LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

The site and surrounding landscape have been characterised at a national, county and borough/district Level. Of most relevance to this contextual study is the District Assessment, which identifies 20 landscape character areas. Appendix 4.1 of the Landscape, Biodiversity and Trees SPD also identifies countryside design areas - within this document Landscape haracter Areas that have the same implications for the design of new buildings in the countryside have been amalgamated to form six areas. Although the site shares some of the characteristics of the wider area, it is effectively annexed by the A34 and A343 Andover Road.

BOROUGH CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

The Basingstoke and Deane Character Assessment places the site within the southern fringe of Character Area 1: Highclere and Burghclere.

Characteristics pertinent to this contextual study include:

- Subtle but complex landform, steep in places but generally gently undulating and falling towards the River Enborne in the north, dissected by a network of minor tributary valleys
- Small-scale mosaic of woodland, some mixed farmland and numerous paddocks, giving an enclosed, intimate character in parts
- Area west of the A34 lies within the North Wessex Downs (AONB) and generally has a quiet, rural character away from larger residential areas, apart from some noise and visual intrusion from the A34 and A343
- Generally medium to small-scale fields, with a predominance of pasture, enclosed within an established assarted woodland and intact hedgerow structure with a high proportion of hedgerow trees
- High percentage of woodland cover, particularly close to Penwood and Highclere, between the A34 and A343, where extensive coniferous plantation encloses and contains views
- Low intervisibility across the area, with vegetation and the low-lying nature of the landscape containing views
- Numerous scattered small villages, hamlets, farmsteads and many residential properties, some accessed through a fairly dense network of narrow lanes. However, the paddocks, together with recent residential development, stud farms and a relatively high local population lend a rather urbanised character.

Key issues include:

- Management and retention of hedgerows (including tree saplings) and field patterns of historic significance
- Management of road verges and hedgebanks, and damage from scrub encroachment, road improvements and legacy of agrochemical use on adjacent farmland
- Lack of permanent grass field margins, including uncultivated buffer strips next to rivers, streams and other sensitive wildlife habitats
- Management of floodplain habitats to sustain or improve biodiversity levels
- Management of unimproved/semi-improved neutral/acidic grasslands to maintain or enhance biodiversity
- some adverse impacts of horse grazing (e.g. rank grassland with weeds, poorly-managed boundaries or inappropriate styles of fencing etc.)
- reduction in biodiversity levels through agricultural practices
- suburbanising influence of built development and roads in many parts of the landscape, including suburban styles of fencing, signage, lighting and planting.

New parkland within the site will retain and enhance open space and woodland features of the River Enborne and it's tributary stream. The scheme will include the retention of important hedgerow and trees, the provision of new native planting, semi-natural grassland and wetland features. This will help maintain and enhance biodiversity within the site and wider character area.

LANDSCAPE, BIODIVERSITY AND TREES SPD APPENDIX 4.1: COUNTRYSIDE DESIGN SUMMARY

The Countryside Design Summary places the site within the southern fringe of Countryside Design Area 1:Lowlands and Heathlands.

