of consistency with the existing scale, pattern, grain, land use of the prevailing character, although mitigation may be appropriate to enhance assimilation.
- Low Susceptibility - The development proposed is entirely consistent with the character of the local area, related to matters including pattern, grain, use, scale and mass.

8.79 The Malvern Hills AONB Environs Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Study (May 2019, White Consultants) identified that Parcel Mog within which the site is located has Medium/Low sensitivity to accommodate housing stating that:

"The area has least sensitivity to the north east where housing could be

accommodated with existing housing on two sides."

8.80 This area refers specifically to the location of the site.

8.81 The site is located on the edge of Leigh Sinton and is influenced by existing built form on two sides. Maintaining development adjacent to the existing built form will be consistent with the character of the local area, with development in keeping with the adjacent pattern of development. This is reiterated by the findings of The Malvern Hills AONB Environs Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Study (May 2019, White Consultants) which states:

"The least sensitive sensitive location is the northern part of the site which is flanked by existing housing on two sides and with a partial coniferous boundary."

8.82 Development is not seen as an incongruous feature within the landscape and the newly constructed development at Bluebell Walk brings the settlement edge further south than the proposed development.

8.83 The land use of the site is one which is transitional and a monoculture of Christmas Trees which are harvested periodically, and therefore change is not uncommon feature across the site.

8.84 Considering the above factors, the receiving landscape is of a **Low Susceptibility** to the proposed development.

8.85 Given the limited, low localised value and low susceptibility of the site and its existing land-use, the receiving landscape has been assessed as being of an overall **Low Sensitivity** to development.

Nature of Change

8.86 The effects of new development need to be considered in light of the existing context and baseline situation, which in this instance includes a site which is located on the edge of an existing settlement and on land utilised as a Christmas Tree plantation.

8.87 The development of the site will introduce additional built form into a landscape which is already influenced by human activity and development and is a site which is seen in the context of the existing settlement edge.

Relationship of the site with the existing built edge of Leigh Sinton

8.88 The proposed development is located adjacent to the existing settlement edge to ensure that it does not create an incongruous feature within the landscape. The location of the site and proximity to the existing built form and residential development found along Lynn Close and Malvern Rise will ensure that it is not seen as an uncharacteristic feature, and development will be maintained and the same or lower height than the adjoining properties, so as to be consistent in mass, scale and layout.

8.89 The development will provide a softer settlement edge than the existing situation and will therefore improve the character and transition of the settlement edge of Leigh Sinton. Setting development back and providing

a landscape buffer and accessible open space within a green corridor along the edge of the development will enhance this edge and the relationship of the wider landscape with the new settlement edge.

8.90 These proposals reflect opportunities for improving the landscape character and although additional built form will be introduced the proposed treatment and landscape edges will result in an improved situation than the existing conditions and landscape character.

Wider landscape setting of the Malvern Hills AONB

8.91 The development of the site considers the relationship of the site with the Malvern Hills with regards to the wider visual context and its impacts on visual amenity in wider panoramic views.

8.92 The built form is maintained adjacent to the existing residential edge and the proposals include an accessible public open space at the southern edge of the Malvern Walk scheme and the eastern edge of the new residential properties. This landscape edge ensures that the development of the site is not detrimental to the Malvern Hills and their special qualities with regards to wider ranging views and visual amenity.

8.93 As identified within the Key Views document found at **Appendix 2**, the development of the site will be seen from Exceptional, Special and Representative Key Views from the Malvern Hills.

8.94 The new areas of tree and hedgerow planting will be more characteristic with the wider landscape and the removal of Christmas tree plantation will assist in enhancing the visual experience of the Malvern Hills with positive usable open space provided for local residents, enabling opportunities to enjoy a new accessible landscape for recreation with additional opportunities for ecological enhancements and enjoyment of the landscape as a whole.

8.95 Incorporating the new publicly accessible landscape and linking it with the existing public open space at the southern edge of the Malvern Walk scheme will provide an increased multi functional green corridor through the site from which the views of the Malvern Hills can be experienced and enjoyed.

8.96 On balance, the proposals will not be detrimental to the wider setting and visual situation of the Malvern Hills AONB and the new settlement edge will provide a softer transition and edge to Leigh Sinton, while at the same time incorporating the key scenic qualities of views towards the AONB within the proposals.

Boundary planting and existing landscape features

8.97 All key landscape features with the exception of areas at the entrance into the site and the removal of the Christmas trees themselves to accommodate the development will be retained and incorporated into the proposals. The retained areas of boundary planting at the eastern edge will be enhanced with additional tree and shrub planting which is characteristic of the existing situation and the Principal Timbered

Farmlands Landscaper Character Type.

8.98 The proposals will result in a change in land use from Christmas Tree plantation to residential development and open space. The Christmas Tree plantation is not a characteristic feature of the published landscape character assessment and is a temporary landscape with trees harvested periodically. This is reiterated within the findings of the Landscape Sensitivity Report produced by Whites Consultants (Malvern Hills AONB Environs Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Study (May 2019, White Consultants):

"Any landscape mitigation should reinforce the existing road boundaries to provide a long-term, mainly broad leaf, buffer and in time the existing coniferous boundaries should be replaced, again with mainly broadleaf planting. There is an opportunity to improve the south western edge of the village"

8.99 The proposed landscaped edge and publicly accessible open space which form part of the proposals at the northern and eastern edges of the site will replace the monoculture of Christmas trees with a more diverse and usable landscape. This proposed public open space will increase the characteristic planting, provide increased ecological habitats and increase the usable green infrastructure across the site. It will also enable a more cohesive and connected green corridor with the adjacent areas of open space to the north and south west and increase the network of usable green space.

8.100 The adjacent orchard planting found at the north eastern boundary of the site is retained and incorporated into the scheme with additional fruit trees proposed to enhance the characteristic planting and increase and diversify the species and variety of fruit trees in the area.

8.101 Overall, the development of the site will provide additional landscape features which will be beneficial to the landscape character and wider context and will increase the Green Infrastructure across the site and along boundaries.

Landscape Effects Summary

8.102 Overall, the development of the site will provide an improved settlement edge to Leigh Sinton, created through the proposed open space and additional landscape features. This landscaped edge will provide a more cohesive and connected green space which will be usable and accessible for the local community and will provide additional ecological benefits.

8.103 The proposals can be accommodated and incorporate positive usable community resource which will be consistent with the scale and pattern of the surrounding development and context of the site.

8.104 As identified, the landscape has a Low Sensitivity to development and overall the proposals will be beneficial to the landscape character.

Visual Effects

8.105 As already discussed, a series of Key Views have been identified to and from the Malvern Hills AONB (**Appendix 2**). Where receptors experience these views, these are highlighted.

Visual Receptors

8.106 As identified, the development of the site will result in a change in view for the following receptors:

- Recreational users of footpaths found on the higher slopes of the Malvern Hills around North Hill and End Hill (representative **Photoviewpoint 1 and 2 - AONB KEY VIEWS**);
- Recreational users of PRoW (Hereford CD61) Geopark Way (representative **Photoviewpoint 3 AONB KEY VIEW**);
- Recreational users of PRoW 536C (representative **Photoviewpoint 4**);
- Recreational users of PRoW 563(C) (representative **Photoviewpoint 5**);
- Recreational users of PRoW 705(C) (representative **Photoviewpoint 6**);
- Recreational users of PRoW 687(C) (representative **Photoviewpoint 7**);
- Recreational users of footpath and public open space through Pineview Avenue (representative **Photoviewpoints 12a, 12b and 14**);
- Transient users of the A4103 (Hereford Road) (representative **Photoviewpoint 8**);
- Transient users of Lynn Close (representative **Photoviewpoint 11**);
- Transient users of Leigh Sinton Road (representative **Photoviewpoint 15, 17 and 18**);
- Residents of Lynn Close (representative **Photoviewpoints 11**); and
- Residents of Pineview (representative **Photoviewpoints 12a AONB KEY VIEW, 12b, 13 and 14 AONB KEY VIEW**).

Recreational users of footpaths found on the higher slopes of the Malvern Hills around North Hill and End Hill (representative Photoviewpoint 1 and 2 - AONB KEY VIEW);

8.107 For these receptors the site is barely discernable and is seen in the context of the wider, expansive and panoramic views. Recreational users of the footpaths on and around the slopes of North Hill at End Hill within the Malvern Hills AONB the proposals will be seen against the existing settlement edge of Leigh Sinton and will remain to the north of the existing settlement edge which is extended south into the Significant Gap and closer to Malvern by the development at Bluebell Walk. As already identified the impacts on the openness of the Significant Gap land will be negligible.

8.108 The proposed built form and development is retained on the western part of the site running adjacent to residential built form found along Lynn Close. It lies adjacent to existing development at Malvern Rise at its north western corner and is maintained behind a belt of evergreen trees found at the south western corner. Its proposed location ensures that development is seen against the backdrop of the existing settlement edge in the wider panoramic views from the AONB. The proposed landscape buffer running along the eastern and northern edge of the site will increase characteristic tree and hedgerow planting which will assist in softening the edge of the site within these views.

8.109 In addition, this new edge will provide a more beneficial and sensitive edge to the development at Malvern Rise which is currently seen as an obvious and harsh edge to the settlement edge of Leigh Sinton within these panoramic views.

8.110 The open space will assist in increasing the characteristic planting and providing linear Green infrastructure features to provide a more suitable edge to the settlement and integrate the development into the landscape.

8.111 Additional tree planting within the development along the plot frontages and road edges will also soften the views of the rooflines over time and break up the appearance of built form.

8.112 Retaining evergreen boundary planting at the south western part of the site will also assist in filtering some views of the southern part of the development.

8.113 On balance, although new built form will be introduced into these views, additional landscaping and improved settlement edge will, once mature, provide a softer settlement edge and transition to the wider landscape to the south and improve the visual amenity for users of these footpaths.

Recreational users of PRoW (Hereford CD61) Geopark Way (representative Photoviewpoint 3 AONB KEY VIEW);

8.114 The visual amenity of recreational users of the Geopark Way will be unaffected by the development of the site. The site is set amongst the context of the existing settlement edge and within these views the rooflines of Malvern Rise and Bluebell Walk can be seen with the site located to the rear of these developments.

8.115 The development would not be seen as an uncharacteristic feature or be an incongruous feature within these views and will sit against a backdrop of the existing settlement. It is likely that only glimpsed views of the rooflines of the development will be seen from this location. Additional internal tree planting will assist in breaking up the rooflines and built form over time and on balance, for users of this footpath route the development will be barely discernable.

Recreational users of PRoW 536(C) (representative Photoviewpoint 4)

8.116 Recreational users of PRoW 536(C) see the site in the context of the existing development forming the edge of Leigh Sinton. These mid

distance views set the site amongst a settled character and new built form will be introduced within views of additional rooflines and ridges.

8.117 Additional built form will not be seen as uncharacteristic or incongruous feature, and for users of this footpath their view will remain as one looking towards the settlement edge.

8.118 Additional tree planting within the plots and along the southern edge of the site will assist in filtering the edge of the site, and over time when the Christmas trees are harvested and planting matured, this edge will provide a soft transition to the edge of the development.

8.119 On balance, the development of the site will not be seen as incongruous or out of character for users of this footpath route.

Recreational users of PRoW 563(C) (representative Photoviewpoint 5)

8.120 Recreational users of PRoW 653(C) see the site amongst intervening vegetation and against the existing residential properties located along Lynn Close. The development of the site will introduce additional built form which will be located below the skyline and below the level of the existing development which is seen forming the backdrop within the view.

8.121 The proposed landscape edge to the southern and eastern edge of the development will provide a soft transition to the edge of the site and will assist in integrating it into the surrounding landscape. Additional internal tree planting within the development plots will break up the appearance of built form and help to integrate the proposals into the surrounding context.

8.122 On balance, although additional development will be brought forward within these views, the proposed landscaping, retaining development adjacent to the existing built edge and additional internal tree planting will not be seen as uncharacteristic for users of these footpaths.

Recreational users of PRoW 705(C) (representative Photoviewpoint 6);

8.123 Recreational users of PRoW 05(C) to the south of the site, have much of the site shielded from view due to the presence of evergreen trees found at the south western corner of the site. The adjacent land used as a Christmas Tree plantation also filters views of the site. It is noted however that this transitional and temporary landscape will over time change the visual context with Christmas trees harvested over time.

8.124 The proposed built form of the development is located behind the belt of evergreen trees. The hedgerow found along the southern boundary and remaining undeveloped field will be retained and supplemented with additional areas of tree planting to further filter views.

8.125 There are likely to be glimpsed views of buildings through the gaps in evergreen planting, however this will not be seen as uncharacteristic within these views with glimpsed views of the Bluebell Walk scheme seen to the west and sitting above the skyline.

Recreational users of PRoW 687(C) (representative Photoviewpoint 7)

8.126 Recreational users of PRoW 687(C) to the west of the site may see glimpsed views of the rooflines of the development but these will be seen in the context of the built form at Bluebell Walk located along the A4103 and set behind existing vegetation found along the route and at field boundaries.

8.127 The development will be barely discernable and will be set amongst a context of existing development and built form for users of this footpath.

Recreational users of footpath and public open space through Pineview Avenue (representative Photoviewpoints 12a, 12b and 14)

8.128 Recreational users of the footpath and play area at the northern boundary of the site will experience localised changes to their view, with the Christmas Tree plantation land use transformed into residential built form.

8.129 The proposed development is located adjacent to properties at Lynn Close to the west and is retained in this western part of the site. The resulting proposed development will ensure that for users of this footpath and the public open space will maintain the views across towards the Malvern Hills.

8.130 The proposed open space and landscaped edge to the site will provide additional visual screening and filtering of views with new areas of tree planting, meadow, shrub and hedgerow planting providing increased diversity and visual interest in addition to softening the edge of the development.

8.131 Overall, although new development will be introduced, this built form will not be seen as an uncharacteristic feature nor is it seen in isolation, with the development at Lynn Close and Bluebell Walk forming the backdrop to the new housing.

8.132 The landscape edge will enhance the setting of the site and increase the visual connectivity to the wider landscape. Once mature, the proposed landscaping will soften views across the site and provide a beneficial setting for users to enjoy the scenic qualities of the Malvern Hills AONB.

Transient users of the A4103 (Hereford Road) (representative Photoviewpoint 8)

8.133 Motorists and pedestrians travelling along the A4013 may experience views of the rooflines of the proposed development set against the existing built form located along the A4103.

8.134 Glimpsed views of the site may be seen, but given the surrounding built form and context, the development will not be seen as an incongruous feature for users of this road.

Transient users of Lynn Close (representative Photoviewpoint 11);

8.135 Motorists travelling along Lynn Close will experience a slight change in their view as a result of the proposed development with additional built form seen in the background through gaps in existing residential development.

8.136 This new development and built form will not be seen as an uncharacteristic feature and will be seen in the context of the existing residential properties along Lynn Close.

Transient users of Leigh Sinton Road (representative Photoviewpoint 15, 17 and 18);

8.137 Motorists travelling along Leigh Sinton Road will experience a change in their view where the access point into the site joins Leigh Sinton Road at its north eastern corner. Where this access point enters the site, the vegetation found along Leigh Sinton Road will be removed in places to accommodate the necessary visibility splays.

8.138 Views of the development and new residential properties from this location and for these users will be filtered by the proposed planting found within the proposed open spaces at the eastern and southern boundaries of the site. Retaining the development adjacent to the properties off Lynn Close and Malvern Rise will ensure that the scheme does not introduce uncharacteristic features within the landscape and maintain connectivity with the adjacent built form.

8.139 The proposals will also include enhancements to the remaining boundary planting around the access point and additional planting of fruit trees adjacent to the existing orchard at the north eastern corner of the site adjacent to the access route. This additional planting will further filter views of the built form for users of Leigh Sinton Road.

8.140 The development will not be seen as an incongruous feature for these receptors. Once planting matures along the eastern and northern edges, a softer more natural transition will be created which will filter views of the settlement edge for these receptors.

Residents of Lynn Close (representative Photoviewpoints 11)

8.141 Residents living on Lynn Close who overlook the site at its western boundary will experience a localised change in their view which will be within close proximity. Although tree planting and landscaping is proposed within the development this will not filter views nor screen the new residential dwellings but the additional area of open space will provide benefits and an additional community resource for residents of Lynn Close.

8.142 The proposals will result in a change in the view for residents living off Lynn Close due to the location, scale and proximity of the proposed development and direct views of the development will be seen.

Residents of Pineview (representative Photoviewpoints 12a AONB KEY VIEW, 12b, 13 and 14 AONB KEY VIEW)

8.143 Residents living at properties at Pineview Avenue will experience a localised change in their view with the proposals introducing additional built form at close proximity within their view. The proposals will result in a change in the land use adjacent to the site, with the Christmas

tree plantation replaced with additional residential development and associated infrastructure.

8.144 New built form will be introduced on the western part of the site, but this will be seen in the context of the development located along Lynn Close and Bluebell Walk which are both already evident within views. Where built form is proposed it is to be located at the western part of the site with much of the existing view across towards the Malvern Hills and across the remaining Christmas tree plantation remaining undeveloped with the exception of the new access road and proposed areas of planting and landscaping.

8.145 The edge of the site is proposed to be integrated into the existing development at Malvern Rise through the form of a landscaped edge with proposed tree, wildflower meadow planting and native hedgerow planting creating a soft edge to the development and creating a soft transition. The proposed landscape buffer will also include additional footpath routes and play facilities linking through to the Malvern Rise scheme and footpath routes increasing pedestrian access locally for residents.

8.146 Where possible, views across to the Malvern Hills have been retained with the area to the east and north of the site retained as open space so as to maintain the key view across towards the AONB. This proposed landscape buffer integrates with the existing play area and open space located within the Malvern Rise scheme to increase the visual buffer and transitional landscape to the edge of the site. Where planting is proposed, this is intended to be strategically placed to ensure that key views across towards the Malverns are retained, maintaining the scenic qualities of the Malvern Hills and qualities of the Key View.

8.147 On balance the development will result in localised changes to views due to the proximity and scale of the development for these residents. The provision of a soft landscaped edge and area of accessible public open space will assist in filtering views for residents living towards Leigh Sinton Road. An offset is provided at the north eastern corner adjacent to the new area of development which will provide potential for tree and hedgerows to soften built form.

8.148 The proposed areas of open space will also provide added benefits for recreation, ecological networks and footpath connectivity for these residents.

Residents of Bluebell Walk

8.149 Residents of Bluebell Walk will experience a change in their view as a result of the proposals. The development will pull built form closer in views, but built form will not be an uncharacteristic feature and is already seen in close proximity with development off Lynn Close located adjacent to properties within Bluebell Walk.

8.150 Retaining the planting along the southern boundary of the site will maintain a sense of separation and filter views, with additional hedgerow planting and trees within the development itself softening the built form

and views across rooflines from upper storey windows within the Bluebell Walk development.

Visual Effects Summary

8.151 Overall with regards to visual amenity, the proposals can be accommodated into the landscape with the provision of a soft landscape edge and a transitional public open space along the new settlement edge.

8.152 The development of the site will not be detrimental to the identified Key Views to and from the Malvern Hills AONB with development parcels maintained on the western part of the site, and where receptors will experience a change in their view the scenic qualities and visual setting of the Malvern Hills AONB have been incorporated into the proposals through careful styling of landscaping and proposed enhancements.

8.153 The retention of boundary planting and enhancement of these buffers will further reduce the potential for effects on visual amenity.

8.154 The proposals will provide an improved settlement edge to Leigh Sinton, with the new areas of open space providing a softer transition than the existing situation and enhancing the transition at the southern edges of the settlement when viewed in wider views to the south.

9.1 This LVA has analysed the landscape and visual context of the site and its surroundings and matters relating to visual amenity. It has addressed the principle of development, and identified the design response to the site and its context and resulting opportunities and constraints to inform the layout and design of the scheme. The LVA has reviewed the landscape and visual effects arising as a result of the proposed development and this has been completed in accordance with the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd edition (GLVIA3).

9.2 The LVA has also assessed the potential effects that development has on the Significant Gap land between Malvern and Leigh Sinton and has assessed Key Views to and from the Malvern Hills AONB. The following summarises the key findings and conclusions of the LVA.

Significant Gap

9.3 The Significant Gap appraisal (**Appendix 1**) identified that the development of the site should be maintained to the western edge, away from Leigh Sinton Road, with opportunities identified to improve the existing situation and enhance the perception of separate settlements through a new landscape buffer and transitional edge to the southern and eastern edge of the site.

9.4 The location and proximity of the site to the existing settlement edge, and negligible change in the perception of the Significant Gap as well as the lack of change in physical distance of the gap between the settlements as a result of the proposed development, mean that the proposals to be accommodated without being detrimental to the purposes or function of the significant gap.

9.5 The development of the site will not be detrimental to the visual perception of the openness of the Significant Gap with boundary vegetation retained and development maintained at the western edge of the site adjacent to the existing settlement edge.

Landscape Context

9.6 This appraisal has found that the site is more related to the edge of Leigh Sinton and the built form found to the west and north than the wider more undeveloped landscape to the south and east.

9.7 It contains very few characteristic landscape features with the exception of the boundary planting, and the Christmas tree plantation is a transient landscape which is uncharacteristic of the wider landscape context. The assessment of landscape context identified the following as key drivers for the development of the site:

- The integration of the existing built edge of Leigh Sinton and the relationship of the site to the existing settlement edge;
- The visual relationship between the site and the Malvern Hills AONB and its scenic qualities and visual setting are a key feature in the wider

landscape and are influential on the site;

- The integration of the existing public open space within the Malvern Rise scheme to the north of the site into the site;
- Opportunities to reflect the historic field pattern and historic orchards;
- Opportunities to increase characteristic planting with hedgerows, hedgerow trees, Field Maple and Oak;
- Removal of inappropriate planting which is not characteristic of the wider landscape;
- Opportunities to use hedgerows to sub divide fields;
- Opportunities to increase tree cover.

9.8 These opportunities for enhancements are also consistent with the findings of the Malvern AONB Environs Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Study (Malvern Hills AONB Environs Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Study (May 2019, White Consultants) which stated the following:

- *"Location, Layout, Design - The least sensitive location is the northern part of the site which is flanked by existing housing on two sides and with a partial coniferous boundary. Part of the rest of the LCP may be able to be developed in the longer term, with an emphasis of development to the east rather than the west. However, there is an opportunity to improve the south western edge of the village."*
- *"Landscape Mitigation - Any landscape mitigation should reinforce the existing road boundaries to provide a long-term, mainly broad leaf, buffer and in time the existing coniferous boundaries should be replaced, again with mainly broadleaf planting. There is an opportunity to improve the south western edge of the village."*

Visual Context

9.9 The visual survey of the site and its surroundings has found that other than the panoramic views of the site which are possible from the Malvern Hills AONB, the majority of views are localised and limited to local footpath routes, residents overlooking the site and road users on local transport routes.

9.10 Where local views are possible, these are direct and from footpaths and residential properties which directly overlook the site and are localised in their nature. The settlement of Leigh Sinton to the north and west of the site reduces visibility and vegetation found along field boundaries and lanes limits visibility.

9.11 The panoramic and expansive views from the Malvern Hills are seen from the northern peaks of End Hill and North Hill and in glimpsed locations along the Geopark Way on the lower slopes to the west of the site, and within these views the site is seen within the context of the existing settlement edge and as part of a developed and settled context.

9.12 The Malvern Hills AONB Key Views Assessment (**Appendix 2**) identified three Key Views looking from the AONB towards the site ('Exceptional' View from North Hill (representative **Photoviewpoint 1**) and Special View from End Hill (representative **Photoviewpoint 2**).

9.13 It also identified two Key Views looking towards the Malvern Hills AONB, overlooking the site with the Malvern Hills seen in the background (representative **Photoviewpoints 12b and 14**).

9.14 The Exceptional View 48 from Worcestershire Beacon was assessed but views of the site were not possible, due to the topography of North Hill and End Hill.

Proposals

9.15 The development of the site has responded to the identified opportunities and constraints and the landscape and visual baseline situation.

9.16 The resulting proposals illustrate how the site can be accommodated without causing undue harm to landscape character or visual amenity, with the scheme providing additional benefits for the community and wildlife with additional recreational routes, areas of accessible public open space and diverse wildlife habitats and ecological corridors. The proposals include:

- Maintaining views across towards the Malvern Hills from within the development;
- Proposed built form located adjacent to the existing settlement edge;
- Development set back away from Leigh Sinton Road to maintain sense of separation between Malvern and Leigh Sinton to minimise impacts on Significant Gap;
- Creation of a softer settlement edge created at the eastern and northern parts of the site with tree planting, hedgerow and wildflower meadows;
- Creation of a usable and accessible recreational resource, with footpath routes, play facilities and linked accessible green corridors;
- Enhanced landscape features and characteristic planting with native trees, hedgerow and fruit trees; and
- Protection of key views and scenic qualities of the AONB and integration of development into the surrounding landscape.

Landscape Effects Summary

9.17 The development of the site will result in the change of use from a Christmas tree plantation to residential development and associated infrastructure.

9.18 The LVA has demonstrated that the proposals will enhance the

landscape character through retained and enhanced landscape features, proposed open space and landscaped edge and a more cohesive and connected green space which will be accessible for the local community and provide additional ecological benefits. In addition, the proposals will provide a softer settlement edge to the south of Leigh Sinton and enhance the wider setting of the village.

9.19 The proposed landscaping will be characteristic of the wider context and characteristics found within the Principle Timbered Farmlands LCT and will protect and enhance existing Green Infrastructure.

Visual Effects Summary

9.20 The key views have been assessed and the scenic qualities of the AONB sensitively incorporated within the proposals with key views retained and proposed planting incorporated to enhance the visual experience of receptors.

9.21 The proposals will provide betterment for users of footpaths on the Malvern Hills and at 'Exceptional' View from North Hill (representative **Photoviewpoint 1**) and Special View from End Hill (representative **Photoviewpoint 2**).

9.22 Views from these locations are seen at approximately 4km to the south of the site, and are seen as part of the wider panorama and expansive views. The current settlement edge is seen as an abrupt edge to the southern part of Leigh Sinton and the proposals will enhance this edge and provide a softer and more characteristic treatment to the south western part of Leigh Sinton.

9.23 Other key views also identified through the visual survey and Key Views assessment, identified that the Malvern Hills form a distinct feature when seen from the site (representative **Photoviewpoints 12b and 14**).

9.24 Views of the distinctive profile of the Malvern Hills for these receptors have been retained and addressed within the proposals, with development contained to the western extent of the site and an open space providing a more appropriate setting to experience the scenic qualities of the AONB and retain views of the hills from within a publicly accessible open space.

9.25 The Special Qualities of the AONB which are relevant to the site are its "Dramatic scenery and spectacular views arising from the juxtaposition of high and low ground" and its "opportunities for bracing walks with fine views."

9.26 The development of the site has responded to the visual context and the proposals can be accommodated without being detrimental to the Special Qualities of the AONB. The scenic qualities of the AONB have been considered and incorporated into the proposals and views from the elevated positions within the AONB will be enhanced with an improved settlement edge and enhanced landscape character.

9.27 The retention of boundary planting, maintaining development at the western edge adjacent to existing built form and the additional landscaped

open space at the eastern and northern edges of the site will integrate the proposals into wider views and reduce the impact on visual amenity.

9.28 The proposed scheme allows for a higher quality and softer treatment along the southern edge of the settlement of Leigh Sinton with the proposed open space providing a softer transition and edge than the existing situation and enhancing the edge of the settlement when seen in wider views to the south.

Conclusion

9.29 Overall, the proposals have taken account of the adopted policies within the South Worcestershire Development Plan and the Leigh and Bransford Neighbourhood Plan as well as addressing guidance set out within the Malvern Hills AONB Management Plan and supplementary planning documents.

9.30 The LVA and associated supporting documents have demonstrated that the proposals can be accommodated on the site without being detrimental to the purposes of the Significant Gap, with no increase in physical distances between the settlements of Leigh Sinton and Malvern, limited impacts on openness and coalescence and no perceived reduction to the Significant Gap for users of local footpath and road networks.

9.31 The improved settlement edge will enhance the identity of the settlement of Leigh Sinton when seen in wider views and provide additional benefits to biodiversity, Green Infrastructure and the setting of the settlement.

9.32 The development addresses the visual sensitivities and scenic qualities of the Malvern Hills AONB and has incorporated views of the hills into the proposals. Overall, the scheme has responded to the landscape and visual context without being detrimental to the Significant Gap land, or the Malvern Hills AONB and can be accommodated within the wider landscape and surroundings.

9.33 The proposals are consistent with, and reiterated by the findings detailed within the White Consultants Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Report (Malvern Hills AONB Environs Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Study (May 2019, White Consultants), which identified that the parcel within which the site is located, is of Medium/Low value and able to accommodate development at its north eastern part adjacent to the existing settlement edge.

9.34 The proposed landscape strategy and response to the baseline situation is also consistent with the findings of the Sensitivity Report, which states:

"landscape mitigation should reinforce the existing road boundaries to provide a long-term, mainly broad leaf, buffer and in time the existing coniferous boundaries should be replaced, again with mainly broadleaf planting. There is an opportunity to improve the south western edge of the village."

9.35 The LVA has demonstrated that the proposals can be accommodated within to the landscape and its surroundings, resulting in an improved settlement edge to Leigh Sinton and a development which will provide areas of open space and green infrastructure which will be beneficial to local residents and the community.

