



## Seemore Properties Limited

### Examination of the Lancaster District Strategic Policies & Land Allocations Development Plan Document and Development Management Development Plan Document Submission Drafts

#### Matter 2: Housing

#### **Main Issue: Whether the Council's strategy for meeting its housing requirement is sound?**

*f) Is the amount of land allocated for housing sufficient to meet the requirement and how will it ensure delivery of the appropriate type of housing where it is required within the District (with particular reference to Policies SP2, SG1, SG7, SG9, H1, H2, H3, H4, H5, H6, DOS7, DM1, DM2, DM4, DM7, DM8, DM11 and DM12)?*

1. For the avoidance of doubt, Seemore Properties Limited (Seemore) is promoting the strategic site at East Lancaster for development in general accordance with Policy SG7. Seemore Properties has signed a Statement of Common Ground which provides the context for the delivery of this strategic site.
2. Although there are some differences between Lancaster City Council and Seemore in the drafting of Policies SG7 and SG8 (see Matter 3), together with the extent of the allocation, Seemore is supportive of bringing forward this strategic site for development with a potential yield of around 735 dwellings, both market and affordable homes, during the period up-to 2034.
3. Seemore would ask the Inspector to consider the representation which has been submitted concerning the potential extent of the residential allocation at East Lancaster at East Lancaster to be increased on the Proposals Map by the inclusion of land within the vicinity of the Cuckoo Farm buildings, in the south east corner adjacent to HM Prison Lancaster Farm. Based upon a landscape assessment undertaken for the Council by Arcadis (Document En-LP-05.5), an amendment to the Proposals Map was proposed by the Council in its Draft Suggested Modifications. The Suggested Modifications would have extended the East Lancaster Strategic Site to include this land for development (LPPM M10).
4. A plan showing the amendment sought is also included in the Statement of Common Ground – the area is notated as 'Additional land Promoted by Seemore Properties'. The development of this land for housing would not prejudice the key views towards the Ashton



Memorial and would screen the harsh urban edge of the Prison by creating a transitional area.

5. The effect of the modification sought by Seemore would be to increase the capacity of the East Lancaster site by circa 50-75 dwelling.

*g) Will the distribution, capacity and speed of deliverability (with regard to viability and infrastructure) of the sites, satisfy the provision of a 5 year housing land supply?*

6. The Local Plan includes a range of sites whether within the urban area or as strategic urban extensions. There is, therefore, a balanced supply of sites for different sizes and types of housing development. The availability of sites within the urban area, and smaller greenfield allocation, will provide the opportunity to maintain a continuity of supply whilst the urban extensions are master planned, brought through the development management process and development commences.
7. Recognising that future needs can no longer be accommodated within existing settlement boundaries the strategy supports the need to supplement the urban focussed approach with a number of strategic sites located on the edge of the main settlements. This is an appropriate spatial strategy to adopt.
8. Subject to the modification sought to the extent of the East Lancashire strategic site, Seemore considers there is a realistic prospect that the site can deliver the 735 dwellings within the plan period (i.e. up-to 2034). The additional land proposed by Seemore to be included within the strategic site is an area of relatively flat land which is readily capable of being developed as part of the initial phase of development at East Lancaster (i.e. accessed from the south).
9. The East Lancaster strategic site has been the subject of a high-level Viability Assessment prepared by Lambert Smith Hampton (LSH). Although Seemore has reservations about some of the assumptions, the high level approach adopted in the Assessment is appropriate for Local Plan purposes and demonstrates that the site is viable as a whole. However, as recognised in the Viability Assessment, a more detailed viability appraisal will be required to accompany the planning application when more detailed costs and other related site-specific information are available.
10. For the avoidance of doubt, Seemore is the owner of the largest part of the East Lancaster strategic site. Lansil Sports and Social Club is the second largest Owner. As confirmed in a letter from the Agent (Lamb and Swift) acting for the Club's Trustees (to follow), Seemore is jointly promoting the allocation through the planning process on behalf of the owners



and there is an obligation to relocated/reconfigure the current golf course as part of the scheme. There is a smaller landholding at Ridge Farm and the owner has expressed a willingness to bring forward the site albeit this land is not essential for the delivery of housing. The future detailed master planning exercise will incorporate all the other land interests.