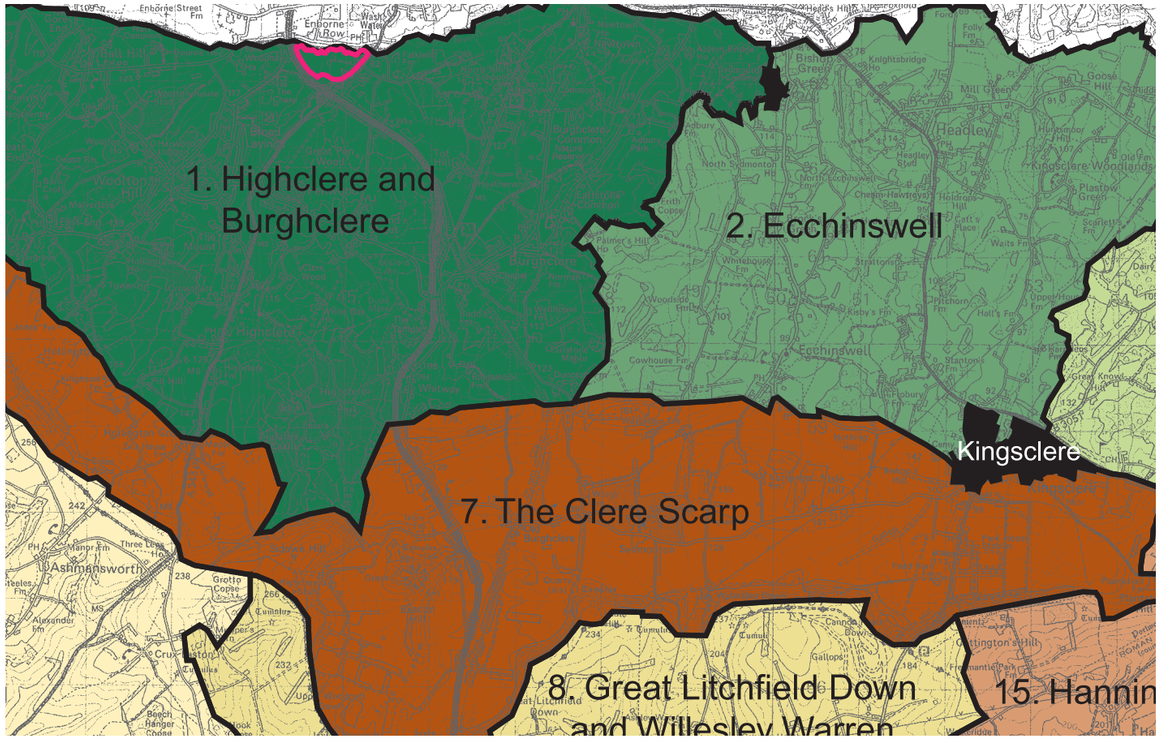
The area is generally described as, *'A low, gently undulating landscape that contrasts with the steep chalk scarp and downs to the south. There is mixed use of the landscape, with fields of small to medium size used as pasture and arable land. There are numerous woodlands. Settlements are scattered throughout, with a greater number of settlements in the west of the area, just south of Newbury. The North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) covers the area west of the A34, including Highclere and Woolton Hill, and also the area east of the A34 to the south and west of Burghclere.'*

Traditional buildings within the landscape are described as, *'generally two-storey or single-storey with dormer windows. They are domestic in character and predominantly detached or semi-detached.* The predominant materials are red brick and roof tiles, *'Red brick with blue brick patterning is a particular feature across the area. Traditionally, limited use has also been made of yellow bricks and 'specials' for decoration... Cat slide roofs are a feature of some of the older buildings in Kingsclere.'*

The document goes onto set out design recommendations of the contextual analysis which include:

- Where necessary, new development should allow sufficient room for a framework of trees and shrubs to be planted, to integrate the built form into the surrounding landscape. Native trees and shrubs should be planted around developments adjacent to open countryside
- The density of new development should be in keeping with that in the existing settlements. Buildings should generally be two-storey and face onto the road. Boundaries facing onto the road should be marked by hedgerows or red brick walls as appropriate to the local area
- Public paths should be retained and new development linked to the wider countryside wherever possible
- New development should reflect the form, scale and proportions of existing vernacular buildings in the area and pick up on the traditional building styles, materials, colours and textures.

Where appropriate, the scheme will reflect the historic character of development within the wider countryside together with the urban context of Newbury and other precedents to establish an exemplar scheme.



LANDSCAPE CHARACTER: 1 HIGHCLERE AND BURGHCLERE
(SOURCE: BASINGSTOKE AND DEANE LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT, 2001)

WOODLAND COVER SEEN FROM STATION ROAD SOUTH OF THE A34

VISUAL BASELINE

Following the visual survey of the study area, the existing visibility of the site is considered to be limited to a very small area surrounding the site, with wider views truncated by bunding alongside the A34, topography, vegetation and built form. Views of the site are summarised below:

- Within the site, open views extend over parts of the eastern site fields from footpath 116/9/1. In views from this footpath the majority of the western site area is screened by an internal belt of trees and vegetation
- Adjacent to the east, on the A343 Andover Road, views of internal site fields are in part truncated by a dense boundary hedgerow
- To the north on the Washwater road, views of trees and vegetation within the site are glimpsed beyond intervening roadside hedgerow
- There are open and partial views of the site from some adjacent residential properties in Enborne Row and Washwater. In these views internal site areas are in-part truncated by boundary vegetation
- From within the wider landscape including the AONB and listed buildings, the site is very difficult to perceive by virtue of the intervening features and land form.

