

## **Review of Landscape and Visual Effects**

of the Planning Application

by IDI Gazeley

for

Hybrid Planning Application for:

- 1) Outline application for the demolition of existing buildings and erection of up to 427,200 sq m Storage and Distribution (B8) with ancillary offices (B1a), up to 3,700 sq m for a Logistics Institute of Technology (D1) with associated playing field, up to 9,000 sq m small business space (B1a, B1b), up to 300 sq m estate office with conference facility and exhibition centre (D1), the creation of a Country Park, other open space and landscaping works on land to the north of Mere Lane, formation of access road from Magna Park, creation of roundabouts, partial realignment of Mere Lane, upgrading of A5 to dual carriageway, creation of roundabout access on A5, creation of SuDS facilities and associated infrastructure and landscaping works (siting, extent and use of the defined parcels, the maximum quanta and height of buildings, the restriction on the siting of yards, demolitions and means of access to be considered only); and
- 2) Detailed application for the creation of a 140 space HGV parking facility, associated gatehouse and HGV Driver Training Centre, vehicle wash and fuelling facilities, and a rail freight shuttle terminal, with associated hardstanding, landscaping works and SUDS facilities on land adjacent to Asda George Headquarters

Lutterworth

Planning Application: 15/01531/OUT & 15/01531/FUL

on behalf of

Harborough District Council

October 2017

Quality Control

Review of Landscape and Visual Effects

IDI Gazeley, Hybrid Application, Mere Lane, Lutterworth

Planning Application: 15/01531/OUT & 15/01531/FUL

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This report has been prepared by The Landscape Partnership (TLP) for Harborough District Council (HDC) to review the submissions on landscape and visual matters in relation to a hybrid planning application 01531/OUT and 15/01531/FUL a proposal by IDI Gazeley on land adjacent to Magna Park, Lutterworth, Leicestershire comprising:

1) **Zone 1** - Outline application for the demolition of existing buildings and erection of up to 427,200 sq m Storage and Distribution (B8) with ancillary offices (B1a), up to 3,700 sq m for a Logistics Institute of Technology (D1) with associated playing field, up to 9,000 sq m small business space (B1a, B1b), up to 300 sq m estate office with conference facility and exhibition centre (D1), the creation of a Country Park, other open space and landscaping works on land to the north of Mere Lane, formation of access road from Magna Park, creation of roundabouts, partial realignment of Mere Lane, upgrading of A5 to dual carriageway, creation of roundabout access on A5, creation of SuDS facilities and associated infrastructure and landscaping works (siting, extent and use of the defined parcels, the maximum quanta and height of buildings, the restriction on the siting of yards, demolitions and means of access to be considered only); and

2) **Zone 2**- Detailed application for the creation of a 140 space HGV parking facility, associated gatehouse and HGV Driver Training Centre, vehicle wash and fuelling facilities, and a rail freight shuttle terminal, with associated hardstanding, landscaping works and SUDS facilities on land adjacent to Asda George Headquarters.

1.2 Site visits were made in December and January 2014/15 during the process of pre-application discussions by TLP (Jonathan Billingsley -CMLI) to view the Site including from the viewpoints selected and shown within Chapter 9 of the Environmental Statement (ES). An initial visit was made in December 2014 and a further visit in January 2015 to agree with the applicant's Landscape Architects (Nicholas Pearson Associates and Grant Associates) the range of representative viewpoints to be used within the Landscape and Visual Assessment (LVIA) to be included in the ES. The Site visit process was carried out for both application 15/00919/FUL (DHL - B8 and B1 application) and application 15/01531/OUT as there was some overlap of the Site area and a benefit in agreeing any common locations for both applications. In addition, a number of additional viewpoints were identified to cover the proposed HGV parking facility (Part 2 of the application described in 1.1. above) that was added to the original Site area prior to the submission of the applications. A further Site visit was made by TLP on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2016 to examine the wireline drawings and photomontages submitted with the application in the field from the agreed representative viewpoints and also to explore the range of views from the public right of way network and existing permissive routes within the vicinity of the Site. A further Site visit was made on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2017 of review the findings of the Addendum to Chapter 9 covering Cumulative Impact (July 2017).

1.3 The purpose of this report is to:

- ◆ review the Environmental Statement (ES) and subsequent Addendums (ESAs) of 2016 and 2017 in relation to landscape and visual matters and the landscape proposals.
- ◆ consider the acceptability of the scheme in landscape and visual terms.

## 2 REVIEW OF ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT AND ADDENDUMS

### Background

2.1 The landscape and visual aspects of the Environmental Statement (ES) and subsequent Addendums (ESAs) have been authored by Nicholas Pearson Associates (NPA). The Landscape Design proposals have been prepared by Grant Associates (GA). In this report, we will refer to 'NPA' / 'GA' as appropriate for their respective contributions.

2.2 This review allows for and combines pertinent comments from two previous reports produced by TLP (March 2016 and September 2016) that covered the original submission and later update of Feb 2016. The applicant's submitted documents reviewed in this report include:

- ◆ Environmental Statement Chapter 9 - Landscape and Visual Effects (ES) and supporting Appendices F1-F7- NPA (September 2015)
- ◆ Landscape design proposals - GA 2015
- ◆ Design and Access Statement (DAS) - Section 2 Vision and Objectives, Section 3: Site analysis, Section 4: Design Principles, Section 5: Design Evolution and Section 6: The Landscape and Masterplan Proposals – IDI Gazeley Planning and Design Team (September 2015)
- ◆ Cover Report and Summary: Update of the Environmental Statement and Supplemental Information (ESA Feb 2016)– (Feb 2016)
- ◆ Update of the Environmental Statement Chapter 9 and Supplemental Information. Landscape and Visual Effects (ESA Feb 2016) and updated drawings and Appendices – NPA (Feb 2016)

[NB The Update was produced partly in response to comments from TLP]

- ◆ Cover Report and Summary: The Amendment to the Planning Application, Update of the Environmental Statement and Supplemental Information – IDI Gazeley Planning and Design Team (April 2016)
- ◆ Update Addendum to the Environmental Statement Chapter 9: Landscape and Visual Effects (ESA Feb 2016) and supporting Appendices and Figures - NPA (April 2016). [NB This is based on a revision to the scheme involving the retention of Bittesby House]

- ◆ Clarifications Addendum to the Environmental Statement Chapter 9: Landscape and Visual Effects (ESAC Feb 2016) – NPA (April 2016). [NB This is based on a revision to the scheme involving the retention of Bittesby House]

- ◆ Addendum to the Environmental Statement Chapter 9: Landscape and Visual Effects (ESA Nov 2016) and supporting Appendices and Figures – NPA (Nov 2016).