*h) Do the DPDs make provision for addressing inclusive design and accessible environments issues in accordance with the NPPF?*

11. In principle the answer is yes and this will come through in more detail as the master planning of the site progresses. Seemore has, however, commented upon the detail of Policies SG7 and SG8 (see Matter 3) which will be for the Inspector to consider.

*i) Is the proposed monitoring likely to be adequate and what steps will be taken if sites do not come forward?*

12. Seemore does not have a particular view about this matter.

*j) How will the housing allocations in the DPDs deliver the affordable housing set out in policies DM3 and DM6? What is the likely effect of DM6 on viability?*

13. The allocation has been the subject of a through a high-level Viability Assessment prepared by LSH. Although Seemore has some reservations about some of the assumptions, the high level approach adopted in the Assessment for Local Plan purposes demonstrates that the site as a whole is viable with affordable housing provision based upon the residual method of calculation.

14. However, as recognised in the Viability Assessment, a more detailed viability appraisal will be required to accompany the application when more detailed costs and other site-specific related information are available. A detailed viability appraisal will influence the phasing, mix, tenure and delivery of affordable housing across the proposed development.

*k) How do the DPDs sit with the aim of the NPPF to create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities (Policy SP9)?*

15. The policies for the DPDs include some detailed elements which contribute towards delivering sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities in their own right and also provide links to the existing community. Therefore, in principle, the answer is yes and this will come through in more detail as the master planning of the site progresses.

16. Seemore has, however, commented upon the detail of some of policies for East Lancaster strategic site (Policies SG7 and SG8) which will be a matter for the Inspector to consider.



If the modifications sought by Seemore were to be recommended by the Inspector as modifications to the Local Plan then they would not undermine the aim and intent of Policy SP9.

17. The delivery of the aspirations established by Policy SP9 would be reflected in any master planning process for the East Lancaster strategic site together with any Planning Obligations which would be negotiated between the Council and Seemore.

*l) Are policies EN6 Strategic Policies & Land Allocations DPD and DM49 of the Development Management DPD on the Green Belt consistent with the NPPF?*

18. This is a matter for the Council to address.

*m) Could the Council provide clarification on the amount of housing to be provided within individual neighbourhood plans (Policies SC1 and DM54)?*

19. This is a matter for the Council to address.

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Date: 1 April 2019



## Seemore Properties Limited

### Examination of the Lancaster District Strategic Policies & Land Allocations Development Plan Document and Development Management Development Plan Document Submission Drafts

#### Matter 3: Spatial Strategy

##### **Main Issue: Whether the Council's spatial strategy for development within the District is sound?**

*a) Is the spatial strategy as set out in policies SP1, SP2, SP3, SP4, SP5 and SP6 and their supporting text soundly based? Is the settlement hierarchy soundly based? Would the spatial strategy be sound if no provision was made for any unmet housing need for Lancaster District either within the District or within the wider Strategic Housing Market Area?*

1. Seemore Properties Limited (Seemore) consider Lancaster is correctly recognised in Policy SP2 as Regional Centre. As such a Regional Centre it is entirely appropriate that Lancaster should be the key focus for future development in the District and, therefore, accommodate the majority of growth requirements during the plan period.
2. The urban focused approach of Policy SP3 is supportive of the settlement hierarchy established in Policy SP2. However, it is evident that to accommodate the level of growth required to meet the housing and employment needs of the District up-to 2034 there is inadequate land available for redevelopment within the urban areas. Instead, it is entirely reasonable and appropriate to consider extensions to the main urban areas, in particular Lancaster. As recognised in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), the supply of new homes can sometimes be best achieved through planning for larger scale development, including urban extensions.
3. As the promoter, Seemore consider that the East Lancaster strategic site (Policy SG7) referred to in Policy SP6 is consistent with the Local Plan's spatial strategy and the general approach to locating growth at accessible locations advocated in the Framework.
4. Seemore does not have an specific view about the quantum of any unmet housing need but would expect such a need to be met in accordance with the Local Plan's spatial strategy.