An iterative design process has been undertaken so that potential adverse visual effects, identified through the LVIA, can be reduced or mitigated through design modifications and / or the landscape mitigation strategy.

Mitigation measures will include the introduction of open space alongside the Enborne, adjacent to existing residential properties; and additional trees planting alongside the Andover Road frontage to create a positive relationship with adjacent settlement.

POTENTIAL VIEWS TOWARDS THE SITE (AS SET OUT IN THE LVIA)

LEGEND

- **SITE BOUNDARY**
- **OPEN VIEW(AN OPEN VIEW OF THE WHOLE OF THE SITE OR OPEN VIEW OF PART OF THE SITE)**
- **PARTIAL VIEW (A VIEW OF THE SITE WHICH FORMS A SMALL PART OF THE WIDER PANORAMA, OR WHERE VIEWS ARE FILTERED BETWEEN INTERVENING BUILT FORM OR VEGETATION)**
- **TRUNCATED VIEW (VIEWS OF THE SITE ARE OBSCURED BY THE INTERVENING BUILT FORM AND / OR VEGETATION, OR IS DIFFICULT TO PERCEIVE)**

PHOTOGRAPHS

1 **PHOTOGRAPH LOCATION 8B:** VIEW FROM THE WASHWATER ROAD IN WHICH THE SITE IS ALMOST ENTIRELY SCREENED BY INTERVENING HEDGEROW

2 **PHOTOGRAPH LOCATION 12:** VIEW FROM PENWOOD ROAD TOWARDS SITE BOUNDARY HEDGEROW ON ANDOVER ROAD, WHICH TRUNCATES INTERNAL VIEWS OF THE SITE

3 **PHOTOGRAPH LOCATION 18:** VIEW FROM ANDOVER ROAD SOUTH OF THE A34 IN WHICH THE SITE IS DIFFICULT TO PERECIEVE BEYOND THE ROAD CORRIDOR AND INTERVENING VEGETATION

1


2


3


A3

THE SITE

SITE CHARACTER

Characteristics of the site are described by the landscape and visual assessment and summarised below:

- The site lies within the flat valley floor of the River Enborne, which forms the northern boundary. A tributary to the Enborne flows north through the centre of the site
- The site is contained by raised land form and planting associated with the A34 corridor, a hedgerow alongside the A343 Andover Road and riparian trees adjacent to the River Enborne
- Land uses include fields of pasture, pony paddocks, buildings associated with Common Farm and the Public Right of Way that extends through the site
- Common Farm lies within the centre of the site in the location of a former Mill. A track from the A343 shared with the Public Right of Way leads to a small farmhouse on the eastern bank of the Enborne Tributary. On the western bank, largely contained by mature trees are large modern farmsheds, a storage yard and a pony paddock
- Internal vegetation features include a mature tree belt alongside the tributary stream and a parallel tree belt, which historically was associated with the Old Mill Race. There are also gappy hedgerows through the site, which are punctuated by trees including a number of mature oaks
- Urbanising influences include adjacent residential properties and rear gardens which extend down to the Enborne within the western part of the site and noise and movement associated with the A34 and A343 road corridors
- Sections of the Enborne and the Enborne tributary have a peaceful quality. This is particularly apparent adjacent to eastern sections of the Enborne where open fields are retained on both sides of the riverbank, and sections of the tributary stream which are enclosed by trees and vegetation. The northern section of the tributary is appreciated from an adjacent section of the Public Right of Way between Common Farm and Washwater Road to the north
- The site is visually annexed from the AONB and wider countryside to the south and west by the A34 corridor, associated planting and raised landform.