Land North of Leigh Sinton Road, Leigh Sinton

Landscape And Visual Appraisal



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Site Location Plan (Incola 1010 P01)		Topography Plan (Incola 1010 P03) Zone of Theoretical Visibility Plan (Incola 1010 P04) Viewpoint Location Plan (Incola 1010 P05) Photoviewpoint 1-18			
2 Methodology	Page 5	6 Opportunities	Page 39	9 Conclusion	Page 51
		Opportunities and Constraints Plan (Incola 1010 P06a)			
3 Landscape Planning Policy	Page 6	7 Proposals	Page 41	Appendices	
		Landscape Strategy Plan (Incola 1010 P07a)		Appendix 1: Significant Gap Appraisal Appendix 2: Malvern Hills AONB Views Assessment	
4 Landscape Context	Page 10				
Site Specific Character Plan (Incola 1010 P02)					

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1 Introduction and Site Context

Background

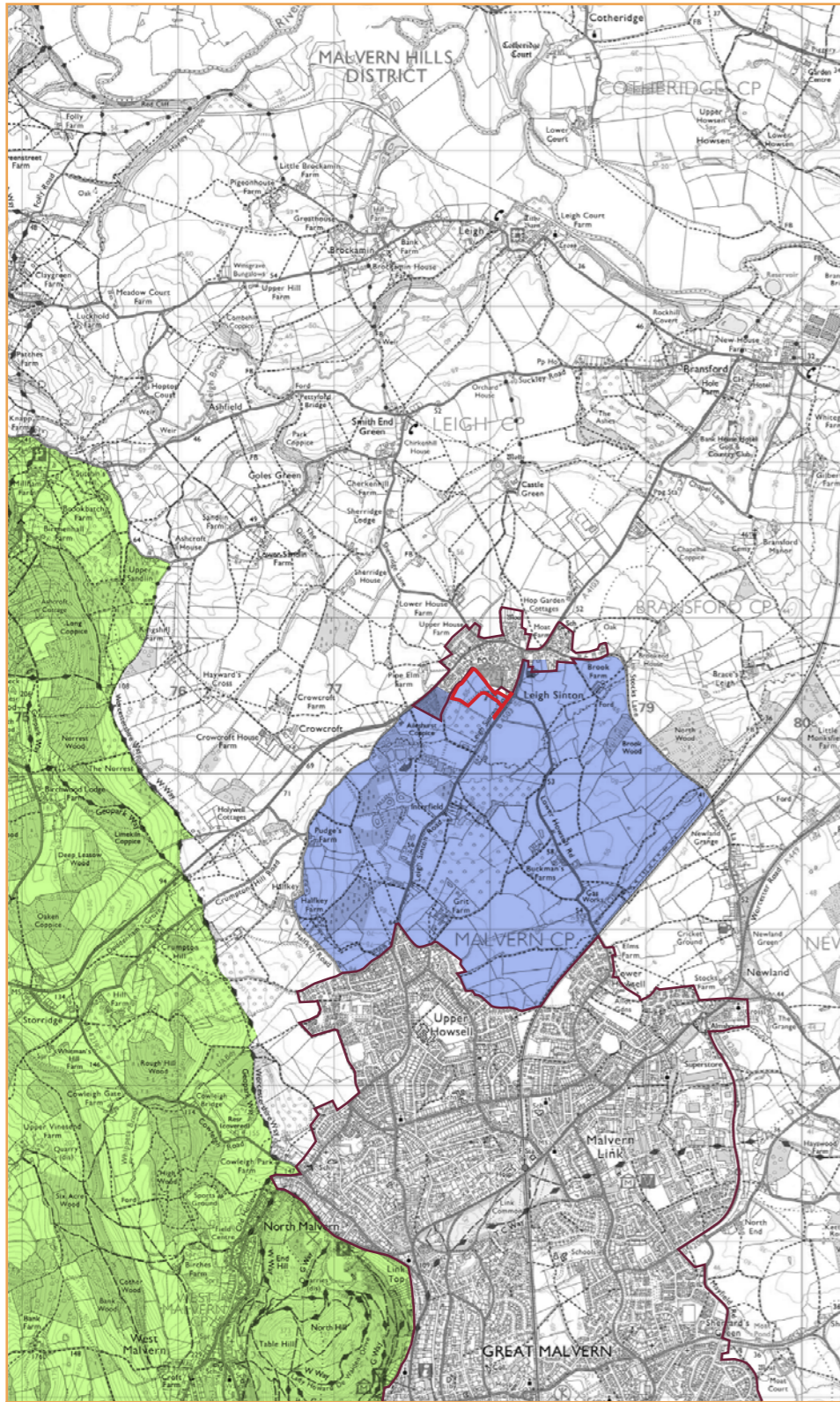
- 1.1 This Landscape and Visual Appraisal has been produced by Incola Ltd on behalf of LoneStar Land Limited to support the submission of an outline planning permission for the development of land for residential development to the north of Leigh Sinton Road, Leigh Sinton, Worcestershire.
- 1.2 The proposed development is for an outline application for up to 45 residential units, including 12 self and custom build units and associated infrastructure.
- 1.3 This document analyses the landscape and visual context of the site and its surroundings and matters relating to visual amenity. It introduces the principle of development, and identifies the design response and resulting opportunities and constraints to inform the layout and design of the scheme.
- 1.4 An iterative approach has been taken with the design team to inform the design of the scheme from the outset, and this is outlined further within the proposals section of the report.
- 1.5 The report reviews the landscape and visual effects arising as a result of the proposed development and is produced in accordance with the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd edition (GLVIA3).
- 1.6 This report has been produced by a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute (CMLI) with over 13 years experience and reviewed by a CMLI with over 17 years experience.
- 1.7 This report is structured as follows:
 1. Introduction and Site Context
 2. Methodology
 3. Landscape Planning Policy
 4. Landscape Context
 5. Visual Context
 6. Opportunities and Constraints
 7. Proposals
 8. Assessment
 9. Conclusion
- 1.8 Other documents which support the findings of the LVA are included to the rear of this report within the appendices. These are:
 - Significant Gap Assessment - produced by Incola Ltd (**Appendix 1**);and

- Malvern Hills AONB Views Assessment - Produced by Incola Ltd (**Appendix 2**).

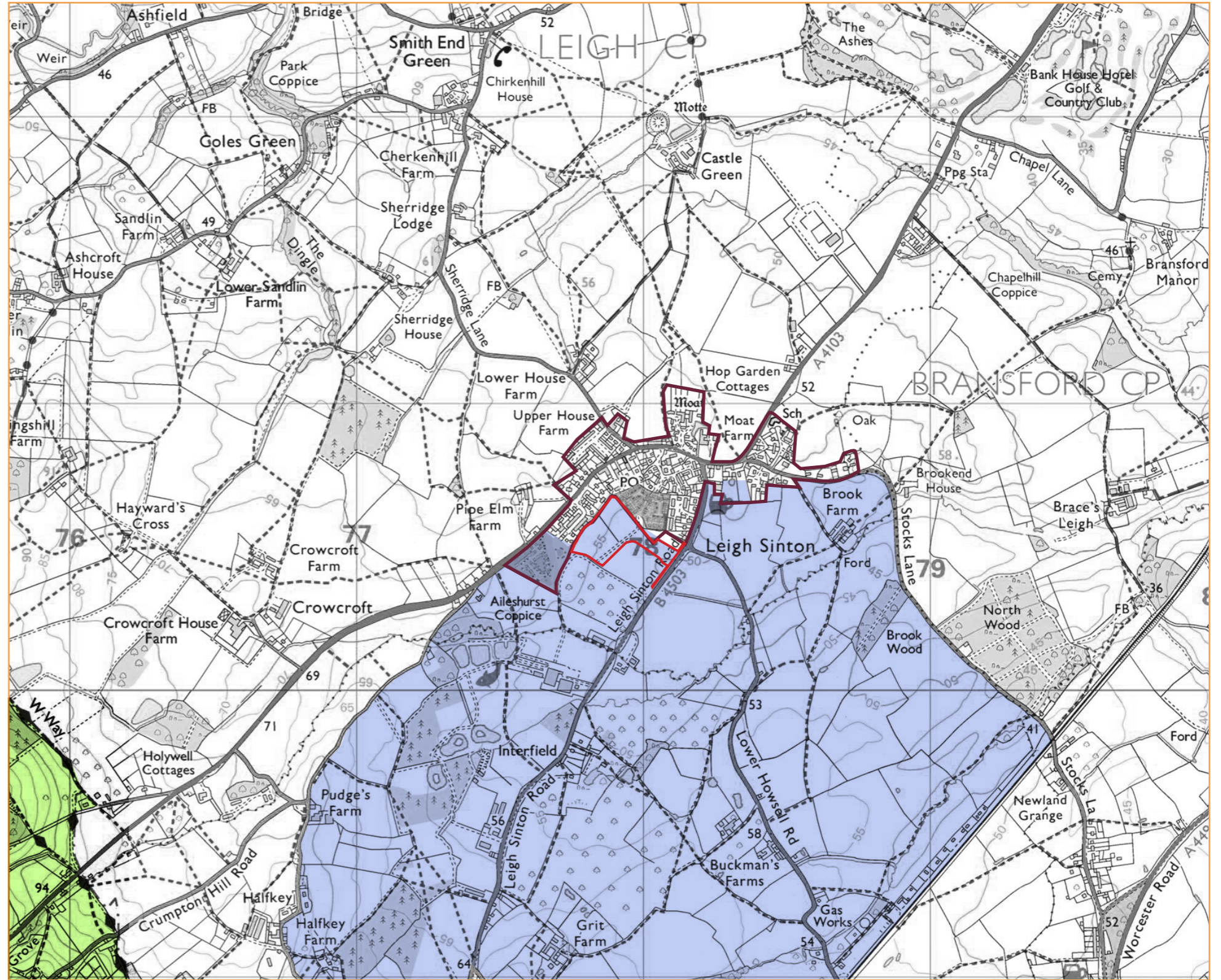
Site Context

- 1.9 The site is situated on the edge of Leigh Sinton, Worcestershire. Residential development boundary the site to the north and west, and there is under construction development located to the south west. It is located approximately 2km to the east of the boundary of the Malvern Hills AONB as illustrated on the Site Location Plan (**Incola 1010 Po1**). The Malvern Hills themselves are located approximately 4km to the south of the site.
- 1.10 The site is also located on land within the Significant Gap, which is adopted within the South Worcestershire Development Plan (2016) and separates the settlements of Malvern and Leigh Sinton. The settlement boundary of Malvern is located 1.46km to the south.
- 1.11 The site is currently used as part of Leigh Sinton Christmas Tree Farm and the entirety of the land is dedicated for the growing and harvesting of Christmas Trees.
- 1.12 Forming the north eastern boundary of the site and settlement edge of Leigh Sinton, is the residential development at Malvern Rise. The north eastern boundary of the site is formed by these residential properties, SuDS, play area and the associated infrastructure of this housing estate. Beyond this, to the north east is the wider settlement of Leigh Sinton.
- 1.13 The south eastern boundary is formed by Leigh Sinton Road, and the further adjoining land is dedicated as Christmas Tree Plantation. Further east are areas of arable land, scattered farmsteads, orchards and areas of woodland along watercourses and field boundaries.
- 1.14 The south western boundary is formed by a belt of evergreen trees and hedgerow which separates it from the adjoining Christmas tree plantation to the south. Approximately 1.46km to the south is the settlement of Malvern, separated by land-use of Christmas tree plantations, deciduous and evergreen woodland, arable land and scattered agricultural and residential buildings. The Malvern Hills are located beyond this, approximately 4km to the south.
- 1.15 The north-western boundary is formed by residential development located off Lynn Close and the A4103 (Hereford Road). Bluebell Walk, a residential development currently under construction is located just to the south west of the site. The A4103 links Leigh Sinton to Malvern and beyond this are arable fields, tree and hedgerow vegetation to field boundaries, areas of orchards and scattered farmsteads in the valley bottoms with the land rising in the east towards the Malvern Hills AONB.
- 1.16 A network of publicly accessibly footpaths are located in the landscape beyond the site, and to the west are the Worcestershire Way and Geopark Way, two long distance routes linking to the network of footpaths within with the AONB.

1 Introduction and Site Context



Wider Location Plan



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Legend

- Site Boundary
- Malvern Hills AONB
- Significant Gap (SWDP 2016)
- Settlement Boundaries

Plan Name	Site Location Plan
Plan Number	Incola 1010 P01
Revision	-
Date	06/06/2021



Assessment Methodology

- 2.1 This LVA has been undertaken in accordance with the following guidance:
- An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment, Natural England, 2018; and
 - Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA), Third Edition, Landscape Institute and IEMA, 2013.
- 2.2 This is a standalone report and does not constitute a landscape chapter in the context of an Environmental Statement (ES) required by an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).
- 2.3 Table 3.1 of the GLVIA₃ outlines what is required in this type of appraisal report, as a project outside of an EIA. This includes the following:
- Establish the existing nature of the landscape and visual environment in the study area and the baseline situation;
 - Provides a description of the proposed development, identifying the main features of the proposals and the changes that will occur; and
 - Systematically identifies and describes the effects that are likely to occur, including whether they are adverse or beneficial.
- 2.4 The approach taken in the preparation of this report is appropriate and proportional in the context of the professional guidance published by the Landscape Institute.
- 2.5 Professional judgement plays an important role in the landscape and visual analysis process where the analysis of landscape character and visual amenity is both a subjective and objective process. However, the analysis process seeks to provide a narrative to explain the judgement reached.
- 2.6 As set-out within GLVIA₃ Statement of Clarification 1/14 28-01-14 published by the Landscape Institute, when undertaking a landscape appraisal as opposed to a full Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA): *"The appraisal process is completed with a final statement of the effects identified, which may identify the relative importance of the effects, but without assessing their likely significance."*

Establishing the existing nature of the landscape/Baseline analysis

- 2.7 The starting point for the assessment is to establish the baseline situation of the site and its surroundings with regard to its landscape and visual context. This analysis considers the physical and perceptual qualities of the landscape and the value attached to it, the views from where the development of the site will result in a change and the potential people or 'receptors' whose view will experience a change in their view as a result.

- 2.8 The baseline assessment includes the following:

- An analysis of the site context;
- Consideration of the national and local planning policy context relevant to landscape matters;
- Analysis of the landscape context, the published landscape character, historic landscape context and the local and site specific character informed by the field visit; and
- Analysis of the visual context through the production of a Zone of Theoretical Visibility Plan (ZTV), topographical Plan and field visit.

- 2.9 The baseline analysis has assisted in providing a series of recommendations for the development of the site to enable design recommendations to best accommodate the scheme while considering the landscape opportunities and constraints. This design response has been fed into the scheme and has informed the masterplan and scheme proposals.

Significant Gap Analysis

- 2.10 In addition to undertaking an assessment of the landscape and visual context and identifying the likely landscape and visual effects of the proposed development, this LVA also includes a site-specific assessment of the Significant Gap designation within which the site is located. This report is located at **Appendix 1**.
- 2.11 This analysis considers the baseline situation and the implications of the development of the site on the Significant Gap land, it addresses policy, physical distance and the perceived distance of the development of the site in relation to the Significant Gap.

AONB Methodology

- 2.12 Given the location of the site in relation to the Malvern Hills AONB, an assessment has been undertaken to assess any Key or Important Views as identified within the Malvern Hills AONB Management Plan Key View Document (Malvern Hills AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 - Guidance on Identifying and Grading Views and Viewpoints).
- 2.13 In addition to including an assessment of identified Key Views, any additional views which have been identified through the baseline studies and are also included within this assessment.
- 2.14 The assessment uses the methodology as set out within the Malvern Hills AONB Guidance on Identifying and Grading Views and Viewpoints, and the standard proforma used to assess identified views. This document is found at **Appendix 2**.

Assessment

- 2.15 Using the findings of the baseline studies and inputs to the design of the proposals, the fixed scheme has been assessed for its impacts on Landscape and Visual receptors. Likely effects on identified landscape and visual receptors have been assessed and the nature of change identified as a result of the proposed development.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 3.1 The NPPF is a material consideration in planning decisions and outlines the Government's planning policies for England, setting out how these are expected to be applied.
- 3.2 At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For plan making, the presumption requires plans to positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of an area to be sufficiently flexible to adapt to change.
- 3.3 Footnote 6 of Paragraph 11 indicates designated areas where development should be restricted. These are identified as follows:
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
 - Green Belt;
 - Local Green Space;
 - Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
 - Heritage Coasts;
 - National Parks;
 - Designated Heritage Assets; and
 - Areas at Risk of Flooding or Coastal Erosion.
- 3.4 The site is not located within close proximity to, or within a nationally designated area of landscape value and is located 2.1km to the east of the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Local Planning Policy - Adopted South Worcestershire Development Plan (2016)

- 3.5 The site falls within the administrative boundary of Malvern Hills District Council, and the adopted development plan which is relevant to the site is the South Worcestershire Development Plan (2016). Key adopted policies which will be pertinent to the development of the site are as follows:

SWDP 1: Overarching Sustainable Development Principles

- 3.6 Policy SWDP 1 states:

"When considering development proposals, the Local Authority will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework".

- 3.7 It identifies "that in order to In order to achieve a sustainable end result, the SWDP (through its overall approach and policies) needs to perform a number of roles:

"An environmental role – contributing to protecting and enhancing south Worcestershire's unique natural, built and historic environment by:

- i. Helping to improve biodiversity.*
- ii. Using natural resources prudently.*
- iii. Minimising waste and pollution.*
- iv. Safeguarding and enhancing landscape character.*
- v. Protecting important historic buildings, monuments, sites of archaeological significance and the integrity of local planning designations.*
- vi. Protecting and enhancing green infrastructure.*
- vii. Mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy."*

SWDP 2: Development Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy (Including Significant Gap Policy)

- 3.8 Policy SWDP 2 identifies Leigh Sinton as being a lower category village and within a 'Rural Area'. It identifies that any proposed development should 'retain the open character of the Strategic Gaps'. It identifies the following with regard to the purpose of these gaps:

"The purpose of maintaining these gaps, which either serve as a buffer or visual break between rural settlements and adjacent urban areas or protect the character and setting of settlements, is to provide additional protection to open land that may be subject to development pressures. The designation helps to maintain a clear separation between smaller settlements and urban areas in order to retain their individual identity. Acceptable development proposals in such areas may include the reuse of rural buildings, agricultural and forestry-related development, playing fields, other open land uses and minor extensions to existing dwellings."

- 3.9 A separate assessment found at **Appendix 1** provides further information on how the site responds to the Significant Gap designation.
- 3.10 The site is located within the Significant Gap, but this designation is not identified as a landscape designation and is a local designation which is designed to prevent coalescence of settlements to maintain separation.
- 3.11 It is not identified as a designation specifically related to landscape character or landscape value.

SWDP 5: Green Infrastructure

- 3.12 Policy SWDP 5 states that:

"Housing development proposals (including mixed-use schemes) are required to contribute towards the provision, maintenance, improvement and connectivity of Green Infrastructure (GI) as follows:

- i. For greenfield sites exceeding 1ha (gross) - 40% Green Infrastructure (GI)"*

- 3.13 It identifies that the design and specific form of the Green Infrastructure will be dependant upon the local context and the priorities identified within the Worcestershire Green Infrastructure Strategy.

- 3.14 Within the Green Infrastructure Strategy, the site is located within the within Area 9 'Malvern Chase & Commons' and is identified as an area to 'Protect and Enhance' as classified on the South Worcestershire Green Infrastructure Environmental Character Area.

- 3.15 The overarching principles relating specifically to the environment within Area 9 are to "Protect and enhance acid and neutral grassland habitats and wooded landscape of orchards, woodland and scrub".

- 3.16 The Green Infrastructure Strategy states that:

"Development should not be detrimental to existing Green Infrastructure (GI) assets, and enhancements should be made to existing assets with replacement/investment in GI to provide benefits to the community and environment."

SWDP 21: Design

- 3.17 Policy SWDP 21 states that:

"All development will be expected to be of a high design quality. It will need to integrate effectively with its surroundings, in terms of form and function, reinforce local distinctiveness and conserve, and where appropriate, enhance cultural and heritage assets and their settings. New and innovative designs will be encouraged and supported where they enhance the overall quality of the built environment."

- 3.18 It also states that :

"Development proposals must complement the character of the area. In particular, development should respond to surrounding buildings and the distinctive features or qualities that contribute to the visual and heritage interest of the townscape, frontages, streets and landscape quality of the local area." and goes on to say:

"Design proposals should ensure that the prominent views, vistas and skylines of Worcester city and the towns are maintained and safeguarded, particularly where they relate to heritage assets, existing landmark buildings, and 'gateway' sites. Development at the urban edges should respect the rural setting. "

- 3.19 Policy SWDP 21 states that development 'should provide high quality hard and soft landscaping'. Species selection, and arrangements for long term management is also a key factor in the development of sites.

SWDP 22: Biodiversity and Geodiversity

- 3.20 Although not of direct relevance to landscape and visual matters, the holistic approach to Green Infrastructure across the site should be

designed to enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, conservation interests and on site ecological corridors with opportunities to enhance GI links beyond the site boundaries.

SWDP 23: The Cotswolds and Malvern Hills Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

- 3.21 Although the site does not fall within the boundaries of the Malvern Hills AONB, development should not have a detrimental impact on the natural beauty of the Malvern Hills AONB and should make reference to the relevant AONB Management Plans. Further information is provided at **Appendix 2** of this report. It states that:

"For development outwith but affecting an AONB, regard should be had to the purpose of conserving and enhancing its natural beauty."

SWDP 25: Landscape Character

- 3.22 Policy SWDP 25 states the following with regards to Landscape Character:

"A. Development proposals and their associated landscaping schemes must demonstrate the following:

i. That they take into account the latest Landscape Character and its guidelines; and

ii. That they are appropriate to, and integrate with, the character of the landscape setting; and

iii. That they conserve, and where appropriate, enhance the primary characteristics defined in character assessments and important features of the Land Cover Parcel, and have taken any available opportunity to enhance the landscape.

B. A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) will be required for all major development proposals and for other proposals where they are likely to have a detrimental impact upon:

i. A significant landscape attribute;

ii. An irreplaceable landscape feature; or

iii. The landscape as a resource.

The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment should include proposals to protect and conserve key landscape features and attributes and, where appropriate, enhance landscape quality."

SWDP 39: Provision for Green Space and Outdoor Community Uses in New Development

- 3.23 Development of over 5 dwellings should 'provide Green Space and outdoor community uses'.

- 3.24 Enhancements to encourage access to new green space is encouraged through enhancements to existing PRoW networks and recreation routes.

Neighbourhood Plan

- 3.25 The Leigh and Bransford Draft Neighbourhood Development Plan (Informal Consultation Draft 2019 to 2030/2040) details a number of policies of relevance to the development of the site. Although not yet adopted, the following policies are of relevance for consideration:

Policy LB/H/4

- 3.26 This policy details that the Significant Gap between Malvern and Leigh Sinton should be retained in order for it to maintain the existing character, including views from and to the Malvern Hills (AONB), to maintain the separation between Leigh Sinton and Malvern.

Policy LB/D/1

- 3.27 Any new development should seek to reinforce local distinctiveness.

Policy LB/HLB/1

- 3.28 Any new development should make a positive contribution to character and surroundings. It should be guided by any relevant Conservation Area appraisals, should preserve key views and enhance visual and ecological value.

Policy LB/HLB/3/4

- 3.29 Landscape proposals should take account of the latest Worcestershire Landscape Character Assessment and should maintain and enhance hedgerows, conserve ancient woodland sites and plant new woodlands with native species.

Policy LB/HLB/12

- 3.30 New development should protect and enhance green infrastructure and new multifunctional green networks should be created.

Policy LB/HLB/13

- 3.31 Proposals must evidence how specific landscape features have influenced design and layout.

Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Beauty (AONB)

Management Plan and Policies

- 3.32 Whilst the site is not situated within or adjacent to the AONB, it is located approximately 2km to the east of the boundary of the Malvern Hills AONB. The Malvern Hills themselves are located approximately 4km to the south of the site and are visible from the site and surrounding area, with Leigh Sinton and the site being visible in expansive elevated views across the wider landscape.

- 3.33 This LVA and the supporting Key Views Assessment at **Appendix 2** has considered views both to and from the Malvern Hills AONB to identify

those views and features of importance to the special qualities and wider setting of the AONB and have informed the proposals. The Malvern Hills AONB Management Plan (2019-2024) identifies that the Malvern Hills AONB has the following special qualities which are relevant to the development of the site:

- "Dramatic scenery and spectacular views arising from the juxtaposition of high and low ground;
- Open access in many places over the hills and commons, providing opportunities for bracing walks with fine views."

- 3.34 The key policies found within the AONB Management Plan which will be relevant to the development of the site are as follows:

- Loss and degradation of views (Policies LP1, LP2, LP3 and BDP4);
- Loss of tranquillity (Policies LP1, LP2, TRP2 and TRP6);
- Protecting views and setting of the Malvern Hills AONB (Policies BDP4, BDP14); and

- 3.35 The development of the site will take account of any Key Views identified within the AONB Management Plan both to and from the AONB and as detailed within the following reports:

- Identification of Key Views to and From the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (March 2009);
- Guidance on how Development can Respect Landscape in Views
- Landscape Strategy and Guidelines;
- Guidance on the Selection and Use of Colour in Development

- 3.36 A full assessment of these key views is included at **Appendix 2**.

2019 South Worcestershire Development Plan Evidence Base

County Landscape Character (Published) - Worcestershire Landscape Character Assessment

- 3.37 The Landscape Character Assessment which will be assessed as part of this appraisal is the Worcestershire County Council Landscape Character Assessment. The site is located within the Principle Timbered Farmlands Landscape Character Type (LCT). This guidance provides a series of key characteristics, Planning and Development Sheets and Landscape Types Advice Sheets for Land Management.

South Worcestershire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (March 2018)

- 3.38 Of particular relevance is Section 6, Respecting the Natural and Historic Environment which details a series of recommendations and guidance on landscape matters relevant to the development of new schemes.

Malvern Hills AONB Environs Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Study (May 2019, White Consultants)

3.39 A Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Study, completed by White Consultants in 2019 identifies the site as being located within Parcel Mog as illustrated on **Figure 1** below.

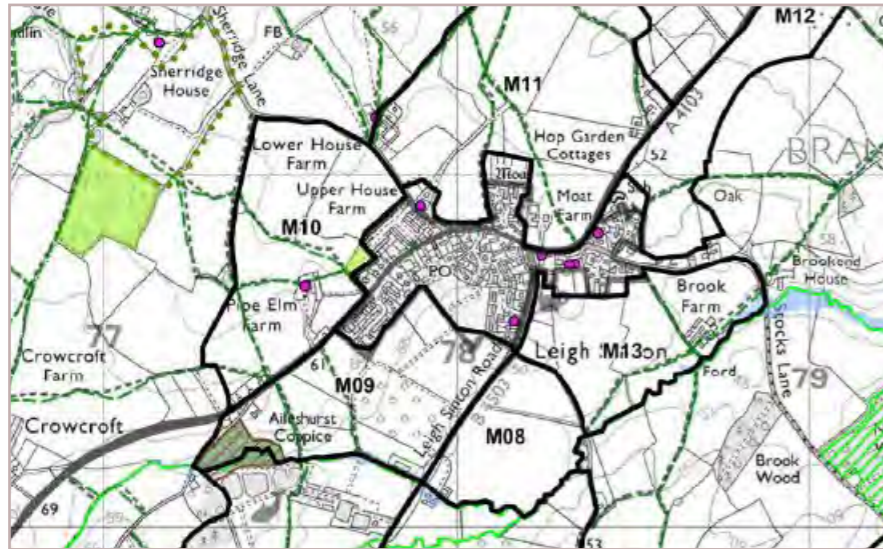


Figure 1: Extract from Malvern Hills AONB Environs Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Study

3.40 The White Consultants Report identifies that Parcel Mog extends beyond the site boundaries to the south to Ailshurst Coppice.

3.41 The parcel adjoins the southern settlement edge of Leigh Sinton at its northern extents. The parcels within the sensitivity study are assessed for their landscape and visual susceptibility and sensitivity and their capacity to accommodate development.

Review of Views from the Malvern Hills

3.42 The assessment also includes a review of views from the Malvern Hills. It states the following with regards to views from North Hill:

“View from North Hill - Overview

This view looks north and north-east from the edge of North Hill. It takes in the edges of the lower northern wooded hills to the left showing their relationship with the lower sloping land of the Severn Vale to the east. In the distance, a series of hills are visible but in the majority of views the landscape is either gently undulating or flat. Worcester is apparent although indistinct. The northern and north eastern edges of Malvern are highly noticeable extending out into the countryside. This does modify the context of the view to an extent. The railway line is a feature running north-east. The settlement of Leigh Sinton is apparent separated from Malvern by an area of dense orchards and coniferous plantations.

The landscape is of mixed agriculture with a slight emphasis on grassland/pasture. There is a fairly substantial tree cover in woodlands and hedgerow trees as might be expected for the Timbered Farmlands landscape type.

The most noticeable buildings in the view are larger buildings, including commercial units in Townsend Way and a church, white or light coloured buildings (roof or elevation), elements with a different colour e.g. artificial pitches or buildings with light blue roofs, and clear patterns of built development, such as along straight roads. These elements catch the eye and some could be termed as detractors.

3.43 It goes on to say the following with regards to the relationship with land parcels:

“The LCPs which are further away where development would be less obtrusive include 9, 11 and 19.”

Landscape Value

3.44 The study identifies that the parcel has a Medium/Low Landscape Value with the justification being that *“the value of the area lies in the Ancient Woodland/SSSI of Ailshurst Coppice, Careys Brook wildlife site and the two PROWs”*. The parcel extends beyond the site itself, with the Ancient Woodland at Ailshurst Coppice situated at its southern extent.

3.45 With regards to the inherent value indicators and in particular tranquillity, the following is stated:

“The two adjacent roads and highly visible settlement edge reduce tranquillity although it increases to the south west where the PROWs are located.”

Landscape and Visual Susceptibility and Sensitivity

3.46 The study identifies that the parcel is of Medium/Low Landscape sensitivity/susceptibility and Medium Visual susceptibility/sensitivity with an overall assessment of Medium/Low for Sensitivity for housing of between 1Ha and 5Ha in size.

3.47 The justification for this is *“The landscape susceptibility of the area to housing lies in its ancient woodland, stream corridor, traditional hedgerows and PROWs. The visual susceptibility of the area lies in its aspect falling south towards the Malvern Hills, its relative internal openness in places and users of PROWs. Overall, the LCP increases in sensitivity towards the west with the Ancient woodland acting as a strong feature. The area has least sensitivity to the north east where housing could be accommodated with existing housing on two sides.”*

3.48 The study states the following with regards to the settlement edge character and visual context:

“The existing settlement is a barely mitigated housing estate to the north west and a new housing development to the north east which will look raw for a period of time.”

3.49 It also states the following with regards to the visual relationship between the area and the settlement:

“The settlement is open to views especially in the northern part of the LCP the area and the settlement”

Overall Capacity

3.50 It states that the parcel has the capacity to accommodate residential development between 1ha-5ha in size and states that: *“In the short term the area has capacity for up to 5 ha. In the longer term the area could accommodate a further 5 ha of development but this should be balanced with the size of the settlement and whether development on other sides of the village may be more appropriate to reinforce the core.”*

Opportunities

3.51 The study identifies the following with regards to opportunities and potential for mitigation if Parcel Mog is developed:

“Location, Layout, Design - The least sensitive location is the northern part of the site which is flanked by existing housing on two sides and with a partial coniferous boundary. Part of the rest of the LCP may be able to be developed in the longer term, with an emphasis of development to the east rather than the west. However, there is an opportunity to improve the south western edge of the village.”

Landscape Mitigation - Any landscape mitigation should reinforce the existing road boundaries to provide a long-term, mainly broad leaf, buffer and in time the existing coniferous boundaries should be replaced, again with mainly broadleaf planting. There is an opportunity to improve the south western edge of the village.”

3.52 The study identifies that the most suitable location for development within the parcel is located at the north eastern part adjacent to the existing settlement edge of Leigh Sinton, where this is the least sensitive part of the parcel. It identifies that the existing settlement edge is seen in wider views and is ‘highly visible’ and that the roads and existing settlement edge ‘reduce tranquillity’.

3.53 The site is located within the least sensitive part of Parcel Mog, as identified within the sensitivity study, and has the potential to improve the existing landscape and visual situation and existing settlement edge.

Other designations

Tree Preservation Orders

3.54 There are no trees covered by TPO designations within the site boundaries. To the north east of the site is an area of fruit trees which are covered by a Group TPO (TPO Ref: 582 (2016)). This group of trees overlook the boundary of the site at the north eastern corner adjacent to Leigh Sinton Road.

Listed Buildings

3.55 One Grade II listed building is located 130m to the north east of the site along Leigh Sinton Road, but the site has not intervisibility with this building or connected physically.

3 Landscape Planning Policy

Conservation Areas

3.56 The site is not located within close proximity of any Conservation Area designation.

Ancient Woodland

3.57 Ailshurst Coppice, an Ancient Woodland and SSSI is located 260m to the south west of the site, but there is no connectivity nor intervisibility between this and the site.

Other Planning Applications

3.58 Within the vicinity of the site are two recently constructed schemes. These are:

Bluebell Walk

3.59 To the south west of the site a consented scheme for 35 dwellings is located off the A4103 (Hereford Road). The scheme was granted permission at appeal and at the time of writing this report is being built out. Further details of this appeal decision are found within the Significant Gap appraisal document at **Appendix 1**.

Malvern Rise

3.60 Immediately to the north of the site is the completed Malvern Rise scheme which comprises 53 dwellings, associated infrastructure SuDS and play area (application reference 13/00952/OUT).

Summary

3.61 The development of the site should seek to do the following in order to comply with adopted policy:

- Development should not be detrimental to the Special Qualities of the Malvern Hills AONB or key views identified within the AONB Management Plan (NPPF, Malvern Hills AONB Management Plan, and Policy SWDP 23);
- Development should not be detrimental to the Significant Gap Land and should ensure that the separation between the settlements of Malvern and Leigh Sinton is maintained and open land and the separate identities of the settlements maintained and protected (Policy SWDP 2 and Neighbourhood Plan Policy LB/D/1);
- Development should respond to local character and distinctiveness and reference the relevant Landscape Character Assessment (Policy SWDP 21, 25 and Neighbourhood Plan Policy LB/H/4 and LB/HLB/3/4);
- Development should protect and enhance Green Infrastructure (GI) and provide at least 40 % GI, with benefits for recreation and biodiversity (Policy SWDP 5 and SWDP 22 and Neighbourhood Plan Policy LB/HLB/12);

- Development should provide a positive community resource and recreational routes and facilities (Policy SWDP 39);
- Development at rural edges should respect and respond appropriately to the rural setting and context (Policy SWDP 21).