*b) Policies SG1, SG2, SG3 and TC1 (Bailrigg Garden Village), Policies SG7 and SG8 (East Lancashire Strategic Site), SG9 and SG10 (North Lancaster) and SG11, SG12 and SG13 (South Carnforth): are the need and locations for these mixed-use developments soundly based on, and justified by, the evidence assembled by the Council in support of the DPDs?*

5. For the reasons explained in response to question (a), Seemore consider that the East Lancaster strategic site (Policy SG7) is consistent with the Local Plan's spatial strategy's urban focus and the general approach to locating growth at accessible locations as advocated in the Framework.
6. For the avoidance of doubt, Seemore is the owner of the largest part of the East Lancaster strategic site. Lansil Sports and Social Club is the second largest Owner. As confirmed in a letter from the Agent (Lamb and Swift) acting for the Club's Trustees (to follow), Seemore is jointly promoting the allocation through the planning process on behalf of the owners and there is an obligation to relocate/reconfigure the current golf course as part of the scheme. There is a smaller landholding at Ridge Farm and the owner has expressed a willingness to bring forward the site albeit this land is not essential for the delivery of housing. The future detailed master planning exercise will incorporate all the other land interests.
6. The Council has produced an extensive evidence base which supports the principle of allocating the East Lancaster strategic site as a mixed urban extension to Lancaster. Seemore has undertaken its own initial assessments of the environmental and technical matters which confirm there are no insurmountable constraints. These assessments, alongside the Council's own evidence base, have been used to inform the Indicative Layout contained in the Statement of Common Ground. It is recognised that more detailed master planning work, informed by further surveys and assessments, will be required to refine the master plan prior to the submission of a planning application.
7. Although there are some differences with Council in the drafting of Policies SG7 and SG8, together with the extent of the allocation, Seemore is supportive of bringing forward the strategic site for development with a potential yield of around 735 dwellings, both market and affordable homes, during the period up-to 2034.
8. Seemore's detailed objections to the policies are associated with clarification of what is required and matters associated with deliverability and viability as and when an application is brought forward for consideration. Seemore requests that the Inspector considers the suggested modifications to Policies SG7 and SG8 and the consequential amendments which



would flow into other development management policies. Solely for ease of reference, Appendix 1 contains a list of the specific objections to Policies SG7 and SG8.

8. Seemore would ask the Inspector to consider the representation which has been submitted concerning the potential extent of residential development at the East Lancaster strategic site to be increased on the Proposals Map to include land within the vicinity of the Cuckoo Farm buildings, adjacent to HM Prison Lancaster Farms (i.e. the south east corner of the site).
9. The *Identified Sites Landscape & Visual Assessment Landscape & Visual Assessment Part 2.2: Site 02 – Land at Cuckoo Farm/Ridge Lane undertaken by Arcadis* (Document En-LP-05.5) provides the following commentary about the potential development of this area of land:

*Development of the south eastern corner of the site, including the provision of an access route along the existing bridleway adjacent to HMP Lancaster Farm, would be visible from the M6 corridor and the rising hillsides to the east in the form of increased built form adjacent to the infrastructure of the prison, but this would be partially filtered by mature vegetation located along the motorway corridor, resulting in a slight adverse effect from high sensitivity receptors.* (emphasis added)
10. By reason of the slight adverse effect, an amendment to the Proposals Map was proposed by the Council in its Draft Suggested Modifications. The Suggested Modifications would have extended the East Lancaster strategic site to include this land in the south east corner for housing development (LPPM M10). A plan showing the amendment sought is included in the Statement of Common Ground – the area is notated as 'Additional land Promoted by Seemore Properties'.
11. Specialist opinion from the Landscape Agency is attached as Appendix 2 (which was submitted with the Objections to the Local Plan) which provides further justification for the change to the modification at the East Lancaster strategic site. The development of this land for housing would not prejudice the key views towards the Ashton Memorial and would screen the harsh urban edge of the Prison by creating a transitional area. As recognised, the modification suggested would be only a slight adverse effect in landscape terms.