1 PUBLIC FOOTPATH 116/9/1 ON THE MAIN TRACK THAT LEADS TO COMMON FARM FROM ANDOVER ROAD

2 THE FARMHOUSE AT COMMON FARM (NOT LISTED)

3 MODERN FARM BUILDING AND YARD AT COMMON FARM

4 MATURE TREES ALONGSIDE THE RIVER ENBORNE

5 THE ENBORNE TRIBUTARY STREAM WHICH FLOWS THROUGH THE MIDDLE OF THE SITE. WOODLAND TREES ARE TO EITHER SIDE OF THIS STREAM CORRIDOR

6 THE RIVER ENBORNE AND VIEWS OVER THE ADJACENT MEADOW TO HOUSING IN ENBORNE ROW

7 PONY PADDOCK AND STABLE WITHIN THE CENTRAL PORTION OF THE SITE

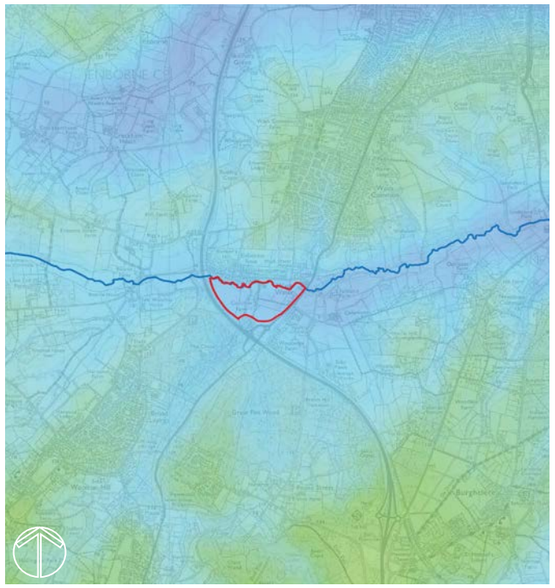
8 NORTH OF COMMON FARM FOOTPATH 16/9/1 FOLLOWS A NARROW TRACK ALONGSIDE THE MEANDERING TRIBUTARY OF THE ENBORNE

9 LARGE MONO-CULTURAL FIELD WITHIN THE WESTERN

10 OCCASIONAL MATURE SPECIMEN OAK TREES ON FIELD BOUNDARIES

TOPOGRAPHY

The River Enborne flows west to east through the site. The study area is gently undulating and generally falls northwards towards the Enborne. To the north of the site, the topography rises up from the River Enborne to Wash Common at approximately 126m AOD. Additional high points within the area are located to the south at Burghclere and Tot Hill Service Station ranging from between approximately 135m-145m AOD, Penwood at approximately 127m AOD, and Woolton hill at approximately 130m AOD. The lowest points within the landscape occur along the River Enborne valley, to the centre of the study area at approximately 90m AOD.



TOPOGRAPHY ANALYSIS

SITE BOUNDARY

ARBORICULTURE

A tree survey was undertaken by Aspect Arboriculture in April 2021. All trees within influence of the site boudary have been objectively appraised using the guidance provided within BS5837:2012: *'Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations'*. This information has been relied on to inform on the trees' suitability for retention and to identify their above and below ground constraints during the iterative process of design; the tree survey information comprises a scaled tree constraints plan and accompanying record of the trees' dimensions and observations germane to decision making and future management. Background checks have revealed that there are no Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) or Conservation Areas within influence of the site. There are also no online records of any ancient or veteran tree cover within influence of the site, which has been confirmed as part of our baseline survey work.

The current tree assemblage is a mixture of large native broadleaves, majoring on English oak and ash set within a matrix of native agricultural hedgerows and parcels of scrub. Other species are also present including alder which is dominant where the site's boundaries are defined by watercourses. A high proportion of the trees are of priority quality for retention, both individually and as part of a group where there is clear collective merit. Accordingly, the majority are recognised as trees of high and moderate quality i.e. BS5837:2012 category A and B trees, which make a positive and important contribution to the amenity and green credentials of the site.

The location of existing trees suggest that the development would not threaten its most important trees and could provide an opportunity to deliver arboricultural benefits; principally through improving the resilience and coverage of the tree cover and public access to it. Mature trees should be retained within open space to avoid misplaced retention and maximising the trees' ecological and amenity functions. The potential for extensive tree clearance should be avoided by default, and where unavoidable will be the focus of comprehensive mitigation replanting, commensurate to amenity and biodiversity gain. Particular focus is being granted to ensure that the residual relationship between mature trees and future residents is both reasonable and sustainable.