[NB Amendments following the Grant of Planning Permission for DHL Supply Chain 15/00919/FUL]

- ◆ Clarifications and Supplementary Information to the Environmental Statement Chapter 9: Landscape and Visual Effects including Soft Landscape Phasing Plan and clarifications – NPA (Nov 2016).

- ◆ Addendum to the Environmental Statement Chapter 9 – Landscape and Visual Effects. Volume 3B: Cumulative Impact Assessment Addendum to Chapter 9 NPA (July 2017)

2.3 The Addendum and associated materials of February 2016 includes clarifications and additional material in relation to points made in TLP’s initial findings in January 2016 report.

2.4 The Addendum and associated materials of April 2016 relate to the revised proposal to retain Bittesby House within the scheme.

2.5 The Addendum of November 2016 and associated materials related to the consent for the DHL scheme and consequential reduced effects allowing for it forming part of the baseline rather than an undetermined proposal. The DHL scheme is largest and tallest single building within the scope of the Hybrid application but also closest to the existing Magna Park. The Clarifications and Further Information provide detail on the evolution of the proposals for the Hybrid Site, together with information on phasing of planting and advanced planting and a justification of some of the judgements made in the ES and ESA compared to those by TLP.

2.6 The Addendum and associated materials of 2017 focuses on cumulative landscape and visual effects from existing consented schemes and applications yet to be determined in the locality.

## Methodology

- 2.7 The Landscape and Visual Effects Section (LVIA) of the ES has been prepared in accordance with the GLVIA 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (2013) which is the current best practice guidance document for producing LVIAs within an Environmental Statement. The structure and content of the LVIA follows the GLVIA guidance and provides a very comprehensive level of information for a scheme of this type.
- 2.8 The LVIA methodology (Technical Appendix F2) provided in the ES is clear and well-structured with good definitions to base judgements against. It should be noted that within the applicant's methodology any landscape and visual effects of 'Moderate to Major' and above are considered to be 'significant' and as such are important factors in the decision-making process. [NB. The use of Moderate to Major as the 'significance' threshold is not universal for all ES's where alternative levels of Moderate and above may be set as the significance threshold.]

## Proposed Development

- 2.9 The existing Magna Park development is recognised as an exemplar logistics/distribution development. This is expressed in part by the treatment of the landscape within and around the perimeter of the existing Magna Park. Any proposed extension or closely related development, such as the proposed Hybrid Application should continue the existing pattern and high-quality of green infrastructure as an integral part of any proposal.
- 2.10 The application is a large-scale proposal for B8, B1, D1 logistics and commercial development. Allowing for the approved DHL element and the Country Park the Site is c. 80% of the existing Magna Park, extending c 2.4km (north-west to south) along the A5 and c 1.2 m (to the north-east) from the A5. It is recognised that the majority of the Hybrid Application (15/01531/OUT) is outline and that matters relating to layout, scale and landscaping would form part of any future Reserved Matters applications. Nonetheless considerable supporting information has provided at this outline stage. Comments are provided on these including:
- Parameters Plans - Drawing number 3657-34 (Rev 18) and 3657-36 (Rev 06) by Chetwoods. Dwg 3657-34 (Rev 18) shows the parcels and main structural landscape features and 3657-36 (Rev06) shows the building heights AOD
  - Illustrative Masterplan – Drawing MLP410- AL- A01- MP-0-001 (Rev 02) - by GA
  - Proposed Illustrative Landscape Sections – Drawings MLP410- AL- A01- GE-2-001, 2, 3 and 4 - by GA
  - Design Access Statement (DAS) - by IDI Gazeley /Brookfield Logistics Properties



- Illustrative Masterplan Comparison – Drawing 3657-41 (12/4/2016) by Chetwoods. [NB shows the areas affected by retaining Bittesby House]
- Hybrid Masterplan Planting Phases Fig 3.1 MPL410-AL-SK038 03 to show the progressive implementation of the structural planting

2.11 The original application included the demolition of Bittesby House. Concerns were raised by consultees to this loss and as a consequence an amended scheme was submitted retaining Bittesby House.

### ***Design and Access Statement and Proposals***

2.12 The DAS provides a comprehensive approach to the background, objectives and design of the scheme. The document is clearly set out and accompanied by high quality illustrations. The DAS notes (2.1.3) that this is a landscape led scheme and this statement is reflected by the volume and level of detail relating to landscape orientated matters. Much of the analysis material on landscape and visual matters in the DAS is common with sections of the LVIA in the ES.

2.13 Section 2 of the DAS sets out the Vision and Objectives for the Site. The first three objectives relate to commercial matters. Of the remaining nine objectives seven relate to landscape and or environmental matters. Paragraph 2.4.1 states that the masterplan has been conceived as an evolution of Magna Park and would involve a fundamental change to the character of the existing landscape combining both an expanded logistics centre and areas of supportive landscape and open space. The green infrastructure approach is embedded within scheme and is reflected by the approach to inter alia: water management, protected landscapes, access, landscape management and adaptation to climate change.

2.14 Section 3 of the DAS provides analysis of the Site in relation to a range of topics including: landscape character, soils, arboriculture, ecology, public rights of way, heritage and sensitive views. One particularly important aspect is the topography of the Site. It is noted this varies by approximately 22 m across the Site. A series of tributary streams and valleys of the River Soar run through the centre of the application Site with areas of high ground to the south-west, south-east and north. The topography of the application Site is undulating and very different to the plateau landscape on which the existing Magna Park has been established to the south.