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## **Appendix 1: Summary of Seemore Properties Objections to Policies SG7 and SG8**

### **Policy SG7**

- The need for a Development Brief given the comprehensive nature of the policy requirements and the need to prepare a master plan through consultation with the local community. The preparation of a master plan and the consultation which would be required through its preparation would avoid unnecessary duplication. The Statement of Common Ground, including the indicative layout plan, provides a useful starting point for this detailed work.
- Reference to the affordable housing provision not being a requirement but a target.
- (I) Separate comments are made regarding the requirements of Policy SG8.
- (III) Separate comments are made regarding the requirements of Policy SG8.
- (V) As stated in Policy DM3, there is a requirement for up-to 40% affordable housing to be provided on Greenfield sites in excess of 15 dwellings. This requirement should be consistent with Policy DM3 by reference to 'Up-to 40%' and not 'Approximately 40%' albeit subject to viability considerations which have not yet been published.
- (VI) The first sentence of this requirement is unnecessary.
- (VII) There should be no specific requirement to explore a district heating system. If renewable energy technologies are to be utilised, they should be based upon what is appropriate for the site and not be pre-determined. A cross reference to Policy DM30 is sufficient.
- (X) There is a separate objection concerning the appropriateness of Policy EN7 (Urban Setting Landscape) and its application to the land and buildings at Cuckoo Farm which should be included within the extent of the Strategic Site.
- (XVIII) No comments except to note that any highway solutions will need to have some flexibility during the design evolution stage to avoid highways dominating the master planning process.
- (XVIII) As has previously been advised to the Council, improvements involving third party land cannot be delivered except by the owners of this land. As an example, improvements to the towpaths alongside the Lancaster Canal are matters for the Canals and Rivers Trust. However, financial contributions could be made to facilitate such improvements, but delivery would be a matter for these owners to undertake. This approach is reflected in the Statement of Common Ground.



## Policy SG7

- (I) It will need to be demonstrated that insufficient capacity available in the existing primary schools before any new school of whatever size is required to be provided. Further, there should be an onus on the Education Authority to explore all sources of funding for any new school and not just rely upon developer contributions. If any additional land beyond a 1-form entry primary school is required then there will be a loss of potential housing land and, accordingly, the Education Authority will be required to pay for such land at market rate. The provision of expansion land for the school is recognised in the Statement of Common Ground.
- (II) In principle the criteria for a local centre are appropriate. However, there should be recognition that the site for any medical centre will be a commercial transaction rather than a requirement to provide a free site.
- (III) No comment except that the management of the country park is a matter which should not be pre-determined. It may well be that a wildlife trust or similar may be a suitable management body.
- (V) There is no justification for any contribution towards Williamson Park given the generous open space requirements associated directly with the East Lancaster Strategic Site. The Statement of Common ground refers to potential contributions towards sports pitches and associated infrastructure in the locality.
- (VI) As has previously been advised to the Council, improvements involving third party land cannot be delivered except by the owners of this land. As an example, improvements to the towpaths alongside the Lancaster Canal are matters for the Canals and Rivers Trust. However, financial contributions could be made to facilitate such improvements, but delivery would be a matter for these owners to undertake. This approach has been recognised in the Statement of Common Ground.



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## 1.0 SUMMARY

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2	Illustrative Development Framework Plan, Rev E
3	Conceptual Landscape Vision, RPT1055-001 Rev A, The Landscape Agency, February 2016

# 1 Landscape Summary

## 1.1 Planning Context Overview: The Lancaster Local Plan

Lancaster Council are currently in the process of developing a Local Plan to support the needs of a growing and changing community and provide opportunities for expansion. There is already significant development happening locally including the recently completed Heysham to M6 link road. Cuckoo Farm was identified in the call for sites as a potential location for residential expansion.

The Cuckoo Farm site is identified as UE3 – East Lancaster Land to the west of the M6 Motorway, within the *“People, Homes and Jobs, How should we plan for our districts future? Developing a Local Plan for Lancaster District 2011 – 2031,”* produced by Lancaster City Council (LCC).