ARBORICULTURE PLAN

SITE BOUNDARY
EXISTING VEGETATION
CATEGORY A TREE ROOT PROTECTION ZONE (RPZ)
CATEGORY B TREE RPZ
CATEGORY C TREE RPZ
CATEGORY C TREE RPZ

ARCHAEOLOGY

An Archaeological Desk Based Assessment was carried out by RPS in April 2021. The assessment provides a review of the site's below-ground archaeological potential and addresses the information requirements of national, regional and local planning policy. In terms of designated archaeological assets, no World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Historic Wrecks or Historic Battlefields lie within the study site and there will not be no indirect impact on any such assets in the wider landscape. This assessment has identified that the site can be considered to have a known potential for remains associated with former mill buildings shown on historic mapping and structures associated with the extant farmstead complex. There is also a moderate potential for medieval remains, and a low to moderate potential for all remaining past periods of human activity within the study site. Any such remains would likely be considered of overall low/local significance.

ECOLOGY

An ecological assessment of the site and surroundings has been undertaken by Aspect , involving a desktop study, Phase 1 habitat survey and faunal surveys for bats, badger, dormouse, great crested newt, water vole and otter.

The site itself is not subject to any nature conservation designations. The nearest statutory designation is Avery's Pightle Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), located 1.8km to the north-west, and the nearest European designations are Kennet Valley Alderwoods Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Kennet & Lambourn Floodplain SAC, located approximately 3.3km and 3.9km north of the site respectively. These designations are well-distanced from the site and would not be affected. The nearest non-statutory designations are Wash Water Field Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC), located 20m to the east, and Bypass Meadow SINC located approximately 280m south of the site. Wash Water Field SINC is separated from the site by the A343, whilst Bypass Meadow SINC is separated by both the A343 and the A34. It is therefore considered that, subject to appropriate pollution prevention measures, no significant effects to the SINCs are anticipated by development.

In terms of habitats, the site is dominated by semi-improved grassland pasture fields of low ecological value. Whilst the desk study review has identified mapping of grazing marsh within the site, this is not based on ground truthed sources and such habitats are absent from the site. Habitats of elevated value include the River Enborne along the northern site boundary and its tributary, areas of woodland within and adjacent to the site, hedgerows and scattered trees. The majority of the woodland, scattered trees and hedgerows should be fully retained and protected under the proposals, with some sections requiring removal to facilitate access roads and pedestrian paths. The River Enborne and tributary will be fully retained. The development provides the opportunity to enhance these valuable habitats through management practices in line with ecological principles, whilst there are opportunities for new habitat creation within the proposed areas of open space, including ponds.

Specific faunal surveys have recorded some faunal interest, with the site supporting a moderate assemblage of foraging / commuting bats and some low status roosting interest, together with evidence of badger and otter. Habitats for faunal species will largely be maintained as part of the proposals, albeit the residential building supporting active bat roosts will be lost. Mitigation will therefore need to be implemented to safeguard protected species during the construction phase, and minimise impacts from the completed development such as disturbance or increased light-spill onto retained or newly created habitats. The proposals should also seek to provide additional enhancements for faunal species, including the erection of bat and bird boxes to form new nesting and roosting opportunities, and wetland creation as part of the drainage proposals to provide amphibian habitat.

Overall, it is considered that development of the site has the potential to deliver deliver substantial gains for ecology, with new habitat creation and enhancement of existing habitats delivering a biodiversity net gain in excess of 20%.

ECOLOGY AND ARCHAEOLOGY PLAN

- SITE BOUNDARY
- WOODED STRIP
- WET WOODLAND
- ROADSIDE WOODLAND PLANTING
- WOODLAND
- SEMI IMPROVED GRASSLAND
- AMENITY GRASSLAND
- IMPROVED GRASSLAND
- BARE GROUND
- RECOLONISING VEGETATION
- TALL RUDERAL
- EXISTING BUILDING ON SITE
- MANURE HEAP
- DENSE SCRUB
- TREE LINE
- FENCE
- WATERCOURSE
- HEDGEROW
- MILL POND LOCATION
- DRY/EPHEMERAL POND
- POND/STANDING WATER
- BADGER SETT
- TREE
- TREE WITH LOW MODERATE BAT ROOSTING POTENTIAL
- TREE WITH MODERATE BAT ROOSTING POTENTIAL
- TREE WITH LOW BAT ROOSTING POTENTIAL
- TREE WITH HIGH BAT ROOSTING

FLOOD RISK

The development is located on the banks of the River Enborne which flows west-east alongside the northern boundary of the site. An unnamed feeder tributary flows in a northerly direction through the centre of the site discharging into the Enborne. The Environment Agency (EA) Flood Map for Planning shows that most of the site is at low risk of flooding (Flood Zone 1), however large areas associated within the floodplains of both the River Enborne and unnamed tributary are shown to be at a medium to high flood risk (Flood Zone 2 and/or 3).