2.15 Section 4 sets out the Design Principles and in particular at page 68, paragraph 4.2.3 how they respond to landscape character and views. These design principles have helped guide the Illustrative Masterplan.

2.16 TLP consider there are a number of positive features of the illustrative proposals and include:

- a. An improved network of rights of way utilising public rights of way and proposed permissive routes. These would link settlements and existing routes with the network focusing at the proposed Bitteswell Country Park in the centre of the Site
  - b. A substantive Strategic Green Infrastructure network combining existing features and areas of new planting, bio-diverse meadows, open space and wetlands focused on the Bittesby County Park.
  - c. Responsiveness to the key characteristics of the Lutterworth Lowlands and Upper Soar LCAs, albeit that there is still likely to be a fundamental change in the landscape baseline through the introduction of the proposed development within the Upper Soar LCA. Some aspects of the proposed built environment including the proposed buildings and associated yards would be difficult to assimilate in the existing local context. Rather than integrating the scheme with the intrinsic characteristics of the Upper Soar LCA a new landscape would be effectively be created, in a comparable style to the existing Magna Park scheme but allowing for the more marked variations in the topography.
  - d. Offsite and detached planting areas including linear belts to the north-east on higher ground to provide more effective screening from neighbouring settlements and rights of way
  - e. Retention of Bittesby House as a Local Heritage Centre with links to the Bittesby Scheduled Monument.
  - f. In perpetuity management of the landscape areas.
  - g. Promotion of a new 'Area of Separation' between the application Site and nearby settlements of Ullesthorpe and Claybrooke Parva (similar in purpose to the existing Area of Separation supported by HDC Policy CS14 e) between Lutterworth and Magna Park) is indicated at paragraphs 4.3.2-4 and an accompanying drawing in the DAS. However, such a planning policy designation is not in the gift of the applicant and would need to be led by HDC.
- 2.17 It should also be noted that the landscape proposals for the approved DHL scheme include a comprehensive suite of landscape features.
- 2.18 Section 5- Design Evolution of the DAS explains how the proposed layout development has emerged and the exploration of a number of different options. A series of Masterplan Concepts are set out from page 92 to 97. These explore scheme options that are driven by diverse factors e.g. capacity, landscape, heritage or a more integrated approach. The selected concept includes locating the majority of the built forms at right angles and adjacent to the A5 corridor and a further large unit (the approved DHL - Unit G) adjacent to Mere Lane and existing Magna Park. The remaining central triangular area which follows the course of the low-lying valley and watercourses that run through the Site area are

mainly set aside for open space, heritage features, water management and recreational purposes. The applicants design response to the landscape is also summarised in the Nov 2016 ESA Update (paras 2.17-20). The rationale for the selected option is based on the stated constraints and appears sound subject to the acceptability of the proposed logistics development in the locality (which is part of the planning balance consideration).

- 2.19 Section 6 (for Zone 1) and Section 7 (for Zone 2) of the DAS detail the Landscape and Masterplan Proposals for the Site. These Sections include strategies for: the Site access and plot layout, the tree and woodland planting strategy and Habitat mitigation. The masterplan is accompanied by series of annotated illustrations, perspectives and cross sections. These provide evidence of a well-considered approach to create a diverse range of habitats and indicate the scope to provide a high-quality setting to the Site reflecting the benchmark of the existing Magna Park.
- 2.20 It is recognised that if consented the proposed development would be implemented over a number of years (c 10year period). This would result in incremental landscape and visual effects across the Site during the Construction stage and the progressive establishment of mitigation during the Operation Stage which would overlap with construction work on other parts of the Site. A Planting Phases Plan (Fig 3.1 MPL410-AL-SK038 03) has been submitted (Nov 2016) showing areas to form part of a phased delivery of infrastructure and on plot landscape works. This provides clarification and the basis for a suitable phasing plan and its delivery should be covered by a suitable planning condition including trigger dates for implementation of each phase.
- 2.21 TLP consider that the submitted information is sufficient to support an outline planning application and provides a good basis for further Reserved Matters applications should the scheme on balance be acceptable in planning terms. It is envisaged that conditions would also be required to cover: materials of building (including cladding type and colour), lighting, phasing, delivery and management of the landscape areas around and within the site.

### **Landscape Character Effects**

- 2.22 The ES considers the effects on landscape character and are assessed using both the relevant district scale units: Upper Soar, Lutterworth Lowlands and High Cross Plateau and further sub-divisions of the Upper Soar LCA within Zone 1 of the Site. The ES considers the effects at three levels, the Site, the local area and the district scale character unit. The level of sensitivity, magnitude of change and effects are most recently presented in the Nov 2016 ESA which allows for the DHL scheme as part of the baseline (as shown in Tables 5.1a and 1b- Oct 2016).

### ***Upper Soar LCA***

- 2.23 The majority of the Site (Zone 1) is located within the Upper Soar landscape character area (HDC LCA 2007) which is assessed as having an overall Medium Sensitivity for development in the HDC character assessment. The ES has divided the Upper Soar LCA into two sub-types:
- Upper Soar LCA -low lying clay vale farmland with gentle ridges landscape type and
  - Upper Soar LCA - Soar tributary flat floodplains and terrace type
- 2.24 The ES assesses both sub-types as having Medium levels of sensitivity to change. The 'low lying clay vale farmland with gentle ridges landscape type' covers most of the locations where the buildings are proposed and is assessed as having a Low to Medium susceptibility to change. The ES considers that during the Construction Stage there would be a High magnitude of change on the Site and Medium change both within 2km and at the District LCA level. The levels of effects would be Moderate to Major adverse on the Site and Moderate adverse within 2km and at the District LCA level. This would therefore result in a significant effect on the Site but not beyond.
- 2.25 During the Operation Stage the ES considers there would be Medium to High magnitude of change and a Major to Moderate adverse effect in the short term reducing to an Moderate adverse effects by the mid-term. This would initially result in a significant effect on the Site during Operation but reduce to a Moderate and non-significant effects even on the Site over time (Year 10 onwards).
- 2.26 TLP have identified a relatively higher level of sensitivity for the landscape sub-type. TLP agree the landscape value is Medium but that due to the nature and scale of the change the susceptibility to change is higher resulting in a Medium to High sensitivity overall. This different opinion reflects the consequence of introducing large logistics buildings extending over 2km along an undeveloped section of the A5 corridor comprising an undulating rural landscape. The nature of the existing topography and vegetation would be susceptible to the type of change proposed by creating large footprint buildings and parking areas on level plots across the underlying sloping ground. This higher susceptibility is despite the acknowledged historic change that has taken place in the Site over the last c.150 as highlighted by NPA (ESA Update Nov 2016 page 21). The magnitude of change is agreed with the ES but the levels of effect during the Construction Stage would be relatively higher than identified in the ES. TLP consider this would be Major on the Site and Moderate to Major within c 1km. Both of these are significant effects on character. During Operation stage TLP consider a Major adverse effect would continue in the early years reducing to Moderate to Major over time on the Site and a Moderate to Major effect in the early years within 1km reducing to Moderate (and then not significant over time) within 1km.