Site UE3 considers a large site on land based on Cuckoo Farm, between the Ridge, the M6 and Lansil Golf Course. UE3 could provide a site for 1500 dwellings and new employment. The People, Homes and Jobs document lists advantages and disadvantages of development within the site (Figure 1). There are significantly more advantages than disadvantages identified in this table.

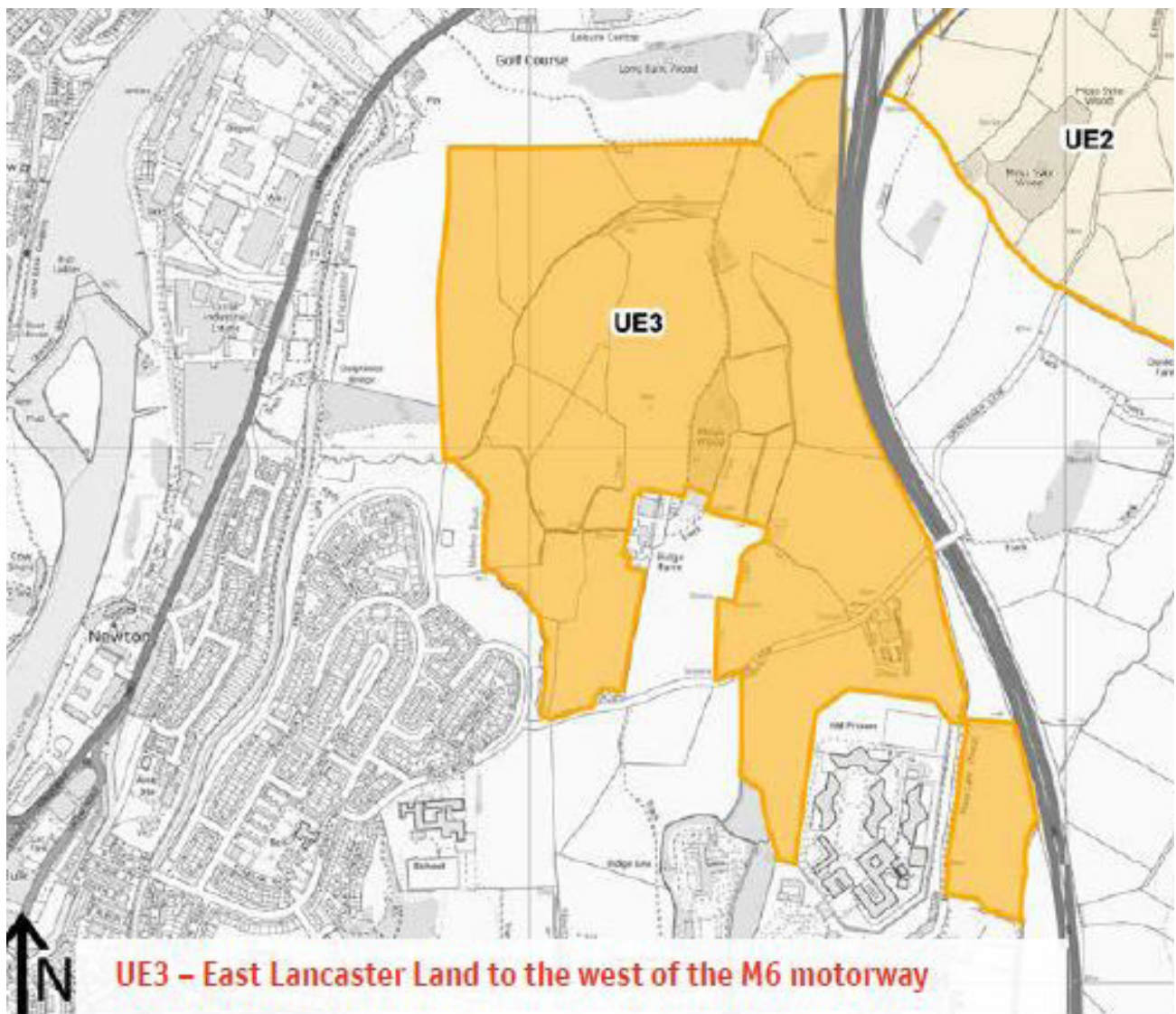
## 1.2 Key Influencing Landscape Drivers