A detailed review of the publicly available hydraulic models used to produce the flood map for planning identified that the model outputs were not sufficiently accurate for use in a site-specific assessment of flood risk and as such should not be used to inform a planning application for proposed development. In order to produce more accurate flood risk data with which to inform the site layout and ensure appropriate mitigation measures are designed-in, where appropriate, a detailed bespoke hydraulic model was constructed using Flood Modeller Pro and Tuflow software. A number of event probabilities (including climate change scenarios) were run to produced a more refined floodplain compared to that of the broadscale EA modelling.

Model results indicate that lower order events (up to 2 year return period) the channel capacity is generally sufficient to convey flows and there is minimal spillage into the floodplain. As the magnitude of events increases, the channel capacity becomes exceeded leading to water spilling out into the floodplain, where it fills topographically lower areas adjacent to the channel.

Based on the outputs of the hydraulic model, the site layout should be tailored to ensure 'more vulnerable' parts of the proposed development (e.g. residential properties) along with attenuation features, such as ponds, are steered to areas at low risk of flooding. This approach is in accordance with the NPPF and local planning policy.

NOISE

The area is suburban/rural in nature with no large industrial sources of sound in the vicinity. Road traffic movements on the A34 and the A343 are the primary sources of noise affecting the acoustic environment across the proposed development site. To establish baseline noise levels, two long-term sound level surveys have been undertaken on the site in order to quantify baseline noise levels. This has been supplemented with the completion of a 3D sound model and comparison with the 'Strategic Noise Mapping' data, published by Defra.

The results of the long-term surveys and analysis show that the highest daytime and night-time sound levels on the proposed site closest to the roads are 65 and 60 dB LAeq,T respectively, albeit for the majority of the site away, from the roads daytime and night-time levels are below 55 and 50 dB LAeq,T respectively. It should be noted that a substantial earth bund is located on the western boundary of the site, adjacent to the A34, which provides a significant level of noise attenuation.

The results of the survey and analysis will inform an assessment regarding the suitability of the site for residential development based on guidance within the Professional Practice Guidance on Planning and Noise – New Residential Development (ProPG) document and British Standard (BS) 8233:2014 'Guidance on sound insulation and noise reduction for buildings'.

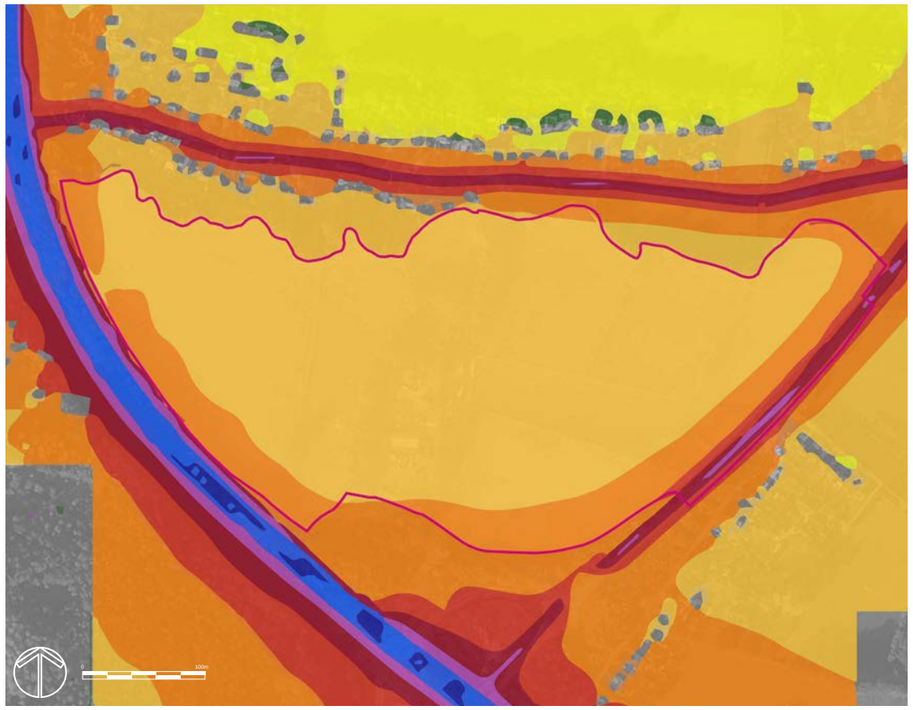
With regard to dwellings, guideline internal sound levels are 35 dB LAeq,16h and 30 dB LAeq,8h during the daytime and night-time periods respectively. For external amenity areas, such as gardens, the lower and upper guideline daytime sound levels are 50 and 55 dB LAeq,16h respectively.