- 2.27 The 'Soar tributary flat floodplains and terrace type' relates to locations in the Site that are in the main undeveloped and retained as local valley/stream corridors. The ES considers that the susceptibility to change in this sub-type is relatively higher at Medium to High but the sensitivity is still Medium. During the Construction Stage there would be a Medium to High magnitude of change on the Site, Medium to Low change within 2km and a Low change at the District LCA level. The levels of effects would be Moderate adverse on the Site, Moderate to Minor adverse within 2km and Minor at the District LCA level. This would result in no significant effects on the Site or beyond.
- 2.28 During the Operation Stage the ES considers there would be similar levels of magnitude and effects initially but this would reduce a level over time. Therefore, no significant effects are identified over time on the sub-type.
- 2.29 TLP have identified a relatively higher level of sensitivity for the landscape sub-type as the introduction of large scale built development in close proximity and the change of levels and character through the creation of a Country Park, playing pitches, roads etc. would be a substantial change from the existing situation and character. TLP also consider that the value of sub-type is higher than in the ES being Medium/High in the areas away from the A5 corridor as opposed to Medium. This is based on the presence of the Bittesby Scheduled Monument, the contained character of the valley, the stream corridor, attendant vegetation and associated features. TLP consider that during the Construction Stage the magnitude of change would be High on the Site and High to Medium within 1km. Therefore, TLP consider that the level of effect would be a Moderate to Major on the Site and Moderate within 1km. The first of these effects would be a significant effect. During the Operation stage TLP consider a Moderate to Major adverse and significant effect would continue in the early years on the Site reducing to Moderate with the establishment of the mitigation. Beyond the Site TLP consider there would initially be a Moderate and not significant effect reducing to Moderate to Minor in time.

### ***Lutterworth Lowlands LCA***

- 2.30 A small part of the Site, in Zone 1, is located within the Lutterworth Lowlands landscape character area (HDC LCA 2007) which has a Medium-Low sensitivity. This area is located east of Mere Lane but is included in the approved DHL scheme and the effects are now understood to be part of the baseline. A further area of land – Zone 2 includes the site of the proposed lorry park to the south-east of the George site. This area had previous consent for a similar type of development to that proposed.
- 2.31 The ES assesses the value of Zone 2 land to be Medium to Low and the sensitivity of the local character area to be Low. The magnitude of change from the proposed Construction in Zone 2 would be High on the Site and Medium on the locality. The level of effect on the LCA is assessed as Moderate on the Site and Minor on the locality. The magnitude of change during Operation would remain High on the

Site and Medium to Low on the locality. The level of effect on the LCA is assessed as Moderate on the Site and Minor reducing to Negligible on the locality by the mid-term.

- 2.32 TLP agree with the judgements on the Lutterworth Lowlands and that none of these effects are Significant.

### ***High Cross LCA***

- 2.33 TLP are in agreement with the ES that there would not be any significant landscape character effects on the High Cross Plateau-Open Plateau to the west of the A5. From within the High Cross Plateau the effects are indirect and reduced due the combination of distance and that the plateau character of the landscape helps to assimilate the proposed buildings from this direction. Taking into account the proposed planting along the A5 corridor which would be partly implemented with the approved DHL scheme the greatest level of effects over time would be Moderate and not significant.

### ***Landscape Effects with Retention of Bittesby House***

- 2.34 The ESA (April 2016) includes a variant to the original proposals to retain Bittesby House together with its principal outbuildings, grounds and some of the associated mature trees within the layout. The change is set out at pages 5-13 of the Cover Report and Summary (April 2016). TLP consider that the retention of Bittesby House and its immediate grounds is a modest but net benefit together with the potential for greater visual linkage with the Schedule Monument to the north-west. There will also be a consequential reduction in the adverse effects during Construction and Operation stages.
- 2.35 However, while the proposed physical retention of Bittesby House is beneficial the effects on the current setting of the house in landscape terms would still be adverse since: a large part of the tree avenue which provides a key existing feature in the approach to the house from the south would still be removed and the principal southern elevation of the house would lose its outward vista over the open agricultural land to the south and be more contained by new planting put in place to screen views to Parcel H. Furthermore, the proposed approach to Bittesby House would be amended to come from the north-west (rear) along the new access track. From this route the sense of arrival at the house would be very much reduced until leaving the car park on foot.
- 2.36 At Construction stage TLP agree with the ESA (April 2016) that with the retention of Bittesby House there would be a modest reduction in the size/scale of effect in landscape character terms. However, TLP agree with the ES that this change would not be sufficient to move from a 'High' adverse to 'Medium to High' magnitude category within the 'Low Lying Clay Vale Farmland' character sub-type of the Upper Soar. The ESA considers the effect would remain at Moderate to Major while TLP consider this would remain at Major adverse on the character of the Site.