4 Landscape Context

Published Landscape Character - Worcestershire Landscape Character Assessment

- 4.1 At a regional level the site is located within the Mid Worcestershire Forests LCA. Covering a large area this is further broken down into Landscape Character Types of which the site is located within the 'Principal Timbered Farmlands' Landscape Character Type as illustrated on **Figure 2**:

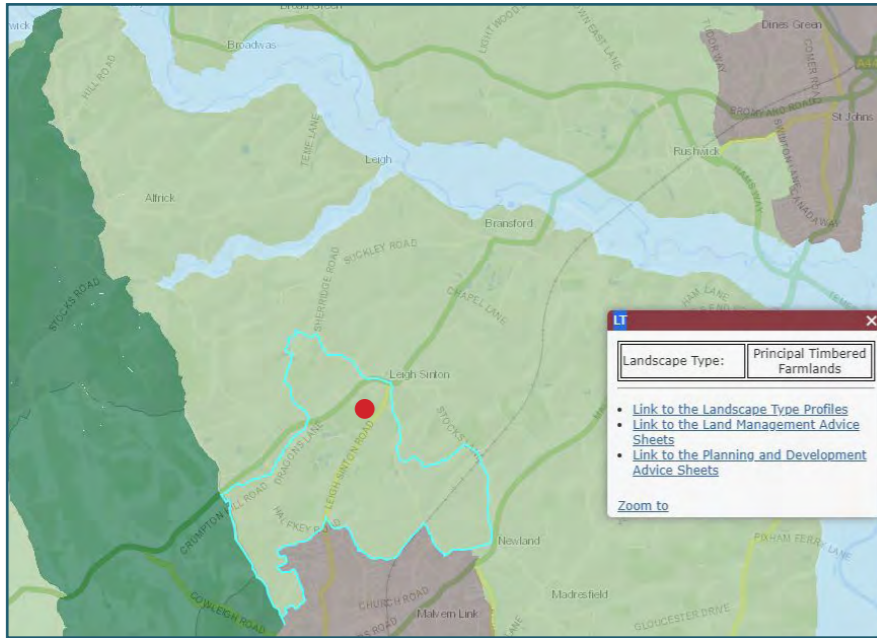


Figure 2: Principal Timbered Farmlands Landscape Character Type

- 4.2 The landscape within the Principal Farmlands LCT is described as:

"A small to medium-scale wooded, agricultural landscape characterised by filtered views through densely scattered hedgerow trees. This is a complex, in places intimate, landscape of irregularly shaped woodlands, winding lanes and frequent wayside dwellings and farmsteads. It is a landscape of great interest and exception, yet also one of balance."

- 4.3 Its primary key characteristics are:

- "Hedgerow boundaries to fields;
- Ancient wooded character; and
- Notable pattern of hedgerow trees".

- 4.4 Its secondary characteristics are:

- "Organic enclosure pattern;
- Small-scale landscape, hedgerow trees creating filtered views; and
- Brick and timber building styles of properties".

- 4.5 Its tertiary characteristics are:

- "Mixed farming land use; and
- Dispersed settlement pattern".

- 4.6 The Landscape Guidelines for the Principal Timbered Farmlands LCT identifies that new development should do the following:

- "Maintain the tree cover character of hedgerow oaks, and enhance the age structure of the hedgerow oak population;
- Conserve all ancient woodland sites and restock with locally occurring native species;
- Seek to bring about coalescence of fragmented relic ancient woodlands;
- Encourage the planting of new woodlands, reflecting the scale, shape and composition of the existing ancient woodland character, favouring oak as the major species;
- Conserve and restore tree cover along water courses and streamlines;
- Seek opportunities to enhance tree cover along highways and other non-farmed locations;
- Conserve and restore the pattern and composition of the hedgerow structure through appropriate management, and replanting;
- Conserve the organic pattern and character of the lane networks; and
- Maintain the historic dispersed settlement pattern".

- 4.7 The Planning and Development Advice Sheet contained within the Landscape Character Assessment, provides a number of recommendations for development which should be taken into account in the evolution of the design of the scheme. Of particular relevance to the site are the following:

- "There is concern over loss of scale and structure of tree cover, and notably hedgerow trees;
- There may be opportunities to create new areas of woodland reflecting characteristics of ancient woodland;
- There are opportunities to plant new hedgerows, and restore and strengthen existing hedgerows with appropriate management. Species composition will be important as well as replacing fencing with new hedgerows;
- Opportunities exist to plant new hedgerow trees and to regenerate existing hedgerows with new generation planting of Field Maple and Oak;
- The removal of existing inappropriate tree planting which is not characteristic may also be suitable (i.e. belts of poplars etc);
- Opportunities to reflect organic field patterns through areas of new planting to define boundaries and avoiding uniformity; and

- Opportunities to sub-divide larger fields and parcels of land, creating smaller parcels and avoiding regular parcels of land. Incorporating hedgerow planting and tree planting at appropriate scales can filter views and incorporating hedgerow planting within development can assist in softening the visual impacts of development and uniformity of roofscapes and built form."

- 4.8 The published landscape character assessment covers a much wider area than the site itself and provides a broader description of characteristics which may not necessarily be relevant to the site due to its size and scale.

- 4.9 In order to assess the character of the site in more detail, an assessment of the local site specific character is completed to establish the baseline situation and the landscape features which are specific to the site, its surroundings and its context.

4 Landscape Context

Site Specific Character

4.10 The site is located on the southern edge of the settlement of Leigh Sinton and is well related to the existing settlement edge which forms the north western and north eastern boundaries as illustrated on the Site Specific Plan (**Incola 1010 P02 and on Images A-K** - see images overleaf). It has settlement edge characteristics and is currently used as a Christmas Tree plantation.

Topography

4.11 The land falls gently to the east towards Leigh Sinton Road with the lowest part at approximately 50m AOD adjacent to the eastern site boundary and at 58m AOD at the western boundary adjacent to residential development located off Lynn Close.

Settlement Edge Context

4.12 The site is well related to the existing settlement edge of Leigh Sinton along the northern and western boundaries. These boundaries form an abrupt edge, with residential dwellings directly overlooking the site, and rear and side gardens and boundary treatments forming the transition at the existing settlement edge (as illustrated on **Image D, H and I**).

4.13 To the south west, the development at Bluebell Walk is currently under construction (at the time of writing this report). This residential development extends the built form of the settlement to the southwest along the A4103 (Hereford Road) and can be seen within the context of the site, and adjoining development at Lynn Close (as illustrated on **Image G**).

Internal Landscape Features/Land use

4.14 The site comprises a Christmas tree plantation which covers the entirety of the red line boundary land, with the exception of access/maintenance tracks which cut through the site (as illustrated on **Image I, J and K**).

Boundaries

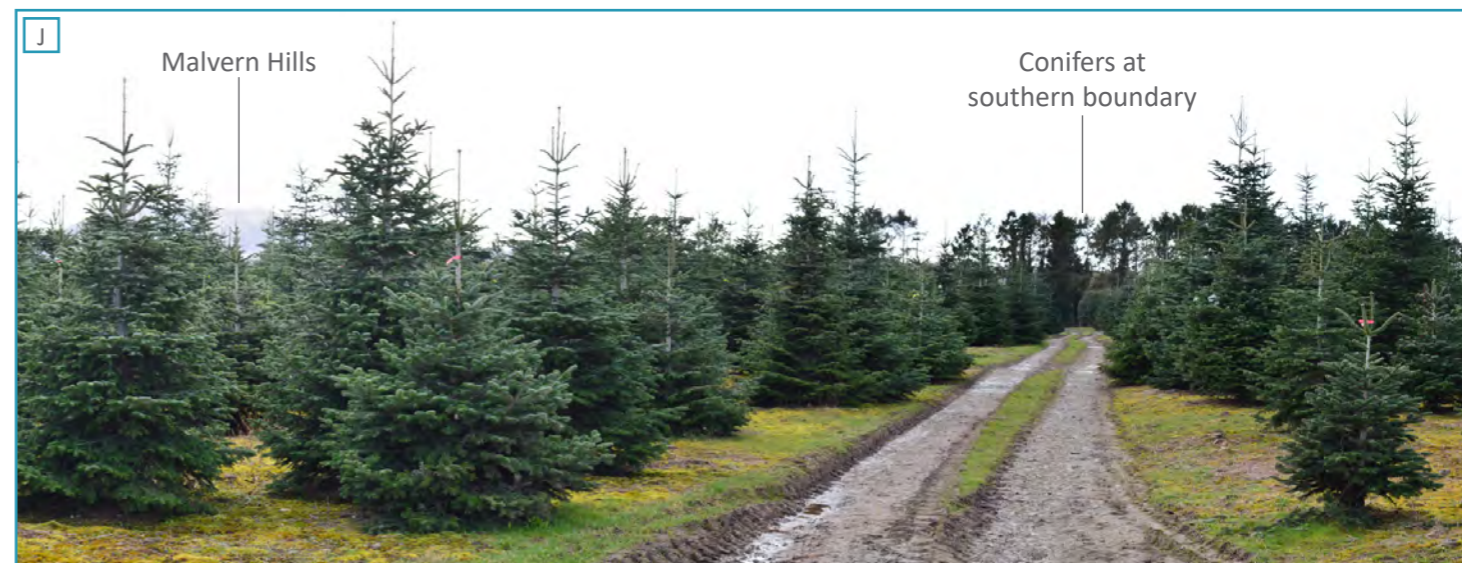
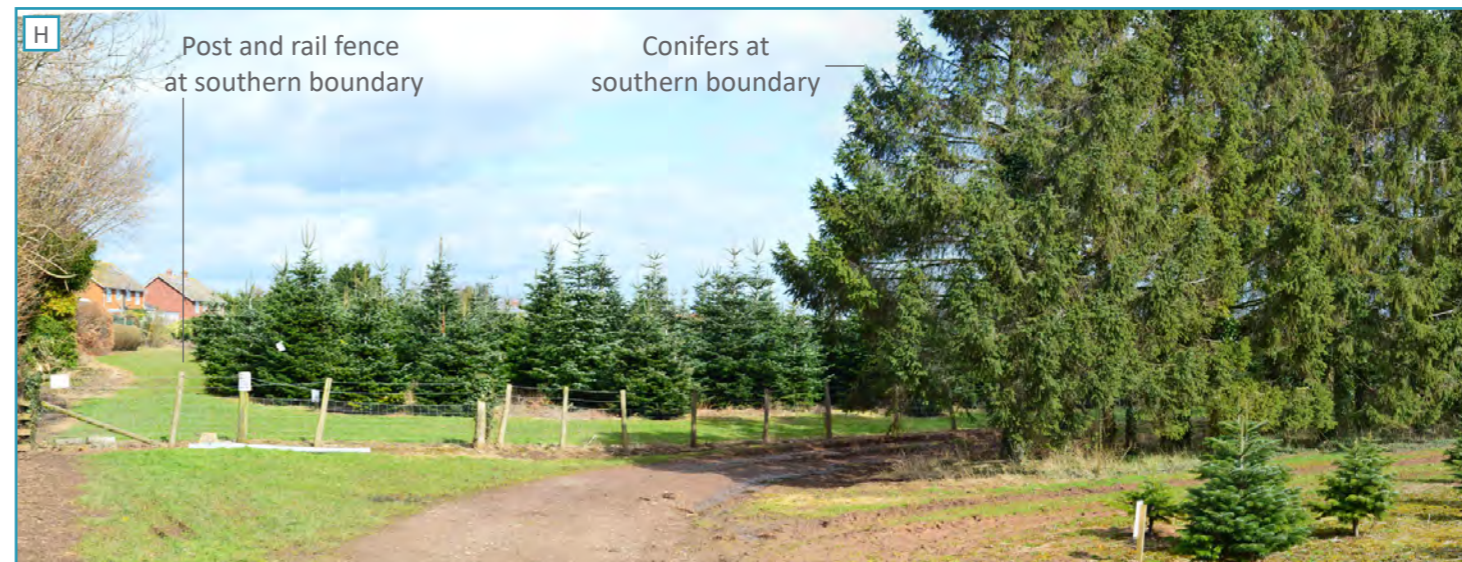
4.15 The north eastern boundary of the site is formed by the recently completed Malvern Rise residential development whose properties overlook the site (as illustrated on **Image B, F and K**). Much of the north eastern edge of the site is formed by a play area and SuDS feature which run alongside a timber post and rail fence and newly planted hedge, separating the development from the existing Christmas tree plantation (as illustrated on **Image C, D and E**). A mature Oak tree is located between the play area and the SuDS feature.

4.16 At the north eastern corner, an existing orchard is present, with new pedestrian access footpath to Malvern Rise running alongside it's north eastern edge (as illustrated on **Image A**).

4.17 Part of the eastern boundary is formed by established mature hedgerow and tree planting which runs alongside Leigh Sinton Road, separating the







4 Landscape Context

site from the wider landscape to the east (as illustrated on **Image F**).

- 4.18 At the north eastern corner, a newly planted section of hedging runs along the boundary, allowing open views across the northern part of the site.
- 4.19 The southern boundary is formed by an existing native hedgerow which joins Leigh Sinton Road to the east (as illustrated on **Image G**). At the south western part of the site, there is a field gate providing maintenance access into the site.
- 4.20 To the south west, a scrappy section of hedgerow exists and beyond this, a post and rail fence is present. Just outside of the boundary, a belt of mature evergreen conifer trees overlook the site, providing a contained and enclosed character to the south western part of the site (as illustrated on **Image H and J**).
- 4.21 There are no public rights of way present within the site boundaries, although there are a number of publicly accessible footpaths to the south of the site in the wider landscape. These include a section of newly constructed footpath connecting with Hereford Road through the Bluebell Walk development and joining the PRoW network to the south. There is also a new route within the Malvern Rise scheme to the north (as illustrated on **Image A**).

Malvern Hills

- 4.22 Although much of the site displays a contained and enclosed character, with existing boundary planting and settlement edge characteristics, the Malvern Hills are a distinctive feature within the landscape (as illustrated in **Image C and E**).
- 4.23 As described further within the Visual Baseline section and within **Appendix 2** of this report, the setting of the Malvern Hills in regards to visual amenity is an important factor in its development.

Historic Land Use

- 4.24 In order to further explore the context of the site an overview of the historical land use has been completed, and **Figure 3** and **Figure 4** illustrate how the site has changed over time.
- 4.25 The site itself remains relatively unchanged in its field patterns with the exception of a hedgerow running north south. This hedgerow route follows the route of a track which runs through the Christmas tree plantation.
- 4.26 The historical mapping data also illustrates that within the wider landscape there is evidence of orchard planting and irregular field patterns.

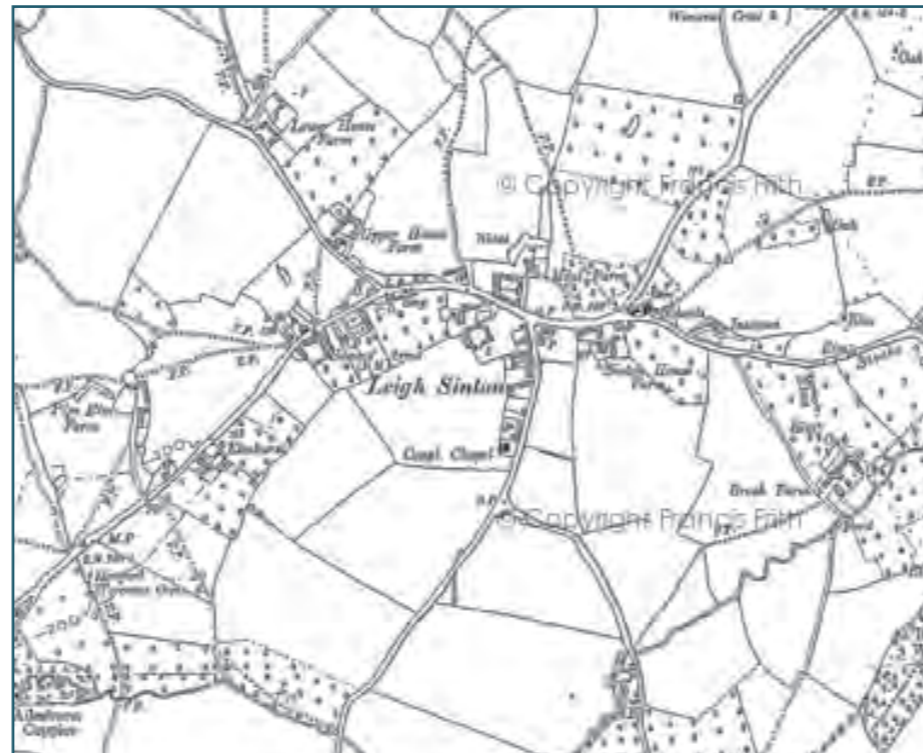


Figure 3: 1894 OS Map (sourced from <https://maps.nls.uk>)



Figure 4: 1945 Aerial Map (sourced from <https://maps.nls.uk>)

Summary

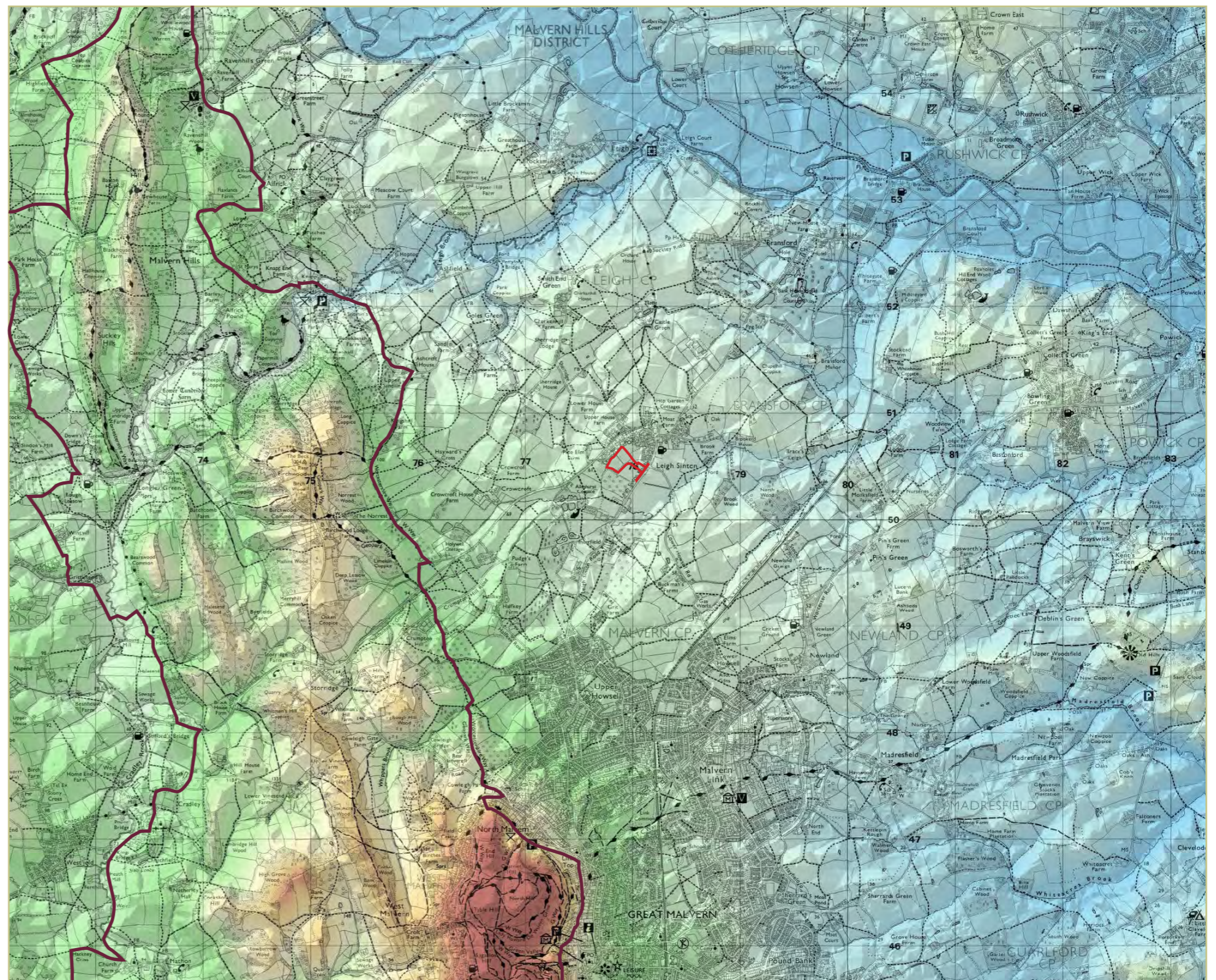
- 4.27 The assessment of the published and site specific character has found that the site shares some characteristics with the Principal Timbered Farmlands LCT. The hedgerows and hedgerow trees at the southern and eastern edges of the site are characteristic features of the wider landscape and detailed within the published character assessment.
- 4.28 However, the site is more related to the edge of Leigh Sinton and the built form found to the west and north than the wider more undeveloped landscape to the south and east. It contains very few characteristic landscape features with the exception of the boundary planting and the Christmas tree plantation is a transient landscape which is uncharacteristic of the wider landscape context.
- 4.29 As stated within the published Landscape Character Assessment, "the removal of existing inappropriate tree planting which is not characteristic may also be suitable".
- 4.30 The assessment of landscape character has identified the following which will be key to the development of the site:
- The integration of the existing built edge of Leigh Sinton and the relationship of the site to the existing settlement edge;
 - The views and visual setting of the Malvern Hills AONB;
 - The integration of the existing public open space within the Malvern Rise scheme to the north of the site into the site;
 - Opportunities to reflect the historic field pattern and historic orchards;
 - Opportunities to increase characteristic planting with hedgerows, hedgerow trees, Field Maple and Oak;
 - Removal of inappropriate planting which is not characteristic of the wider landscape;
 - Opportunities to use hedgerows to sub divide fields;
 - Opportunities to increase tree cover.

Topography and Public Rights of Way

- 5.1 The topography of the surrounding landscape is illustrated on the adjacent Topography Plan (Incola 1010 P03).
- 5.2 The site is located on land which slopes gently from its highest part at the western boundary at approximately 58m AOD to the lowest part located at the south eastern part of the site at approximately 50m AOD.
- 5.3 Within close proximity of the site the topography is relatively flat with localised undulations and changes in levels.
- 5.4 In the landscape to the north of the site, the land falls slightly towards the river corridor of the River Teme and the tributary of the Leigh Brook.
- 5.5 Approximately 4km to the south of the site are the Malvern Hills which form a distinctive topographical feature within the Worcestershire landscape. The Malvern Hills at their highest point rise to approximately 425m AOD at Worcestershire Beacon, with the closest hill to the site (End Hill) rising to approximately 329m AOD.
- 5.6 The Malvern Hills AONB and it's network of footpaths can be seen extending to the north with the Worcestershire Way and Geopark Way National Trails located on elevated positions within the AONB.

Public Footpaths

- 5.7 No public footpaths are present within the site itself, although to the north a new footpath created as part of the Malvern Rise development is located in close proximity to the northern boundary where it joins Leigh Sinton Road with Pineview Drive as illustrated on the Site Specific Analysis found within Section 4.
- 5.8 To the south west, a new footpath, which at the time of writing this report is under construction adjoins the A4103 and runs through the Bluebell Walk development to join an existing PRow to the south west of the site.
- 5.9 A network of footpath routes is present in the wider landscape to the south of the site and in the wider landscape various long distance routes and PRow can be found within the Malvern Hills AONB.



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Plan Name	Topography Plan
Plan Number	Incola 1010 P03
Revision	-
Date	06/06/2021

Legend: Site Boundary (red outline), Malvern Hills AONB (brown outline)

Source: This topography plan has been modelled using GIS computer software (QGIS) and Ordnance Survey Terrain 5 data.

Height AOD (m): 300m and above, 200m and above, 100m and above, 0m and below

Scale: 0km, 0.5km, 1.0km, 1.5km, 2km

North Arrow

Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)

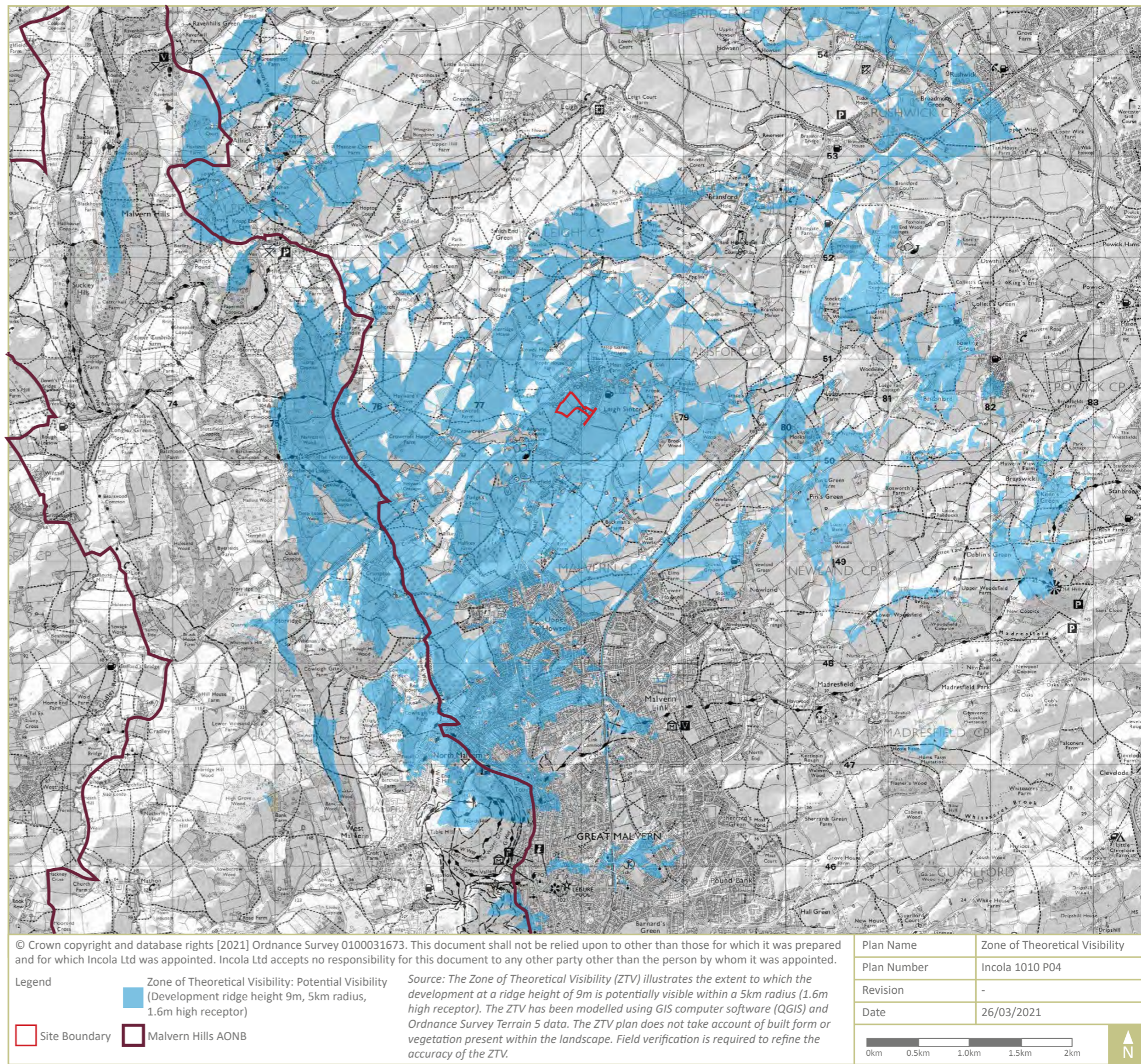
- 5.10 To assess the potential visibility of the site, representative views towards the site from the surrounding area are identified.
- 5.11 In order to identify areas where people may experience a change in their view as a result of the development, an assessment of the topography of the surrounding landscape is completed as well as the production of a GIS generated Zone of Theoretical Visibility Plan (ZTV).
- 5.12 The ZTV Plan illustrates the extent to which development of up to 9m (two storey properties) high on the site would be potentially visible within a 5km radius based on a 1.6m high receptor. This first sieve exercise has been refined and verified in the field.
- 5.13 The ZTV Plan is produced based on Ordnance Survey Terrain 5 data which provides data level data only, and does not take into account built form or vegetation present within the landscape.

Potential Visibility generated by the ZTV Plan

- 5.14 To the north, the ZTV suggests that the development of the site will be visible from Castle Green and Bransford off the A4103.
- 5.15 To the east, the ZTV suggests that the development of the site will be visible from the rising land located around Bastonford and the Old Hills.
- 5.16 To the south, the ZTV suggests that the development of the site will be visible from the network of footpaths on the slopes of the Malvern Hills, located approximately 4km to the south of the site.
- 5.17 To the west, the ZTV suggests potential visibility from the rising land within the Malvern Hills AONB and from the long distance footpaths of the Worcestershire Way and Geopark Way.
- 5.18 This initial ZTV plan has been used to inform the site visit and to identify the potential location whereby the development of the site will have an influence on views. In reality, the potential visibility of the site is substantially less than the ZTV suggests, and the development is likely to be less than the ZTV suggests due to the presence of built form and intervening vegetation.

Visual Survey Site Visit

- 5.19 Two site visits were completed in March 2021 (06.03.2021 and 16.03.2021) where photographs were taken from selected viewpoints with a digital camera with an equivalent 50mm focal length lens at eye level (approximately 1600mm above ground).
- 5.20 In total, 18 representative viewpoints have been chosen from locations surrounding the site, to enable the effects of the development to be assessed from all directions (see **Photoviewpoints 1-18**). Long distance, middle distance and short distance views are included.
- 5.21 The photoviewpoints are included within the following section with



associated descriptions, an identification of receptors likely to experience a change in their view as a result of the development of the site and an assessment of the value, susceptibility and sensitivity of views as a result of the proposed development.

- 5.22 The representative photoviewpoints have been selected to provide a representation of the visual context and likely visual receptors who will experience a change in their view as a result of the development.
- 5.23 Whilst the views are chosen to be representative of the area, they cannot provide continuous coverage of all potential locations within the vicinity of the development. The selected views will often occur as part of a wider sequence within the surrounding landscape.
- 5.24 The visual analysis is based on views from public external spaces. This excludes barely discernible views and views from private properties and spaces. However, where notable views from private properties are possible, these have been considered where relevant, for example where direct views from residential development overlook the site.
- 5.25 Where there are transient or fleeting views, these are also assessed as part of the report.
- 5.26 The following **Photoviewpoints 1-18** identify the approximate site extents and the land which is located within the red line boundary. The red line boundary includes potential development parcels as well as the potential access road located off Leigh Sinton Road. The identified approximate site extents does not specify the location of potential development parcels and built form at this stage, but merely the extent of the red line boundary which is assessed in full for the purposes of the baseline visual analysis.
- 5.27 In addition, a number of photos were taken to assess the site specific character, the impact on key views to and from the Malvern Hills AONB and the Significant Gap Designation. More detailed assessments of these specific matters are found within **Appendix 1** and **Appendix 2**.

Extent and Composition of Views

Local short distance views (up to 0.5km)

- 5.28 From the north, uninterrupted views of the site are possible from the adjoining residential development at Malvern Rise which overlooks the northern boundary (representative **Photoviewpoints 12a, 12b and 14**). Views are also possible from the pedestrian access footpath and play area located alongside the northern boundary of the site.
- 5.29 From the east, glimpsed views of the site can be seen through gaps in the hedgerow planting found along Leigh Sinton Road (representative **Photoviewpoint 18**), where a newly planted hedgerow is yet to mature. In places, there are gaps in the established hedgerow and glimpsed filtered views of the site can be seen.
- 5.30 From the south, local views are mostly filtered by the presence of evergreen trees and existing Christmas tree plantations found in the adjoining land

(representative **Photoviewpoint 6**).

- 5.31 The development at Bluebell Walk which is currently being constructed (at the time of writing this report) is likely to result in views across the site for those residents.
- 5.32 From the west, it is likely that views of the site will be possible for residents living in properties overlooking the site at Lynn Close. However, these views have not been assessed as part of the LVA due to their private nature.
- 5.33 From the A4103, glimpsed views may be possible of the south western part of the site where the new footpath route within the Bluebell Walk scheme joins the A4103 (representative **Photoviewpoint 11**).