Based on the above, the results of the long term surveys and above and then layout appropriate internal noise levels will be readily achievable with typical design methods, and external noise levels in all external amenity areas will be below the upper guideline value with the majority below the lower guideline level.

FLOOD RISK

SITE BOUNDARY

1 IN 100 YEAR FLOOD RISK + 70% CLIMATE CHANGE ALLOWANCE



NOISE

SITE BOUNDARY

40-45 DB

45-50 DB

50-55 DB

55-60 DB

60-65 DB

65-70 DB

70-75 DB

75-80 DB

UP TO 80 DB

A4

OPPORTUNITIES & CONSTRAINTS

The information explored in the baseline analysis leads to the identification of challenges and opportunities for development of the site. These are summarised below and in the plan opposite.

CONSTRAINTS

- Integration with the surrounding land uses and settlement
- Integration of the Public Right of Way which crosses the site
- Retention of important vegetation features, including tree belts, mature trees and boundary features
- 20m woodland and treebelt buffers
- Retention of the existing floodplain
- Mitigation of noise associated with the A34 dual carriageway
- Redevelopment of the existing modern farm sheds and storage yard at Common Farm.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Delivery of up to 350 homes, including affordable housing, to help meet the need for homes within the Borough
- The provision of a new cycle route alongside the A343 to connect the site and towns outer suburbs with the centre of Newbury
- Enhanced bus services between Enborne Row, Washwater, Wash Common and Newbury Town Centre
- The provision of community facilities within the site such as a convenience store, community building and shared office space
- Provision of public access to the River Enborne within a semi-natural parkland setting
- Provision of flexible and adaptable homes with space for home working
- Provision of a mobility hub providing access to sustainable transport choices including bus provision, E-bike hire, EV car club parking and a network of pedestrian and cycle links
- The provision of a connected network of public open space including a riverside park, pocket parks, community gardens, green corridors and courtyard gardens
- Creation of a woodland play area, outdoor gym and trim trail
- Enhancement to wildlife habitats through the creation of areas of wet grassland, permanently wet and ephemeral ponds, native hedgerow, rough grassland, native scrub and native tree planting
- Provision of built form and open space that reflects the landscape character and settlement context.

SITE BOUNDARY
EXISTING BUILDING ON SITE
ROAD CORRIDOR
CONTOURS (AT 5M INTERVALS)
EXISTING TREES AND HEDGEROW
POTENTIAL OPEN SPACE
POTENTIAL GREEN CORRIDOR
EXISTING WATERBODY
POTENTIAL SUDS LOCATION
EXISTING COMMON FARM DEVELOPMENT
20 M BUFFER FROM WOODLAND AND TREE BELT (BASINGSTOKE AND DEANE TREES AND LANDSCAPE SPD)
MAIN RIVER OFFSET 20M (BASINGSTOKE AND DEANE TREES AND LANDSCAPE SPD)
POTENTIAL SITE ACCESS POINT
CATEGORY A TREE ROOT PROTECTION AREA (RPA)
CATEGORY B TREE RPA
CATEGORY C TREE RPA
EXISTING PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY (PROW)
DIRECTION OF FALL
POTENTIAL CYCLE ROUTE
NOISE
POTENTIAL LOCATION FOR A CONVENIENCE STORE
POTENTIAL LOCATION FOR A MOBILITY HUB

OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS