

SALDEN CHASE
OUTLINE PLANNING APPLICATION

Chapter 9: Landscape and Visual

9.0 LANDSCAPE & VISUAL

Introduction

9.1 This Section provides a landscape and visual assessment of the proposals.

The aims of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment are as follows:

- to identify the existing features and characteristics of the landscape within which the proposals are located, their value and condition;
- to determine the landscape and visual impacts - including both positive and negative - resulting from the proposals, together with the significance of these impacts; and
- to evaluate mitigation measures included within the proposals and determine any further potential for mitigation.

9.3 Landscape may be described as comprising the interaction between the physical aspects of the external environment, their use by humans and wildlife, and their development over time. Landscapes therefore have importance because of the natural, historic and cultural resources which they may contain, providing opportunities for subsistence, recreation, historical investigation and wildlife. The approach to assessment, which is both qualitative and quantitative, is determined by the complex interrelations between aspects of the landscape.

9.4 There are interactions between the Landscape and Visual Assessment and other topics such as Cultural Heritage, Ecology and Hydrology, which are discussed individually elsewhere in the Environmental Statement. Interactions and Cumulative Effects are addressed at chapter 15.

Scope and Method of Assessment

Breadth of Topic

9.5 The effects of the proposals on the landscape and their visual impact may be determined as:

- changes in landscape character, including direct physical impacts on landscape resources; and
- visual impacts resulting from changes in the view.

9.6 Landscape character is defined by the cumulative presence of features and characteristics, including landform, land cover (vegetation types, built up areas, water etc.), land uses, degree of enclosure, patterns, scale, attractors and detractors. A change in landscape character involves the physical change to a site and the sense of what characterises the place, rather than simply changes in the view.

9.7 Landscape resources are individual elements within the landscape, including hedgerows, woodlands, particular local landforms (e.g. ridge and furrow features), surface water features, built forms, roads and footpaths.

9.8 Visual impacts are the effects of the proposals on other locations, such as dwellings or public areas from which the existing study area may be seen.

9.9 Landscape and visual effects may include:

- loss of landscape resources;
- changes in land use;
- altered patterns of enclosure, scale and density;
- change from rural to urban character;
- impact on views from within the study area;
- visual intrusion on receptors away from the study area; and
- the effects of lighting from the proposals.

9.10 Visual effects are considered for a number of types of visual receptors, including dwellings, public footpaths and heritage features, such as listed buildings. The visual effects on dwellings and public footpaths comprise:

- intrusion of new features;
- loss of important views; and
- loss of key elements from the view.

Visual effects on heritage features also include the effect on the setting of features – i.e. when viewed in a context which also includes the proposals.

Long term effects comprise the impacts associated with the change in landscape character and views discussed above, following completion of the proposals.

Landscape and visual effects are likely to change over time following implementation, chiefly due to the growth of planting included in the proposals. This is of significance with regard to both the integration of the proposals into the surrounding landscape and the impact on visual receptors. For visual impact, the following scenarios are considered:

- opening year; and
- 15th year after completion.

Methodology

Assessment Methodology and Significance Criteria

9.12 Scope of the Assessment

The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment of the Proposed Development has been conducted encompassing the “Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment” (GLVIA) published by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment 2002 and “Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland” (LCA) published by the Countryside Agency and Scottish National Heritage 2002

9.13 Extent of the Study Area

The interaction of urban fabric, vegetation and topography determines the potential for views to the Site and the Zone of Visual Influence (ZVI) for the Proposed Development. The Study Area was initially assessed from OS data and a Zone of theoretical visibility and confirmed following site visits (undertaken between Winter 2008 and Summer 2009). A series of key viewpoints have been selected to represent the varying degrees of site visibility and the potential effect on receptors. These seek to explore the maximum potential views available, thus defining the Study Area for the assessment.

9.14 Significance Criteria

Landscape Impact

The criteria adopted for the assessment of the impacts of the Proposed Development on landscape features are set out in Tables 9.1 and 9.2 below. It should be noted that a degree of flexibility is required depending upon the nature and context of a particular character area.

Table 9.1 Landscape Sensitivity

Sensitivity	Description
High	Landscape areas with particularly distinctive or positive characters or with valued landscape features. The areas may be sensitive to relatively small changes, and are worthy of conservation.
Medium	Landscape areas with reasonably positive character, but with evidence of alteration or degradation of the character or features. Potentially tolerant of some change, and worthy of enhancement.
Low	Landscape areas with a weak character or relatively few features of value, potentially tolerant of significant change, requiring the restoration of structure.

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Table 9.2 Magnitude of Landscape Change

Change	Description
Major negative	Total loss of, or major alteration to the key characteristics or features of the landscape area.
Moderate negative	Potential loss of or alteration to the key characteristics or features of the landscape area.
Minor negative	Minor loss of, or alteration to the key characteristics or features of the landscape area.
No change	Very minor alterations to the landscape characteristics or features of the area, which would have an insignificant effect on character.
Minor positive	Minor improvements to the key characteristics or features that outweigh any adverse landscape effects of the proposal. Removal of minor incongruous features
Moderate positive	Notable improvements to the key landscape characteristics or features, or improvements resulting from removal of inappropriate land uses or features.
Major positive	Major landscape improvements, through the creation of a new landscape structure, and/or the removal of large scale inappropriate features.

Overall, the potential impacts on landscape features are determined by correlating the sensitivity of the landscape resource with the magnitude of landscape change. Professional judgement is used to determine the overall significance of impact based on these two elements. Overall impact significance is classified by major, moderate, minor or negligible and the effects can be negative or positive.

Visual Effects

Table 9.3: Visual Sensitivity

The criteria adopted for the assessment of the potential visual impacts from the Proposed Development are set out in Tables 9.3 and 9.4 below. As stated above, flexibility is required when assessing the sensitivity of receptors depending upon their

Sensitivity	Description
High	Occupiers of residential properties with important views affected by the development. Communities where the development would affect valued views. Users of outdoor recreational facilities including rights of way where interest may be focused on the landscape.
Medium	Properties with secondary views, primarily from first floor level. Users of outdoor recreational facilities where the view is less important to the activities (e.g. sports pitches). Rights of way where landscape is not the significant feature.
Low	People at places of work. People travelling through the area in cars, buses or on trains, or people at places of work with limited views potentially affected by the development (e.g. Industrial sites).

nature and context.

Table 9.4: Magnitude of Visual Change

Change	Description
Major negative	Where the Proposed Development would cause a significant deterioration in the view, being a dominant and incongruous feature in the scene.
Moderate negative	Where the Proposed Development would cause a noticeable deterioration in the view, or form a visible and recognisable incongruous new element readily noticed by a casual observer.
Minor negative	Where the Proposed Development would cause a minor deterioration in the view, or a small incongruous element in the scene that could be missed by a casual observer.
No Change	Where the Proposed Development overall would not form a noticeable deterioration or improvement in the view.
Minor positive	Where the Proposed Development would cause a minor improvement in the view, or a small improvement to the scene that could be missed by a casual observer.
Moderate positive	Where the Proposed Development would cause a noticeable improvement in the view or form a recognisable improvement that could be noticed by a casual observer.
Major positive	Where the Proposed Development would cause a significant improvement in the view.