The Illustrative Development Framework Plan (Figure 2) for UE3 was produced by POD on the 29th August 2016, subsequently updated to relocate the club house and related sporting facilities and informed by the Conceptual Landscape Vision produced by The Landscape Agency in February 2016 (Figure 3).

The Conceptual Landscape Vision was informed by a series of key landscape drivers identified over the course of several site visits. The following pages summarise the key landscape drivers which have informed the Conceptual Landscape Vision and ultimately the Illustrative Development Framework Plan.

Key landscape drivers include:

- Views.
- Topography.
- Existing woodlands, hedgerows and water-courses.
- Access and Land Ownership.



## Advantages

- Urban extensions were the most preferred option in the 2014 consultation.
- Well connected to existing urban areas and communities, with opportunities to use existing utilities and services.
- Well connected to existing public transport and road networks with opportunities for infrastructure improvements.
- Closeness to existing urban area makes walking and cycling practical alternatives to motorised transport.
- Development would be within the existing urban area of Lancaster with the M6 link forming a boundary to the city.
- Opportunity to build well sited affordable housing.
- Avoid the amalgamation of settlements.
- Proximity to employment opportunities in the city centre and along Caton Road.
- Reduce the need for large scale development in the more isolated rural areas of the district.

## Disadvantages

- Development would mean the loss of green field and agricultural land.
- The area is currently identified as Key Urban Landscape in the adopted Local Plan. This designation recognises an area's role in providing the setting for the city and in several instances the setting for a number of significant heritage assets.
- Investment in infrastructure needed to support the development of this site.
- Limited capacity on the existing road network and few opportunities to provide new provision.
- Area is difficult to access and would require significant investment.
- Potential to impact on local landscape and wildlife.
- Limited opportunity to meet rural housing needs.

Figure 1 Plan UE3 taken from *People, Homes and Jobs, How should we plan for our districts future? Developing a Local Plan for Lancaster District 2011 – 2031*.



Figure 2 Illustrative Development Framework Plan, Rev E

## Conceptual Landscape Vision

Cuckoo Farm, Lancaster.

February 2016  
RPT1055-001  
Rev A

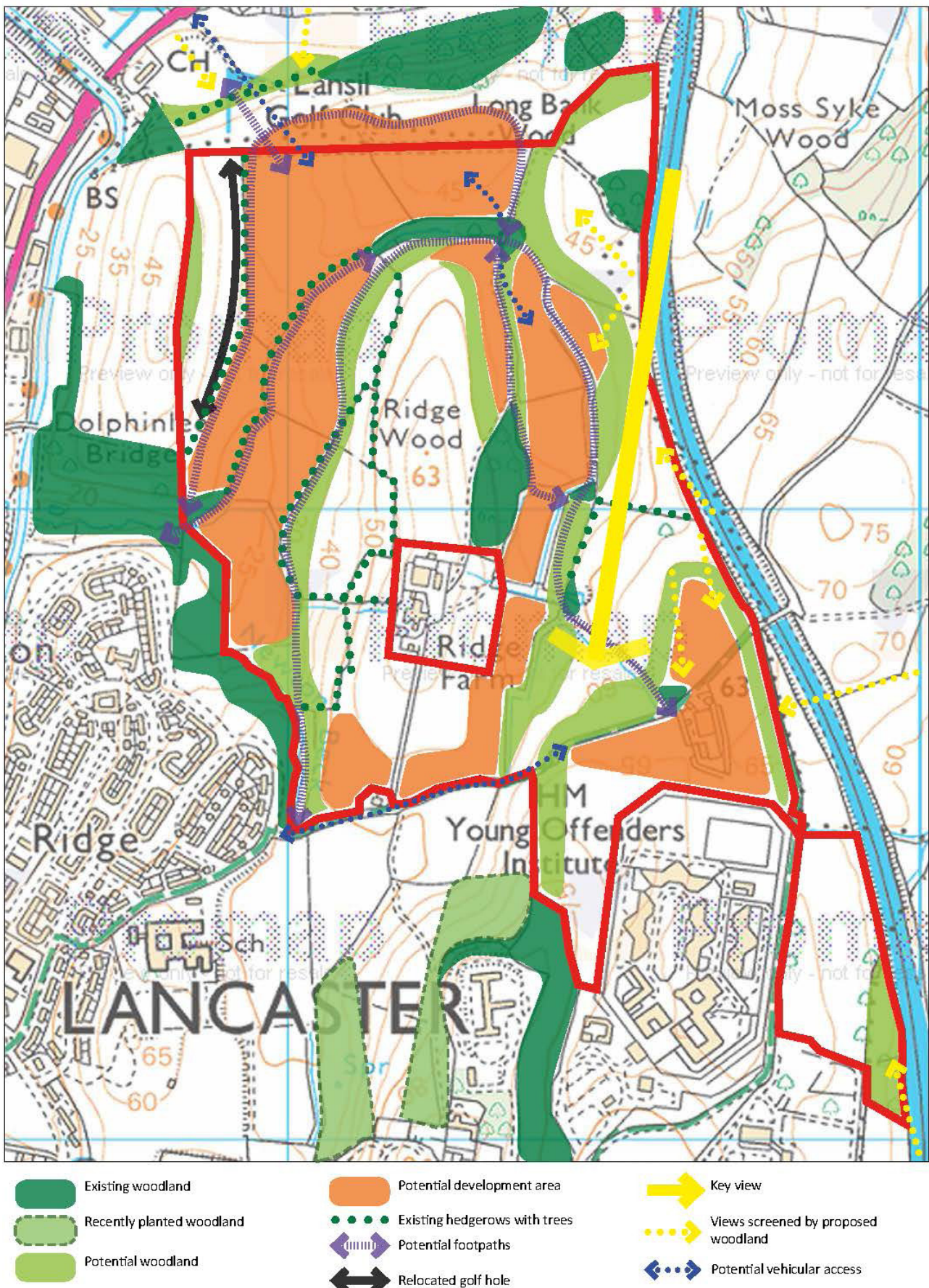


Figure 3 Conceptual Landscape Vision, RPT1055-001 Rev A

# 1 Landscape Summary

## 1.3 Views

Views form a key experience of UE3 and are largely defined by the extremes in topography and rolling landform.

A key vista experienced across the site is to the Ashton Memorial, a recognizable landmark on the Lancaster skyline. This view is mainly visible on the approach to the site when travelling southbound on the M6. The southerly view permits a clear sightline to the landmark on the skyline which is appreciated over and between existing woodland belts within the rural landscape. The development framework seeks to respect this view and setting by retaining the visual corridor and rural landscape at the periphery of Lancaster.

In addition, motorway users heading north on the M6 experience a rural edge, adjacent to the roadside. Concept proposals retain views of this rural landscape characteristic whilst additional structural landscape planting ensures unsightly views of the M6 are screened and limited from within UE3.

Existing vegetation to the site wide boundaries partially screens most internal areas of the site and this will be retained and enhanced as part of the site wide landscape strategy. Internally within the site the undulating topography creates a series of well-defined valley corridors which are strengthened by the enhanced landscape corridors to ensure this visual experience is retained.

Development parcels are sited to reduce interference with key views, higher density houses are located to the lower areas of site whilst lower densities are promoted within the more elevated and visual prominent locations.

The redevelopment of Cuckoo Farm additionally provides an opportunity to screen less favorable views of the prison and therefore improve the setting of the Ashton Memorial visual corridor and relationship of the urban settlement in this rural fringe.



View from M6 Ashton Memorial is clearly visible on the skyline. (Photo taken at speed and in heavy traffic)

## 1.4 Topography

The undulating drumlin landform is a strong and defining character of this landscape. Levels vary in height from approximately 25m at the lowest point on the eastern edge of the site, to approximately 63m at the highest central ridge line. The rolling landform is therefore an important characteristic of the site, it provides opportunities to define development parcels between contours and use the linear routes of vegetation across the site to inform green corridors, public open space and visual connectivity.

Topography has additionally provided parameters to guide development locations and respect the wider landscape character and visual experience. Development is typically set below the line of the landform ridges within the wider landscape. Concept proposals have intentionally located development parcels below the 55m contour of the central ridge within the site to respect and prevent dramatic change to the skyline.

The central 'Ridge Wood' area is deliberately left open and undeveloped to reflect the current landscape character and respect the unbroken skyline. This high plateau has the potential to become a Country Park and capitalise upon open and expansive views across Lancaster from this elevated location. In turn, the central open space provides the opportunity to create a zone of Public Open Space for recreation and appreciating the wider landscape. The primary area proposed for development in UE3 is well screened by the undulating landform when viewed from the rural fringe of the M6, topography therefore plays a key roll in absorbing development within the lower enclosed drumlin valleys.



Rolling landscape and distant views

# 1 Landscape Summary

## 1.5 Existing woodland, hedgerows and water-courses

Existing established woodland structure, hedgerows, trees, buffer corridors and water-courses are retained and enhanced where possible throughout the site.

Due to the topography of the site, existing woodland, field boundary hedgerows and hedgerow trees have developed along contour lines which form linear routes across the site. These routes have the potential to create connected ecological corridors and incorporate water-courses and integrated SUDs as part of the proposed development. These routes will help to enhance and increase biodiversity as well as offering the potential to create new habitats.

These linear routes have also been used to define development parcels and areas of Public Open Space. In the proposals, the existing linear groupings have further been extended to create:

- Sinuous green corridors which function to divide development parcels into a human scale
- Work in parallel with the sites contours to strategically thread soft landscape throughout the development and soften the built form in elevated or visual prominent locations.
- Reinforce the key visual corridor and view of Ashton Memorial.
- Sensitively manipulate internal and external views to ensure less favourable features such as the prison or M6 remain screened and less dominant in the landscape experience.
- Provide connected landscape corridors which create opportunities for green movement, recreation and wider connectivity with the surrounding context and settlement.

In addition to the existing established green structure the network of field drains, ditches and streams have been used to inform the placement of areas of Open Space. A landscape drainage strategy that incorporates these existing water-courses and network of drains and ditches has been proposed. This provides an opportunity for integrated SUDs and wetland areas in appropriate locations across the site. By implementing a connected drainage strategy there is a potential opportunity for creating habitats and increasing biodiversity.

To the south of the site, there is an area of recently planted woodland. This has the potential to provide connected habitats that extend out of UE3 and enhance biodiversity and wildlife habitats in the wider landscape.

## 1.6 Access and Land Ownership

Proposed primary access routes are from Caton Road to the north of the site and via the Ridge Lea Hospital from the south. A number of secondary routes will also be created for bus, cycle, pedestrian and emergency access, see Figure 2, ensuring the site is permeable and well connected with the exiting settlement and context.

The opportunity for land swap with the Lansil Golf Club has the potential to allow suitable siting of development parcels and expand the golf course into the Ashton Memorial view corridor. By introducing a means of access from Caton Road the primary vehicle route can follow contour lines across the site, ensuring transport infrastructure sits as harmoniously within the landscape setting as possible.

The current extent of the golf course ownership is illustrated on Figure 2 by the blue boundary. Planting along the northern site boundary and along the M6 corridor would allow the rural edge along the M6 to be maintained. Structural landscape planting will constrain the edges of the golf course whilst screening proposed development and providing good connectivity for woodland habitat.

A proposed new Lansil Sports and Social Club with the potential for improved and rationalised facilities will be located to the north west of the site. This sits alongside the proposed area to potentially reintroduce the canal towpath access and crossing to the west of the site. In addition, a new Golf Clubhouse and leisure development will also be provided adjacent to Caton road to the north east of the site.



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