Middle distance views (0.5-2km)

- 5.34 From the north, the presence and location of the settlement of Leigh Sinton generally limits visibility in middle distance views.
- 5.35 From the east, glimpsed views of the site can be seen from footpaths off Lower Howsell Road and views of the site are seen in the context of the existing development at Malvern Rise, Bluebell Walk and Lynn Close (representative **Photoviewpoint 5**).
- 5.36 From the south, middle distance views of the site are mostly filtered by the presence of Christmas tree plantations, the edge of the Bluebell Walk scheme and the presence of vegetation found to field boundaries and lanes. However, glimpsed views are possible where the land rises slightly at the northern edge of Malvern (representative **Photoviewpoints 4**).
- 5.37 From the west, middle distance views of the site are mostly screened by the presence of the existing development which runs along the A4103 and the new development at Bluebell Walk (representative **Photoviewpoint 7**).

Long distance views (Greater than 2km)

- 5.38 From the north long distance views of the site are not possible due to the falling ground, presence of built form of Leigh Sinton and intervening vegetation found to field boundaries and lanes.
- 5.39 From the east, although the ZTV plan identifies the potential for visibility from the high point at the Old Hills, the presence of vegetation around the common land prevents views of the site.
- 5.40 From the south, long distance and panoramic views of the site can be seen from the footpaths on the northern part of the Malvern Hills, namely End Hill and North Hill (representative **Photoviewpoints 1 and 2**). From these locations panoramic views can be seen across the landscape and the settlement of Leigh Sinton is visible from a number of locations from these elevated positions.
- 5.41 Views cannot be seen from Worcestershire Beacon and as such have been scoped out of the appraisal.
- 5.42 From the west, where the land rises towards the Malvern Hills AONB,

views can be seen from sections of the Geopark Way on elevated land (representative **Photoviewpoint 3**). From this footpath route panoramic views can be seen across the landscape through gaps in intervening vegetation.

Nature of Views

- 5.43 The visual appraisal has identified the following in relation to the nature of views:

Local Views

- In local views from the north, direct and uninterrupted views across the site from the northern edge of the site can be seen for residents and pedestrians living on and using the footpath and play area located on Pineview Drive (representative **Photoviewpoints 12a, 12b and 14**). These direct views across the Christmas Tree plantation are seen against the backdrop of residential development at Lynn Close and Bluebell Walk. The Malvern Hills are a distinctive feature within these views across the site towards the south and the play area is seen within the foreground of these views. In addition, mature evergreen planting and the Christmas tree plantation itself provides a well vegetated foreground within these views, although it is noted that the Christmas Tree plantation is a transient landscape;
- From the south, views of the site are screened and filtered for users of local footpath routes (PRoW 705(C)) by the presence of mature evergreen tree planting and the adjacent Christmas tree plantation to the south of the site (representative **Photoviewpoint 6**). The low lying land and intervening vegetation found around field boundaries sets the site amongst a well vegetated landscape and limits visibility for the users of these local footpaths;
- The existing residential development located along the A4103 and in particular the development at Bluebell Walk filter views of the site for users of local footpath routes to the west (PRoW 687(C)) (representative **Photoviewpoint 7**). Within these views residential built form can be seen along the skyline;
- Users of the A4103, when travelling into Leigh Sinton from the south will have views of the site filtered by the residential development at Bluebell Walk, with built form a common feature within these views for users of this route (representative **Photoviewpoint 8**). As users travel further along this route, the newly constructed scheme at Bluebell Walk is more apparent and the diverted footpath which adjoins the A4103 can be seen (representative **Photoviewpoint 9**). Where this footpath route provides a more open aspect, glimpsed views of the southern edge of the site can be seen against the setting of residential buildings found along Lynn Close. Lynn Close itself, sets the site against a backdrop of built form and filters views further along this route for users travelling north (representative **Photoviewpoint**

10); and

- Views of the site from Leigh Sinton Road for users travelling north towards Leigh Sinton are filtered by the presence of hedgerow vegetation found along Leigh Sinton Road (representative **Photoviewpoint 18**). Where glimpsed views are possible, the existing settlement edge is seen rising to the west with residential properties at Lynn Close and Bluebell Walk seen located on slightly higher ground (representative **Photoviewpoint 17**). Much of Leigh Sinton Road when travelling from the south does not have a pedestrian footpath, and car users travelling along this route will see glimpsed and fleeting views of the site.

Middle Distance Views

- From elevated positions at the edge of Malvern, the site is seen amongst a well vegetated landscape and the existing residential edge of Leigh Sinton and rooflines of the Bluebell Walk scheme can be seen within these views (representative **Photoviewpoint 4**); and
- In middle distance views from the east and from PRoW 563(C), where the ground rises slightly, views of the site are partially screened by intervening vegetation found along Leigh Sinton Road and to field boundaries (representative **Photoviewpoint 5**). The residential development found along the A4103 can be seen along the skyline in these views and the Bluebell Walk scheme can be seen as a distinct feature within the landscape.

Long Distance Views from the Malvern Hills AONB

- Within views from the footpaths found on End Hill and North Hill (representative **Photoviewpoint 1 and 2**), the site is seen within panoramic views across the wider landscape and is set against a backdrop of residential development and amongst a mature setting of vegetated field boundaries, and the settlement edge of Leigh Sinton.
- In these distant, elevated and expansive views the site is seen in the context of the settlement edge. The development at Bluebell Walk extends the settlement edge beyond the site at the southern edge and the site is seen located beyond this to the north; and
- In longer distance views from the west and from the elevated positions along the Geopark Way, views of the site are glimpsed and seen amongst a well vegetated landscape with field boundary planting and the residential edge of Leigh Sinton filtering views of the site (representative **Photoviewpoint 3**). Within these views, built form, agricultural buildings and scattered residential development is a common feature across the landscape.

Malvern Hills Key Views

- 5.44 The following key views have been identified at **Appendix 2** both to and from the Malvern Hills AONB. These are identified as follows, with reasoning for their selection included within the Key Views appraisal document:
- 5.45 The assessment of Key Views has found the following with regards views towards the site from the Malvern Hills AONB:
- Photoviewpoint 1 - This view is already identified as an Exceptional View
 - Photoviewpoint 2 - This view has been identified as a Special View
 - Photoviewpoint 3 - This view has been identified as a Representative View
- 5.46 A key view is identified from the Worcestershire Beacon at the highest point on the Malvern Hills by the Malvern Hills AONB Key Views document, in reality the topography of North Hill and End Hill screens views from the Beacon. This view has therefore been scoped out of the assessment.
- 5.47 The following views are identified as key views towards the Malvern Hills AONB:

Views towards the Malvern Hills AONB

- Photoviewpoint 12a** - This view has been graded as a Special View at Appendix 2)
- Photoviewpoint 14** - This view has been graded as a Special View at Appendix 2)
- Photoviewpoint 16** - (identified as a Special View within the Malvern Hills Key Views Document). From this location, views of the site cannot be seen and this has therefore been scoped out of the appraisal.

Visual Receptors

- 5.48 The following groups of people (visual receptors) have been identified as having the potential to view the proposed development and experience visual change and impacts on their visual amenity resulting from the proposed development. This is due to the proximity and nature / extent of view, as well as the activities and focus of the people likely to experience them:
- Recreational users of footpaths found on the higher slopes of the Malvern Hills around North Hill and End Hill (representative **Photoviewpoint 1 and 2**);
 - Recreational users of PRoW (Hereford CD61) Geopark Way (representative **Photoviewpoint 3**);
 - Recreational users of PRoW 536C (representative **Photoviewpoint 4**);

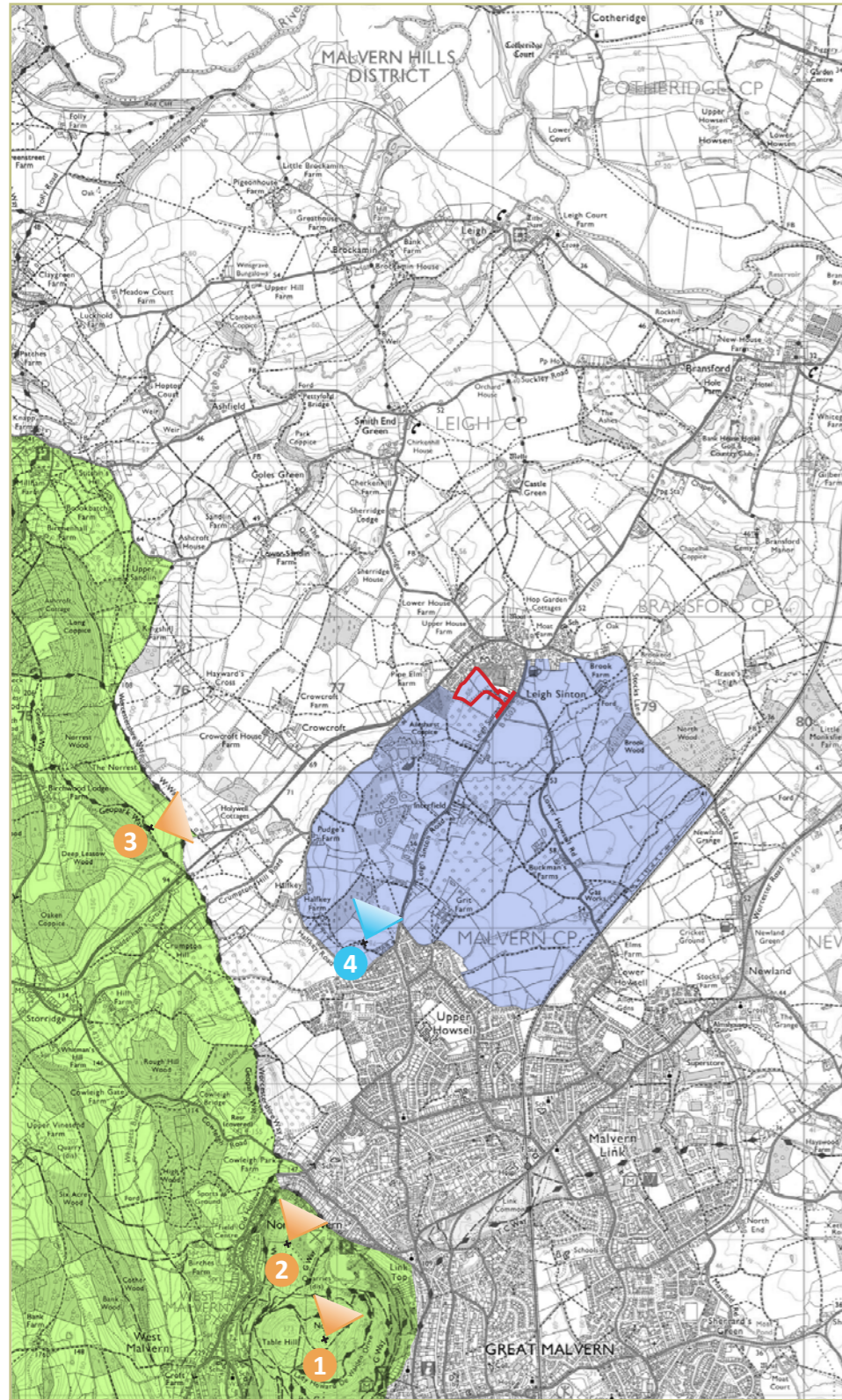
- Recreational users of PRoW 563(C) (representative **Photoviewpoint 5**);
- Recreational users of PRoW 705(C) (representative **Photoviewpoint 6**);
- Recreational users of PRoW 687(C) (representative **Photoviewpoint 7**);
- Recreational users of footpath and public open space through Pineview Drive (representative **Photoviewpoints 12a, 12b and 14**);
- Transient users of the A4103 (Hereford Road) (representative **Photoviewpoint 8**);
- Transient users of Lynn Close (representative **Photoviewpoint 11**);
- Transient users of Leigh Sinton Road (representative **Photoviewpoint 15, 17 and 18**);
- Residents of Lynn Close (representative **Photoviewpoints 11**);
- Residents of Pineview (representative **Photoviewpoints 12a, 12b, 13 and 14**); and
- Residents of Bluebell Walk.

5.49 The following receptors that have been scoped-out of this appraisal due to the limited nature of views towards. These include:

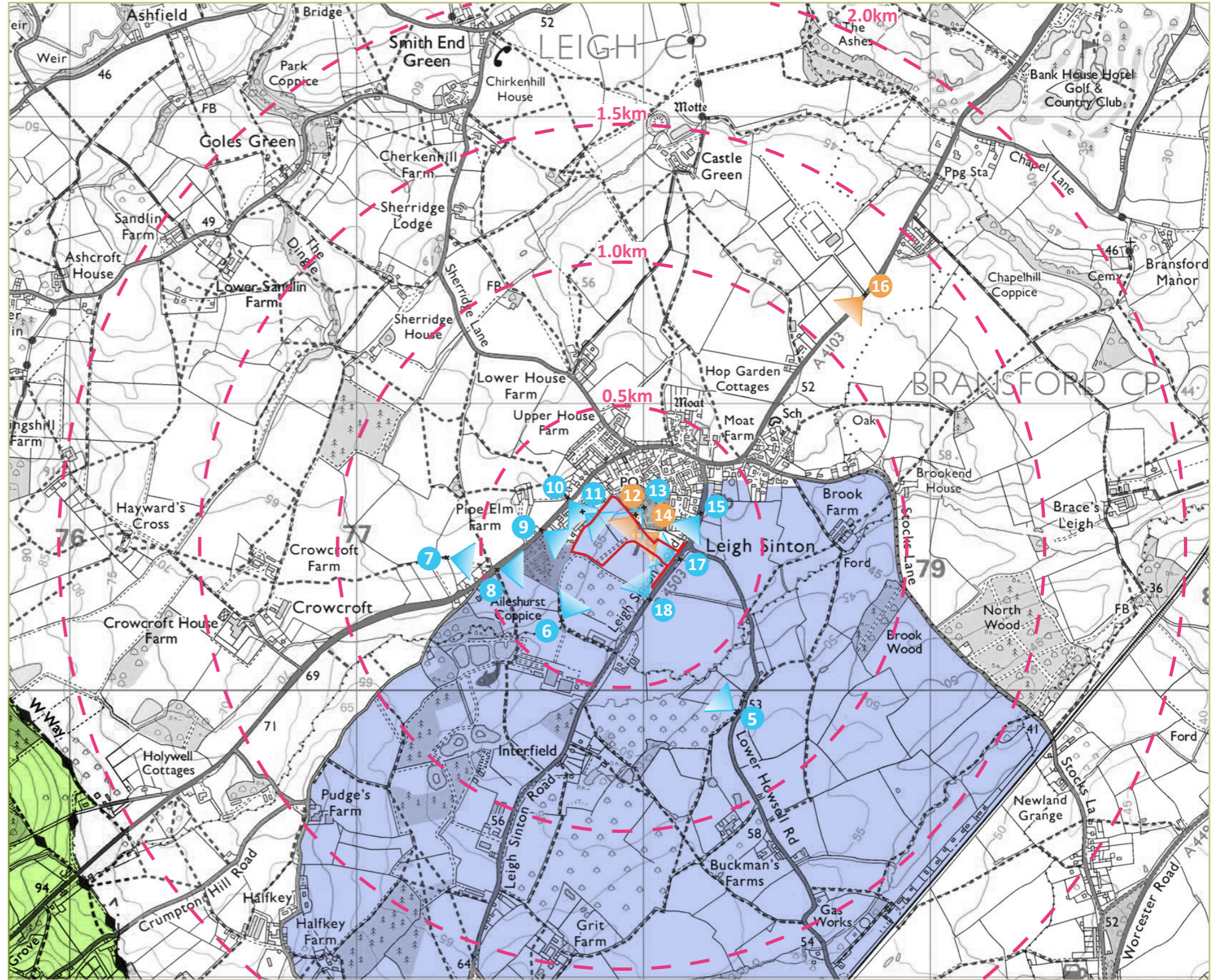
- Users of the A4103 travelling south towards the site (as identified as Key View 1 (Special View 1) within the Malvern Hills Key View document - representative **Photoviewpoint 16**); and
- Recreational users of footpaths around Worcestershire Beacon (as identified as Key View 48 (Exceptional View 48) within the Malvern Key View document).

Visual Context Summary

- 5.50 Overall, the visual survey has found that other than the panoramic views of the site which are possible from the Malvern Hills AONB, the majority of views are localised and limited to local routes, residents overlooking the site and road users on local transport routes.
- 5.51 The Key Views identified have also been assessed for their implications on development in relation to the Malvern Hills and has found that Special View 1 from the A4103, and Exceptional View 48 from the Worcestershire Beacon are not relevant and the site is not visible.
- 5.52 Where views are possible from Exceptional View 47 from End Hill, the site is seen in the context of the existing settlement edge of Leigh Sinton. These views are distant, elevated and expansive.
- 5.53 Other key views also identified through the visual survey identify that the Malvern Hills form a distinct feature within the site and the development will need to take this into account.



Inset Location Plan



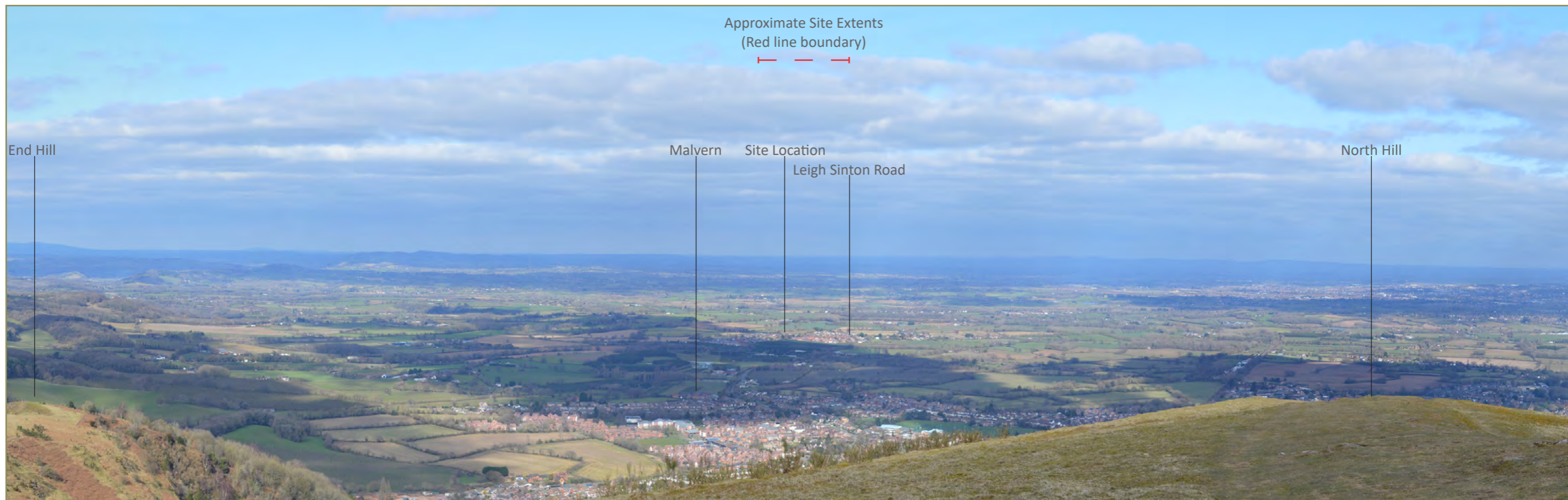
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Legend

- Site Boundary
- Malvern Hills AONB
- Significant Gap (SWDP 2016)
- 1 ▶ Viewpoint Locations
- 1 ▶ Key Views (Malvern Hills AONB-Viewpoint Locations 1,2,3,12,14 & 16)

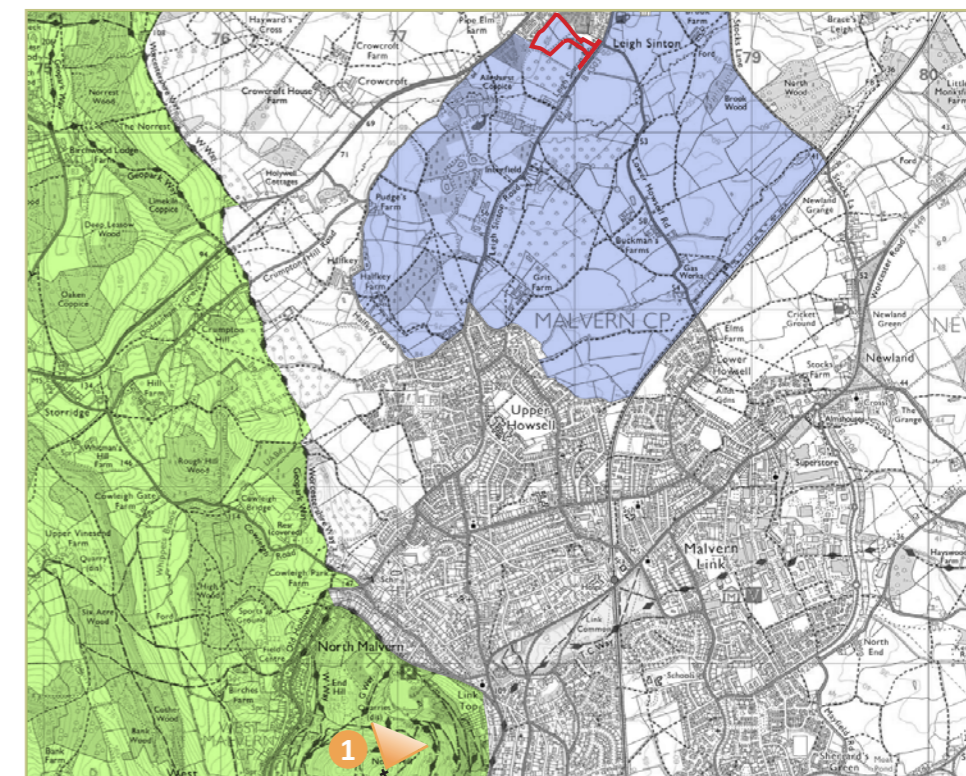
Plan Name	Viewpoint Location Plan
Plan Number	Incola 1010 P05
Revision	-
Date	06/06/2021





Orientation: North Grid Reference: SO 76935 46360 **Photoviewpoint 1**
 Distance From Site: 4.1km Date and Time: 06/03/2021 13:20

Description: View from footpaths on North Hill from within the Malvern Hills AONB.



Users of Footpaths on the Malvern Hills within the Malvern Hills AONB (Key View - Exceptional View 47)

Description

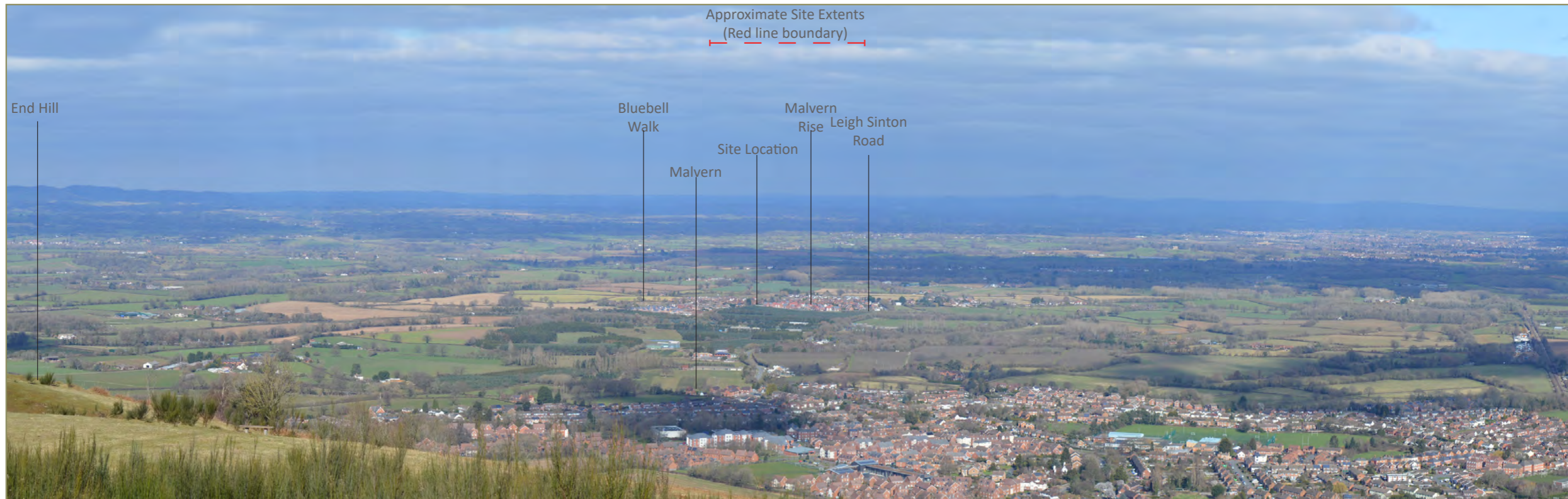
- 5.54 Photoviewpoints 1 and 2 illustrate the panoramic views possible from the elevated footpaths located within the Malvern Hills AONB. In these views, receptors experience wide ranging, open and expansive views across Worcestershire. A network of footpaths and open access land are present across the Malvern Hills.
- 5.55 The settlement of Malvern can be seen in the foreground within these views with ridges and roof lines of the northern part of Malvern seen at the foot of the hills.
- 5.56 The new development at Bluebell Walk off Hereford Road is also visible for users of these footpaths.
- 5.57 From these elevated positions, views can be seen of the irregular field patterns, belts of tree planting and hedgerow planting forming boundaries to fields, along with blocks of evergreen planting located between Malvern and Leigh Sinton.

5.58 The site is seen in the context of the wider panoramic view, surrounding landscape and settlement patterns which are all seen within these wide ranging views.

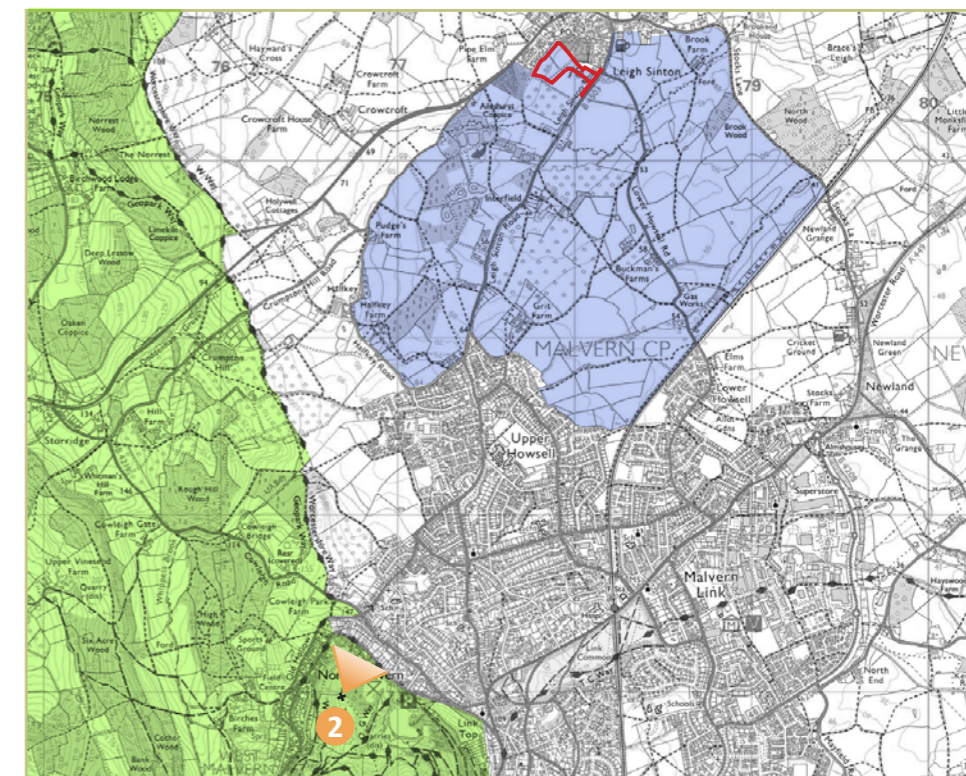
5.59 Representative Photoviewpoints 1 is identified as a key view within the Malvern Hills AONB Key Views document has been assessed in more detail within **Appendix 2**.

Receptors

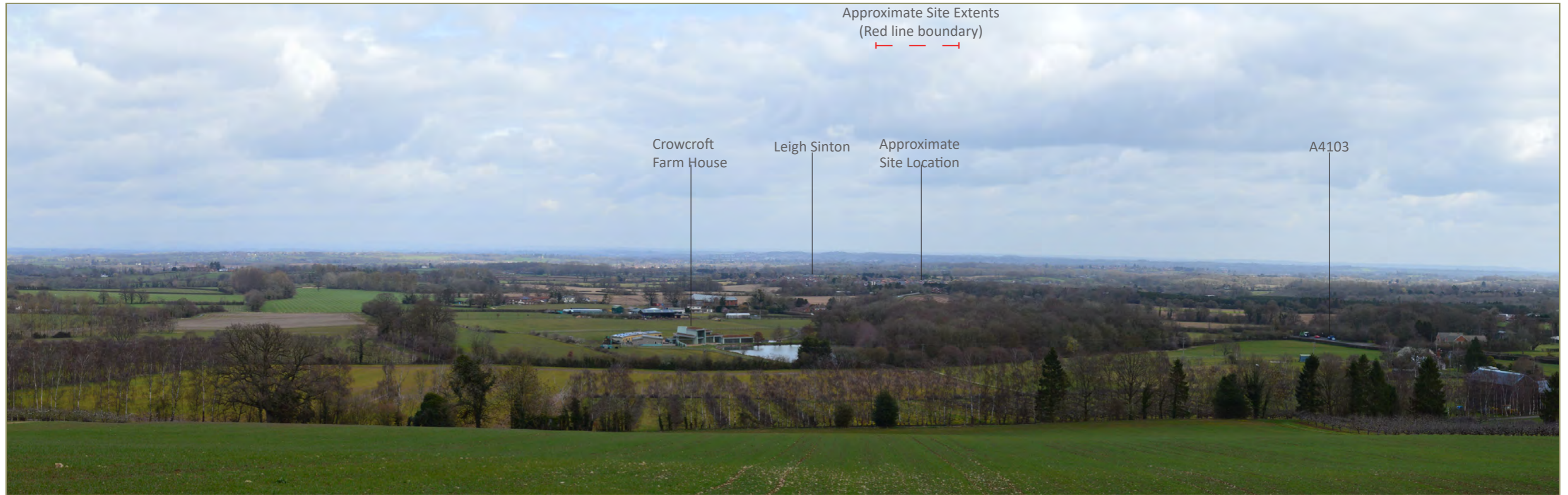
- Recreational users of various footpaths within the Malvern Hills AONB



Orientation: North Grid Reference: SO 76692 46800
 Distance From Site: 3.8km Date and Time: 06/03/2021 13:34
 Description: View from End Hill from within the Malvern Hills AONB. **Photoviewpoint 2**



Value	High	-Photoviewpoint 1 is identified as a recognised important view from the Malvern Hills for its scenic qualities
Susceptibility	Low	-Recreational users will have a low susceptibility to change due to the scale and distance within the site is seen -Views for these users set the site amongst the context of existing built form and the existing settlement edge of Leigh Sinton -Existing built form is already a common feature within these views
Overall Medium Sensitivity		



Orientation: East Grid Reference: SO 75794 49662
 Distance From Site: 2.1km Date and Time: 15/03/2021 11:47
 Description: View from the Geopark Way (Hereford CD61). **Photoviewpoint 3**

Users of PRow (Hereford CD61) Geopark Way (Key View - Representative)

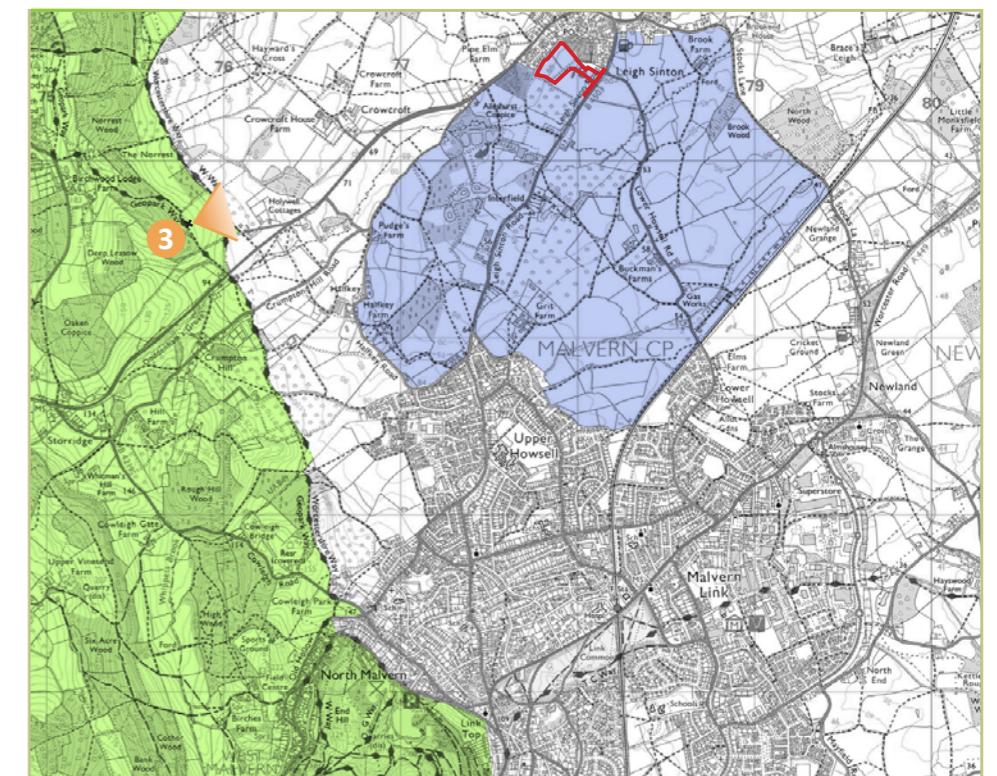
Description

- 5.60 Photoviewpoint 3 taken from the Geopark Way (Hereford CD61) National Trail to the south west of the site illustrates the panoramic and wide ranging views across the landscape. Views from these footpaths are from within the Malvern Hills AONB located approximately 2.1km to the southwest of the site, and receptors using these footpaths experience panoramic views across the landscape from higher ground.
- 5.61 The existing development of Bluebell Walk and Malvern Rise which form the settlement edge of Leigh Sinton can be seen sitting amongst existing deciduous and evergreen tree planting. There are panoramic views from this slightly elevated position with existing scattered farm buildings and residential dwellings present.
- 5.62 Evergreen tree planting and the presence of Christmas tree plantations in the landscape can be seen from these footpaths within close proximity of the site, along with the presence of orchard planting seen in the foreground between Crowcroft Farm House and the Worcestershire Way.