- 2.37 At Operation stage the ESA similarly considers that despite the enhancements at Bittesby House there would be no change to the assessed level of effect on landscape character in the 'Low Lying Clay Vale Farmland' character sub-type at Year 1 or in the mid-term with which TLP would agree. The ESA considers there would be a Major adverse effect at Year 1 reducing to Major to Moderate in the mid-term on the Site which is a locally significant. NPA consider that the level of effects would reduce to Moderate and non-significant on the Site from the medium term. TLP consider that effects would still continue to be Moderate-Major and significant within the Site into the longer term.

### ***Area of Separation***

- 2.38 Zone 1 and Zone 2 both lie within c.1.5km of different parts of the Area of Separation (HDC Policy CS14e) between Lutterworth and Magna Park. TLP consider there would be a Negligible effect on this designation from the Hybrid scheme due to the distance and intervening natural and built landscape features (including the approved DHL scheme).

### **Visual Effects**

- 2.39 The ES has assessed the effect on visual receptors within the area through the use of 22 viewpoints (some of which are then subdivided a, b etc. to reflect sequential routes e.g. along rights of way giving a total of 38 locations). This provides a comprehensive range of representative locations and receptors. A number of wirelines (showing the outline of the proposed buildings at the set parameters) and verifiable photomontages have been produced to illustrate the scale and location of the visual effects from eleven locations. The images have been updated in the November 2016 ESA submission to show the DHL scheme as part of the baseline and the summary table of effects on visual receptors (Tables F. 5.2ai and F.5.3bi) is highlighted to identify any changes from the original ES.

### ***Construction Phase***

- 2.40 During the Construction period the ES and ESAs identified significant visual effects (level at Major or Moderate to Major) at viewpoint locations: 3(Woodway Lane) 4aii and 4aiiv, 4bii (south Claybrooke Parva) 4civ (Bridleway W86 within Site) 5aii (Ullesthorpe Moat Scheduled Monument) 6ai, 6aiiv, 6b (rights of way south of Ullesthorpe), 9ai, 9bi and 9bii (Bridleway W88 within Site) 15 (east Willey Fields Farm) and 16a-d (west A5). Effects at Viewpoint 7 (Bittesby SM) were reduced to not significant in the context of the consented DHL scheme.
- 2.41 TLP agree with most of the judgements of sensitivity, magnitude and effect in the ES and note that all the significant visual effects would be within c.1km of the Site. There are a few differences in professional judgement between the ES and TLP. TLP consider the sensitivity to change (and value) is likely to be higher at some of the Viewpoints e.g. 4aii, 4c and 9a-c. However, since the DHL scheme

now forms part of the baseline the magnitude of change and level of effect at a number of locations (e.g. Viewpoint 7 by Bittesby Scheduled Monument and Viewpoint 12 Mere Lane) have proportionately reduced.

- 2.42 It is noted that the Construction stage would last for a number of years as the scheme is built out. This would result in a progressive and incremental development rather than all the development taking place simultaneously. The phased implementation of the planting works would also provide early localised mitigation from some viewpoints and reduced effects.

### ***Operation Phase***

- 2.43 The ES and ESA (Tables L.5.3b and bi) identify significant visual effects in the short-term from Viewpoints 3 (Woodway Lane) 4bii (south Claybrooke Parva) 4cv and 4cvi (Bridleway W86 within Site near A5) 6ai, 6aii, 6aiii and 6aiv (right of way south of Ullesthorpe), 9a and 9bi (Bridleway W88 within Site) and 16a-d (west A5). However, no significant effects (i.e. above Moderate) are identified in the ES from the medium-term onwards.
- 2.44 During the Operation period TLP agree with most of the judgements on sensitivity and magnitude in the ES. Differences in professional judgement include that TLP consider the magnitude of change is likely to be higher at Viewpoint: 9bii (Bridleway 88 within the Site) being Major reducing to Major-Moderate due to the extent of the development occupied within the views (despite DHL being part of baseline). This is likely to result in some significant Major and Moderate to Major effects during the Operation of the scheme from this location at Year 1. The magnitude would then slowly reduce in time as the landscape mitigation establishes.
- 2.45 In contrast to the ES, TLP also identify that significant effects would continue into the medium term at Viewpoints, 6ai, 7, 9a and 9bi. It is acknowledged that most of these viewpoints are either within or close to the Site with the most distant being 6ai at c. 730m south of Ullesthorpe. This reflects a relatively few number of locations for the size and scale of the proposed development and is in part a result to the extent of landscape mitigation proposed. It is understood that the land uses shown on the Parameter Plans including the areas of Country Park and Structural Landscape would be a requirement of any future reserved matters application.
- 2.46 It is also likely that there would be significant visual effects on the three residential properties at White House Farm at least in the short to medium term. However, NPA have confirmed (ESA Nov 2016 Clarifications and Further Information – Section 3)) that additional advanced planting would be provided for this location and have shown this change on the Hybrid Masterplan Planting Phases (Fig 3.1 MPL410-AL-SK038 03). If implemented these proposals would make a positive measure (of 5-7 years growth) to reduce the effects on the properties at White House Farm before the main development works approach the location. This advanced planting would also need to be secured by way of a planning condition.
- 2.47 The proposed development is extensive comprising many large built forms set within an undulating topographical context. From some orientations e.g. as seen from the north on Woodway Lane the proposed buildings would be seen against the backdrop of the existing Magna Park. Where this is the case the level of impact once mitigation becomes established would be relatively lower. However, from



viewpoints to the west and east the notable linear extension of built form along the A5 would intrude into the existing open rural views and the levels of effect would be greater. There would be a number of expansive views of the development from public rights of way in the vicinity once leaving villages in the local area e.g. 4aiii (south of Claybrooke Parva), 6ai (south of Ullesthorpe), 9bi (Bridleway W88) and 14b (east of Willey). A number of these routes are from local ridges where there are panoramas over the undulating existing arable landscape, albeit also with the consented DHL scheme being visible in some parts of the view. The built forms would break the skyline in number of these viewpoints and even after the planting has established would still remain prominent features on the horizon. However, it is recognised that any future reserved matters applications could include materials for graduated colour cladding which could reduce the visual impact of built form as shown in the photo realistic montages in the Nov 2016 ESA Update for Viewpoints 5ai, 6ai and 7.