Overall, the potential visual impact from the Proposed Development is determined by correlating the sensitivity of the receptor with the magnitude of visual change. Professional judgement is used to determine the overall significance of impact based on these two elements. Overall Impact significance is classified as major, moderate, minor or negligible, and the effects can be negative or positive.

Legislation and Guidelines

9.15 Planning policy at the national, regional, county and local level is discussed in the Planning Statement that accompanies this document in the formal submission. The following documents are relevant to this Chapter:

- Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs) and Planning Policy Statements (PPSs); and
- South East Regional Plan (May 2009).

9.16 National Planning Policy

PPS1 – Delivering Sustainable Development (January 2005)

The Government is committed to protecting and enhancing the quality of the natural and historic environment, and requires a high level of protection for the most valued landscapes. It recognises that the condition of our surroundings has a direct impact on the quality of life and that the conservation and improvement of the natural and built environment brings social and economic benefit for local communities. It advises that development plan policies and planning decisions should be based on up-to-date information on the environmental characteristics of the area.

South East Regional Plan

The most relevant policies are:

9.17 Policy CC6: Sustainable Communities and Character of the Environment

This policy states that actions and decisions associated with development of land will promote the creation of distinctive communities that respect and where appropriate enhance the character and distinctiveness of settlements and landscapes through the region.

Policy CC8: Green Infrastructure

9.18 This policy states that local authorities and partners will work together to plan, provide and manage connected and substantial networks of accessible multi-functional green space. Networks should be planned to include both existing and new green infrastructure. They need to be planned and managed to deliver the widest range of linked environmental and social benefits including conserving and enhancing biodiversity as well as landscape, recreation, water management, social and cultural benefits to underpin individual and community health and 'well being'. They will be created and managed as a framework of green spaces and other natural features that will boost the sustainable development of settlements and increase the environmental capacity of the locality and region as a whole, helping communities to be more resilient to the effects of climate change.

Policy C5: Managing the Urban Fringe

9.20 This policy has a checklist to deliver a sustainable urban fringe. Relevant items include:

- creating a bridge to the country - Networks of new and improved parks, woodlands and other green spaces are linked to the urban centre and wider countryside by footpaths, bridleways, rivers and their valleys, canals and cycleways. Urban parks, country parks and other green spaces are joined up to form continuous green corridors between town and country;
- a gateway to the town - As a gateway to the urban area the quality of the countryside creates a powerful first impression to visitors and possible investors;
- a more accessible and attractive countryside and green space infrastructure close to where most people live and work provides an invaluable recreational resource;
- the countryside in and around towns provides hands-on learning opportunities in a variety of 'outdoor classrooms'. This supports all parts of the national

curriculum with a particular relevance to environmental education and rural studies;

- recycling and renewable energy centre - The countryside in and around towns is recognised as playing an important part in the sustainable management of the waste, water and pollution generated in urban areas;
- cultural legacy - The countryside in and around towns contains many imprints of the history of our towns and communities, their development and expansion or sometimes even their disappearance; and
- a nature reserve - The countryside in and around towns contains historic and newly established woodlands, wetlands, meadows and a broad array of other natural habitats.

Landscape Guidelines & Studies

9.21 The assessment also refers to the following local planning documents and guidance:

National Countryside Character

9.22 The site and surrounding area lies within Character Area 88 'Bedfordshire & Cambridgeshire Claylands' as defined by the Natural England in their Character Map of England. The character map describes the following: 9.23 The calcareous clay soils are created as a result of chalk and limestone till underlying heavy clay soils. The arable landscape is gently undulating and divided by broad shallow valleys. Along the river valleys are rich alluvial soils which give rise to market gardening and horticulture and wet meadows with pollarded willows. The landscape is open with sparse woodland cover and poor hedgerows around medium to large fields. The majority of the arable claylands are sparsely populated with small villages found on the valley sides and hamlets and farmsteads widely dispersed.

9.24 Key Characteristics:

- gently undulating topography and plateau areas, divided by broad shallow valleys;
- predominantly an open and intensive arable landscape. Fields bounded by either open ditches or sparse closely trimmed hedges both containing variable number and quality of hedgerow trees;
- river corridors of Great Ouse and level compose cohesive sub-areas characterised by flood plain grassland, riverine willows and larger hedges;
- woodland cover variable: clusters of ancient deciduous woods on higher plateau area to north west between Salcey and Grafham Water. Smaller plantations and secondary woodland within river valleys;
- settlement pattern clusters around major road and rail corridors (A1 and M1) many with raw built edges. Smaller, dispersed settlements elsewhere. Village edge grasslands an important feature;
- generally a diversity of building materials, including brick, thatch and stone. Limestone villages on the upper Great Ouse;
- restored gravel working lakes adjacent to river Ouse, and water-bodies in Marston Vale resulting from clay extraction; and
- medieval earthworks including deserted villages the major feature of visible archaeology.

9.25 Within the Shaping the Future section of the character area descriptions are suggested strategies which aim to provide guidance for retention or enhancement of key features to strengthen the character in the future. Within this area, the creation of new woodland is suggested as follows;

'There is scope for the creation of new woodlands: smaller woods to river valleys and larger woods on higher plateau areas, with scope to enhance linkage within traditional woodland areas. The continued management of existing ancient woodlands is important.'

9.26 Settlement edges are to be protected through management of rough grassland and the retention of ridge and furrow and can also be enhanced through extensive planting schemes to reduce visual impacts. This also applies to infrastructure corridors and isolated agricultural and industrial buildings. Planting to re-establish hedgerows, hedgerow trees and species-rich verges and field margins is also suggested to provide visual and wildlife corridors.

9.27 A number of landscape studies and strategies provide a finer grain of local landscape character, and relevant information for the landscape and visual analysis, these include:

- The Landscape Plan for Buckinghamshire;
- Local Authority Growth Area Studies;
- MKP Options for Growth Evaluation Report, April 2006;
- Aylesbury Vale Landscape Character Assessment;
- Buckinghamshire Green Infrastructure Strategy; and
- Buckinghamshire Historic Landscape Characterisation.

9.28 The Landscape Plan for Buckinghamshire (BCC, Jan 01)

This study was carried out by Hyder Consulting for Buckinghamshire County Council and provides a finer grain of landscape characterisation. The Salden Chase area sits within the Clayland Villages zone, and key extracts are included below:

9.29 Clayland Villages Z2

This area which encompasses is described as having an undulating and enclosed landform containing numerous small ridges with meandering streams. Settlements are small villages with a number of vernacular buildings and the edge of Milton Keynes is intrusive with large agricultural barns, warehousing and small industrial units visible. Current trends identified for this zone include development pressures for the area immediately adjacent Milton Keynes as the urban areas are expanding and a loss of hedgerow trees. Priorities for the zone include the development of design guidelines for both the villages and the landscape. Hedgerow trees should be established and small community woodlands encouraged, close to settlements.

9.30 Milton Keynes & Aylesbury Growth Area Studies

In May 2003, Roger Tym & Partners published the Milton Keynes & Partners Growth Area Studies Final Report. This document informed the MKSM Study to provide guidance on how the area could be developed in the most sustainable way. Twenty potential development sites were evaluated to test long-term growth options. Salden Chase (MK 3 & 4) was identified as having no major environmental or natural resource constraints, whilst being well located in terms of access to existing roads, the then proposed southern bypass and the East West rail corridor.

9.31 **A Strategy for Growth to 2031**

This document, produced for the Milton Keynes Partnership by GVA Grimley in June 2006, built upon earlier option evaluations to create a proposed strategy up to 2031, with the imperative to enhance, rather than detract, from the unique 'green' character of the city. Table 9.1 set out the Strategic Objectives of the proposed growth strategy, with two of the twelve objectives being of particular landscape and visual relevance, as follows:-

- Landscape/countryside protection - Maintain and extend green infrastructure and historic environments and ensure that potential impacts on landscape character and coalescence of settlements are addressed.
- Retain distinctive character of communities - Ensure that development of the city complements surrounding towns and villages and maintains the distinctive character and identity of existing settlements and communities through the creation of principles leading to the establishment of long term development boundaries.
- The document went on to identify the importance of robust protection for the setting of existing communities including Newton Longville.

9.32 **Aylesbury Vale Landscape Character Assessment (May 2008)**

The site falls within three Character Areas within this assessment:

9.33 **LCT 4.9 - Newton Longville – Stoke Hammond Claylands**

Overall the condition of the landscape is moderate. There is scant woodland cover, however trees are a feature of some hedgerows. The settlements of Newton Longville and Stoke Hammond have expanded significantly as a result of new housing development. The area retains its local distinctiveness however, continuity is disrupted. The sense of character is considered to be weak and overall the degree of sensitivity remains **low**.

9.34 **LCT 4.7- Whaddon Chase**

Overall the condition of the landscape is considered to be very good. The area is particularly noted for the coherent pattern of elements, namely the relationship of steeper valleys streams and woodland cover. Cultural integrity is good, represented by the remnant woodland, landscape features and archaeology of the historic Chase. The area is noted as a unique/rare landscape because of the surviving relics of Whaddon Chase. There is a strong sense of place. Overall the degree of sensitivity is **high**.

9.35 **LCT 4.8 – Horwood Claylands**

Overall the condition of the landscape is considered to be good. The area covers an undulating clay plateau eroded by a network of local streams into a series of shallow valleys and broad flat ridges. The area maintains it's distinctiveness due to it's rural characteristics and the historic continuity of the area. Sense of place is considered to be moderate. Overall the degree of sensitivity remains **moderate**.

9.36 **Buckinghamshire Green Infrastructure Strategy (March 2008)**

The Buckinghamshire Green Infrastructure (GI) strategy has found that North Aylesbury Vale (Priority Action Area 1, which includes Salden Chase) is particularly deficient in GI. The strategic aims are:

- to provide green infrastructure needs of communities on the west side of Milton Keynes and Leighton Linlade in Bedfordshire. Both areas are identified for significant growth up to 2026 and
- to provide green infrastructure for the new communities in Buckinghamshire from the expansion of the South West of Milton Keynes.

The former medieval hunting forest of Whaddon Chase, which includes a small portion of the site, has been highlighted as a GI 'Strategic Opportunity Area'. The study has suggested how the area could be restored to its pre-19th century form with the replanting of extensive woodland cover for recreational use, and perhaps

supplying fuel for sustainable bio-power generation. Ancient monuments, historic ponds and routeways could provide foci of interest whilst protecting these valuable assets. Biodiversity could be enhanced through maintaining and restoring woodland and species-rich grassland. Salden Chase can deliver some of these aspirations along the proposed GI brook corridor and its western boundary.

9.37 **Historic Landscape Character Assessment**

Full details regarding archaeology & heritage are provided in chapter 5. The majority of the site is identified as lying within '19th century enclosure' with the exception of the field in the north west corner that is north of the stream and runs up to the roundabout which is 18th century irregular enclosure. There has been significant hedgerow loss to the south of Weasel Lane which has resulted in an essentially 20th agribusiness landscape which has little historic value.

Baseline Local Landscape

9.39 Topography (figure 9.2)

The site itself covers two sides of a minor east-west ridge along the top of which runs Weasel Lane. The site reaches a low point of 105m along the former railway which runs along the southern boundary. To the west and south west of the site the land rises beyond the Ouzel Valley to a height of 150m AOD at Mursley and further away 145m AOD at Stewkley. Further to the south west, the green sand ridge at Woburn is a prominent feature on the skyline.

Woodland and Biodiversity (figure 9.3)

9.40 To the immediate east of the site, there are a number of areas of woodland, including Broadway, Salden, Thrift and Hogpound wood. These are designated as areas of Ancient & Semi-natural Woodland and are relics of the former Whaddon chase. However, the site itself is not covered by any environmental designations. A BS:5837 Tree survey and Veteran Tree Survey has been carried out for the site and is submitted as a free standing document as part of this application. The majority of the existing trees and all veteran trees will be retained within the green infrastructure.

Settlement & Communications

9.41 The A421 immediately north of the site provides a strategic route between Oxford and Cambridge. The southern boundary is formed by the disused Oxford to Bletchley rail line, possibly planned for reopening by 2014. A number of long distance walks also pass through the area including the Milton Keynes Boundary Walk and the Midshires Way. (**Fig 9.4**) The bridleway along Weasel Lane passes through the centre of the site.

Local Landscape Character

9.42 This combines the above review of published information on landscape character with a detailed field survey to assess the landscape resource, visual amenity and the key qualities that define consistent areas of landscape character in the local area. The study area has been broken down into the following character areas (see **Figure 9.5**).

Character Area 1 - Whaddon Chase. (fig 9.6)

9.43 This character area includes a small corner of the north west portion of the site. The majority of the character area is visually separated from the site by a necklace of woods including Thrift and Broadway Woods north of the site. These are the historic remnants of Whaddon Chase a royal hunting forest, which formerly covered the entire character area. The contours and woodlands combine to give this character area a relatively enclosed nature, with medium scale fields and large trees in hedgerows set between the remnant woodland blocks. The village of Whaddon itself has no intervisibility with the proposed site. Although the character of this area is influenced by the adjacent urban fringe, the expansion of the city has been successfully visually contained by the interaction of established woodland blocks, which effectively define the western edge of Milton Keynes. The area within the site itself is now agricultural fields with little visible evidence of its former woodland character. The majority of this area will be used for green infrastructure and therefore has potential to restore a more wooded nature. The character area is assessed to be of **high** sensitivity.

9.44 **Character Area 2 – Newton Longeville & Salden Claylands (Figure 9.6)**

This Character Area includes the majority of the site itself. The site is characterised by predominantly arable land with undulating topography. It has long ranging views, in particular from south of Weasel Lane and a general sense of openness. It is subject to urbanising influences from the adjacent Milton Keynes fringe, including roads, views of the adjacent industrial development at Snelshall East and West, and overhead power cables. To the west of the site the woodland blocks of Thrift & Salden Woods are visible.

A number of farms and buildings are scattered across the landscape, including Bletchley Leys Farm. A network of well used footpaths passes through this character area including the Midshires Way and the Milton Keynes Boundary Walk, providing links from the town to the countryside. South of the railway, that runs along the southern boundary of the site, the character changes and becomes smaller and more enclosed in character with areas of grazing fields. This character area is considered to be of **low** sensitivity.

Character Area 3 – Horwood & Mursley Claylands

- 9.45 This character area is similar to Character Area 2, with a growing rural character, although the Milton Keynes edge is still evident within the western edge of the character area adjacent to the site. The area within the site itself includes grazing fields, and has a slightly smaller scale feel to Character Area 2, with a larger number of hedgerows. A combination of topography and the existing woodland blocks of Salden Wood and Broadway Woods means that there is limited intervisibility between the site and the majority of this character area. A number of farms and a small hamlet of recent built houses at Chase Farm are located immediately west of the site. The character area is considered to be of **medium** sensitivity.

9.46 **Character Area 4 – Bletchley** To the east of the site is the suburb of Bletchley. This area includes limited local facilities and a mix of housing including some 1980s suburban residential cul de sacs immediately adjoining the site. These houses sit on the southern facing slope of the minor ridge along which Weasel Lane runs. The boundary between the existing housing and the countryside is abrupt. The character area is of **low** sensitivity.

Character Area 5 – Newton Longville

9.47 Newton Longville has a small historic village centre within a much larger village significantly altered by modern development. The historic village is designated as a Conservation Area, with several listed buildings including St Faiths Church, St Anne's Grange, The Manor House and The Old Parsonage. The views towards the site from the Conservation Area are restricted by the surrounding 20th century development. Significant views within the Conservation Area are focused on the local buildings, including St Faiths Church and St. Anne's Grange. The village itself is separated from the urban edge of Milton Keynes by the railway, which runs along the southern boundary of Bletchley, some fields and a former clay pit. The village is overall considered to be of **medium** sensitivity.

Character Area 6 – Milton Keynes North of A421

9.48 North of the busy dual carriageway A421 are the employment units at Snelshall East, and the infrastructure for new housing development of Tattenhoe Park, with new school (Priory Heights) on a crest. Separating the housing and employment is a new green corridor, which links into the proposed site at the Bottledump roundabout. This area is considered to be of **low** sensitivity to change.

Summary: Landscape Character

The analysis of character has highlighted the following:

- the majority of the site sits within an area of low sensitivity, with few features of landscape merit. The large arable fields and general lack of tree cover creates

the impression of a landscape with a comparatively uniform character and a weak “sense of place”;

- the historic landscape of Whaddon Chase to the north of the site has been shown to have a distinctive character and high sensitivity;
- Newton Longeville is considered to be of medium sensitivity. The Conservation Area within the historic village centre has locally high sensitivity but has limited intervisibility with the site due to the surrounding 20th century development; and
- Snelshall East and West, Tattenhoe Park and Bletchley are considered to be of low sensitivity to change.

Baseline Visual Analysis

9.49 A comprehensive visual assessment has been undertaken to determine the visibility of the proposed Site within the surrounding landscape and townscape. Key representative viewpoints have been selected to explore the potential visibility of the development and these enable a Zone of Visual Influence to be determined. Receptors encompass residents, users of rights of way, open spaces and recreational facilities, views from highways and people at work. In overall terms, the first two categories are generally of higher sensitivity than the latter two, although the context of individual receptors can have a bearing on sensitivity.

A series of representative viewpoints have been selected to illustrate the varying degrees of Site visibility and the potential effect on receptors, as shown on **Figure 9.1**. The main findings are described below:

Viewpoint 1 (Figure 9.8)

9.50 This viewpoint is from Bottle Dump Roundabout, north of the site and represents the first view that vehicular users of the road travelling from the west will have of the site, as Broadway Wood screens all views further west. The views are restricted by a combination of existing tree and shrub planting and contours, with only a partial area of the site north of Bletchley Leys farm visible. The transient receptors are of **low** sensitivity.

Viewpoint 2 (Figure 9.8)

- 9.51 This viewpoint is from the long distance footpath that runs along the edge of Snelshall East and West, north of the site and represents the view of pedestrian users of the footpath. Views of the site are restricted by the existing hedgerows and tree and shrub planting, although the northern section of the proposed site can be seen in the distance, with power lines that cross the site more strongly visible on the skyline. The receptors are considered of **medium** sensitivity.

Viewpoints 3 & 4 (Figure 9.9)

- 9.52 These viewpoints are from the long distance footpath (Mid Shires Way) adjacent to Thrift Wood. The views are of small scale grazing fields, with sheep and horses. Broadway Wood is visible from viewpoint 4, hedges include a large number of large trees, and the views are fairly enclosed due to contours. Receptors (pedestrian users of footpath) are considered to be of **high** sensitivity.

Viewpoint 5 (Figure 9.10)

- 9.53 This elevated viewpoint is from the access road to Chase Farm. The contours allow more long distance views east towards the site. The green sand ridge around Woburn is visible on the skyline, with several mature trees within hedgerows. The transient receptors are of **low** sensitivity.

Viewpoint 6 (Figure 9.10)

- 9.54 This viewpoint is from the group of approximately ten houses at Chase Farm and represents a typical view from the residents. Broadway and Salden Woods enclose the view to the north and south, with a long thin horizontal area of the fields within the site visible behind existing hedgerow planting beyond a single field used for grazing. The white warehouse development at Snelshall East and West detracts from the view, as do the overhead power cables. The receptors are of **high** sensitivity

Viewpoint 7 (Figure 9.11)

9.55 This elevated viewpoint is from the access road to Lower Salden Farm, adjacent to Springfield Farm. Milton Keynes centre is visible on the distant skyline, with the residential area of Bletchley below the skyline. Overhead power cables are dominant. Salden Wood, to the right of the picture, and Broadway Wood to the left, create a strong woodland structure. The receptors are of **low** sensitivity.

Viewpoint 8 (Figure 9.11)

9.56 These viewpoints are from Lower Salden Farm and Weasel Lane. The views are open in character, with glimpses of existing development in Milton Keynes visible on the skyline. The grazing fields are bounded by low hedgerows and post and wire fences, which create a more open feel than the area further north. The users of Weasel Lane are considered to be of **high** sensitivity.

Viewpoints 9 & 10 (Figure 9.12)

9.57 These elevated viewpoints are from the footpath south of the site from Mursley towards Newton Longeville. The housing at Bletchley is visible in the middle distance, with Milton Keynes on the skyline. The users of this footpath are considered of **medium** sensitivity.

Viewpoint 11 (Figure 9.13)

9.58 This viewpoint represents a glimpsed very distant view of the site from the edge of Drayton Parslow. There are restricted views of the site from the village due to topography and contours. The users of this footpath are considered of **medium** sensitivity.

Viewpoint 12 (Figure 9.13)

9.59 This shows a view north from the entrance to Cowpasture Farm, which is the Landrover and Conference Centre. The site itself forms a long horizontal strip along the horizon. Housing in Bletchley is visible to the right of the view. This also represents similar views from Hounslow Hall. To the west, Middle Salden and Salden Wood combine to screen some views of the site, as does the planting alongside the railway along the southern boundary of the site. The residential receptors and users of the footpath are considered of **high** sensitivity.

Viewpoint 13 (Figure 9.14)

9.60 This shows a view north from a footpath west of Newton Longville and this also represents similar views from housing along the western edge of Newton Longville. The south facing slope of the site is partially visible from this viewpoint with the trees along Weasel Lane visible on the skyline. The receptor is of **medium** sensitivity.

Viewpoint 14 (Figure 9.14)

9.61 This shows a view north from a footpath through the playing fields in Newton Longville, and also represents users of the Boundary Walk Long Distance Footpath. Tree planting north of Newton Longville filters views of the site, although fields within the site are visible. The receptor is of **high** sensitivity

Viewpoint 15 (Figure 9.15)

9.62 This shows a panoramic view into the site from Whaddon Road and represents the view of vehicular users of the road. The proposals will be clearly visible from this elevated bridge into the site. The sensitivity of the transient receptors is **low**.

Viewpoints 16 & 17 (Figure 9.15)

- 9.63 These show glimpses of the site between houses along the northern edge of Newton Longeville. Approximately 20 homes will have clear views towards the site, although the properties along the road are predominantly bungalows, with reduced views. The sensitivity of the receptors is **high**.

Viewpoint 18 (Figure 9.16)

- 9.64 This viewpoint from Hamilton Lane represents similar views from approximately 29 properties along the western boundary of Bletchley including Aintree Close, Carmel Close, Haydock Close and Thirsk Gardens, Dagnall House and New Leys.
- 9.65 These are the closest residential receptors to the site (not including the two farm buildings within the centre of the site) The tree and hedge planting along the rear of the properties screens some views of the countryside, but properties currently have long distance views to the west, particularly from upper storey windows. The receptor is of **high** sensitivity. **Viewpoint 19** does not represent a viewpoint, but provides a view of the existing vegetation in the back gardens/boundary of the existing properties.

Viewpoint 20 (Figure 9.17)

- 9.66 This represents the view south from users of Weasel Lane, the public footpath that runs through the centre of the site along the ridgeline. The views are fairly open and long distance from the western end of the lane, whilst to the east, the surrounding hedgerows and trees restrict views out into the surrounding countryside. The housing and church within Newton Longeville are visible beyond the site boundary. The receptors are considered of **high** sensitivity.

Viewpoint 21 (Figure 9.17)

- 9.67 This represents the view from users of the footpath that runs south from Weasel Lane towards Newton Longeville. The housing on the western edge of Bletchley is visible, beyond the existing field, whilst the existing hedgerow screens views to the west. The users are considered of **medium** sensitivity.

Viewpoint 22 (Figure 9.18)

- 9.68 This represents the views from users of the public open space between Snellshall East and Tattenhoe Park. The views are screened by existing planting within the park. The users are considered of **medium** sensitivity.

Viewpoint 23 (Figure 9.18)

- 9.69 This represents a view from the pedestrian underpass, but also represents to a similar extent, views from the A421. The existing planting along the A421 screens all views into the site. The users of the A421 are considered of **low** sensitivity.

Viewpoint 24 (Figure 9.19)

- 9.70 This represents the view from the roundabout within Tattenhoe Park. The area of the site north of Weasel Lane is partially visible on the skyline but is seen in the context of the industrial development within Snellshall East and West and with the recently completed school in the foreground.

Farms at The Leys and Bletchley Lees

- 9.71 Farmhouses at Bletchley Leys and The Leys currently have views into the surrounding countryside. They are considered of **high** sensitivity.

Conclusion

9.72 This selection of representative viewpoints has highlighted the following:

- There are relatively few residential receptors with views of the site. These are limited to residents on the northern edge of Newton Longville, residents at the hamlet of Chase Farm, residents within the row of houses on the western boundary of Bletchley and the two farmhouses within the site itself.
- Other high sensitivity receptors include the users of the two long distance footpaths that cross the site, in particular Weasel Lane which runs through the centre of the site.
- The site is visible from public vantage points to the south due to the rising ground. However, Bletchley is already visible on the similarly facing slope and receptors on the footpaths to the south of the site are limited to infrequent users of footpaths whose sensitivity is medium;
- Long distance views from the West are restricted by the existing contours and woodland blocks of Salden and Broadway woods, and from the east by existing urban fabric within both Bletchley and more specifically Far Bletchley.
- The existing planting and contours along Weasel Lane currently forms a strong positive visible element within the landscape.
- The existing mature woodland blocks are visible from a wide area due to the lack of tree and hedgerow planting within the site.
- Detractive visual elements within the landscape are the overhead power lines, buildings within Snelshall East and West and the harsh urban edge of Far Bletchley.
- The site constitutes a gateway view of Milton Keynes when travelling east along the A421.

- There area close range views of the Site from Whaddon Lane but the sensitivity of the transient receptors is low.

Night Time Character

9.73 Whilst the study area itself is predominantly unlit, the surrounding development influences result in numerous light sources which have a bearing on the character and visual amenity of the environment. The conurbation of Milton Keynes creates a significant and wide reaching level of sky glow to the north and east, with secondary areas of light being generated by the A421. Newton Longville is comparatively unlit.

The Proposals

9.74 A full description of the proposals is given at Chapter 2. The proposed development has evolved in response to baseline environmental surveys and assessments and the resulting identification of opportunities and constraints. Analysis of local landscape character and visual resources has informed the footprint of built development and the provision of the proposed Green Infrastructure Framework (**Figure 9.20**). The overall strategy for the green infrastructure is protection and enhancement of the environment, responding to the landscape and wildlife context and supporting biodiversity.

9.75 Full details are provided within Appendix 9.1 'Green Infrastructure Strategy'. The green infrastructure will create a varied mosaic of landscape types, responding to the existing and pre-existing landscape character. These will help define the character and setting of the development. The green infrastructure plan shows the overall approach summarised below.

- the ridgeline and associated hedgerow and tree planting along Weasel Lane will be protected from development and incorporated into a new green corridor through the centre of the site (refer to **Figure 9.23**, Section FF for typical section through Weasel Lane);

- along the western edge of the Site a new minimum 80m width woodland corridor will link Salden and Broadway Woods, providing a transition between built form and open countryside. **Figure 9.26** provides an aerial illustration of how these two woodland blocks will be linked. The proposed green infrastructure area will accommodate variations in depth of planting. It is not the intention to create a dense and impenetrable woodland edge, but to create a more irregular edge and to break up the built form to allow glimpses of the development within a predominant landscaped setting. Sections CC & DD (**Figure 9.22**) provide a guide to the depth of woodland planting within this area;
- the former wooded character of Whaddon Chase will be recreated in the area north of Tattenhoe Brook, where lower density housing will be surrounded by woodland planting and open space. A variety of woodland planting will include local native woodland mixes and woodland blocks for coppicing, broken up by woodland 'rides' to reflect the historic character. Sections AA & BB (**Figure 9.21**)
- the proposal will be broken up with corridors of planting which will link to the retained GI elements. The green infrastructure will also accommodate open green spaces, play space, amenity areas and structural green corridors with integrated key footpath and cycle paths. Woodland planting will help to subdivide the built form once planting has become established;
- particular care has been taken to create a strong relationship between the new settlement edge and Newton Longeville to the south east. The location of sports pitches adjacent to Weasel Lane removes development from the most visually exposed area of the site, with higher development located on the lower ground adjacent to the former railway. Section KK (**Figure 9.25**) illustrates the distance and views between the proposed development and existing development in Newton Longeville ; and

- the areas to the south east and north west have potential for balancing ponds and habitat creation. A typical section is shown in **Figures 9.24 & Figure 9.25** This area will include a sustainable drainage network. This area and offers significant opportunities for habitat creation. In particular, habitats noted in the Buckinghamshire Biodiversity Action Plan will be established. The new habitats will include ponds, reedbeds, ditches, meadow, scrub, woodland and wet woodland and woodland edge.

Landscape Character

9.76 Impacts on Landscape Character

A comprehensive landscape and visual impact assessment has been undertaken to determine the visual effects upon the surrounding receptors of the Proposed Development. Receptors with views to the Site and character areas have been assessed in terms of sensitivity, proposed changes to the view and resulting overall significance.

- 9.77 Two assessments have been undertaken for all receptors. The first considers the effects upon completion of Salden Chase (Year 1) and also represents potential impact during the construction phase and the second predicts the effects based upon 15 years after completion. This enables the effectiveness of any planting to be evaluated. Tables 9.6 & 9.7 detail the landscape and visual impact assessment schedules. The results of the assessment are summarised below.

9.78 Character Area 1: Whaddon Chase

Salden Chase will encroach upon a very small part of this character area, but the majority will not be affected due to the limited intervisibility beyond Thrift Wood. Within the site north of the brook new woodland will be created as part of the proposed green infrastructure, creating an ecological and recreational corridor north east towards Milton Keynes and west into Buckinghamshire. The sensitivity of the character area is high and the magnitude of change is low. Therefore, there is likely to be an effect on Character Area 1 of moderate negative in the short term and during construction. As the new high quality landscape habitats mature, and within 15 years, the proposed development will have minor negative effects on landscape character.

9.79 Character Area 2: Salden & Newton Claylands

A large area within the site will be proposed for development. The magnitude of change would be high, resulting from the proposed conversion of arable agricultural land into a high quality mixed used development and an extensive new green infrastructure network. Whilst the existing sense of openness will inevitably be lost, green infrastructure will break up the massing of the development, and the townscape quality of the proposed development will be high, with a strong hierarchy of streets and open spaces. All existing landscape features, such as Weasel Lane, will be retained and enhanced within the Proposed Development. The proposed local footpath and cycleway network will provide enhanced recreational opportunities throughout the Proposed Development. The sensitivity is low but the magnitude of change is high. The proposals will therefore have a moderate negative effect on this character during the short term. However, within 15 years and as the new GI matures there are likely to be minor positive effects on landscape character.

9.80 **Character Area 3: Horwood and Mursley Claylands**

Salden Chase will be partially visible from this character area and a small portion will be directly affected. On the western boundary, Salden Wood, Broadway Wood and Hogpound Wood provide the building blocks for a robust sweep of which will complete the framework which already defines the western edge of Milton Keynes. New woodland planting between Broadway and Salden Woods will deliver a strong green infrastructure linking into the Milton Keynes overall green infrastructure network and east into Buckinghamshire. There are also significant opportunities to draw on the changing character of this area within the site with a strong green infrastructure including retained hedgerows and mix of woodland planting and open spaces. The proposals are assessed as having a **moderate negative** effect on this character during the short term. However, within 15 years and as the new woodland planting matures there are likely to be **minor positive** effects on landscape character.

9.81 **Character Area 4: Bletchley**

The area of Bletchley which abuts the study area is of low sensitivity. The magnitude of change in the short term is considered to be low, as the majority of housing will have limited intervisibility with the site. Topographically, the study area has potential to echo the orientation of the residential area of Bletchley on the south facing slopes of the Weasel Lane ridge. During the short term there is likely to be an effect on Character Area 4 of **minor negative** significance. However, as the new planting matures, with improved green infrastructure and links into the countryside, with strong integration between the existing and new settlements, effects will be **minor positive**.

Character Area 5: Newton Longville

9.82 The Proposed Development will be partially visible from the northern edge of the village. However, the majority of the village and its setting will not be affected. The setting and character of Newton Longville, as a distinct and separate area to the Milton Keynes conurbation can be successfully protected and enhanced, using the rail line as the definitive boundary of Salden Chase and elements of the valley to the south as a green buffer permanently separating Newton Longville from Bletchley. The setting of the listed buildings within the village centre will not be affected. Significant new woodland planting is proposed along the railway corridor and associated development infrastructure. The sensitivity of the character area is medium and the magnitude of change is medium. Therefore, there is likely to be an effect on Character Area 5 of **moderate negative**, changing to **negligible** within 15 years as the planting matures.

9.83 Character Area 6: Tattenhoe Park

Tattenhoe Park and Snelshall East and West are of low sensitivity. The magnitude of change is considered to be low due to only a partial amount of the site north of Weasel Lane being visible from this character area. However, there are significant positive elements for users of the employment area and the residents including a new green infrastructure that will provide accessible parkland, facilities, lakes and footpaths linking south from Snelshall East and West and into the wider countryside. Effects are therefore assessed as **minor negative** in the short term changing to **moderate positive** within 15 years as the new GI matures.

9.84 Visual Impacts

Effects on Visual Resources

9.85 Viewpoint 1

The proposals will include a larger roundabout at the Bottledump roundabout. This will create a new gateway and sense of arrival into Milton Keynes from this viewpoint. The proposals include a large area of balancing ponds and green infrastructure beyond the new roundabout, which will create a landscaped setting with the development forming a backdrop. The sensitivity of the receptor is low and the magnitude of change to what is already a busy traffic dominated view is medium. Effects are assessed to be **minor negative** during the initial period following and during construction changing to **moderately positive** following completion, and maturing of the proposed landscape which will create a new green gateway to Milton Keynes. Further traffic proposals to the A421 including widening to the Tattenhoe Roundabout will have only minor negative effects.

9.86 Viewpoint 2

The northern section of the development will be minimally visible in the short term from this view. The continuation of the open space and existing planting across the A421 and along the proposed brook corridor will help to link Snelshall East and West and Tattenhoe Park with the surrounding Buckinghamshire Countryside. The sensitivity of the receptor is high and the magnitude of change is low. Effects are therefore assessed to be **minor negative** changing to **minor positive** within 15 years as the proposed planting matures.

9.87 Viewpoints 3 & 4

The development of the adjacent fields will significantly alter these views in the short term and construction period. However, the footpaths will be set within a green infrastructure corridor that will include large areas of woodland, open space and habitat creation, which will in time screen views of the adjacent housing and provide improved access and links into the surrounding footpath network. The sensitivity of the receptors is high and the magnitude of change is high. Effects are therefore assessed to be **moderate negative** in the short term. As the proposed green infrastructure matures, and within 15 years, the effects will be **minor negative**.

9.88 **Viewpoint 5**

Although the proposals will be visible from this view, from this distance the magnitude of change would be low. The receptor is also of low sensitivity. Effects are assessed to be **minor negative** during the initial construction period, changing to **negligible** following completion and maturing of the woodland proposals that will link Broadway and Salden Woods.

9.89 **Viewpoint 6**

Although in the short term, and during construction period, views would be seen, retention of the existing boundary hedgerows, and a new generally 80m wide green infrastructure corridor of woodland planting linking Salden and Broadway woods together, would screen most views of the site. The sensitivity of these approximate ten properties is high and magnitude of change is medium. Effects are assessed to be **moderate negative** in the short term changing to **minor negative** following 15 years and maturing of the proposed woodland planting.

9.90 **Viewpoint 7**

The proposals within the western section of the site will be partially visible from this elevated viewpoint. The sensitivity of the transient receptor is low. When re-enforced with new woodland planting, the existing and proposed woodland will eventually form a strong buffer to the development from this location. Effects are assessed to be **minor negative** changing to **minor positive** within 15 years.

9.91 **Viewpoint 8** The proposals will be visible in the short term. However, the proposed approximately 80 to 100m wide green infrastructure will extend up to the boundary fence within this viewpoint, and will therefore screen the majority of views of housing. Sensitivity of both the residential receptors at Lower Salden Farm and the users of Weasel Lane footpath are high and magnitude of change is medium. Effects are therefore assessed to be **moderate negative** in the short term changing to **minor positive** in the long term as the green infrastructure matures and all views of the proposals are screened.

9.92 **Viewpoints 9 & 10**

The proposals will be only very minimally visible from these viewpoints and will therefore not have a significant impact on the views. The sensitivity of the receptors is medium and the change is low. Effects are therefore assessed to be **minor negative** reducing to **negligible** within 15 years as planting matures.

9.93 **Viewpoint 11**

The proposals will be only minimally visible from this viewpoint and there will therefore be **negligible** effects.

9.94 **Viewpoint 12**

The proposals south of Weasel Lane will be clearly visible from this viewpoint, due to the south facing contours of the site. However, opportunities exist to break up the mass of the development with belts of trees and green infrastructure, which will reduce the impact of the proposals. The scale and form of the development on this more visual aspect will also reflect the contours, with higher development on the lower ground along the railway. The location of the sports pitches on the highest ground adjacent to Weasel Lane also reduces potential impact on the skyline. The sensitivity of the single adjacent residential receptor, and transient users of the footpath is high and magnitude of change is medium. Effects are therefore assessed to be **minor negative** in the short term reducing to **negligible** as planting matures.

9.95 **Viewpoint 13**

The proposals will be visible in the winter behind the existing trees. However, with the mitigation proposals as above. Sensitivity of the receptors is considered to be medium and magnitude of change is low. Effects are assessed to be **minor negative** reducing to **negligible** within 15 years.

9.96 **Viewpoint 14**

The proposals will be minimally visible along the ridge beyond the existing trees south of the railway line. Effects will be **minor negative** changing to **negligible** within 15 years as planting along the former railway corridor and around the proposed balancing area matures.

9.97 **Viewpoint 15**

This currently open view will become part of Salden Chase. The sensitivity of the transient receptors is low and effects are assessed to be **moderately negative** during the initial construction period, changing to **minor negative** following completion and maturing of the new high quality townscape.

9.98 **Viewpoints 16 & 17**

The proposals will be partially visible on the skyline from the housing on the northern edge of Newton Longville. The elevated tree lined ridgeline of Weasel Lane will be reinforced and protected with open space on the highest ground. The proposals also break up the mass of the development with belts of trees and green infrastructure, which reduce the impact of the proposals from these receptors. Effects are assessed to be **moderate negative** in the short term reducing to **negligible** in the long term as the planting matures.

9.99 **Viewpoint 18 & 19**

Salden Chase will completely change the open views available to the outer row of houses on the edge of Far Bletchley. The proposals will however include a new footpath link between the existing and new housing, at the end of this street to ensure that there is movement and integration between the two areas. The views from the backs of houses onto the site will focus either on new housing or public open space. Effects are assessed to be **major negative** during the initial construction period, changing to **minor negative** following 15 years and completion and maturing of tree planting.

9.100 **Viewpoints 20 & 21**

The proposals will remove the long distance open views south currently available along much of Weasel Lane. The proposals will reinforce the existing tree and hedgerow planting along weasel lane which will limit views of the proposed development. Effects will be **major negative** in the initial construction period changing to **moderate negative** as planting matures.

9.101 **Viewpoints 22 & 23**

The proposals will not be visible from these viewpoints due to the existing planting along the A421 and there will therefore be no adverse effects.

9.102 **Viewpoint 24**

A minimal amount of the proposals will be visible north of Weasel Lane on the skyline, but broken up by the retained planting. The proposals will be seen in the context of the existing industrial development at Snelshall East and West. Effects will be **minor negative** in the short term and during the construction period, reducing to **negligible** within 15 years.

9.103 **Bletchley Leys and Hall Leys Farmhouses within the Site.**

Within the site itself the two farmhouses will initially have **major negative** effects, due to the proposals and that will surround them during the construction period and initial stages of development. However, this will reduce to **minor negative** with the maturing of the proposed green infrastructure along Weasel Lane and the re-routed Whaddon Lane which will reduce the traffic to the frontage of Hall Leys Farm and create a pedestrian dominated green corridor and bus route.

9.104 **Night Time Effects**

The large scale urban extension will have to be lit to appropriate levels in order to create a safe environment. However, modern lighting technology will be utilised in order to minimise light pollution in accordance with the guidelines prepared by the Institute of Lighting Engineers.

9.105 **Summary & Conclusion**

The character analysis identified that the majority of the study area sits within an area of low sensitivity which generally lacks intrinsic features of landscape merit. The large arable fields and general lack of tree cover creates the impression of a landscape with a comparatively uniform character and a weak “sense of place”. Whilst the existing sense of openness will inevitably be lost following development, a strong green infrastructure will assist in assimilating development into the surrounding countryside, and the townscape quality of the proposed development will be high, with a strong hierarchy of streets and open spaces. Within the short term there will be moderately negative effects but within 15 years, the proposals will generally have positive effects on the currently weak landscape character of this area.

9.106 A very small portion of the study area to the north west adjacent to Thrift Wood, sits within a character area of high sensitivity as part of the former hunting chase of Whaddon Chase. The wooded character of the overall area is distinctive although there are no visible remnants of the forest within the site itself and the majority of the study area within this area will be retained as green infrastructure. A new wooded but accessible area can be created by the re-introduction of the former woodland habitat. Whilst the small amount of built development within the site would inevitably alter the physical fabric and character of the area in the short term, significant opportunities arise to minimise adverse effects on long term landscape character to minor adverse.

- 9.107 Newton Longville Conservation Area is identified as of high sensitivity. However the distance from the Site and the proposed woodland planting along the southern boundary of the study area will reduce potential impacts on this area to minor significance. The creation of a strong landscape corridor in conjunction with elements of the valley to the south will help to permanently separate Newton Longville from Bletchley and the proposed development. The settlements of Bletchley, Far Bletchley, Snelshall East and West and Tattenhoe Park are considered of low townscape/landscape sensitivity and will have negligible adverse effects.
- 9.108 The visual analysis showed that development will be initially visible from the countryside to the south due to the south facing contours below Weasel Lane. However, there are few receptors within this area. Furthermore, there are significant opportunities to enhance the landscaped edge of the Far Bletchley that is visible from this area. The elevated tree lined ridgeline of Weasel Lane can also be reinforced and protected. The proposals also break up the mass of the development with belts of trees and green infrastructure, which reduce the impact of the proposals.
- 9.109 The magnitude of change from close up views from users of Whaddon Road will be high. However, sensitivity of these transient receptors is low and although the sense of openness will be lost and immediate effects are assessed as moderate negative, after 15 years, when the high quality townscape and green infrastructure matures, affects will be minor positive. Gateway impact on views when travelling west along the A421 of the larger Bottledump roundabout will be mitigated by substantial new planting and new balancing ponds with permanent water which will eventually create a new sense of place and arrival to the site with moderately positive effects.

- 9.110 There are relatively few residential receptors with views of the study area. These are limited to the edge of Far Bletchley, a small number of properties in the hamlet of Chase Farm, the two existing farmhouses and some longer distance views from Newton Longville. Although views from housing on the edge of Bletchley will inevitably be lost, new structure planting will soften views of Salden Chase from Newton Longville and reduce impact to minor. North of the site there are no significant residential receptors, although development will be visible north of Weasel Lane from the Snelshall East and West and the Tattenhoe Park grid squares. Within the site itself the two farmhouses will initially have major adverse effects, reducing to minor adverse with the maturing of the proposed green infrastructure.
- 9.111 To the west of the site there are currently views into the site from the hamlet at Chase Farm. In the short term and during construction period the proposals would be visible. However, the retention of the existing hedgerows, and a new green infrastructure linking Salden and Broadway woods together, would eventually screen most views of the site from the west and create both a strong visual barrier and a more appropriate transition from countryside to urban edge.
- 9.112 The short term impact on the views from the long distance footpaths that run through the site, in particular Weasel Lane, will be major adverse. However, their retention within 'greenways' and areas of habitat creation will eventually create a strong network of open space that will provide important links between the countryside and town and will eventually reduce adverse impact to moderate.
- 9.113 Negative effects on sensitive receptors and character areas have been minimised through the extensive provision of woodland belts and open space. The substantial green infrastructure and high quality development framework plan will eventually establish a positive effect on the majority of visual receptors and character areas, providing an enhanced transition between the urban and rural area and linking the proposed site positively into the strategic wider green infrastructure network.

- 9.114 Well defined natural features establish the broader setting for the development. On the western boundary, Salden Wood, Broadway Wood and Hogpound Wood provide the building blocks for a strategic sweep of green infrastructure which will complete the framework which already defines the western edge of Milton Keynes and successfully separates it from Whaddon and other villages in the Vale. New woodland planting between Broadway and Salden woods will deliver a strong green infrastructure linking into the Milton Keynes overall green infrastructure network. The setting and character of Newton Longville, as a distinct and separate area to the Milton Keynes conurbation will be successfully protected and enhanced, using the railway line as the definitive boundary of Salden Chase.
- 9.115 The proposal forms a logical urban extension to both Far Bletchley together with Snelshall East and West as it abuts the existing mixed use edge of the city and connects well with the recently approved Tattenhoe Park development to the north. The western expansion of the city has been successfully contained by the interaction of established woodland blocks, which reflect the areas historic role as part of Whaddon Chase. This principle will be continued in relationship to the Salden Chase.
- 9.116 The resulting urban extension will be completely contained within a very robust green infrastructure (GI) framework which surrounds and permeates the developed area. This will be truly multi functional, encompassing broadleaved native structural woodland, extensive areas of species rich wet meadow, footpaths and bridleways, play areas, and community sports fields. Over 35% of the available land in Salden Chase is allocated for the provision of GI, thus meeting Government aspirations.
- 9.117 Salden Chase has clear defensible boundaries. It has practical convenient links to the greenways such as Weasel Lane, the Mid Shires Way and the Milton Keynes Boundary Walk, which provide linkages to the open countryside.

9.118 Substantial landscape biodiversity and amenity enhancements would be delivered, both locally and regionally, with the green infrastructure Framework complementing and connecting to wider strategic corridors such as the Whaddon Chase Strategic Opportunity Area identified within the Buckinghamshire Green Infrastructure Strategy.

Table 9.6 Character Areas						
Ref.	Location	Summary of character area	Sensitivity of Receptor; High, Medium, Low	Magnitude of Change; High, Medium, Low No Change (adverse or beneficial)	Significance of Impact at Year 1; Substantial, Moderate, Minor Negligible	Significance of Impact at Year 15; Substantial, Moderate, Minor Negligible
1.	Whaddon Chase	Former Historic Chase, Woodland blocks, contained landscape predominately north of site with small area in site.	High	Low	Moderate Negative	Minor Negative
2.	Salden Claylands	Large scale, agricultural land, lack of tree planting, influenced by MK urban fringe, accessible by footpaths	Low	High	Moderate Negative	Minor Positive
3.	Horwood and Mursley Claylands	Medium scale, agricultural land, growing rural character although still intervisibility with MK.	Medium	Medium	Moderate Negative	Minor Positive
4.	West Bletchley	Housing on edge of MK, traditional two storey, cul de sac – 1980s.	Low	Low	Minor Negative	Minor Positive
5.	Newton Longville	Historic Village centre surrounded by significant 20 th century expansion of village.	Medium	Medium	Moderate Negative	Negligible

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6.	MK north of A421	Employment within Snellshall East	Low	Low	Minor Negative	Negligible
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Table 9.7 - Visual Receptors								
Ref.	Location	Approximate distance from the site	Proportion of the development visible in the view. Full, Partial, Minimal	Transient/ Permanent	Sensitivity of Receptor; High, Medium, Low	Magnitude of Change; High, Medium, Low, No Change (adverse or beneficial)	Significance of Impact at Year 1; Substantial, Moderate, Minor Negligible	Significance of Impact at Year 15; Substantial, Moderate, Minor Negligible
1.	Vehicular users of A421 & Whaddon Road	130m	Partial	T	Low	Medium	Minor Negative	Minor Positive
2.	Pedestrian users of long distance footpath	450m	Partial	T	High	Low	Minor Negative	Minor Positive
3 & 4	Pedestrian users of Mid Shires way footpath	In site	Full	T	High	High	Moderate Negative	Minor Negative
5	Vehicle users of track	650m	Minimal	T	Low	Low	Minor Adverse	Negligible
6	Approximately 10 houses at Chase	110m	Partial	P	High	Medium	Moderate Negative	Minor Negative

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	Farm							
7	Vehicular users of Access road to Salden Farm	775m	Minimal	T	Low	Low	Minor Negative	Minor Positive
8	Users of Weasel Lane & residents of Lower Salden Farm	5m	Full	T/P	High	Medium	Moderate Negative	Minor Positive
9 & 10	Users of footpaths between Mursley and Newton Longeville	2.5km	Minimal	P	Medium	Low	Minor Negative	Negligible
11	Users of footpaths on edge of Drayton Parslow	2.5km	Minimal	T	Medium	No Change	Negligible	Negligible
12	Users of footpath past Cowpasture	1.6km	Partial	T	High	Medium	Minor Negative	Negligible

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	Farm							
13	Users of Footpath from Newton Longville	800m	Partial	T	Medium	Low	Minor Negative	Negligible
14	Users of playing fields/footpath in Newton Longville	450m	Partial	T	High	Medium	Minor Negative	Negligible
15	Vehicular users of Whaddon Road	5m	Full	T	Low	High	Moderate Negative	Minor Negative
16 & 17	Approximately 20 Houses on northern edge of Newton Longville	800m	Partial	P	High	Medium	Moderate Negative	Negligible
18&19	Approximately 29 houses on the edge of Bletchley	5m	Full	P	High	High	Moderate Negative	Minor Negative

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20&21	Users of Weasel Lane footpath & footpath to Newton Longeville	0m	Full	T	High	High	Major Negative	Moderate Negative
22	Users of footpath in Tattenhoe Park	100m	None	T	High	Low	No Change	No Change
23	Vehicular users of A421	0m	Minimal	T	Low	Low	No Change	No Change
24	Future residential within Tattenhoe Park	500m	Minimal	P	High	Low	Minor Negative	Negligible
25	2no. Farmhouses (Bletchley Leys and The Leys)	0m	Full	P	High	High	Major Negative	Minor Negative