Receptors

- Recreational users of PRow (Hereford CD61) Geopark Way

Value	Medium	-Not a recognised view although from a designated landscape and of local value
Susceptibility	Low	-Recreational users will have a low susceptibility to change due to the distance and scale of the site when seen within these panoramic views -The site will be seen within the context of existing built form and scattered residential and agricultural buildings across the landscape
Overall Low Sensitivity		





Orientation: North
 Distance From Site: 1.6km
 Grid Reference: SO 77181 48919
 Date and Time: 16/03/2021 10:24
Photoviewpoint 4
 Description: View from ProW 536C.

Users of PRoW 536C

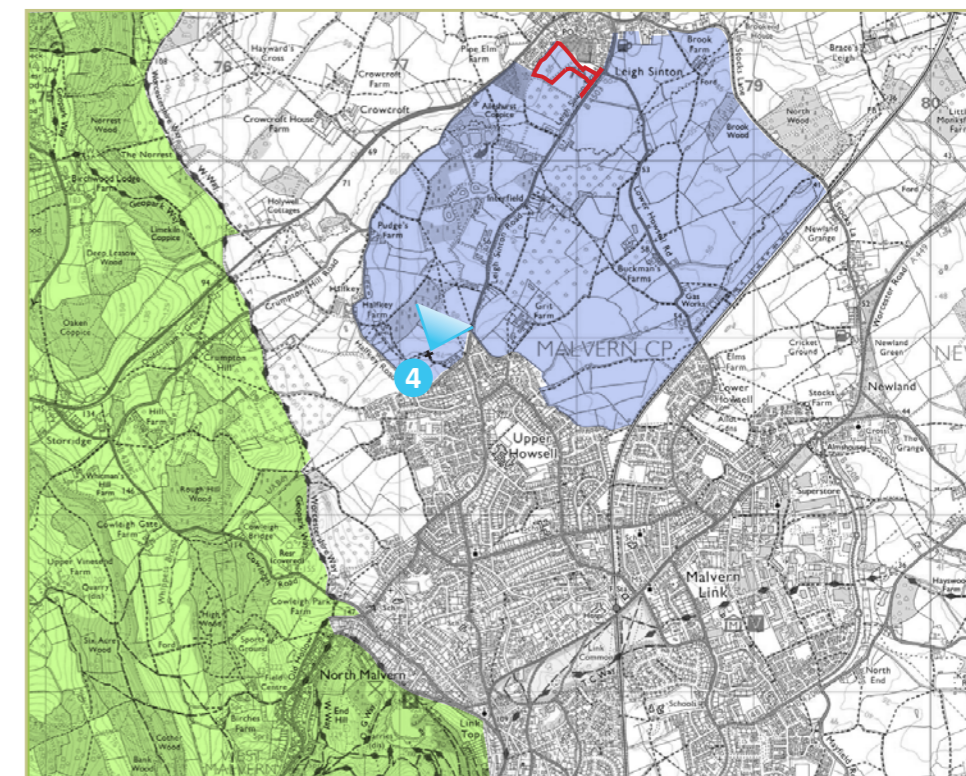
Description

- 5.63 Taken from PRoW 536C to the south west of the site, receptors using this footpath experience views from a slightly elevated position from the edge of Malvern which is located approximately 2km to the south of the site.
- 5.64 The site can be seen within the setting of the existing residential development of the Malvern Rise scheme, whose rooflines form the backdrop to views of the site.
- 5.65 Within the foreground of the view a newly planted Christmas tree plantation can be seen against the backdrop of farm buildings located off Leigh Sinton Road. Much of the view is dominated by mature deciduous and evergreen tree planting, with glimpsed views of Christmas tree plantations and rooflines of scattered building located off Leigh Sinton Road.

Receptors

- Recreational users of PRoW 536C

Value	Low	-Not a recognised view and is of local value
Susceptibility	Low	-Recreational users will have a low susceptibility to change due to the scale and distance within which the site is seen -The site is seen within the context of a well vegetated landscape and against the setting of the existing settlement edge of Leigh Sinton -Existing built form is already seen within these views for these receptors
Overall Low Sensitivity		





Orientation: North West Grid Reference: SO 78340 49929 **Photoviewpoint 5**
 Distance From Site: 0.5km Date and Time: 15/03/2021 14:10

Description: View from ProW 563(C) adjacent to Lower Howsell Road.

Users of ProW 563(C) adjacent to Lower Howsell Road

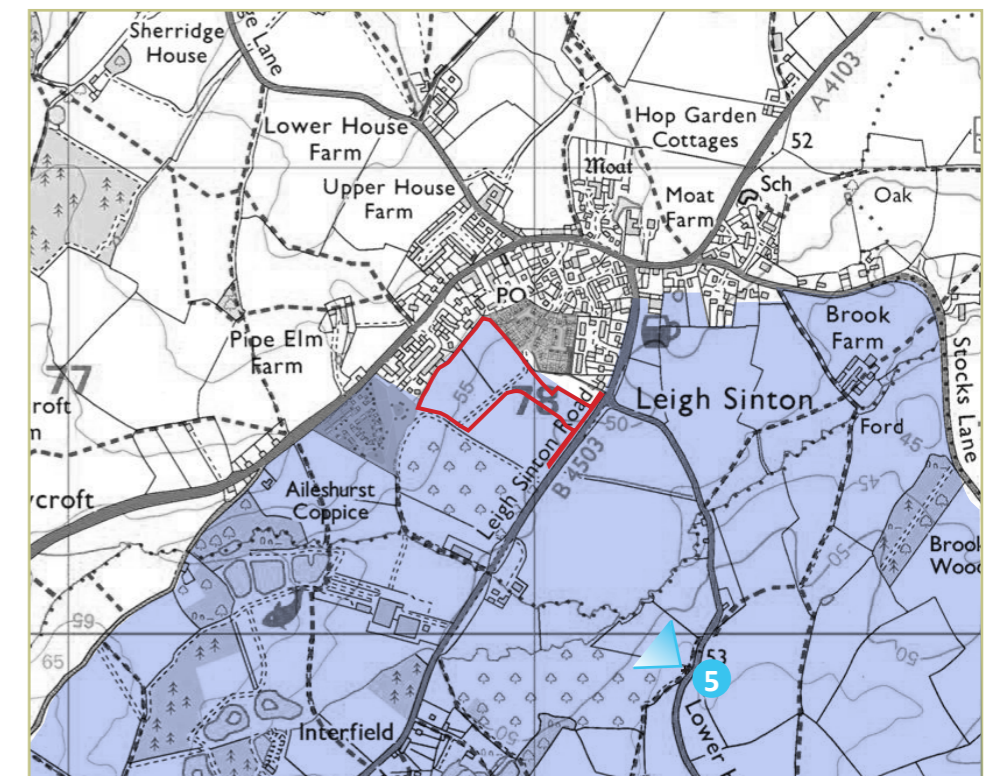
Description

- 5.66 Users of PRoW 563 (C) to the south east of the site, users of this footpath experience views of the site which are seen against the backdrop of existing residential development found along Lynn Close.
- 5.67 Glimpsed views of the development at Bluebell Rise can be seen in the left of the view sitting along the skyline with the rising ground above the site to the west forming the backdrop to the views.
- 5.68 Glimpsed views of the site can be seen, with the tops of the existing Christmas trees seen within the site. Planting along Leigh Sinton Road and at the field boundaries to the east of the site filters most views of the site.
- 5.69 Intervening vegetation found at field boundaries also limits visibility for users of these footpaths.

Receptors

- Recreational users of PRoW 563(C)

Value	Low	-Not a recognised view and is of local value
Susceptibility	Low	-The site will be seen within the context of the existing settlement edge of Leigh Sinton -Existing built form is already seen within these views -The development lies below the skyline
Overall Low Sensitivity		





Orientation: North Grid Reference: SO 77718 50233
 Distance From Site: 0.24km Date and Time: 15/03/2021 12:56
 Description: View from ProW 705C. **Photoviewpoint 6**

Users of PRoW 705(C)

Description

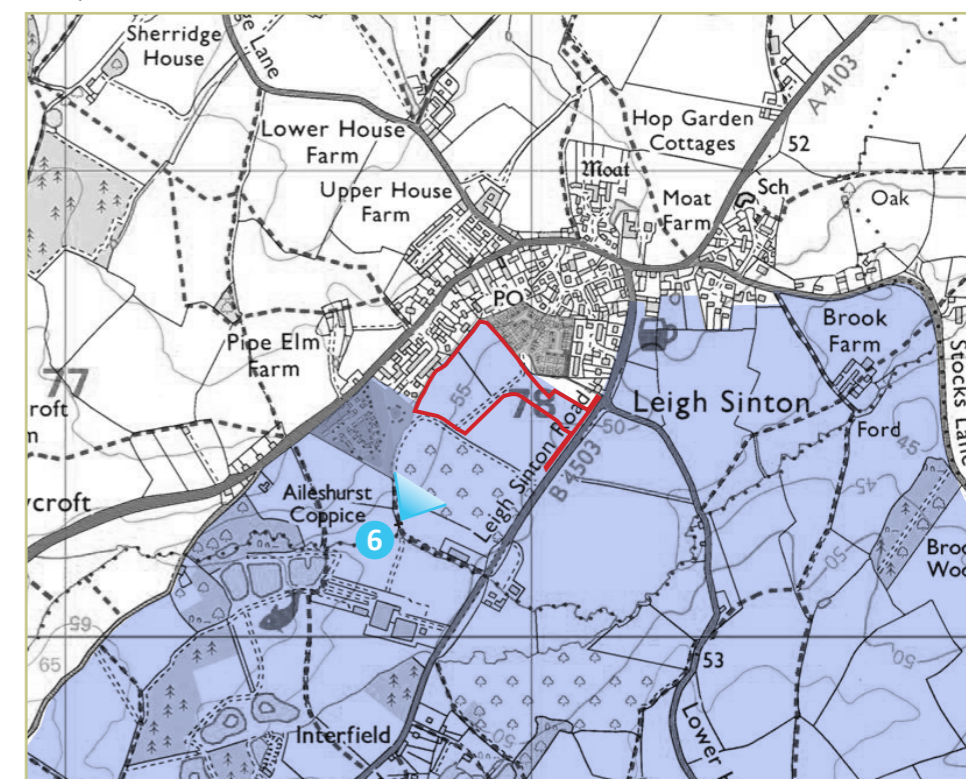
5.70 Views of the site for users of PRoW 705(C) are filtered by the presence of evergreen trees which are located along the southern edge of the site. The adjacent land use and Christmas tree plantation also filters views across the site for these users.

5.71 From these footpaths to the south of the site, glimpsed views of the residential development located at Bluebell Walk can be seen to the left located behind Christmas trees and mature deciduous trees.

Receptors

- Recreational users of PRoW 705(C)

Value	Low	-Not a recognised view and is of local value
Susceptibility	High	-Recreational users are within close proximity to the site but the existing evergreen planting separates the site from views
Overall Medium Sensitivity		





Orientation: East Grid Reference: SO 77307 50474 Photoviewpoint 7
 Distance From Site: 0.45km Date and Time: 16/03/2021 11:33
 Description: View from PRoW 687(C).

Users of PRoW 687 (C)

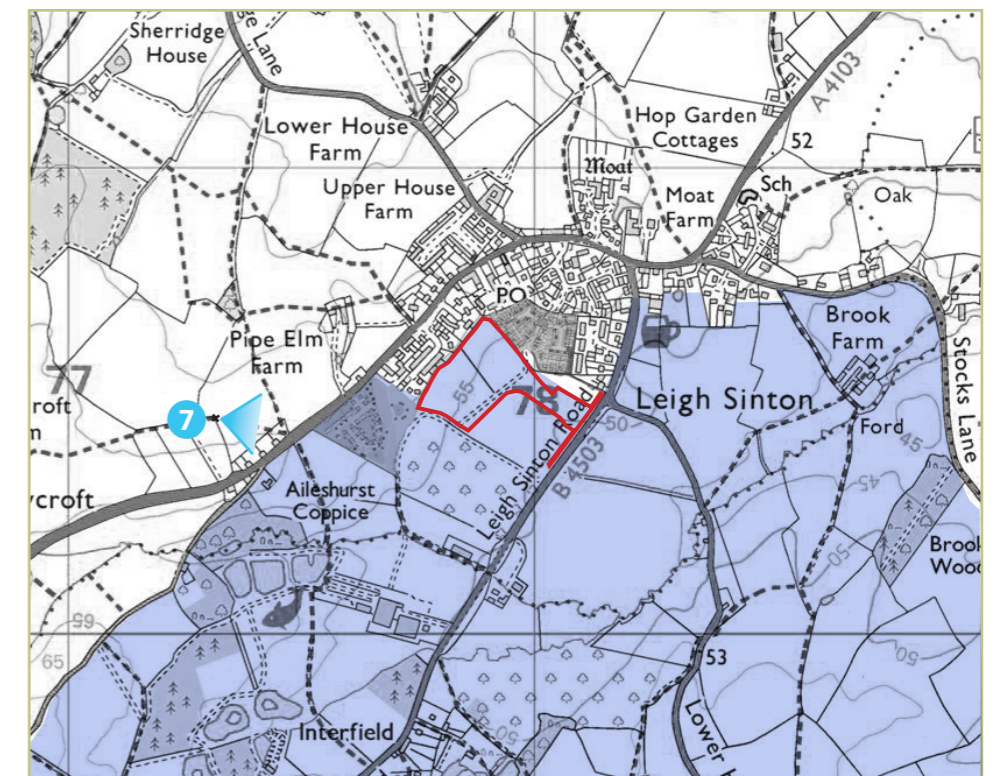
Description

- 5.72 Views of the site for users of PRoW687(C) to the west are filtered by the presence of vegetation and residential buildings found along the A4103.
- 5.73 The Bluebell Walk residential development can be seen located along the skyline within the view and views of the site are obscured.
- 5.74 Within the foreground an arable field is seen running alongside the A4103.
- 5.75 The falling topography to the east also limits the potential visibility of the site.

Receptors

- Recreational users of PRoE687(C)

Value	Low	-Not a recognised view and is of local value
Susceptibility	Low	-The site is situated to the rear of the existing development at Bluebell Walk, seen along the skyline within views -Much of the site is obscured from view by existing built form and intervening vegetation
Overall Low Sensitivity		





Orientation: East Grid Reference: SO 77481 50417
 Distance From Site: 0.23km Date and Time: 16/03/2021 11:39
 Description: View from A4013 (Hereford Road) **Photoviewpoint 8**

Users of A4103 (Hereford Road)

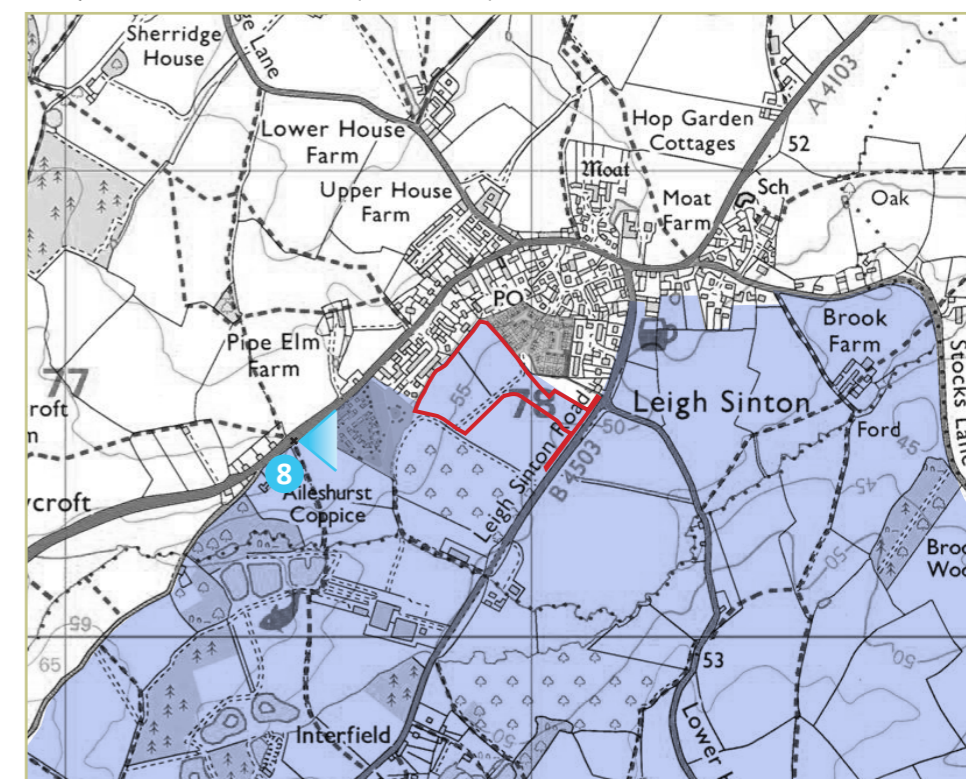
Description

- 5.76 Travelling along the A4103 (Hereford Road) views of the site are obscured by the presence of the Bluebell Walk development and further built form along the A4103.
- 5.77 The rooflines of Bluebell Walk and the wider buildings within Leigh Sinton filter views of the site for transient and recreational users of the A4103.
- 5.78 The falling topography towards the site also limits visibility of the site.

Receptors

- Transient users of the A4103 (Hereford Road)

Value	Low	-Not a recognised view and is of local value
Susceptibility	Low	-Transient users of the A4103 will be concentrating on the road ahead and not views -The site is not obvious and set behind existing built form located along the A4103
Overall Low Sensitivity		





Approximate Site Extents
(Red line boundary-located behind residential development)

New pedestrian footpath route
created as part of Bluebell Walk scheme

A4103

Orientation: East Grid Reference: SO 77642 50544 **Photoviewpoint 9**
Distance From Site: 0.12km Date and Time: 16/03/2021 11:41
Description: View from A4013 (Hereford Road) at entrance to new footpath through Bluebell Walk.

Users of A4103 (Hereford Road)

Description

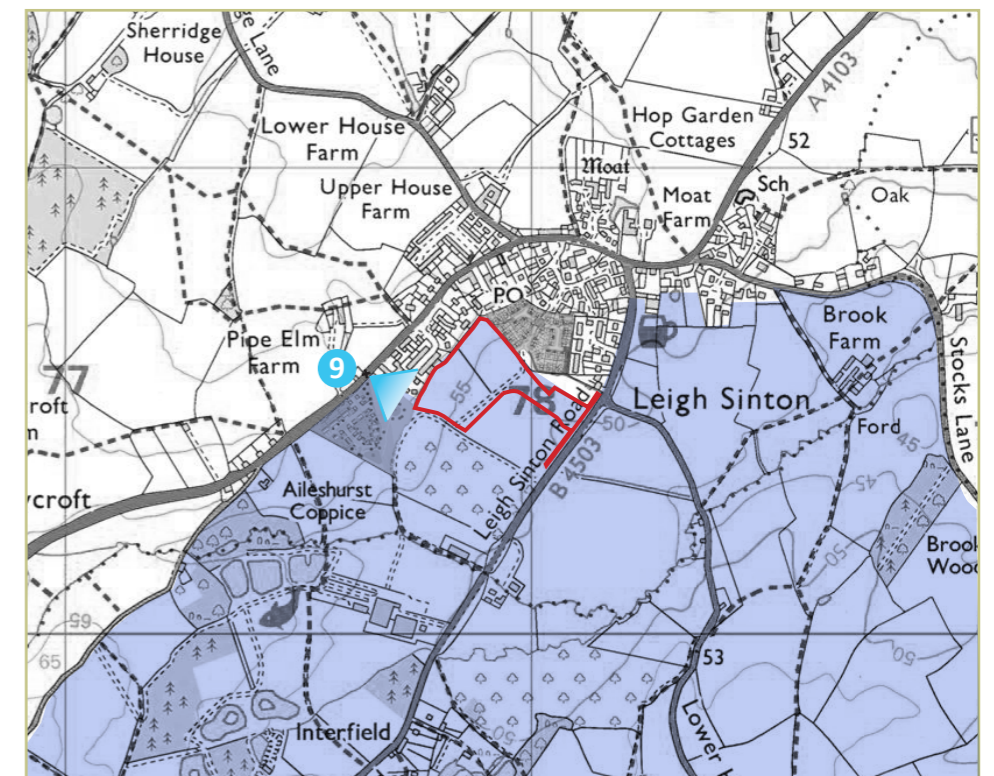
5.79 Views of the site for transient users of the A4103 are filtered by the presence of residential development located off Lynn Close and the A4103 itself. Built form seen in the foreground limits views of the site.

5.80 Within the centre of the view the new footpath which adjoins the A4103 can be seen running through the Bluebell Walk scheme to the south west of the site.

Receptors

- Transient users of the A4103 (Hereford Road)

Value	Low	-Not a recognised view and is of local value
Susceptibility	Low	-Transient users of the A4103 will be concentrating on the road ahead and not views -The site is not obvious and set behind existing built form located along the A4103
Overall Low Sensitivity		





Approximate Site Extents
(Red line boundary-located behind residential development)

Lynn Close

A4103

Orientation: East Grid Reference: SO 77754 50658 **Photoviewpoint 10**
 Distance From Site: 0.11km Date and Time: 16/03/2021 11:45
 Description: View from A4013 (Hereford Road) at junction with Lynn Close.

Users of A4103 (Hereford Road)

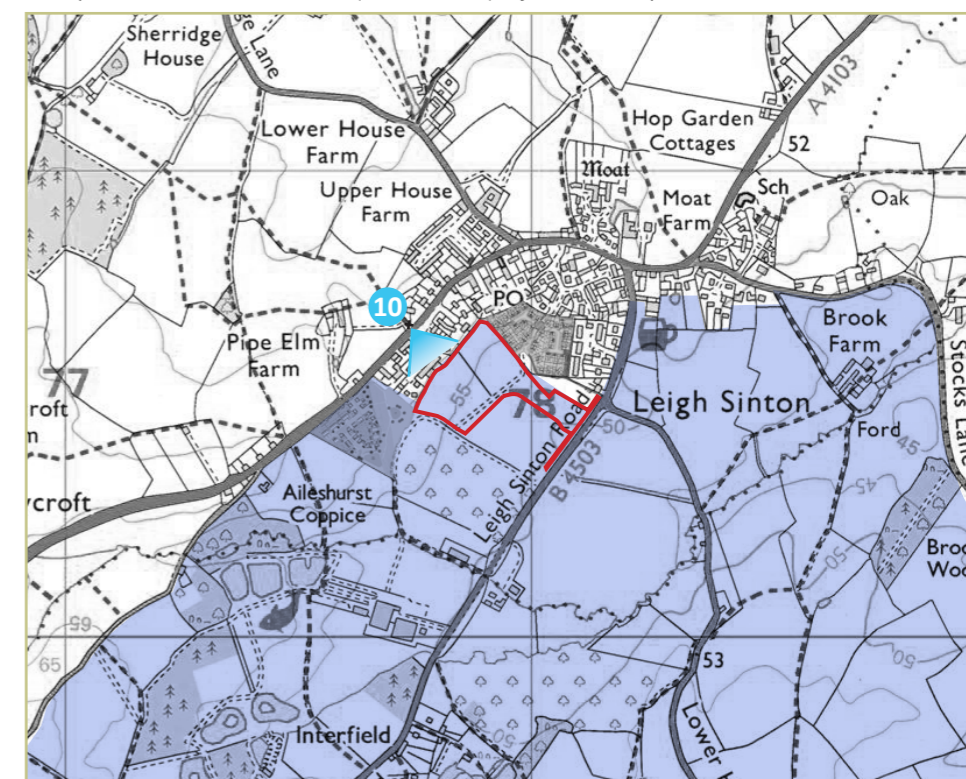
Description

5.81 Views if the site are seen in the context of existing residential development found at Lynn Close and along the A4103. This residential development is seen in the foreground of the view, with the site seen through gaps of existing residential development.

Receptors

- Transient users of the A4103 (Hereford Road)

Value	Low	-Not a recognised view and is of local value
Susceptibility	High	-Residents overlooking the site have direct views across the site and are in close proximity
Overall Medium Sensitivity		





Approximate Site Extents
(Red line boundary located behind residential development)

Lynn Close

Orientation: East
Distance From Site: 0.03km
Grid Reference: SO 77796 50615
Date and Time: 16/03/2021 11:48
Photoviewpoint 11
Description: Taken from Lynn Close.

Users of Lynn Close

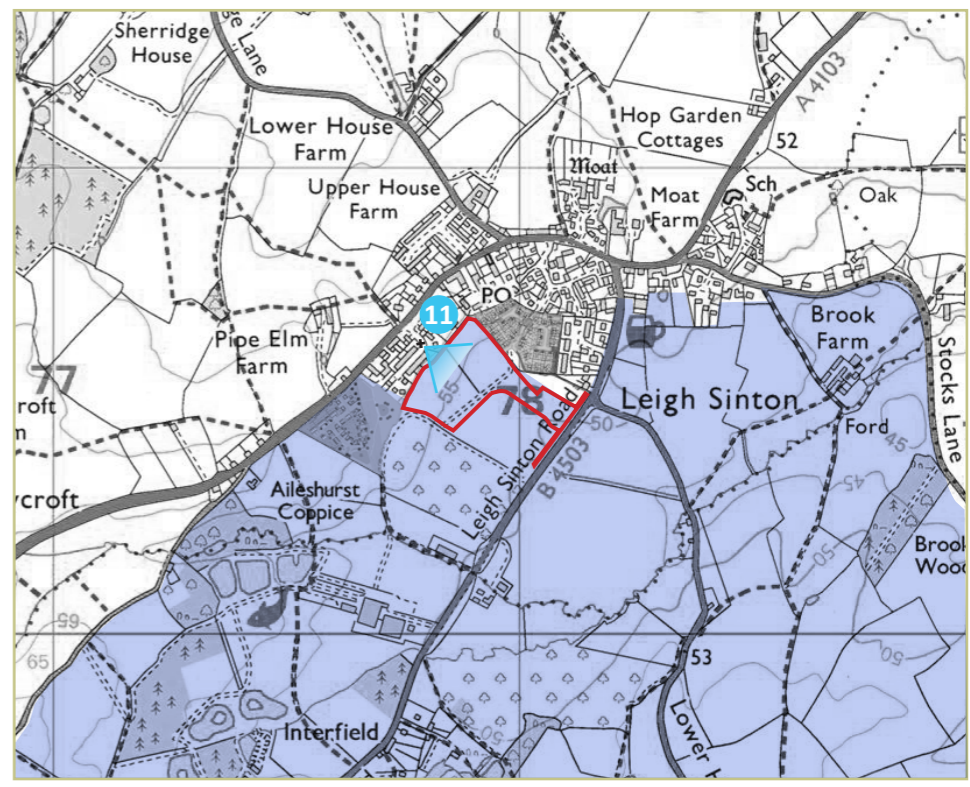
Description

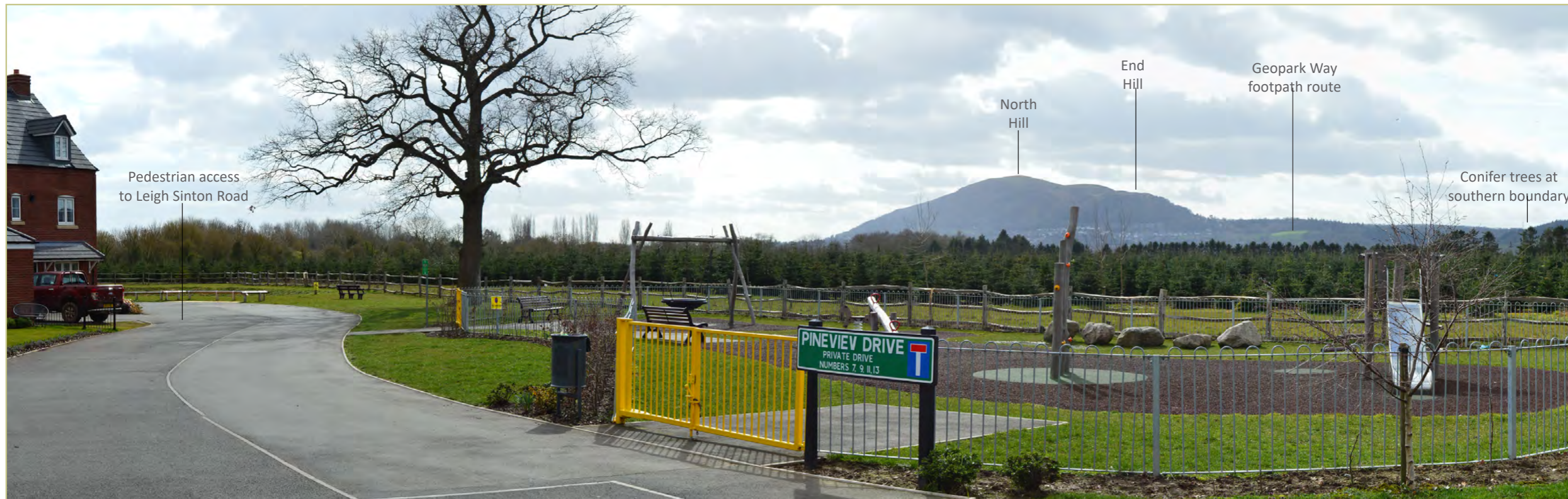
5.82 Views of the site for transient users of Lynn Close are seen in the context of existing residential development which overlooks the western boundary of the site. The site is seen behind existing residential dwellings which are located on a slightly elevated position above the site.

Receptors

- Transient users of Lynn Close
- Residents of Lynn Close

Value	Low	-Not a recognised view and is of local value
Susceptibility	High	-Residents overlooking the site have direct views across the site and are in close proximity
Overall Medium Sensitivity		





Orientation: South West Grid Reference: SO 77979 50608 Photoviewpoint 12a
 Distance From Site: 0km Date and Time: 15/03/2021 12:25
 Description: View from Pineview Close.

Users of Pineview Drive (Key View - Special)

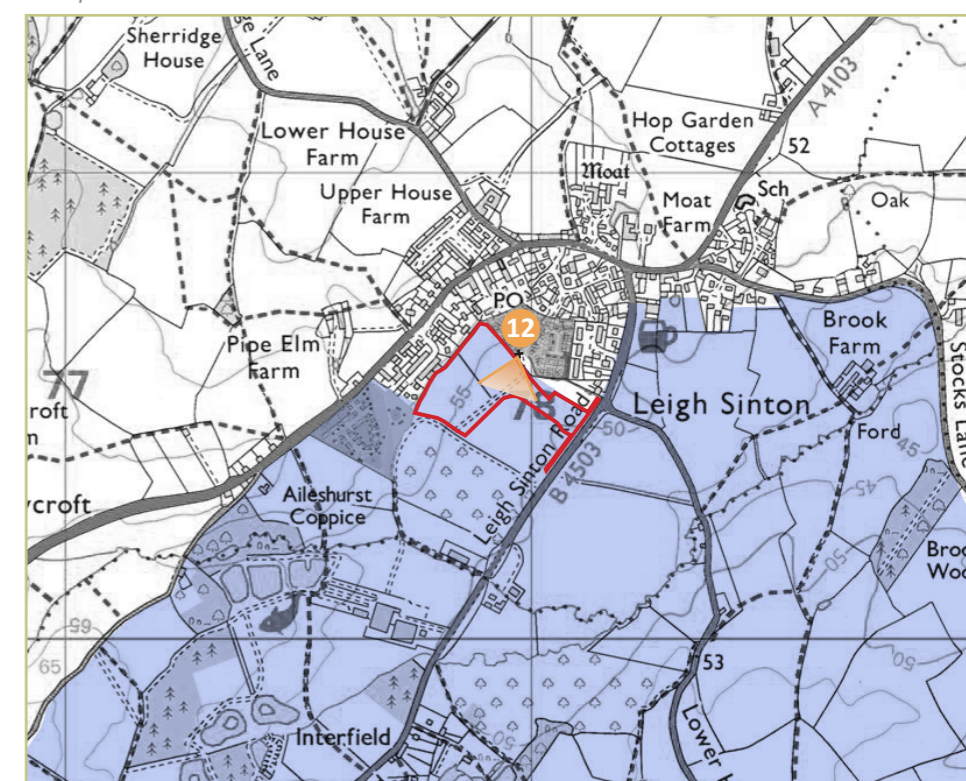
Description

- 5.83 Photoviewpoint 12a and 12b illustrate the direct views across the site for transient and recreational users of Pineview Drive.
- 5.84 Photoviewpoint 12a shows the play area located within the Malvern Rise development at the northern boundary of the site, with a newly planted hedgerow planting running alongside the boundary fence.
- 5.85 Much of the view is dominated by the presence of the existing Christmas tree plantation, with the fruit trees and boundary planting found along Leigh Sinton Road seen to the left of the view at the western site boundary.
- 5.86 Residential properties located along Pineview Drive can be seen overlooking the site within this view.
- 5.87 Within these views the Malvern Hills dominate the skyline and open views of the hills can be seen across the site. To the right of the Malvern Hills, the footpath routes located on the edge of the Malvern Hills AONB can be seen on the open land. The Malvern Hills form a distinctive feature within the landscape for users of Pineview Drive.

Receptors

- Recreational users of footpath through Pineview Drive
- Recreational users of play area
- Residents of Pineview Drive

Value	Medium	-Although not a recognised key view, a locally important view across towards the Malvern Hills for local people
Susceptibility	High	-Users of this footpath will be focussing on the landscape when walking this route Users of play area will be concentrating on the activity of play but also enjoying the view -Residents overlooking the site have direct views across the site and are in close proximity
Overall High Sensitivity		





Orientation: South West Grid Reference: SO 77979 50608 Photoviewpoint 12b
 Distance From Site: 0km Date and Time: 15/03/2021 12:25
 Description: View from Pineview Close.

Users of Pineview Drive

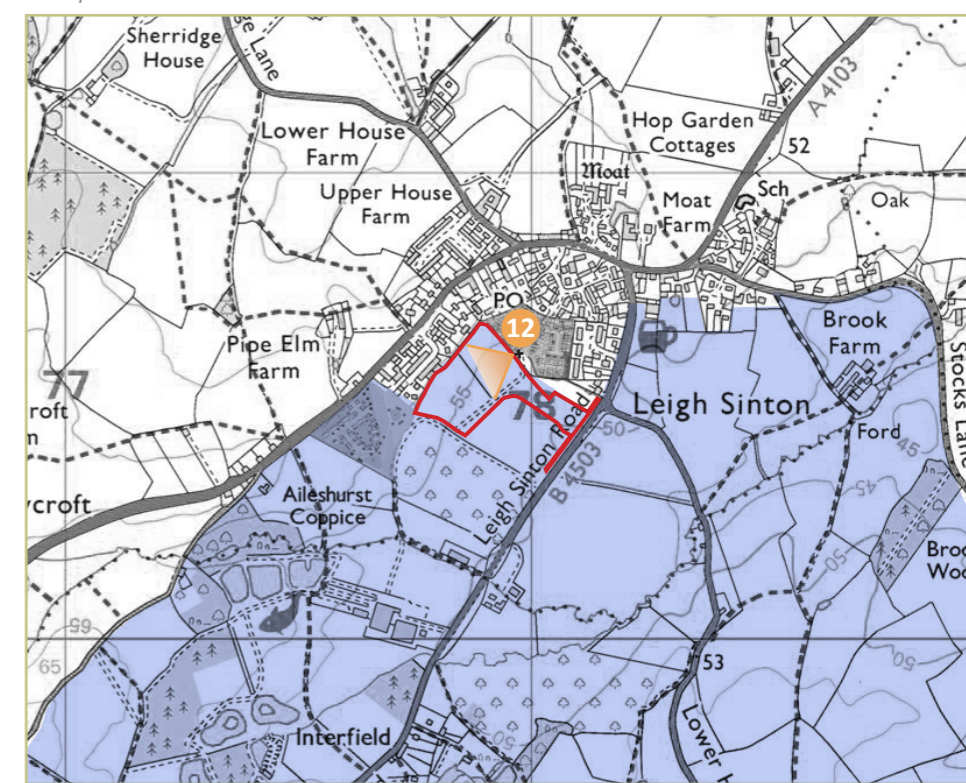
Description

- 5.88 Photoviewpoint 12b from Pineview Avenue overlooks the site at the northern boundary. Views of the site are direct, with the existing play area, fencing and new planting seen in the foreground of the view.
- 5.89 To the right, residential development located off Lynn Close can be seen overlooking the western boundary of the site on slightly elevated ground. To the rear of this housing, glimpsed views can be seen of the Bluebell Walk development seen at the south western corner of the site.
- 5.90 At the south western boundary of the site, mature conifer trees can be seen above the Christmas tree plantation forming the backdrop to the site. Residential development located off Pineview Drive can be seen in the foreground of the view directly overlooking the northern boundary of the site.
- 5.91 These views set the site in a developed context, with the existing settlement edge being a clear feature within the landscape and within the view. The lower slopes of the AONB can be seen in the backdrop of the view from this location

Receptors

- Recreational users of footpath through Pineview Avenue
- Recreational users of play area
- Residents of Pineview Avenue

Value	Medium	-Although not a recognised key view, a locally important view across towards the Malvern Hills for local people
Susceptibility	High	-Users of this footpath will be focussing on the landscape when walking this route -Residents overlooking the site have direct views across the site and are in close proximity
Overall High Sensitivity		





Approximate Site Extents
(Red line boundary-located behind residential development)

Conifers at south western boundary of the site

Orientation: South West Grid Reference: SO 77995 50620 **Photoviewpoint 13**
Distance From Site: 0.03km Date and Time: 15/03/2021 12:24

Description: View from Malvern Rise at the junction of Spruce Close and Pineview Drive.

Users of Pineview Drive

Description

5.92 Views of the site as illustrated by representative Photoviewpoint 13, are seen along Pineview Avenue towards the northern boundary of the site. Residential development within the Malvern Rise development is seen in the foreground of the view and obscures much of the site from view.

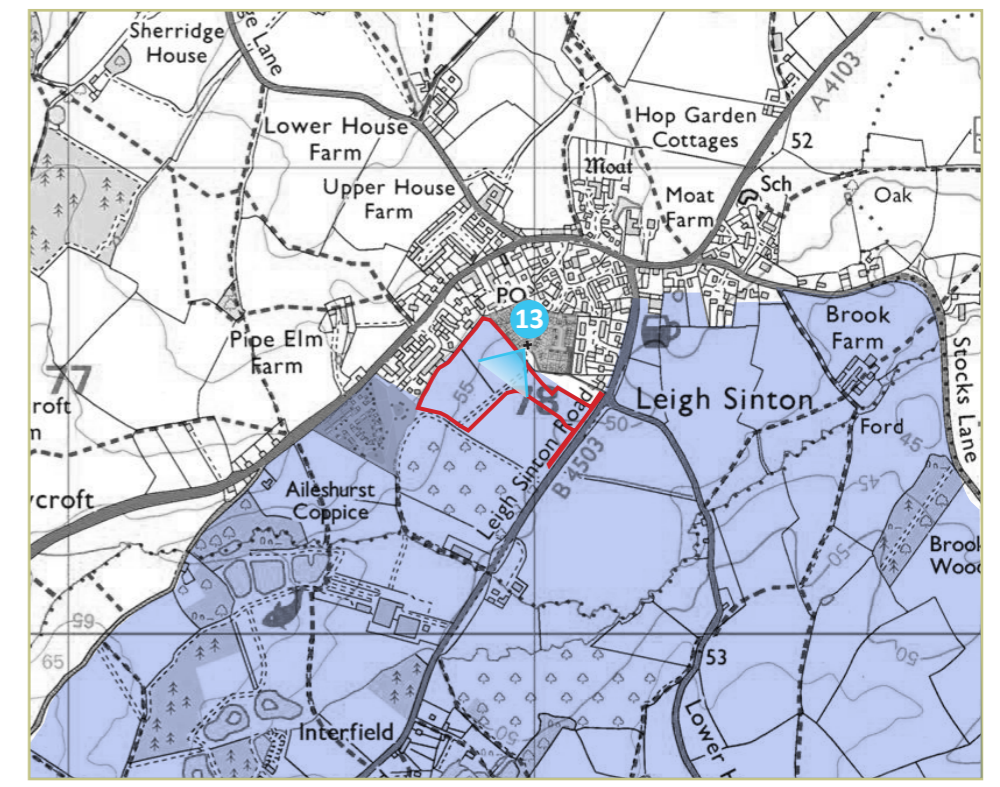
5.93 From these roads, parts of the site are visible, with the planting at the southern boundary seen in the backdrop of the view. The play area can be seen located between the northern boundary of the site and the existing development at Malvern Rise.

5.94 Much of the view of the site from this location comprises the Christmas tree plantation, with boundary planting to the south forming the backdrop, and beyond that the rising ground and edge of the Malvern Hills AONB seen forming the backdrop to the view.

Receptors

- Residents of Pineview Avenue

Value	Medium	-Although not a recognised key view, a locally important view across towards the Malvern Hills for local people
Susceptibility	High	-Residents overlooking the site have direct views across the site and are in close proximity
Overall High Sensitivity		





Orientation: South West Grid Reference: SO 78070 50558
 Distance From Site: 0.05km Date and Time: 15/03/2021 12:30 **Photoviewpoint 14**

Description: View from pedestrian footpath linking Leigh Sinton Road and Pineview Drive

Users of footpath located off Leigh Sinton Road (Key View - Special)

Description

5.95 Representative photoviewpoint 14 is taken from the pedestrian access point off Leigh Sinton Road which runs into the Malvern Rise development to the north of the site. From this footpath site, direct and uninterrupted views of the site can be seen.

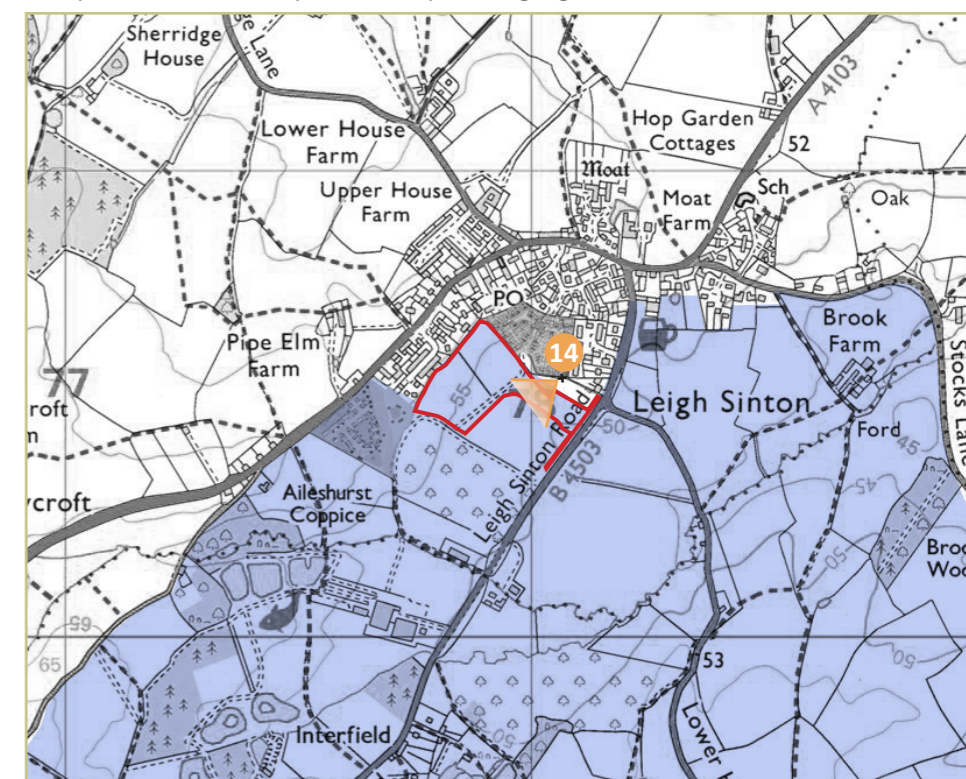
5.96 Within the foreground of the view the SuDS scheme associated with the Malvern Rise scheme is seen, with boundary fencing separating the site from the adjoining land. The Christmas tree plantation is a marked feature within the view, and beyond this the Malvern Hills are seen forming the backdrop and sitting along the skyline within the view.

5.97 To the right, the existing development along Lynn Close and the construction site/development at Bluebell Walk is seen overlooking the western part of the site. Views of rooflines, windows and gable ends are clearly visible on the slightly elevated land to the west of the site. The evergreen trees located at the south western boundary can also be seen within this view, with the canopy line breaking the skyline and an obvious feature within the landscape.

Receptors

- Recreational users of footpath through Pineview Avenue
- Recreational users of play area
- Residents of Pineview Avenue

Value	Medium	-Although not a recognised key view, a locally important view across towards the Malvern Hills for local people
Susceptibility	High	-Users of this footpath will be focussing on the landscape when walking this route -Residents overlooking the site have direct views across the site and are in close proximity
Overall High Sensitivity		





Orientation: South Grid Reference: SO 78201 50607 Photoviewpoint 15
 Distance From Site: 0.01km Date and Time: 16/03/2021 11:58

Description: View from Leigh Sinton Road.

Users Leigh Sinton Road

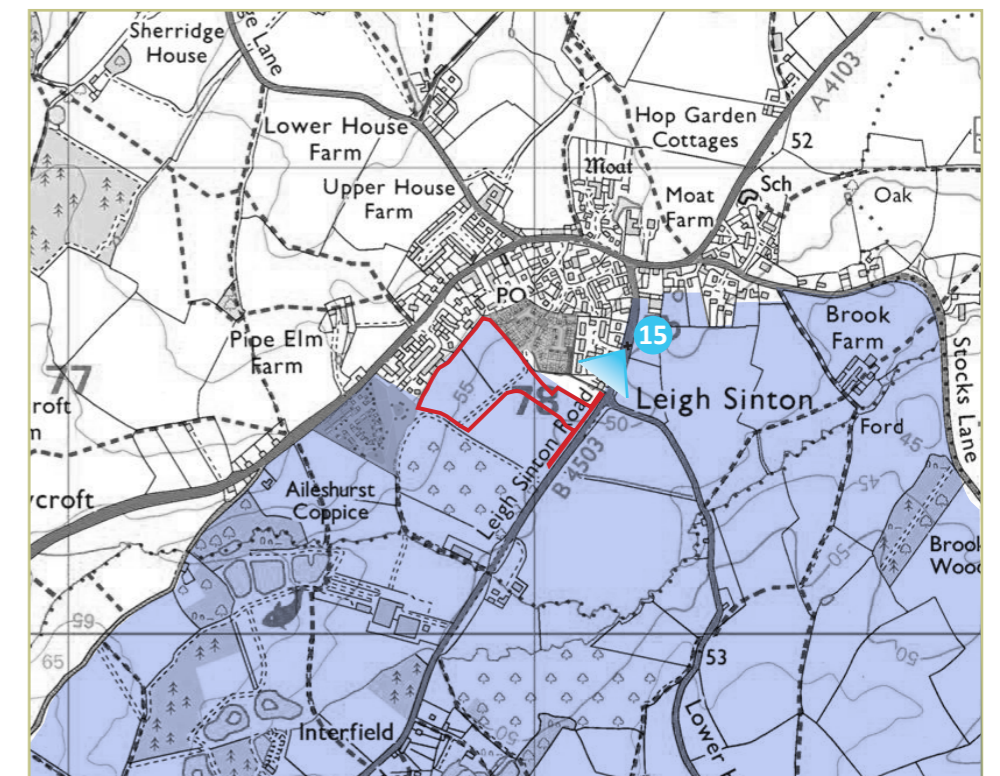
Description

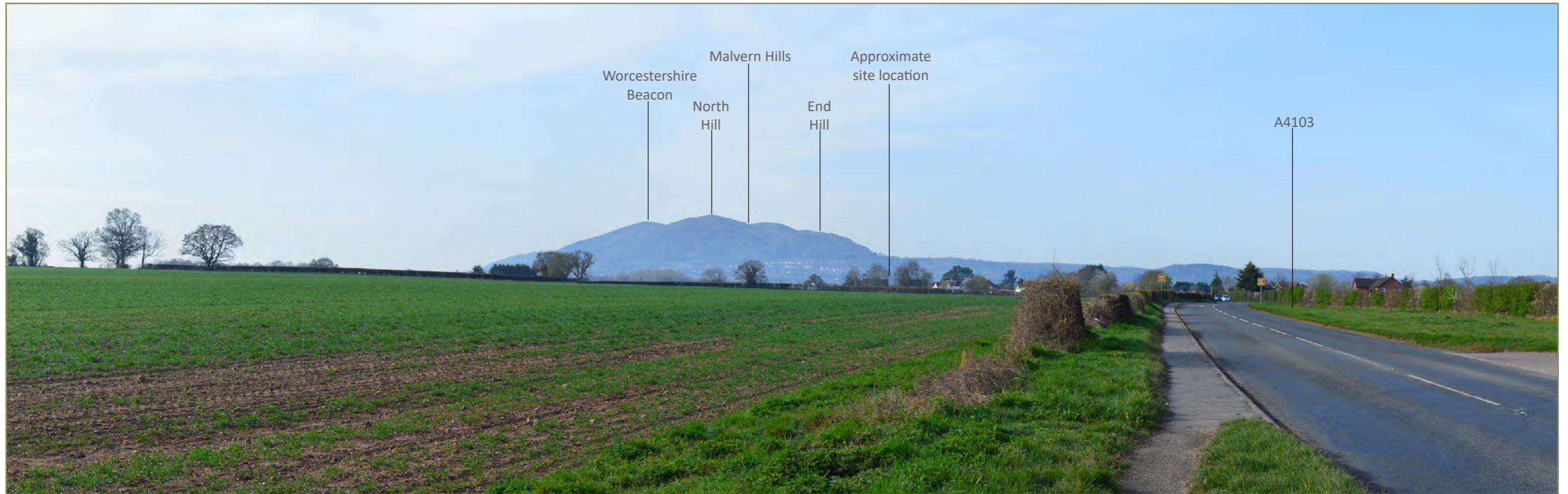
5.98 Representative Photoviewpoint 15 is taken from Leigh Sinton Road to the north east of the site. Views of the site are obscured by the presence of residential development located off Leigh Sinton Road and Chapel Close. To the centre of the view the Malvern Hills can be seen forming the backdrop to the views. Intervening vegetation found within gardens also filter views of the site and limit potential visibility.

Receptors

- Transient users of Leigh Sinton Road

Value	Medium	-Not a recognised key view but local views of AONB
Susceptibility	Low	-Users travelling at speed along Leigh Sinton -Site located to the right of the hills behind existing built form -Users concentrating on the road ahead and not the view
Overall Low Sensitivity		





Orientation: South
 Distance From Site: 1.1km
 Grid Reference: SO 78790 51389
 Date and Time: 30/03/2021 12:20
Photoviewpoint 16
 Description: View from A4103 towards the Malvern Hills.

Users of the A4103 (Key View - Special View 1)

Description

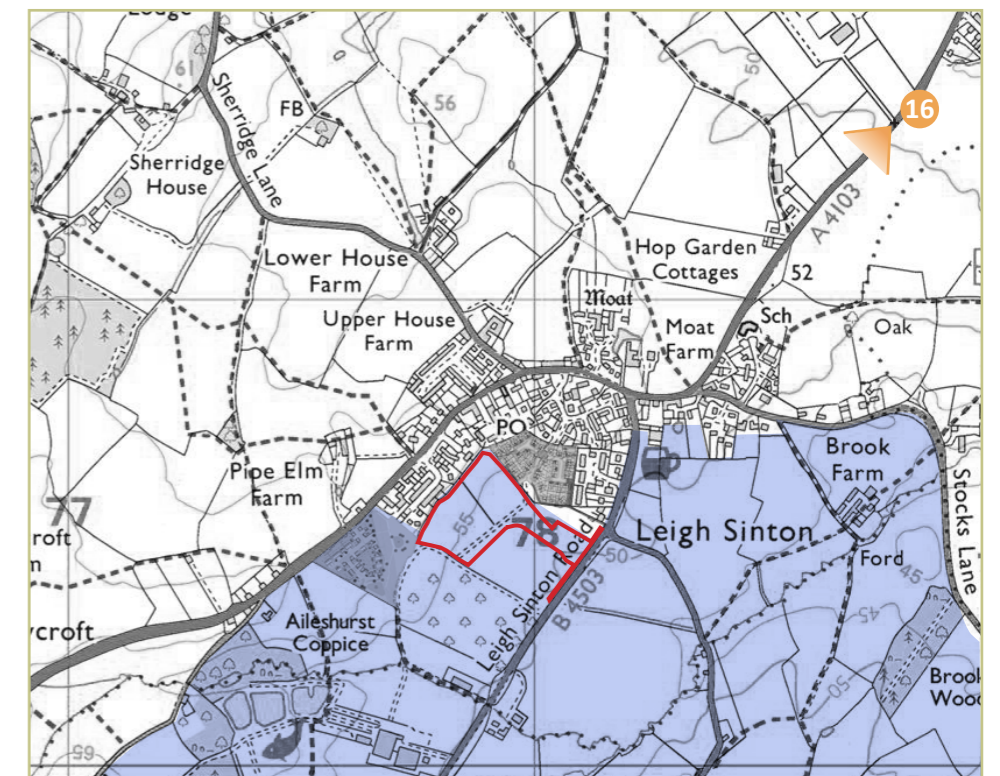
5.99 Representative photoviewpoint 16 is taken to the north of the site from the A4103 and is an identified key view within the Malvern Hills AONB Key Views document, as detailed further within **Appendix 2** of the report.

5.100 From this location, users of the A4103 do not see the site due to the presence of intervening tree planting found to field boundaries and within the curtilage of residential development located at the northern edge of Leigh Sinton. The Malvern Hills are a dominant feature within the view and seen rising above the settlement of Malvern.

Receptors

- Transient users of A4103

Value	High	-Recognised key View within the Malvern Hills AONB Management Plan
Susceptibility	Low	-Users travelling at speed along A4103 with the site located at the foot of the Malvern Hills -Users concentrating on the road ahead and not the view
Overall Medium Sensitivity		





Orientation: West Grid Reference: SO 78135 50460 Photoviewpoint 17
 Distance From Site: 0km Date and Time: 15/03/2021 12:39
 Description: View from Leigh Sinton Road.

Users of Leigh Sinton Road

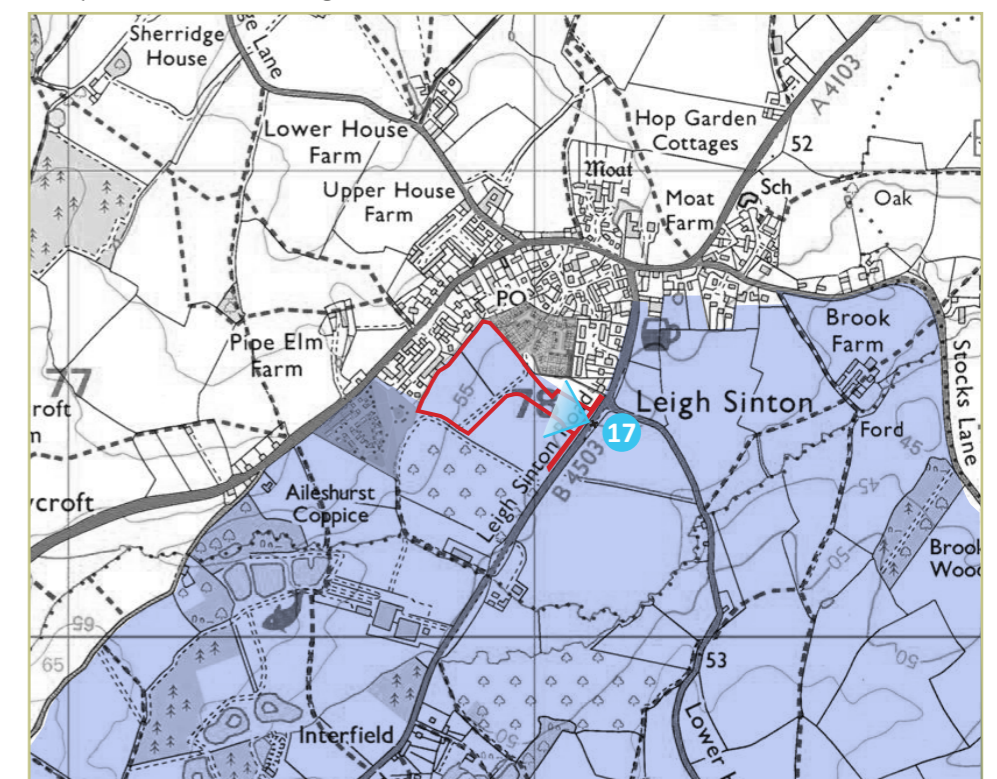
Description

- 5.101 Representative Photoviewpoint 17 is taken from Leigh Sinton Road at the north eastern corner of the site. A relatively newly planted hedgerow can be seen in the foreground of the view affording more open views across the site.
- 5.102 Adjoining this new hedgerow planting is the established belt of tree and hedging located along the length of Leigh Sinton Road, which filters views of the site. Direct views of the site can be seen at the gap through the hedging, and within these views the development at Malvern Rise can be seen along the skyline with the existing fruit tree plantation seen locate at the north eastern boundary of the site.
- 5.103 To the west, and within the backdrop of the view the residential development at Lynn Close can be seen overlooking the western boundary of the site. The existing mature oak tree located just to the northern boundary of the site is also seen within this view.

Receptors

- Transient users of Leigh Sinton Road

Value	Low	-Not within any recognised or locally important view -View of the site is limited by the presence of vegetation
Susceptibility	Low	-Users travelling at speed along Leigh Sinton Road -Users concentrating on the road ahead and not the view -No pedestrian footpath along Leigh Sinton Road
Overall Low Sensitivity		





Orientation: West
 Distance From Site: 0km
 Grid Reference: SO 78029 50318
 Date and Time: 15/03/2021 12:44
Photoviewpoint 18
 Description: View from Leigh Sinton Road.

Users of Leigh Sinton Road

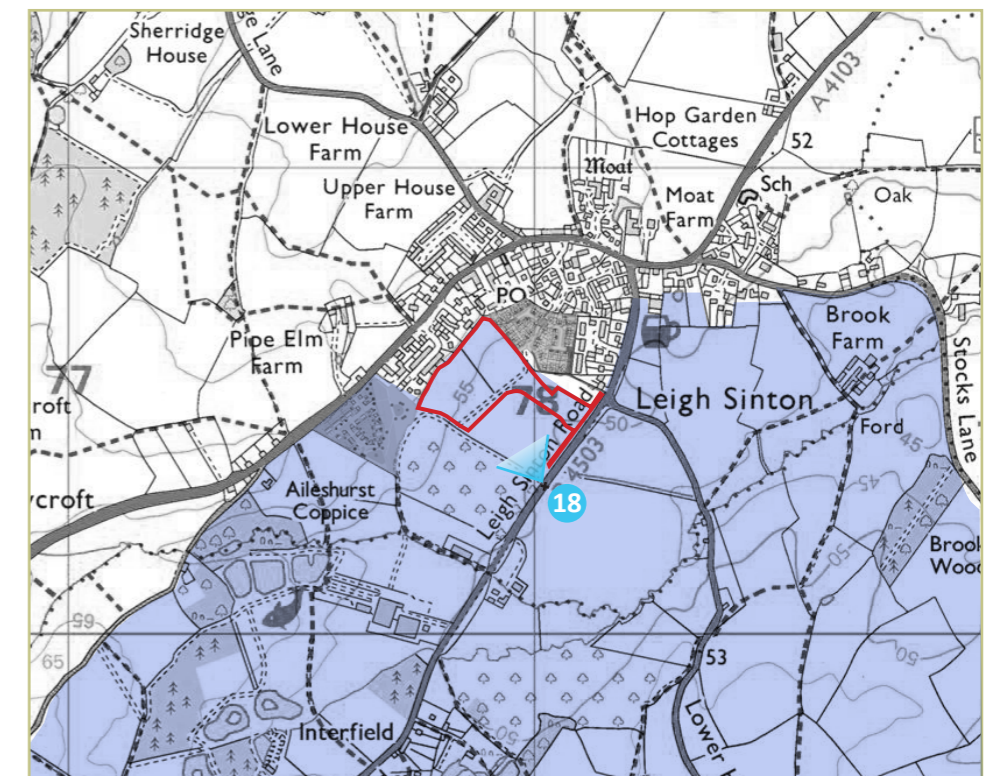
5.104 Representative Photoviewpoint 18 is taken to the south east of the site at a field gate off Leigh Sinton Road. From this location, views of the site are filtered by the presence of the existing vegetation found along Leigh Sinton Road. The overgrown hedgerow which flanks this transport route filters views across the site, although slight glimpsed views of the Christmas tree plantation can be seen through gaps in the planting.

5.105 The southern boundary hedgerow can also be seen in the left of the view and limits visibility of the site. Beyond this, the mature evergreen trees at the south western corner of the site can be seen along the skyline. The development at Bluebell Walk, can also be seen in this view in the background above the existing Christmas tree plantation.

Receptors

- Transient users of Leigh Sinton Road

Value	Low	-Not within any recognised or locally important view -View of the site is limited by the presence of vegetation
Susceptibility	Low	-Users travelling at speed along Leigh Sinton Road -Users concentrating on the road ahead and not the view -No pedestrian footpath along Leigh Sinton Road
Overall Low Sensitivity		



6 Opportunities and Constraints

Landscape Principles and Opportunities

6.1 In response to the landscape and visual baseline analysis, a series of landscape objectives, and opportunities and constraints have been identified to inform the development of the site. The design response and rationale ensures that the development of the site reflects the local circumstances and context, and as been derived from the detailed desktop studies, baseline analysis and field studies. The opportunities also take into account policy compliance and published landscape character.

Significant Gap

6.2 The development of the site should respond to the Significant Gap designation (as identified within **Appendix 1**) through the following objectives and recommendations:

- Maintain development within the envelope of the existing settlement edge to ensure that the perception of the openness of the Significant gap is maintained and coalescence of settlements prevented;
- Provide opportunities for enhancements to the retained undeveloped land within the site for increased ecological networks, and opportunities for increased recreation;
- Maintain and enhance the boundary hedgerow planting along the southern and eastern boundaries to provide visual enclosure and containment in views when travelling along Leigh Sinton Road and along public footpaths to the south of the site;
- Maintain the sense of openness and retain views across towards the Malvern Hills to the south; and
- Provide increased characteristic planting within the site to increase ecological and recreational links outside of the site boundaries.

Malvern Hills AONB Key Views Assessment

6.3 The development of the site should respond sensitively to the special qualities of the Malvern Hills AONB and identified key views (as identified within **Appendix 2**) through the following objectives and recommendations:

- Retention of views from Pineview Drive at the northern boundary of the site across towards the Malvern Hills to the south;
- Proposed landscaping and enhanced hedgerow planting located along the northern boundary of the site to be maintained in the long term to an overall height of 1.2-1.3m, ensuring visibility across the open space and retained undeveloped land towards the Malvern Hills;
- Proposed central open space within site to be planted with scattered trees which are to be located strategically to ensure the retention of key views;

- Views from the Malvern Hills to the north of the new and existing settlement edge should be enhanced with additional characteristic tree and hedgerow planting to soften the settlement edge and built form;
- Retention of new development within the envelope of the existing settlement edge of Leigh Sinton to ensure that the proposals are integrated into existing built form when viewed from elevated positions and within panoramic views;
- Provision of new internal street scene planting to soften the rooflines of the new development in wider longer distance views;
- A soft edge provided to the new development, with tree and hedgerow planting and careful siting and orientation of buildings to ensure a soft and informal edge is created to the new development;
- Choice of materials and colours carefully considered to ensure that the proposals are not out of character or setting with the adjacent settlement edge; and
- Retention of existing evergreen tree planting at the south western corner of the site to maintain filtering of views from lower land within AONB.

Design Response

6.4 Taking into account the recommendations in relation to the Significant Gap Designation and the Malvern Hills AONB Key Views findings, the following recommendations for the development of the site are proposed which should be read in conjunction with the Opportunities and Constraints Plan (**Incola 1010 Po6a**):

1. Existing hedge and tree planting supplemented and enhanced with additional native shrubs with the planting maintained to a height of 1.2-1.3m to retain views of Malvern Hills to the south and increase ecological corridor through site east to west;
2. New areas of scattered tree planting to soften development edge and increase characteristic vegetation to provide additional green infrastructure. Proposed tree planting to be placed strategically to ensure views of the Malvern Hills are maintained to the south;
3. New orchard planting to increase characteristic planting and links to adjacent existing orchard, providing opportunities for community growing and increased ecological habitats;
4. Existing hedgerow maintained and supplemented at eastern and southern boundaries with additional native tree and shrub planting to maintain green corridor and characteristic planting. Where gaps in hedgerow are present, these should be gapped up with a double staggered native hedgerow and hedgerow trees, characteristic of the Principal Timbered Farmlands Landscape Character Type;

5. Publicly accessible green space should be maintained and planted with strategically located scattered native trees to ensure wide ranging views of the Malvern Hills to the south are retained. Opportunities exist to increase the ecological habitats through this space with the creation of wildflower meadow planting, scrub and native tree species, along with increased opportunities for informal recreation routes and opportunities for informal play;
6. Development to be maintained behind the existing evergreen tree planting found along the southern boundary, and adjacent to the existing settlement edge and houses off Lynn Close;
7. Opportunities to increase recreation and green links across the site with the existing Malvern Rise and Bluebell Walk developments with increased green infrastructure, biodiversity and recreation enhancements. This can include additional publicly accessible footpath routes to increase the connectivity to the wider network of recreation routes outside of the site boundaries;
8. Development plots to include internal streetscene planting and plot frontage landscaping to soften built form and integrate development into the surrounding landscape and soften development forms when seen in wider views; and
9. Development maintained within extents of existing settlement edge with opportunities for betterment to new settlement boundary and softer transition at edge of site with the remaining undeveloped landscape outside of the site boundaries;
10. Access off Leigh Sinton Road to include streetscene planting to soften views of the settlement edge and provide increased landscape features through the site; and
11. Opportunity to create new hedgerow along plot frontages to reference historic hedge lined route, increase characteristic hedgerow planting and create additional Green Infrastructure links and connections across the site.

6.5 Overall, the site presents opportunities to enhance the landscape character and setting of the site and can be accommodated through a careful and sensitive approach to the landscape and visual baseline.

6.6 Opportunities exist to develop the site and provide additional benefits for the community and wildlife with additional recreational routes, areas of accessible public open space and diverse wildlife habitats and ecological corridors.

6 Opportunities and Constraints



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Plan Name	Opportunities and Constraints
Drawing Number	Incola 1010 P06a
Revision	-
Date	22/06/2021

Site Boundary
 Potential developable area
 Opportunity for new orchard planting
 Retain and enhance existing native hedgerow planting
 Retain and enhance existing native hedgerow, to 1.2-1.3m high, ensuring views of the Malvern Hills are maintained across open space

Development to front onto open space
 Opportunities for new pedestrian access
 Areas of scattered native tree planting
 Opportunity for new hedgerow planting to reference historic hedgeline and increase GI links

0km 0.05km 0.1km

N

Proposals

7.1 The proposed development will provide the following:

- Up to 45 residential units, including 12 self and custom build units;
- Associated parking and infrastructure;
- Access off Leigh Sinton Road;
- New pedestrian footpaths linking to Malvern Rise, Bluebell Walk and Leigh Sinton Road;
- New areas of accessible public open space;
- SuDS and attenuation;
- Retained boundary planting and landscape features; and
- Retained field access to adjacent Christmas tree plantation.

7.2 In response to the opportunities and constraints which have been identified through the baseline studies a Landscape Strategy Plan has been developed. This Landscape Strategy Plan (Incola 1010 P07a) will provide the following:

- 1. Development located adjacent to settlement edge and within extents of built form to reduce impacts of Significant Gap and landscape character.**
 - The proposed built form is located adjacent to the existing settlement edge and is within close proximity to the buildings found along Lynn Close to the west of the site. Retaining development at the western extent will ensure that views of the site are seen in the context of the adjacent settlement. The built form is proposed away from Leigh Sinton Road which forms the principle route between Leigh Sinton and Malvern to ensure that implications on the openness of the Significant Gap are minimised.
- 2. Proposed development parcel located at the western part of the site on land which is smaller than site extents to reduce impacts on views.**
 - The proposed development parcels are maintained and limited to the western part of the site to minimise the implications on views across towards the Malvern Hills. Maintaining development on only part of the site extents within this area will ensure that the Key Views both to and from the Malvern Hills AONB are retained.
- 3. Hedgerows maintained to a height of 1.2 metre to maintain views across towards Malvern Hills.**
 - To increase characteristic planting and Green Infrastructure across the site in addition to providing characteristic planting and providing an increase in this landscape feature within the site areas of native hedgerow are proposed. These species rich hedgerows will be located and maintained to ensure that views of the Malvern Hills are retained

and hedgerow trees placed strategically.

- 4. Proposed fruit trees/orchard to extend existing orchard located to the north and increase characteristic planting along entrance into the site;**
 - New areas of fruit trees are proposed adjacent to the existing TPO orchard at the north eastern corner of the site to increase diversity and provide additional community benefits and ecological resources. The proposed orchard will also assist in filtering views of the development when seen from Leigh Sinton Road to the east of the site.
- 5. Existing hedgerow along Leigh Sinton Road maintained and enhanced with additional native trees and shrubs;**
 - The hedgerow planting which runs along Leigh Sinton Road is to be retained and managed to filter views across towards the site. Where necessary areas of this hedging will be removed to accommodate visibility splays, but any removal of hedgerow will be mitigated and areas of new hedgerow created through the site elsewhere.
- 6. Proposed native hedgerow and hedgerow trees to form boundary of the site to increase landscape connectivity and characteristic planting. Proposed hedgerow to be managed at a height of 1.2 metres to maintain views across towards the Malvern Hills to the south;**
 - Additional areas of hedgerows are to be created which will increase characteristic planting. These species rich hedgerows will be located and maintained to ensure that views of the Malvern Hills are retained and hedgerow trees placed strategically.
- 7. Proposed wildflower margins to open space to provide transition to site edges and increase ecological habitats;**
 - Areas of wildflower meadows will be created at the margins of the site to create a varied and diverse habitat and landscape. These wildflower margins will also provide increased opportunities for wildlife habitats and wider connectivity of Green Infrastructure.
- 8. Proposed native scattered trees within open space to soften the edge of the development, filter views and provide increased characteristic planting and ecological habitats;**
 - The proposed landscape buffer and public open space which runs along the eastern and northern parts of the site will include areas of scattered native tree planting with Oak and Field Maple the predominant species characteristic of the wider landscape. Proposed native tree planting will replace the more uncharacteristic Christmas tree planting and create a softer transition to the new settlement edge to enhance visual amenity and improve the southern edge of Leigh Sinton when seen in wider longer distance views from the AONB.
- 9. Proposed marginal planting to SuDS and attenuation to provide**

ecological habitat;

- Two areas of SuDS/attenuation are proposed within the open space which will include a diverse mix of native marginal species to provide interest and colour and increase ecological habitat and diversity. The location of the SuDS will also be within close proximity of footpath routes to provide added interest for pedestrian users.
- 10. Proposed pedestrian footpath routes through open space to link to wider PRow and open space to the north and south west;**
 - New footpath routes are proposed through the open space which will link to the footpath and open space within Malvern Rise to the north and to the redirected footpath to the south west at Bluebell Walk. These additional footpath routes will increase opportunities for active travel and sustainable walking routes through the southern part of Leigh Sinton and will provide a car free route linking Leigh Sinton Road in the east with the A4103 in the west. The proposed footpath routes will provide opportunities for dog walking, informal recreation, play, opportunities to admire the view and place to stop and rest through a beneficial and accessible green open space.
 - 11. Proposed areas of play integrated into landscape buffer with proposed tree and shrub planting;**
 - Within the public open space, proposed areas of play are included to provide additional benefits for the community and residents. These areas of play will compliment the existing facilities found at the north of the site within the Malvern Rise scheme and will be located amongst areas with landscape features and new planting.
 - 12. Retention and additional area of hedgerow along southern boundary to increase connectivity and maintain visual containment; and**
 - Gaps in the hedgerow along the southern boundary of the site will be gapped up and planted with additional native trees and shrubs to provide strong green connections and maintain visual containment when seen from the south.
 - 13. Proposed tree and shrub planting at plot frontages to soften built form and increase planting within development plots.**
 - Within the development plots, the scheme will propose tree and shrub planting at plot frontages with tree species appropriate for their location and setting. Trees will soften the appearance of built form, will over time break up the appearance of rooflines in wider views and will increase diversity and green infrastructure.
- 7.3 Overall the proposals respond to the landscape and visual context and their surroundings to provide beneficial green spaces and a sensitive response and provide increased opportunities for recreation and ecological enhancement for the local community.

1. Development located adjacent to settlement edge and within extents of built form to reduce impacts of Significant Gap and landscape character;
2. Proposed development parcel located at the western part of the site on land which is smaller than site extents to reduce impacts on key views;
3. Hedgerows maintained to a height of 1.2 metre to maintain views across towards Malvern Hills;
4. Proposed fruit trees/orchard to extend existing orchard located to the north and increase characteristic planting along entrance into the site;
5. Existing hedgerow along Leigh Sinton Road maintained and enhanced with additional native trees and shrubs;
6. Proposed native hedgerow and hedgerow trees to form boundary of the site to increase landscape connectivity and characteristic planting. Proposed hedgerow to be managed at a height of 1.2 metres to maintain views across towards the Malvern Hills to the south;
7. Proposed wildflower margins to open space to provide transition to site edges and increase ecological habitats;
8. Proposed native scattered trees within open space to soften the edge of the development, filter views and provide increased characteristic planting and ecological habitats;
9. Proposed marginal planting to SuDS and attenuation to provide ecological habitat;
10. Proposed pedestrian footpath routes through open space to link to wider PROw and open space to the north and south west;
11. Proposed areas of play integrated into landscape buffer with proposed tree and shrub planting;
12. Retention and additional area of hedgerow along southern boundary to increase connectivity and maintain visual containment; and
13. Proposed tree and shrub planting at plot frontages to soften built form and increase planting within development plots.



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Legend

- Existing vegetation retained and enhanced
- Fruit Trees/ Orchard
- Open Space Trees
- Street Trees
- Hedgerow Trees
- Native Hedge/ Shrubs
- SuDS/Marginal Planting
- Grassland/ Meadow
- Amenity Grass
- Play Facilities

Fruit Trees
Indicative Species:
Worcestershire Pearmain
Lord Hindlip
Doddin




Native Hedgerow
Indicative Species:
Corylus avellana
Crataegus monogyna
Ilex aquifolium
Prunus spinosa
Viburnum opulus



Open Space Trees
Indicative Species:
Acer campestre
Alnus glutinosa
Betula pendula
Carpinus betulus
Quercus robur



Street Trees and Plot Frontage Trees
Indicative Species:
Amelanchier lamarkii
Carpinus betulus
Prunus avium
Sorbus aria
Quercus palustris



Grassland/Meadow
Indicative Species:
EM3 - Emorsgate Special General Purpose Meadow Mix



SuDS/Marginal Planting
Indicative Species:
EM8 - Emorsgate meadow mixture for wetlands



Plan Name	Landscape Strategy Plan
Drawing Number	Incola 1010-P07a
Revision	a
Date	28/06/2021
Scale	Not to scale

Introduction

- 8.1 Having identified the landscape and visual context, including key characteristics, features and the extent and composition of views, this section provides a summary of the potential landscape and visual effects of the proposed development.
- 8.2 This assessment is based on the design parameters and proposals and the Landscape Strategy Plan (Incola 1010 P07a) in addition to the opportunities and constraints identified within the baseline studies.
- 8.3 The assessment initially provides an overview of the findings of the Significant Gap Appraisal (Appendix 1) and goes on to provide an overview of the Malvern Key Views document found at Appendix 2.

Significant Gap Appraisal (Appendix 1 - Incola 1010 R02)

- 8.4 As identified, the Significant Gap Policy is a spatial designation and not one which addresses landscape character or landscape value.
- 8.5 The purpose of the Significant Gap is detailed as the following within Policy SWDP2 of the adopted South Worcestershire Development Plan:

"The purpose of maintaining these gaps, which either serve as a buffer or visual break between rural settlements and adjacent urban areas or protect the character and setting of settlements, is to provide additional protection to open land that may be subject to development pressures. The designation helps to maintain a clear separation between smaller settlements and urban areas in order to retain their individual identity."

- 8.6 Through a desktop review, the appraisal found the following with regards to the SWDP Review, Preferred Options Significant Gap Appraisal (November 2019):

"The SWDP Review Preferred Options Significant Gap Appraisal (November 2019), identified that the significant gap between Malvern and Leigh Sinton has the potential for discrete parcels of land to the south of Leigh Sinton to be developed."

- 8.7 The review highlights that distinct parcels at the southern edge of Leigh Sinton have the potential to be developed within the Significant Gap. In addition to this, the development at Bluebell Walk to the south west of the site lies within the Significant Gap and was granted permission at appeal.

Existing Physical Distances



Figure 5: Physical Distances of Significant Gap (Extract from Incola 1010 P09 as found within Appendix 1)

Proposed Physical Distances



Figure 6: Proposals and Settlement Edge

Physical Distance

- 8.8 An assessment was completed on the impact of physical distances between the settlement edges of Malvern and Leigh Sinton and as identified within at paragraph 4.5,

"There will be no change to the physical distances between the settlements of Malvern and Leigh Sinton and development of the site will remain to the north of the extents of the existing settlement edge."

- 8.9 The appraisal identifies that the development of the site can be accommodated without reducing the physical distances between the settlements and reducing any potential for coalescence. This is illustrated on (Incola 1010 P09), an extract of which is included at Figure 5.

- 8.10 Retaining the development at the western edge of the site, as illustrated on Figure 6, adjacent to the existing settlement edge of Leigh Sinton will ensure that the physical distances between the settlements are no greater than the existing situation.

- 8.11 In addition to this, Figure 6 illustrates the location of the Bluebell Walk

scheme in relation to the site. This development extends the settlement edge 0.13km further south west than the proposed built form within the site and is located within the Significant Gap.

8.12 The appraisal concludes that the development of the site will not be detrimental to the physical gap between the settlements of Malvern and Leigh Sinton.

Perception of the Significant Gap

8.13 In addition to the assessment of physical distances, an assessment was completed of how the development of the site would affect the perception of the Significant Gap, and its purpose of retaining the separate identities of Malvern and Leigh Sinton and reducing the potential for coalescence between the settlements.

8.14 The appraisal identified key transport routes, footpaths and how the development of the site may impact on the users of these routes and their experience of travelling between Leigh Sinton and Malvern. It also assessed the perception of the gap for users of the footpaths within elevated positions from the northern hills of the Malvern Hills AONB. An assessment of the key transport routes identified the following:

Western transport routes - Halfkey Road, Dragons Lane and Hereford Road

8.15 At paragraph 5.12 the appraisal states that:

"From Hereford Road, views of the site cannot be seen due to the falling topography and presence of built form with the site located further north than the settlement extents."

8.16 The presence of evergreen tree planting and the existing settlement edge reduces visibility and therefore the development of the site will not be perceived as being detrimental to the Significant Gap.

Central transport route - Leigh Sinton Road;

The appraisal at paragraph 5.20, identified that:

"The presence of intervening vegetation, hedgerow planting and linear planting found along Leigh Sinton Road limit the potential for changes to occur to the perceived separation between Malvern and Leigh Sinton, and the presence of existing built form scattered along Leigh Sinton Road also reduces the perceived openness and undeveloped landscape."

8.17 Paragraph 3.17 of the appraisal states the following with regards to the appeal decision of the Bluebell Walk scheme:

"The development at the site at Bluebell Walk was deemed to be acceptable and identified that the development would not be detrimental to the perceived openness or narrowing of the gap between Leigh Sinton and Malvern. The inspector identifies that development located along Leigh Sinton Road would have a greater impact on the perceived gap between

Leigh Sinton and Malvern and that any development fronting this road would have a more detrimental impact on the perceived reduction in gap".

8.18 A new access point will be created off Leigh Sinton Road which will result in infrastructure and changes to the gateway along Leigh Sinton Road, however, the retained hedgerow and additional proposed internal planting will reduce the visual impacts and limit any perceived reduction in the Significant Gap. For these users, views of the settlement edge are already experienced as stated at paragraph 5.19:

"Localised views of the site can be seen at the proposed entrance to the site boundaries where a newly planted section of hedgerow exists. From this location, views across the site can be seen to the existing settlement edge and residential dwellings found to Malvern Rise located at the northern boundary of the site. In the background, residential properties and built form located off Lynn Close can be seen overlooking the site at its western extents. "

8.19 Therefore the perception of any potential narrowing of the gap will be barely discernible for users of this transport route.

Eastern transport routes -Lower Howsell Road and Stocks Lane.

8.20 For users of the eastern transport routes, the development of the site will be barely discernible in views as states at paragraph 5.23:

"Native hedgerow and deciduous tree planting run along the boundaries of much of this road, and limit visibility".

8.21 Where views of the site can be seen from these transport routes, they are seen within the context of the existing settlement edge and there will be limited changes to the perception of the separation and openness for users of these routes.

Footpath Routes

8.22 For footpath users of the routes between Malvern and Leigh Sinton, the presence of intervening vegetation limits the perception of openness

and reduces the visibility of the site. For users of the footpath routes at the eastern part of the Significant Gap, the appraisal found that the development of the site would result in no change to the perception of the significant gap, as identified at paragraph 5.43:

"The well vegetated landscape and tree lined skylines limit the sense of openness across the Significant Gap for users of these footpaths and many of this landscape at the eastern part of the significant gap is more undeveloped in its character than that of the land to the west. There is very little intervisibility between the settlements and the site for users of these footpaths. "

8.23 It identified the following at paragraph 5.35, that for users of the footpath routes within the western part of the significant gap:

"The well vegetated landscape and tree lined skylines limit the sense of openness across the Significant Gap with very little intervisibility between the settlements and the site. Where more open views across the significant gap are possible and where the settlement edge of Leigh Sinton can be seen, views of the site are obscured by existing built form and the site sits within the confines of the existing settlement edge on lower ground, and will therefore not be visible from these locations."

8.24 Where glimpsed views of the site are possible from these footpaths they are limited, filtered by vegetation and seen within the context of the existing settlement edge. There will be limited changes to the perception of the separation and openness for users of these footpath routes.

Long distance routes

8.25 With regards to long distance views from the Malvern Hills AONB and the perception of the development of the site from these elevated positions (as illustrated by Figure 7, the appraisal states at paragraph 5.51 that:

"The proposed development when viewed from these footpath routes will not cause any coalescence between the settlement or extend development into the more undeveloped Significant Gap land to the south, and can



Figure 7: Long Distance View B (taken from North Hill)

be accommodated through mitigation without being detrimental to the openness of the Significant Gap land."

8.26 It goes on to say that:

"From End Hill and North Hill, the edge of Leigh Sinton is a distinctive feature within the landscape and the scheme at Malvern Rise which forms the northern edge of the site is clearly visible at the northern edge of the development. Within these views from the Malvern Hills, built form can be seen within the Significant Gap land and this landscape between Leigh Sinton and Malvern is not devoid of development, with scattered farmsteads, agricultural buildings and scattered residential dwellings seen across the landscape."

8.27 Development of the site will provide an improved settlement edge and will assist in maintaining the separate identities of Malvern and Leigh Sinton.

8.28 The appraisal concludes by saying the following:

"The SWDP Review Preferred Options Significant Gap Appraisal (November 2019), identified that the significant gap between Malvern and Leigh Sinton has the potential for discrete parcels of land to the south of Leigh Sinton to be developed. The location and proximity of the site to the existing settlement edge, and negligible change in the perception of the Significant Gap as well as the lack of change in physical distance of the gap between the settlements all mean that development of the site is achievable without having undue harm to the openness or purposes of the significant gap."

8.29 Development of the site will not result in coalescence between settlements and separation will be maintained between Malvern and Leigh Sinton.

Malvern Key Views Assessment (Appendix 2 - Incola 1010 R03)

8.30 The assessment of Key Views identified key views which were graded as Representative, Special or Exceptional views to and from the Malvern Hills AONB. The grading of these views was completed using the guidance set out within the Malvern Hills AONB Grading of Guidance on identifying and grading views and viewpoints document.

8.31 In addition to the specific grading of Views completed by Incola Ltd, Key views which were identified through the review produced by the Cooper Partnership in 2009 (Identification of Key Views to and from the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (March 2009 - Cooper Partnership)), was also included and these views have been highlighted where relevant.

8.32 The following definitions are provided for Representative, Special and Exceptional Views:

"Exceptional (E): Highly valued, unique, panoramic view or long distance view across intact and quintessential landscapes of Herefordshire,

Worcestershire and/or Gloucestershire; allows for appreciation and understanding of wider surroundings of the AONB; does not replicate another view; allows the enjoyment of well known landmarks.

Special (S): Panoramic or long distance view including dramatic scenery and skyline; allows appreciation of the more intimate setting of the AONB and the relationship of its landscape character types; may be comparable to other views.

Representative (R): Typical view, which may be replicated elsewhere; presence of visual detractors may degrade quality of view; narrow or glimpsed view."

8.33 As identified within **Appendix 2**, the following views were identified as being key views to and from the Malvern Hills AONB:

- **Photoviewpoint 1** - This view is identified as Exceptional View 47 (as identified within the Identification of Key Views to and from the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (March 2009 - Cooper Partnership). This view is taken from North Hill looking north towards the site and identifies the following:

"In views to the north east, the settlement of Leigh Sinton a clear feature within the view, and the land between the edge of Malvern and Leigh Sinton comprises dense evergreen and deciduous tree planting."

- **Photoviewpoint 2** - This view has been identified as a Special View. This view is taken from End Hill and identifies the following:

"Views over the settlement edge of Malvern can be seen in middle distance views, with the gently undulating well wooded landscape to the north separating the edge of Malvern from Leigh Sinton which is a distinctive feature within the view." It also identifies that the landscape from this location is "settled in character".

- **Photoviewpoint 3** - This view has been identified as a Representative View. This view is taken from the Geopark Way on the lower slopes of the Malvern Hills AONB and identifies the following:

"The existing development edge of Leigh Sinton can be seen within the view and is set amongst a well wooded and well treed landscape. There are panoramic views from this elevated position with existing scattered farm buildings and residential dwellings present."

8.34 The following key views were identified towards the Malvern Hills AONB from close proximity of the site:

- **Photoviewpoint 12a** - This view has been identified as a Special View. This view was taken from Pineview and identifies the following:

"Malvern Hills are a focus within the view in the distance and make the user stop and look. Although not an unfamiliar view, from this location the

hills are seen centrally and provide a focus for users. Sense of settled and urban edge character nearby."

- **Photoviewpoint 14** - This view has been identified as a Special View. and was taken from Pineview Avenue and identifies the following:

"The Malvern Hills are seen in the background with existing evergreen vegetation filtering views of the lower slopes. Fencing and existing residential development are detracting features within the view.

Contrasting features within the foreground draw the eye to the hills in the distance.

Glimpsed views of the northern lower slopes of the AONB can also be seen in the view."

8.35 Both key views to and from the Malvern Hills AONB have informed the development of the site, how the site responds to the visual setting of the Malvern Hills AONB, and how users experience views.

Landscape Effects

8.36 As identified, the site is located within the Principal Timbered Farmlands Landscape Character Type as set out within the Worcestershire County Council Landscaper Character Assessment. The key principal characteristics as identified include:

- Hedgerow boundaries to fields;
- Ancient wooded character; and
- Notable pattern of hedgerow trees.

8.37 These key sensitivities and characteristics cover a much larger area than the site itself and are not specific to the site, although the site does share some characteristics with these key characteristics as identified through the site specific assessment.

Landscape Sensitivity

8.38 In order to understand the nature and extents of effects upon the landscape, it is necessary to establish the sensitivity of the site and the receiving landscape to the proposed development and associated landscape mitigation and design response.

8.39 As set-out in GLVIA3, Landscape Sensitivity is a combination of judgements of value and susceptibility to a specific type of change or proposed development.

8.40 Landscape value is defined by GLVIA3 as being: *"The relative value that is attached to different landscapes by society. A landscape may be valued by different stakeholders for a whole variety of reasons."*

8.41 The site is not identified as a valued landscape, and the Malvern Hills AONB is located 4km to the south of the site. The Malvern Hills are a common feature within the landscape and are a valuable asset in views and setting.

8.42 The site and immediate surrounding landscape are not designated for their qualities or value and are not a valued landscape under the provisions of paragraph 170 of the NPPF. The value of the landscape is therefore limited to being of local importance.

8.43 As a more detailed level, value can be assessed using the factors as set-out at Box 5.1 of GLVIA. This is an approach that is widely used and considered as an accepted method.

8.44 The technical guidance note on assessing Landscape Value outside National Designations published recently by the Landscape Institute (TGN 02/21) also provides further guidance on assessing the value of the landscape and how the factors which may determine value are presented and may be indicated. The technical guidance note is intended to be read in addition to, and is complimentary to GLVIA3. The technical guidance note also identifies a further factor for assessing value, with function added to the list of factors below.

8.45 The factors are as follows:

- Landscape quality (condition);
- Scenic quality;
- Rarity and Representativeness (distinctiveness);
- Conservation Interests (Natural heritage and cultural heritage);
- Recreation Value;
- Perceptual aspects; and
- Associations;
- Function.

8.46 The susceptibility of the landscape is defined by GLVIA3 at paragraph 5.40 as: *"the ability of the landscape receptor (whether it be the overall character or quality/condition of a particular landscape type or area, or an individual element and/or feature, or a particular aesthetic and perceptual aspect) to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of planning policies and strategies."*

8.47 The indicators of value are to be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, taking into account what they contribute (whether this is positively or negatively) to a specific landscape. The importance of these factors and indicators will vary across landscapes, and an overall judgement is made to assess the site and the contribution it makes to these factors in determining its value.

8.48 The assessment of the proposals considers not only the site itself but its relationship with the context of the site, and the role the specific features play within this context. In assessing value, it is important to appreciate value at the scale within which the landscape is perceived.

8.49 The greater the understanding of the type, scale, extent and location of development, the more of an understanding of susceptibility of a landscape to the proposals can be.

8.50 For each of these indicators, this assessment has made a judgement on the site in relation to each of these factors. Judgements are made with reference to the observable landscape features, which can include components such as landform, vegetation, housing, roads, boundary treatments etc.

Landscape Quality (condition)

8.51 The site is located adjacent to the settlement edge of Leigh Sinton which has a strong influence over its setting and context. The northern and western boundaries of the site are seen within the context of the adjacent built form which are detracting features within the landscape, creating a harsh edge to the settlement boundaries of Leigh Sinton.

8.52 There is a lack of diverse internal landscape features with the site devoted to growing Christmas trees. Boundary hedgerows found along the eastern

and southern boundaries are established but are gappy in places but generally intact and providing a strong linear feature within the landscape.

8.53 The land use of the site is temporary, with Christmas Trees harvested periodically over time, and the landscape is therefore transient in its nature.

8.54 There are no other internal landscape features within the site itself, and the field pattern is intact based on a study of historic mapping with historic boundaries still remaining intact within the site, with the exception of a previous hedge running north south across the site which no longer exists.

8.55 The built edge of Leigh Sinton is influential to the site and provides the site with settled and urban edge characteristics. The site is influenced by human activity, with residential development and the Christmas Tree land use influencing the quality and condition of the landscape.

Scenic quality

8.56 Although there are no distinctive features within the site itself which contribute to scenic quality there are strong associations with the Malvern Hills to the south of the site with views across towards the AONB from the site and from the adjacent development at Malvern Rise. The Malvern Hills have strong aesthetic qualities, as identified within the Key View document to the rear of the report (**Appendix 2**). The distinctive views of the Malvern Hills is a key factor in the development of the site and contributes to a distinctive landscape.

8.57 Although the Malvern Hills are a distinctive features within the landscape, the site itself does not display characteristics contributing to scenic quality. It is influenced by built form and in wider views from the Malvern Hills is seen within this settlement edge context with built form a common feature in the landscape.

Rarity and Representativeness (distinctiveness)

8.58 The site does not include any rare or notable features of particular significance which are characteristic of any particular place or contributing to any sense of identity.

8.59 The site does not provide a particular important gateway or approach into Leigh Sinton to contribute to the settlement, or display a strong sense of character or sense of place.

Conservation Interests (Natural heritage and cultural heritage)

8.60 The site is not located within or within close proximity to any protected wildlife habitats or include any distinctive geological features. It does not make a contribution to part of a green recovery network or is located within any identified Green Infrastructure networks.

8.61 There are no historical landmarks or structures within or within close proximity of the site, nor are there any registered historic parks or gardens designated as historical assets which may contribute to heritage assets.

8.62 There are no features within the site which suggest any natural time depth, ruins of historic field patterns.

Recreation Value

8.63 The site is not publicly accessible and currently offers no recreational value. There are no publicly accessible paths within the site boundaries themselves.

8.64 However, to the north an existing play area located within the Malvern Rise development lies adjacent to the northern boundary of the site, and a pedestrian footpath link joins this with Leigh Sinton Road to the east. To the south west a relocated PRow runs through the Bluebell Walk scheme and adjoins the wider network of footpaths to the south and the A4103 to the west.

8.65 The site is not open access land, however the location of the adjacent play area affords good views across towards the Malvern Hills to the south.

Perceptual aspects

8.66 The site is not perceived as being particularly scenic nor tranquil in its nature or characteristics. It does not display particular characteristics associated with remoteness and is perceived as being an edge of settlement site.

8.67 The Malvern Hills AONB Environs Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Study (May 2019, White Consultants) reiterates this by saying that *"the two adjacent roads and highly visible settlement edge reduce tranquillity."*

8.68 There are however, perceived aspects associated with tranquillity and scenic beauty within the wider landscape with the perception of the Malvern Hills located to the south and seen in views from the site.

Associations

8.69 The site does not share any associations with any notable events, people of cultural events.

Function

8.70 The site does not form part of a multi-functional Green Infrastructure network, nor does it present indicators which suggest it contributes to a healthy functioning landscape. There are not undisturbed soils, or areas of flood plains, and the land use of the site itself does not provide a functioning or diverse landscape, and is a monoculture of Christmas Trees. There are no areas providing additional ecological pollinating habitat such as wildflower meadows.

8.71 Having said this, there is a visual connection with the Malvern Hills, located to the south of the site, for which this designated landscape and its special qualities are experienced in views looking south from within the site and at its surrounding existing built edges.

Summary

8.72 The assessment of value above has identified that the site overall is of an 'Ordinary' landscape value and has therefore been assessed as being of **Low, local value**.

8.73 The Malvern Hills AONB Environs Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Study (May 2019, White Consultants) as detailed within the planning policy section of this report, also identified that the site is of Medium/Low Sensitivity for housing of between 1Ha and 5Ha in size.

8.74 The specific parcel assessed (Parcel Mog) covered a larger area than the site itself and the assessment identified that the *"the value of the area lies in the Ancient Woodland/SSSI of Ailshurst Coppice, Careys Brook wildlife site and the two PROWs"*.

8.75 The ancient woodland is located to the south of the site and no PRow exist within the site boundaries.

Landscape Susceptibility

8.76 GLVIA3 defines susceptibility to change as: *"... the ability of the landscape receptor... to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and / or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies."* (GLVIA3, paragraph 5.40, pages 88 and 89).

8.77 The susceptibility of the landscape needs to be determined for the specific proposals. This is important, as it allows the assessment to take account of the local context and how the proposed development fits within it.

8.78 In relation to the susceptibility, the levels of Susceptibility as defined within GLVIA3 are described as being:

- High Susceptibility - The landscape is such that changes in terms of the development proposed would be entirely at odds with the character of the local area, related to matters including pattern, grain, use, scale and mass.
- Medium Susceptibility - The proposed development has a degree of consistency with the existing scale, pattern, grain, land use of the prevailing character, although mitigation may be appropriate to enhance assimilation.
- Low Susceptibility - The development proposed is entirely consistent with the character of the local area, related to matters including pattern, grain, use, scale and mass.

8.79 The Malvern Hills AONB Environs Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Study (May 2019, White Consultants) identified that Parcel Mog within which the site is located has Medium/Low sensitivity to accommodate housing stating that:

"The area has least sensitivity to the north east where housing could be

accommodated with existing housing on two sides."

8.80 This area refers specifically to the location of the site.

8.81 The site is located on the edge of Leigh Sinton and is influenced by existing built form on two sides. Maintaining development adjacent to the existing built form will be consistent with the character of the local area, with development in keeping with the adjacent pattern of development. This is reiterated by the findings of The Malvern Hills AONB Environs Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Study (May 2019, White Consultants) which states:

"The least sensitive sensitive location is the northern part of the site which is flanked by existing housing on two sides and with a partial coniferous boundary."

8.82 Development is not seen as an incongruous feature within the landscape and the newly constructed development at Bluebell Walk brings the settlement edge further south than the proposed development.

8.83 The land use of the site is one which is transitional and a monoculture of Christmas Trees which are harvested periodically, and therefore change is not uncommon feature across the site.

8.84 Considering the above factors, the receiving landscape is of a **Low Susceptibility** to the proposed development.

8.85 Given the limited, low localised value and low susceptibility of the site and its existing land-use, the receiving landscape has been assessed as being of an overall **Low Sensitivity** to development.

Nature of Change

8.86 The effects of new development need to be considered in light of the existing context and baseline situation, which in this instance includes a site which is located on the edge of an existing settlement and on land utilised as a Christmas Tree plantation.

8.87 The development of the site will introduce additional built form into a landscape which is already influenced by human activity and development and is a site which is seen in the context of the existing settlement edge.

Relationship of the site with the existing built edge of Leigh Sinton

8.88 The proposed development is located adjacent to the existing settlement edge to ensure that it does not create an incongruous feature within the landscape. The location of the site and proximity to the existing built form and residential development found along Lynn Close and Malvern Rise will ensure that it is not seen as an uncharacteristic feature, and development will be maintained and the same or lower height than the adjoining properties, so as to be consistent in mass, scale and layout.

8.89 The development will provide a softer settlement edge than the existing situation and will therefore improve the character and transition of the settlement edge of Leigh Sinton. Setting development back and providing

a landscape buffer and accessible open space within a green corridor along the edge of the development will enhance this edge and the relationship of the wider landscape with the new settlement edge.

8.90 These proposals reflect opportunities for improving the landscape character and although additional built form will be introduced the proposed treatment and landscape edges will result in an improved situation than the existing conditions and landscape character.

Wider landscape setting of the Malvern Hills AONB

8.91 The development of the site considers the relationship of the site with the Malvern Hills with regards to the wider visual context and its impacts on visual amenity in wider panoramic views.

8.92 The built form is maintained adjacent to the existing residential edge and the proposals include an accessible public open space at the southern edge of the Malvern Walk scheme and the eastern edge of the new residential properties. This landscape edge ensures that the development of the site is not detrimental to the Malvern Hills and their special qualities with regards to wider ranging views and visual amenity.

8.93 As identified within the Key Views document found at **Appendix 2**, the development of the site will be seen from Exceptional, Special and Representative Key Views from the Malvern Hills.

8.94 The new areas of tree and hedgerow planting will be more characteristic with the wider landscape and the removal of Christmas tree plantation will assist in enhancing the visual experience of the Malvern Hills with positive usable open space provided for local residents, enabling opportunities to enjoy a new accessible landscape for recreation with additional opportunities for ecological enhancements and enjoyment of the landscape as a whole.

8.95 Incorporating the new publicly accessible landscape and linking it with the existing public open space at the southern edge of the Malvern Walk scheme will provide an increased multi functional green corridor through the site from which the views of the Malvern Hills can be experienced and enjoyed.

8.96 On balance, the proposals will not be detrimental to the wider setting and visual situation of the Malvern Hills AONB and the new settlement edge will provide a softer transition and edge to Leigh Sinton, while at the same time incorporating the key scenic qualities of views towards the AONB within the proposals.

Boundary planting and existing landscape features

8.97 All key landscape features with the exception of areas at the entrance into the site and the removal of the Christmas trees themselves to accommodate the development will be retained and incorporated into the proposals. The retained areas of boundary planting at the eastern edge will be enhanced with additional tree and shrub planting which is characteristic of the existing situation and the Principal Timbered

Farmlands Landscaper Character Type.

8.98 The proposals will result in a change in land use from Christmas Tree plantation to residential development and open space. The Christmas Tree plantation is not a characteristic feature of the published landscape character assessment and is a temporary landscape with trees harvested periodically. This is reiterated within the findings of the Landscape Sensitivity Report produced by Whites Consultants (Malvern Hills AONB Environs Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Study (May 2019, White Consultants):

"Any landscape mitigation should reinforce the existing road boundaries to provide a long-term, mainly broad leaf, buffer and in time the existing coniferous boundaries should be replaced, again with mainly broadleaf planting. There is an opportunity to improve the south western edge of the village"

8.99 The proposed landscaped edge and publicly accessible open space which form part of the proposals at the northern and eastern edges of the site will replace the monoculture of Christmas trees with a more diverse and usable landscape. This proposed public open space will increase the characteristic planting, provide increased ecological habitats and increase the usable green infrastructure across the site. It will also enable a more cohesive and connected green corridor with the adjacent areas of open space to the north and south west and increase the network of usable green space.

8.100 The adjacent orchard planting found at the north eastern boundary of the site is retained and incorporated into the scheme with additional fruit trees proposed to enhance the characteristic planting and increase and diversify the species and variety of fruit trees in the area.

8.101 Overall, the development of the site will provide additional landscape features which will be beneficial to the landscape character and wider context and will increase the Green Infrastructure across the site and along boundaries.

Landscape Effects Summary

8.102 Overall, the development of the site will provide an improved settlement edge to Leigh Sinton, created through the proposed open space and additional landscape features. This landscaped edge will provide a more cohesive and connected green space which will be usable and accessible for the local community and will provide additional ecological benefits.

8.103 The proposals can be accommodated and incorporate positive usable community resource which will be consistent with the scale and pattern of the surrounding development and context of the site.

8.104 As identified, the landscape has a Low Sensitivity to development and overall the proposals will be beneficial to the landscape character.

Visual Effects

8.105 As already discussed, a series of Key Views have been identified to and from the Malvern Hills AONB (**Appendix 2**). Where receptors experience these views, these are highlighted.

Visual Receptors

8.106 As identified, the development of the site will result in a change in view for the following receptors:

- Recreational users of footpaths found on the higher slopes of the Malvern Hills around North Hill and End Hill (representative **Photoviewpoint 1 and 2 - AONB KEY VIEWS**);
- Recreational users of PRoW (Hereford CD61) Geopark Way (representative **Photoviewpoint 3 AONB KEY VIEW**);
- Recreational users of PRoW 536C (representative **Photoviewpoint 4**);
- Recreational users of PRoW 563(C) (representative **Photoviewpoint 5**);
- Recreational users of PRoW 705(C) (representative **Photoviewpoint 6**);
- Recreational users of PRoW 687(C) (representative **Photoviewpoint 7**);
- Recreational users of footpath and public open space through Pineview Avenue (representative **Photoviewpoints 12a, 12b and 14**);
- Transient users of the A4103 (Hereford Road) (representative **Photoviewpoint 8**);
- Transient users of Lynn Close (representative **Photoviewpoint 11**);
- Transient users of Leigh Sinton Road (representative **Photoviewpoint 15, 17 and 18**);
- Residents of Lynn Close (representative **Photoviewpoints 11**); and
- Residents of Pineview (representative **Photoviewpoints 12a AONB KEY VIEW, 12b, 13 and 14 AONB KEY VIEW**).

Recreational users of footpaths found on the higher slopes of the Malvern Hills around North Hill and End Hill (representative Photoviewpoint 1 and 2 - AONB KEY VIEW);

8.107 For these receptors the site is barely discernable and is seen in the context of the wider, expansive and panoramic views. Recreational users of the footpaths on and around the slopes of North Hill at End Hill within the Malvern Hills AONB the proposals will be seen against the existing settlement edge of Leigh Sinton and will remain to the north of the existing settlement edge which is extended south into the Significant Gap and closer to Malvern by the development at Bluebell Walk. As already identified the impacts on the openness of the Significant Gap land will be negligible.

8.108 The proposed built form and development is retained on the western part of the site running adjacent to residential built form found along Lynn Close. It lies adjacent to existing development at Malvern Rise at its north western corner and is maintained behind a belt of evergreen trees found at the south western corner. Its proposed location ensures that development is seen against the backdrop of the existing settlement edge in the wider panoramic views from the AONB. The proposed landscape buffer running along the eastern and northern edge of the site will increase characteristic tree and hedgerow planting which will assist in softening the edge of the site within these views.

8.109 In addition, this new edge will provide a more beneficial and sensitive edge to the development at Malvern Rise which is currently seen as an obvious and harsh edge to the settlement edge of Leigh Sinton within these panoramic views.

8.110 The open space will assist in increasing the characteristic planting and providing linear Green infrastructure features to provide a more suitable edge to the settlement and integrate the development into the landscape.

8.111 Additional tree planting within the development along the plot frontages and road edges will also soften the views of the rooflines over time and break up the appearance of built form.

8.112 Retaining evergreen boundary planting at the south western part of the site will also assist in filtering some views of the southern part of the development.

8.113 On balance, although new built form will be introduced into these views, additional landscaping and improved settlement edge will, once mature, provide a softer settlement edge and transition to the wider landscape to the south and improve the visual amenity for users of these footpaths.

Recreational users of PRoW (Hereford CD61) Geopark Way (representative Photoviewpoint 3 AONB KEY VIEW);

8.114 The visual amenity of recreational users of the Geopark Way will be unaffected by the development of the site. The site is set amongst the context of the existing settlement edge and within these views the rooflines of Malvern Rise and Bluebell Walk can be seen with the site located to the rear of these developments.

8.115 The development would not be seen as an uncharacteristic feature or be an incongruous feature within these views and will sit against a backdrop of the existing settlement. It is likely that only glimpsed views of the rooflines of the development will be seen from this location. Additional internal tree planting will assist in breaking up the rooflines and built form over time and on balance, for users of this footpath route the development will be barely discernable.

Recreational users of PRoW 536(C) (representative Photoviewpoint 4)

8.116 Recreational users of PRoW 536(C) see the site in the context of the existing development forming the edge of Leigh Sinton. These mid

distance views set the site amongst a settled character and new built form will be introduced within views of additional rooflines and ridges.

8.117 Additional built form will not be seen as uncharacteristic or incongruous feature, and for users of this footpath their view will remain as one looking towards the settlement edge.

8.118 Additional tree planting within the plots and along the southern edge of the site will assist in filtering the edge of the site, and over time when the Christmas trees are harvested and planting matured, this edge will provide a soft transition to the edge of the development.

8.119 On balance, the development of the site will not be seen as incongruous or out of character for users of this footpath route.

Recreational users of PRoW 563(C) (representative Photoviewpoint 5)

8.120 Recreational users of PRoW 653(C) see the site amongst intervening vegetation and against the existing residential properties located along Lynn Close. The development of the site will introduce additional built form which will be located below the skyline and below the level of the existing development which is seen forming the backdrop within the view.

8.121 The proposed landscape edge to the southern and eastern edge of the development will provide a soft transition to the edge of the site and will assist in integrating it into the surrounding landscape. Additional internal tree planting within the development plots will break up the appearance of built form and help to integrate the proposals into the surrounding context.

8.122 On balance, although additional development will be brought forward within these views, the proposed landscaping, retaining development adjacent to the existing built edge and additional internal tree planting will not be seen as uncharacteristic for users of these footpaths.

Recreational users of PRoW 705(C) (representative Photoviewpoint 6);

8.123 Recreational users of PRoW 05(C) to the south of the site, have much of the site shielded from view due to the presence of evergreen trees found at the south western corner of the site. The adjacent land used as a Christmas Tree plantation also filters views of the site. It is noted however that this transitional and temporary landscape will over time change the visual context with Christmas trees harvested over time.

8.124 The proposed built form of the development is located behind the belt of evergreen trees. The hedgerow found along the southern boundary and remaining undeveloped field will be retained and supplemented with additional areas of tree planting to further filter views.

8.125 There are likely to be glimpsed views of buildings through the gaps in evergreen planting, however this will not be seen as uncharacteristic within these views with glimpsed views of the Bluebell Walk scheme seen to the west and sitting above the skyline.

Recreational users of PRoW 687(C) (representative Photoviewpoint 7)

8.126 Recreational users of PRoW 687(C) to the west of the site may see glimpsed views of the rooflines of the development but these will be seen in the context of the built form at Bluebell Walk located along the A4103 and set behind existing vegetation found along the route and at field boundaries.

8.127 The development will be barely discernable and will be set amongst a context of existing development and built form for users of this footpath.

Recreational users of footpath and public open space through Pineview Avenue (representative Photoviewpoints 12a, 12b and 14)

8.128 Recreational users of the footpath and play area at the northern boundary of the site will experience localised changes to their view, with the Christmas Tree plantation land use transformed into residential built form.

8.129 The proposed development is located adjacent to properties at Lynn Close to the west and is retained in this western part of the site. The resulting proposed development will ensure that for users of this footpath and the public open space will maintain the views across towards the Malvern Hills.

8.130 The proposed open space and landscaped edge to the site will provide additional visual screening and filtering of views with new areas of tree planting, meadow, shrub and hedgerow planting providing increased diversity and visual interest in addition to softening the edge of the development.

8.131 Overall, although new development will be introduced, this built form will not be seen as an uncharacteristic feature nor is it seen in isolation, with the development at Lynn Close and Bluebell Walk forming the backdrop to the new housing.

8.132 The landscape edge will enhance the setting of the site and increase the visual connectivity to the wider landscape. Once mature, the proposed landscaping will soften views across the site and provide a beneficial setting for users to enjoy the scenic qualities of the Malvern Hills AONB.

Transient users of the A4103 (Hereford Road) (representative Photoviewpoint 8)

8.133 Motorists and pedestrians travelling along the A4013 may experience views of the rooflines of the proposed development set against the existing built form located along the A4103.

8.134 Glimpsed views of the site may be seen, but given the surrounding built form and context, the development will not be seen as an incongruous feature for users of this road.

Transient users of Lynn Close (representative Photoviewpoint 11);

8.135 Motorists travelling along Lynn Close will experience a slight change in their view as a result of the proposed development with additional built form seen in the background through gaps in existing residential development.

8.136 This new development and built form will not be seen as an uncharacteristic feature and will be seen in the context of the existing residential properties along Lynn Close.

Transient users of Leigh Sinton Road (representative Photoviewpoint 15, 17 and 18);

8.137 Motorists travelling along Leigh Sinton Road will experience a change in their view where the access point into the site joins Leigh Sinton Road at its north eastern corner. Where this access point enters the site, the vegetation found along Leigh Sinton Road will be removed in places to accommodate the necessary visibility splays.

8.138 Views of the development and new residential properties from this location and for these users will be filtered by the proposed planting found within the proposed open spaces at the eastern and southern boundaries of the site. Retaining the development adjacent to the properties off Lynn Close and Malvern Rise will ensure that the scheme does not introduce uncharacteristic features within the landscape and maintain connectivity with the adjacent built form.

8.139 The proposals will also include enhancements to the remaining boundary planting around the access point and additional planting of fruit trees adjacent to the existing orchard at the north eastern corner of the site adjacent to the access route. This additional planting will further filter views of the built form for users of Leigh Sinton Road.

8.140 The development will not be seen as an incongruous feature for these receptors. Once planting matures along the eastern and northern edges, a softer more natural transition will be created which will filter views of the settlement edge for these receptors.

Residents of Lynn Close (representative Photoviewpoints 11)

8.141 Residents living on Lynn Close who overlook the site at its western boundary will experience a localised change in their view which will be within close proximity. Although tree planting and landscaping is proposed within the development this will not filter views nor screen the new residential dwellings but the additional area of open space will provide benefits and an additional community resource for residents of Lynn Close.

8.142 The proposals will result in a change in the view for residents living off Lynn Close due to the location, scale and proximity of the proposed development and direct views of the development will be seen.

Residents of Pineview (representative Photoviewpoints 12a AONB KEY VIEW, 12b, 13 and 14 AONB KEY VIEW)

8.143 Residents living at properties at Pineview Avenue will experience a localised change in their view with the proposals introducing additional built form at close proximity within their view. The proposals will result in a change in the land use adjacent to the site, with the Christmas

tree plantation replaced with additional residential development and associated infrastructure.

8.144 New built form will be introduced on the western part of the site, but this will be seen in the context of the development located along Lynn Close and Bluebell Walk which are both already evident within views. Where built form is proposed it is to be located at the western part of the site with much of the existing view across towards the Malvern Hills and across the remaining Christmas tree plantation remaining undeveloped with the exception of the new access road and proposed areas of planting and landscaping.

8.145 The edge of the site is proposed to be integrated into the existing development at Malvern Rise through the form of a landscaped edge with proposed tree, wildflower meadow planting and native hedgerow planting creating a soft edge to the development and creating a soft transition. The proposed landscape buffer will also include additional footpath routes and play facilities linking through to the Malvern Rise scheme and footpath routes increasing pedestrian access locally for residents.

8.146 Where possible, views across to the Malvern Hills have been retained with the area to the east and north of the site retained as open space so as to maintain the key view across towards the AONB. This proposed landscape buffer integrates with the existing play area and open space located within the Malvern Rise scheme to increase the visual buffer and transitional landscape to the edge of the site. Where planting is proposed, this is intended to be strategically placed to ensure that key views across towards the Malverns are retained, maintaining the scenic qualities of the Malvern Hills and qualities of the Key View.

8.147 On balance the development will result in localised changes to views due to the proximity and scale of the development for these residents. The provision of a soft landscaped edge and area of accessible public open space will assist in filtering views for residents living towards Leigh Sinton Road. An offset is provided at the north eastern corner adjacent to the new area of development which will provide potential for tree and hedgerows to soften built form.

8.148 The proposed areas of open space will also provide added benefits for recreation, ecological networks and footpath connectivity for these residents.

Residents of Bluebell Walk

8.149 Residents of Bluebell Walk will experience a change in their view as a result of the proposals. The development will pull built form closer in views, but built form will not be an uncharacteristic feature and is already seen in close proximity with development off Lynn Close located adjacent to properties within Bluebell Walk.

8.150 Retaining the planting along the southern boundary of the site will maintain a sense of separation and filter views, with additional hedgerow planting and trees within the development itself softening the built form

and views across rooflines from upper storey windows within the Bluebell Walk development.

Visual Effects Summary

8.151 Overall with regards to visual amenity, the proposals can be accommodated into the landscape with the provision of a soft landscape edge and a transitional public open space along the new settlement edge.

8.152 The development of the site will not be detrimental to the identified Key Views to and from the Malvern Hills AONB with development parcels maintained on the western part of the site, and where receptors will experience a change in their view the scenic qualities and visual setting of the Malvern Hills AONB have been incorporated into the proposals through careful styling of landscaping and proposed enhancements.

8.153 The retention of boundary planting and enhancement of these buffers will further reduce the potential for effects on visual amenity.

8.154 The proposals will provide an improved settlement edge to Leigh Sinton, with the new areas of open space providing a softer transition than the existing situation and enhancing the transition at the southern edges of the settlement when viewed in wider views to the south.

9.1 This LVA has analysed the landscape and visual context of the site and its surroundings and matters relating to visual amenity. It has addressed the principle of development, and identified the design response to the site and its context and resulting opportunities and constraints to inform the layout and design of the scheme. The LVA has reviewed the landscape and visual effects arising as a result of the proposed development and this has been completed in accordance with the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd edition (GLVIA3).

9.2 The LVA has also assessed the potential effects that development has on the Significant Gap land between Malvern and Leigh Sinton and has assessed Key Views to and from the Malvern Hills AONB. The following summarises the key findings and conclusions of the LVA.

Significant Gap

9.3 The Significant Gap appraisal (**Appendix 1**) identified that the development of the site should be maintained to the western edge, away from Leigh Sinton Road, with opportunities identified to improve the existing situation and enhance the perception of separate settlements through a new landscape buffer and transitional edge to the southern and eastern edge of the site.

9.4 The location and proximity of the site to the existing settlement edge, and negligible change in the perception of the Significant Gap as well as the lack of change in physical distance of the gap between the settlements as a result of the proposed development, mean that the proposals to be accommodated without being detrimental to the purposes or function of the significant gap.

9.5 The development of the site will not be detrimental to the visual perception of the openness of the Significant Gap with boundary vegetation retained and development maintained at the western edge of the site adjacent to the existing settlement edge.

Landscape Context

9.6 This appraisal has found that the site is more related to the edge of Leigh Sinton and the built form found to the west and north than the wider more undeveloped landscape to the south and east.

9.7 It contains very few characteristic landscape features with the exception of the boundary planting, and the Christmas tree plantation is a transient landscape which is uncharacteristic of the wider landscape context. The assessment of landscape context identified the following as key drivers for the development of the site:

- The integration of the existing built edge of Leigh Sinton and the relationship of the site to the existing settlement edge;
- The visual relationship between the site and the Malvern Hills AONB and its scenic qualities and visual setting are a key feature in the wider

landscape and are influential on the site;

- The integration of the existing public open space within the Malvern Rise scheme to the north of the site into the site;
- Opportunities to reflect the historic field pattern and historic orchards;
- Opportunities to increase characteristic planting with hedgerows, hedgerow trees, Field Maple and Oak;
- Removal of inappropriate planting which is not characteristic of the wider landscape;
- Opportunities to use hedgerows to sub divide fields;
- Opportunities to increase tree cover.

9.8 These opportunities for enhancements are also consistent with the findings of the Malvern AONB Environs Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Study (Malvern Hills AONB Environs Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Study (May 2019, White Consultants) which stated the following:

- *"Location, Layout, Design - The least sensitive location is the northern part of the site which is flanked by existing housing on two sides and with a partial coniferous boundary. Part of the rest of the LCP may be able to be developed in the longer term, with an emphasis of development to the east rather than the west. However, there is an opportunity to improve the south western edge of the village."*
- *"Landscape Mitigation - Any landscape mitigation should reinforce the existing road boundaries to provide a long-term, mainly broad leaf, buffer and in time the existing coniferous boundaries should be replaced, again with mainly broadleaf planting. There is an opportunity to improve the south western edge of the village."*

Visual Context

9.9 The visual survey of the site and its surroundings has found that other than the panoramic views of the site which are possible from the Malvern Hills AONB, the majority of views are localised and limited to local footpath routes, residents overlooking the site and road users on local transport routes.

9.10 Where local views are possible, these are direct and from footpaths and residential properties which directly overlook the site and are localised in their nature. The settlement of Leigh Sinton to the north and west of the site reduces visibility and vegetation found along field boundaries and lanes limits visibility.

9.11 The panoramic and expansive views from the Malvern Hills are seen from the northern peaks of End Hill and North Hill and in glimpsed locations along the Geopark Way on the lower slopes to the west of the site, and within these views the site is seen within the context of the existing settlement edge and as part of a developed and settled context.

9.12 The Malvern Hills AONB Key Views Assessment (**Appendix 2**) identified three Key Views looking from the AONB towards the site ('Exceptional' View from North Hill (representative **Photoviewpoint 1**) and Special View from End Hill (representative **Photoviewpoint 2**).

9.13 It also identified two Key Views looking towards the Malvern Hills AONB, overlooking the site with the Malvern Hills seen in the background (representative **Photoviewpoints 12b and 14**).

9.14 The Exceptional View 48 from Worcestershire Beacon was assessed but views of the site were not possible, due to the topography of North Hill and End Hill.

Proposals

9.15 The development of the site has responded to the identified opportunities and constraints and the landscape and visual baseline situation.

9.16 The resulting proposals illustrate how the site can be accommodated without causing undue harm to landscape character or visual amenity, with the scheme providing additional benefits for the community and wildlife with additional recreational routes, areas of accessible public open space and diverse wildlife habitats and ecological corridors. The proposals include:

- Maintaining views across towards the Malvern Hills from within the development;
- Proposed built form located adjacent to the existing settlement edge;
- Development set back away from Leigh Sinton Road to maintain sense of separation between Malvern and Leigh Sinton to minimise impacts on Significant Gap;
- Creation of a softer settlement edge created at the eastern and northern parts of the site with tree planting, hedgerow and wildflower meadows;
- Creation of a usable and accessible recreational resource, with footpath routes, play facilities and linked accessible green corridors;
- Enhanced landscape features and characteristic planting with native trees, hedgerow and fruit trees; and
- Protection of key views and scenic qualities of the AONB and integration of development into the surrounding landscape.

Landscape Effects Summary

9.17 The development of the site will result in the change of use from a Christmas tree plantation to residential development and associated infrastructure.

9.18 The LVA has demonstrated that the proposals will enhance the

landscape character through retained and enhanced landscape features, proposed open space and landscaped edge and a more cohesive and connected green space which will be accessible for the local community and provide additional ecological benefits. In addition, the proposals will provide a softer settlement edge to the south of Leigh Sinton and enhance the wider setting of the village.

9.19 The proposed landscaping will be characteristic of the wider context and characteristics found within the Principle Timbered Farmlands LCT and will protect and enhance existing Green Infrastructure.

Visual Effects Summary

9.20 The key views have been assessed and the scenic qualities of the AONB sensitively incorporated within the proposals with key views retained and proposed planting incorporated to enhance the visual experience of receptors.

9.21 The proposals will provide betterment for users of footpaths on the Malvern Hills and at 'Exceptional' View from North Hill (representative **Photoviewpoint 1**) and Special View from End Hill (representative **Photoviewpoint 2**).

9.22 Views from these locations are seen at approximately 4km to the south of the site, and are seen as part of the wider panorama and expansive views. The current settlement edge is seen as an abrupt edge to the southern part of Leigh Sinton and the proposals will enhance this edge and provide a softer and more characteristic treatment to the south western part of Leigh Sinton.

9.23 Other key views also identified through the visual survey and Key Views assessment, identified that the Malvern Hills form a distinct feature when seen from the site (representative **Photoviewpoints 12b and 14**).

9.24 Views of the distinctive profile of the Malvern Hills for these receptors have been retained and addressed within the proposals, with development contained to the western extent of the site and an open space providing a more appropriate setting to experience the scenic qualities of the AONB and retain views of the hills from within a publicly accessible open space.

9.25 The Special Qualities of the AONB which are relevant to the site are its "Dramatic scenery and spectacular views arising from the juxtaposition of high and low ground" and its "opportunities for bracing walks with fine views."

9.26 The development of the site has responded to the visual context and the proposals can be accommodated without being detrimental to the Special Qualities of the AONB. The scenic qualities of the AONB have been considered and incorporated into the proposals and views from the elevated positions within the AONB will be enhanced with an improved settlement edge and enhanced landscape character.

9.27 The retention of boundary planting, maintaining development at the western edge adjacent to existing built form and the additional landscaped

open space at the eastern and northern edges of the site will integrate the proposals into wider views and reduce the impact on visual amenity.

9.28 The proposed scheme allows for a higher quality and softer treatment along the southern edge of the settlement of Leigh Sinton with the proposed open space providing a softer transition and edge than the existing situation and enhancing the edge of the settlement when seen in wider views to the south.

Conclusion

9.29 Overall, the proposals have taken account of the adopted policies within the South Worcestershire Development Plan and the Leigh and Bransford Neighbourhood Plan as well as addressing guidance set out within the Malvern Hills AONB Management Plan and supplementary planning documents.

9.30 The LVA and associated supporting documents have demonstrated that the proposals can be accommodated on the site without being detrimental to the purposes of the Significant Gap, with no increase in physical distances between the settlements of Leigh Sinton and Malvern, limited impacts on openness and coalescence and no perceived reduction to the Significant Gap for users of local footpath and road networks.

9.31 The improved settlement edge will enhance the identity of the settlement of Leigh Sinton when seen in wider views and provide additional benefits to biodiversity, Green Infrastructure and the setting of the settlement.

9.32 The development addresses the visual sensitivities and scenic qualities of the Malvern Hills AONB and has incorporated views of the hills into the proposals. Overall, the scheme has responded to the landscape and visual context without being detrimental to the Significant Gap land, or the Malvern Hills AONB and can be accommodated within the wider landscape and surroundings.

9.33 The proposals are consistent with, and reiterated by the findings detailed within the White Consultants Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Report (Malvern Hills AONB Environs Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Study (May 2019, White Consultants), which identified that the parcel within which the site is located, is of Medium/Low value and able to accommodate development at its north eastern part adjacent to the existing settlement edge.

9.34 The proposed landscape strategy and response to the baseline situation is also consistent with the findings of the Sensitivity Report, which states:

"landscape mitigation should reinforce the existing road boundaries to provide a long-term, mainly broad leaf, buffer and in time the existing coniferous boundaries should be replaced, again with mainly broadleaf planting. There is an opportunity to improve the south western edge of the village."

9.35 The LVA has demonstrated that the proposals can be accommodated within to the landscape and its surroundings, resulting in an improved settlement edge to Leigh Sinton and a development which will provide areas of open space and green infrastructure which will be beneficial to local residents and the community.