### ***Lighting***

- 2.48 The proposed development would include lighting to illuminate access roads, buildings and service yards. The anticipated residual effects of lighting are assessed in the ES (9.7.56).
- 2.49 The proposals include for improved cut off lighting to the main buildings with a white and more natural light. This should help to make a notable reduction in night time impact compared to the orange glow of parts of the existing Magna Park lighting. While the intensity of lighting on the buildings could therefore be reduced the geographical spread of the effects would increase along the A5 corridor. A number of elements of the lighting design may also result in higher levels of adverse effect including: lighting column masts in service areas (as present in the existing Magna Park) if seen from public/private locations, internal access roads and roundabout lighting on the A5 near White House Farm. The applicant has indicated that there are no proposals for flood lighting the sports pitches associated with the innovation centre.
- 2.50 The intention stated in the ES is for high standards of lighting design to be provided to minimise intrusive light and to be within guideline levels for ecology and visual amenity. Lighting design should form a planning condition and the scheme incorporate the latest and high standards of lighting design to minimise light pollution.

### **Cumulative Effects**

- 2.51 Consideration of cumulative effects was included in the ES (Section 9.8). This allowed for a number of other developments in the locality and wider area most notably, Symmetry Park (1500865/OUT) a proposal for 278,709sqm of B8 and B1 to the south of Magna Park.

- 2.52 Further information was provided (in response to a request from TLP) in the Update of the ES (Feb 2016). This covered an assessment of the local landscape west of Lutterworth as a whole to include the combined effects on landscape character (not just on the HDC defined LCAs of Upper Soar and Lutterworth Lowlands as discrete areas). In terms of visual effects, the main focus is on the sequential effects from the local road network.
- 2.53 A further ESA (July 2017) was produced following a Regulation 22 request from HDC in March 2017 to allow for two further consented schemes, Coventry Road – 250-unit residential Scheme (15/01665/OUT) and Fairacres Scheme- B1 Employment and allotment site (16/01288/OUT) and also to reflect the fact the DHL scheme (15/00919/FUL) is now part of the baseline. The ESA (July 2017) reflects the latest assessment and has been used as the basis for identifying the most up to date cumulative effects assessed by NPA.
- 2.54 The ESA (July 2017) considers two Scenario of cumulative effects:
- 2.55 Scenario 1: cumulative landscape and visual effects arising from the addition of the three additional committed schemes and the remainder of the outline IDI Gazeley Hybrid proposal (15/01531/OUT)
- 2.56 Scenario 2: as above situation plus the Symmetry Park scheme (1500865/OUT)
- 2.57 In TLPs opinion the main consideration as part of this application in cumulative terms is the aggregate combination of all the schemes i.e. Scenario 2. The Construction effects of the Hybrid scheme are assessed as lasting 10 years, Symmetry Park 7 years and the other two developments 5 years in duration.

### ***Cumulative Landscape Effects***

- 2.58 **Lutterworth Lowlands LCA** - The ESA (Nov 2016) identified the Lutterworth Lowlands LCA as having a Medium sensitivity overall. The small part of the Hybrid Site within Zone 1 was assessed as Low sensitivity and the part within Zone 2 Medium to Low sensitivity. In Scenario 2 at Construction stage the ESA considers there would be a Major adverse cumulative effect on the LCA and a Moderate to Major Effect at Operation and over the longer term. This is an increase from the situation before the addition of the two recently consented schemes (when assessed in the Feb 2016 ESA). At both Construction and Operation stages this would be a significant and adverse effect and considered to principally arise from the addition of the Symmetry Park scheme with minimal impact from the small parts of the Hybrid scheme in the LCA. The effects would not be reduced in the winter. The ESA considers the main character effects would be on reducing the local farmland gap and the landscape separation between the settlement of Magna Park and Lutterworth.

- 2.59 TLP agree that the IDI Gazeley Hybrid scheme would not give rise to any significant cumulative effects on the Lutterworth Lowlands. The cumulative effects are based on a combination of all three developments but with the Symmetry Park being the largest component.
- 2.60 **Upper Soar LCA** - The ES and ESAs do not consider there would be any significant cumulative impact on the Upper Soar LCA. This seems unreasonable as Scenario 1 would include the DHL and remaining part of the Hybrid as two separate schemes. Since a significant cumulative finding of Moderate to Major is identified in the Lutterworth Lowlands for the three developments it is likely there would also be a significant cumulative effect in the Construction and early stage of the Operation period from the DHL and remaining part of Hybrid on the character area.
- 2.61 **High Cross Plateau** – TLP agree that there would be no significant cumulative effects on the High Cross Plateau LCA.
- 2.62 **Local landscape to the west of Lutterworth as a whole** - The assessment of cumulative landscape effects is based on a composite landscape character area, 'Local landscape to the west of Lutterworth as a whole'. The extent of this area is shown on Appendix F.1 -Fig 9.3A F.1 and includes: Magna Park, the IDI Gazeley Hybrid application, the Symmetry Park application, and land beyond these sites between c 0.5 and c 1.5km distance up to Lutterworth, Ullesthorpe and Cotesbach.
- 2.63 The ESA (July2017) considers that the 'Local landscape to the west of Lutterworth as a whole' has Medium sensitivity with which TLP agree for the area defined. The ESA (July2017) considers there would be a Very High magnitude of change and a Major adverse and significant adverse effect at Construction and a similar effect at Operation. This is an increase from the ESA (Feb 2016) assessment with the addition of the two consented developments near Lutterworth. The main focus of the ESA relates to the reduction in the farmland gap between Lutterworth and Magna Park arising from the Symmetry Park appearing as an extension to the existing logistics development and the residential and other commercial development near Lutterworth. Despite the maturing landscape proposals these developments are still all assessed in the ESA as at variance with the landscape at a local level. It should be noted that the Symmetry Park schemes is not in the designated Area of Separation but lies adjacent to it.
- 2.64 TLP broadly agree that the in combination adverse cumulative effects in Scenario 2 on the Composite Landscape Character Area 'Local landscape to the west of Lutterworth as a whole' would result in some significant adverse cumulative effects. However, this would result not just from the locations between Lutterworth and Magna Park as described in the ESA but also from the DHL and Hybrid schemes which is not recognised in the ESA. While the DHL and Hybrid schemes do not reduce the rural gaps between the Magna Park and Lutterworth they would reduce the gaps between Magna Park and Willey, Claybrooke Parva and Ullesthorpe. In addition, they would comprise a considerable

expansion of logistics development to the north-west along the A5 corridor and to the north of Magna Park. Therefore, TLP considered that both clusters of development contribute to the significant cumulative landscape effects that would occur on the local landscape area but in differing respects – one would reduce a countryside gaps between settlements and the other also extend development c. 2.5km into the countryside.

### ***Cumulative Visual Effects***

- 2.65 In terms of cumulative visual effects, there are no locations where the IDI Gazeley Hybrid scheme (except for the Zone 2 lorry park element) and Symmetry Park could both be seen simultaneously. Therefore, cumulative visual effects are focused around sequential impacts as perceived by receptors on the local road network. There is a possibility that there would be sequential effects for users of rights-of-way, but due to the distances and time to travel along the routes these cumulative effects are not considered to be significant.
- 2.66 ESA Nov 2016 focuses on the effects on road users travelling through the area including users of the A5, Mere Lane, A4303 and Coventry Road/Brookfield Road. TLP agree that the sensitivity of receptors will be Low sensitivity on the main roads and Medium on Mere Lane.
- 2.67 Construction activities are likely to extend over a period of up to 10 years from the various developments. The ESA considers there would be a High magnitude of change during the Construction stage from these various developments, and that this would result in a Moderate to Major adverse significant cumulative effect. This level of effect is unchanged from the ESA Feb 2016 since while the additional developments on the edge of Lutterworth at Brookfield Way and Fairacres are now factored in the DHL scheme would form part of the baseline.
- 2.68 During the Operation stage from Year 1 and in the short-term the ESA considers there would be an increased (from the situation assessed in the ESA Feb 2016) Very High magnitude of change for journeys including sections of Mere Lane, the A5, Coventry Road and Brookfield Way. The latest ESA considers that the effect would be significant and reach levels of Major adverse up to year 10 at which point it would reduce to Moderate to Major. This would therefore represent be a significant cumulative effect in the longer term despite the progressive establishment of planting associated with each of the various developments. The ESA emphasises the increase magnitude of change on the western edge of Lutterworth as being the major change in the updated ESA.
- 2.69 In terms of night time effects lighting would be introduced to each of the consented and proposed developments. This would expand the influence of artificial lighting within the landscape, but in the context of existing departments both at Magna Park and Lutterworth. Details of lighting are not

available for the developments and are therefore difficult to determine. However, but for road users this is unlikely to be a significant adverse effect and capable of mitigation by suitable lighting design at reserved matters stage.

- 2.70 TLP would agree with the judgements in the latest ESA during both Construction and initial Operation stages. However, as time progresses TLP consider the character would increasingly change to a landscape with wooded shelter belts and planting that contain the various developments and therefore this would progressively reduce the adverse effects over time to being Moderate and non-significant.

### 3 CONCLUSIONS

- 3.1 The ES, Addendums of February 2016, November 2016 and July 2017 and associated Clarifications and Updates produced by NPA on behalf of the applicant provide clear and well-structured reports that respond to the range of landscape and visual issues related to the Site including matters raised by TLP. The most recent assessments allow for the consented DHL scheme as part of the baseline and the full range of consented/committed schemes within the cumulative assessment. Many of the judgements on sensitivity, magnitude and effects are agreed between TLP and NPA but a few differences of professional judgement remain on sensitivity, magnitude and level of effect.

#### ***Proposals***

- 3.2 The submitted Landscape Masterplan and Parameter Plans set out a strong landscape framework for the development of the site as a major logistics development. The proportion of the site given over to structural landscape at c. 49% is notable and includes a number of positive features in terms of public access, biodiversity, green infrastructure and heritage interpretation. This would be centred on a proposed Bittesby Country Park but extend through much of the Site. The future management of the strategic landscape areas and areas of open space would be the responsibility of the applicant (via a s106 agreement) and would ensure long term benefits for the community and local environment. However, while the provision of the quantum of open space is a positive and relatively generous, for a development of this type, it is driven by the existing Site constraints including the tributary valley features of the Upper Soar and the presence of the Scheduled Monument and Bittesby House within the centre of the Site. These constraints necessitate the linear development pattern along the A5 corridor extending some 2.4km beyond the existing edge of Magana Park. Layout and landscaping are reserved matters, and can be developed further as part of a future Reserved Matters application. However, the submitted materials provide a positive basis for establishing a strong landscape framework if the application is consented.

#### ***Summary on landscape character effects***

- 3.3 The ES concludes that there would be few significant landscape character effects. These would be restricted to the part of the Upper Soar LCA (low lying clay vale farmland with gentle ridges - landscape type) where the built development is concentrated and then only during Construction stage and in the Operation stage in the short term until the landscape mitigation has begun to be established.
- 3.4 In contrast TLP's opinion is that the geographical extent and duration of significant effects would be relatively greater. This would extend to significant effects both during the Construction period and Operation stage within the 'low lying clay vale farmland with gentle ridges landscape sub-types' in the Upper Soar LCA both within the Site and extending to locations beyond the site in the immediate area up to a maximum of c. 1km. Within the 'Soar tributary flat floodplains and terrace sub-type' TLP

consider there would be a Moderate to Major effect within the Site at both Construction and the early years of Operation. This assessment by TLP is made in the context of the substantive landscape proposals incorporated within the development and presence of the DHL scheme as part of the baseline. TLPs judgement reflects the scale and location of development (which extends some 2.4km x 1.2km) and the likely visibility of the proposed built forms in the winter months. This would constitute a locally significant effect on the landscape character of the Upper Soar albeit it is acknowledged that in the longer term (c. year 10 onwards) the adverse effects would progressively reduce both within the Site and from the immediate area. This would result in a change of landscape character to this part of the Upper Soar valley in the longer term to produce in TLPs opinion a neutral nature of change to character where the c. 48% of the Site given over to green infrastructure and open space making a positive contribution to the landscape and offsetting the adverse impacts of the logistic building and infrastructure by this time.

- 3.5 TLP agree with the ES that there are unlikely to be significant effects from the proposals on the other two district landscape character areas i.e. Lutterworth Lowlands and High Cross Plateau in the vicinity. In the case of the Lutterworth Lowlands the extent of the effect is relatively localised and the works within Zone 2 comprise a development that is similar to a scheme that is already approved on that part of the Site.
- 3.6 The proposals if implemented would read as a notable northern extension to the existing Magna Park. This would in part, relate to the existing B8 development to the south including the consented DHL scheme, but would also extend over an open undulating agricultural landscape to the east of and following the A5.

### ***Visual effects***

- 3.7 In terms of visual effects, the ES and ESAs consider there would be significant visual effects during the Construction stage at viewpoint locations: 3(Woodway Lane) 4a<sup>iii</sup> and 4a<sup>iv</sup>, 4b<sup>ii</sup> (south Claybrooke Parva) 4c<sup>iv</sup> (Bridleway W86 within Site) 5a<sup>ii</sup> (Ullesthorpe Moat SM) 6a<sup>i</sup>, 6a<sup>iv</sup>, 6b (south of Ullesthorpe), 9a<sup>i</sup>, 9b<sup>i</sup> and 9b<sup>ii</sup> (Bridleway W88 within Site) 15 (east Willey Fields Farm) and 16a-d (west A5).
- 3.8 TLP agree with most of the judgements of sensitivity, magnitude and effect in the ES and that all the significant effects would be within c.1km of the Site. A few differences in professional judgement between the ES and TLP including TLP consider there would be relatively higher sensitivity at Viewpoints e.g. 4a<sup>ii</sup>, 4c and 9a-c.
- 3.9 It is important to note that the Construction stage would last for c. 10 years as the scheme is built out. This would result in a progressive and incremental development rather than all development taking place simultaneously. The phased implementation of the planting works as proposed would

provide early localised mitigation from some viewpoints and reduced effects of subsequent construction activities.

- 3.10 During the Operations stage The ES and ESA identify significant visual effects in the short-term from Viewpoints 3 (Woodway Lane) 4bii (south Claybrooke Parva) 4cv and 4cvi (Bridleway W86 within Site near A5) 6ai, 6aii, 6aiii and 6aiv (right of way south of Ullesthorpe), 9a and 9bi (Bridleway W88 within Site) and 16a-d (west A5). However, no significant effects (i.e. above Moderate) are identified in the ES from the medium-term onwards.
- 3.11 In contrast to the ES TLP also identify that significant effects would continue into the medium term (beyond Year 10) at Viewpoints 6ai, 7, 9a and 9bi. It is acknowledged that most of these viewpoints are either within or close to the Site with the most distant being 6ai at c. 730m south of Ullesthorpe. This also represents a relatively small number of locations, bearing in mind the size and scale of the proposed development, which in part reflects the extent of landscape mitigation proposed (based on the Parameter Plans including the areas of Country Park and Structural Landscape being a requirement of any and details include as part of any future reserved matters application). There is also scope to reduce the worst-case visual effects by the use of graduated colour cladding to buildings in future reserved matters applications (as illustrated by the submitted photo realistic montages in the Nov 2016 ESA Update for Viewpoints 5ai, 6ai and 7).

### ***Cumulative Effects***

- 3.12 The ES and ESAs identify there would some significant cumulative landscape character effects by extending the existing logistics facilities of Magna Park both to the north-west with the IDI Gazeley Hybrid scheme and to the south with the Symmetry Park application. Together these two developments in addition to other consented schemes in the area would result in a Major adverse significant adverse effect on the composite landscape character area 'Local landscape to the west of Lutterworth as a whole'.
- 3.13 TLP agree with this assessment but furthermore consider that the significant cumulative effects would result not just from the reduction in the gap between Lutterworth and Magna Park but also from the addition of both DHL and Hybrid schemes which would reduce the gap between Magna Park and settlements of Willey, Claybrooke Parva and Ullesthorpe. In addition, they would comprise a considerable expansion of logistics development along the A5 corridor to the north-west of Magna Park.
- 3.14 Cumulative visual effects are focused around sequential impacts as perceived from the local road network including users of the A5, Mere Lane, A4303 and Coventry Road/Brookfield Road. TLP agree that the sensitivity of receptors will be Low to Medium sensitivity. The ESA considers there would be



a High magnitude of change during the Construction stage from these various developments, and that this would result in a Moderate to Major adverse significant cumulative effect.

- 3.15 During the Operation stage from Year 1 and in the short-term the ESA considers there would be a Very High magnitude of change for journeys including Mere Lane, A5, Coventry Road and Brookfield Way. The latest ESA considers that the effect would be Major adverse up to year 10 at which point it would reduce to Moderate to Major. This would therefore still represent be a significant cumulative effect in the longer term despite the progressive establishment of planting associated with each of the various developments.
- 3.16 TLP would agree with the judgements in the latest ESA during both Construction and initial Operation stage but that the cumulative effects would be likely to reduce to non-significant levels in the longer term as the wooded shelter belts along the routes mature.

### ***Conclusion***

- 3.17 Overall there would be a number of significant adverse effects arising from the proposals on both landscape character and visual receptors within an area extending up to approximately 1km from the Site boundary. Bearing in mind the substantive scale of the overall development this significant effect is relatively localised and is likely to be expected in most greenfield locations. The adverse effects would reduce over time with the delivery of a phased landscape planting scheme and the range of proposed green infrastructure enhancements. The proposed development would result in a notably different landscape character and visual context to the Site and locality in the long-term, but one that has some synergies with its context adjacent to Magna Park to the north.
- 3.18 The adverse effects on landscape character and visual receptors will need to be balanced against all the benefits of the proposal by the decision maker. However, in landscape and visual terms the scheme as proposed is not considered to be unacceptable.