

Land at the west of Smithy Bridge Road

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

September 2022

Prepared for:

**Taylor
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1. Introduction

- 1.1. Randall Thorp LLP has been commissioned by Taylor Wimpey UK Ltd to produce a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) for proposed residential development on land west of Smithy Bridge Road.
- 1.2. The LVIA is prepared to assist the Council's determination of a full planning application for 199 dwellings and associated public open space, internal highways, car parking, gardens and landscaping with access to be taken from Smithy Bridge Road and pedestrian access from Brooklyn Avenue.
- 1.3. The site location and extent of the study area is shown on **Figure 1 (Appendix A)**. The site is located around 4km north-east of Rochdale Town Centre and within the wider area of Littleborough.
- 1.4. The site is currently in agricultural use. It is contained to the north and parts of the eastern and western boundaries by the urban edge of Smallbridge. Smithy Bridge Road borders part of the eastern boundary. The banks of the River Roch border the site to the south with the urban area of Smithy Bridge further south, beyond the Caldervale railway line and the Rochdale Canal.
- 1.5. The LVIA identifies and assesses the anticipated effects resulting from the development on the character and features of the landscape and on people's views and visual amenity. It describes the assessment methodology; the baseline conditions at the application site and surroundings; the scheme and the potential effects arising from it; the mitigation measures adopted to prevent, reduce or offset any significant adverse effects; and the likely residual effects when the scheme is operational.

2. Methodology

Guidance

- 2.1. The LVIA has been prepared in accordance with 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' (GLVIA), Third Edition, 2013; Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment.
- 2.2. Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 06/19 (2019) – Visual Representation of Development Proposals has been followed in respect of Type 1, Annotated Viewpoint Photographs.
- 2.3. Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 02/21 – Assessing landscape value outside national designations has been followed in respect of the assessment of valuing the landscape.

Approach

- 2.4. The principal objectives of the Landscape and Visual Appraisal are:
 - To describe and evaluate the existing landscape character and components likely to be affected by the proposals;
 - To identify visual receptors with views of the proposals;
 - To identify and describe the potential effects of the Proposed Development on landscape character and components, and on visual receptors;
 - To assess the significance of the residual effects, taking into account the measures proposed to mitigate any of the effects identified.

Baseline Studies

- 2.5. The baseline study identifies the landscape character and components of the site and surrounding landscape, and receptors with potential views of the development within the study area. The study area as shown on **Figure 1 (Appendix A)** includes an area of over 1km radius from the centre of the site. This includes parts of the 'urban valleys' landscape character area within which it sits and other surrounding landscape character areas, as described with the Rochdale Unitary Development Plan Adopt (2006). It also includes the urban context of the site and a much wider area than the visual envelope as built elements, topography and vegetation will prevent views of the site from a number of locations within the study area.
- 2.6. Baseline information on the landscape has been gathered through a combination of desk studies and field surveys.
- 2.7. The following documents have been reviewed as part of the desk study:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021)
- Natural England National Character Area –54 Manchester Pennine Fringe
- Rochdale Unitary Development Plan adopted June 2006
- Rochdale Adopted Core Strategy 2016

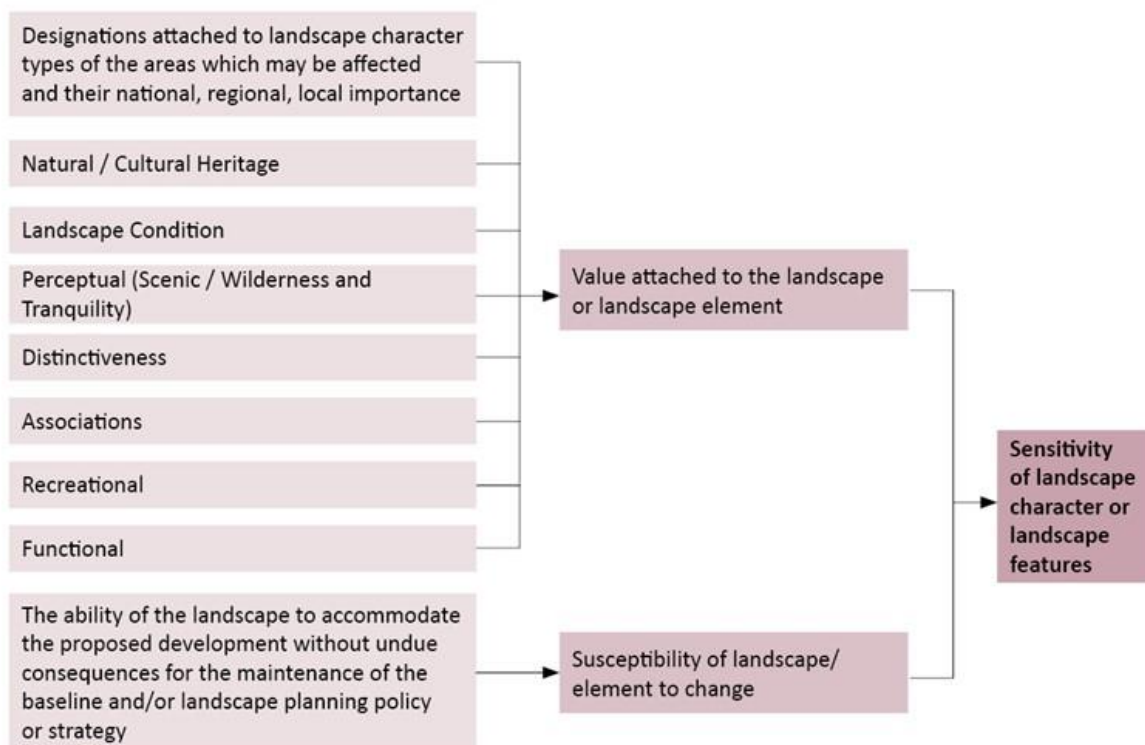
- 2.8. A site survey was carried out on the 1st February 2018 and further site surveys were carried out on the 25th March 2021. The field work established an understanding of the landscape within and around the site, its component parts and subdivisions, as well as the contribution currently made by different areas in terms of landscape quality and character, value, green infrastructure functions and accessibility. It also established the visual baseline to identify the range of views of the site, and whether there are any public viewpoints which are important in terms of appreciating the character of the site.
- 2.9. Viewpoints considered representative of potentially sensitive receptors situated within the study area at varying distances and directions have been identified. Views from public viewpoints, such as Public Rights of Way (PRoW) and roads in the vicinity, as well as private viewpoints at residential properties have been considered. As part of the screening process the viewpoints have been agreed with the Local Planning Authority.
- 2.10. The Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) report prepared by Urban Green (June 2022) has been relied upon with regard to the quality of the existing trees within the site and tree removal.

Photography Methodology

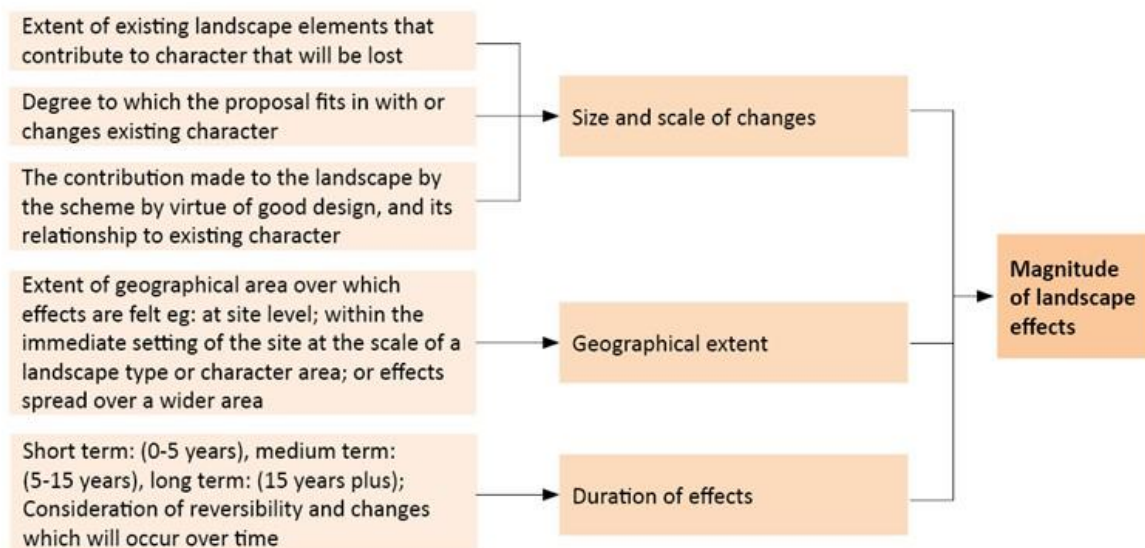
- 2.11. Photographic surveys have been undertaken to record views from readily accessible public viewpoints. A digital SLR camera (Nikon D3300) with a 35mm fixed lens has been used with the camera handheld to obtain normal eye height. Photographs included in the assessment are presented with the intention of aiding the understanding of the descriptive text. Where appropriate, frames have been joined together to create panoramas which are representative of normal forward vision with a horizontal field of view of 120 degrees, and which may be extended up to a maximum of 180 degrees.

Assessment of Effects

- 2.12. In line with GLVIA3, the assessment is based on consideration of the sensitivity of landscape character, landscape features, and views/viewers to the type of development being proposed, (i.e. – residential development) and on the magnitude of effect likely to occur. The sensitivity and magnitude are then considered together, and conclusions drawn on the likely effects on the landscape or on people's visual amenity.
- 2.13. For each landscape and visual receptor, a wide range of considerations are drawn together as indicated by **Diagrams 1 and 2**.

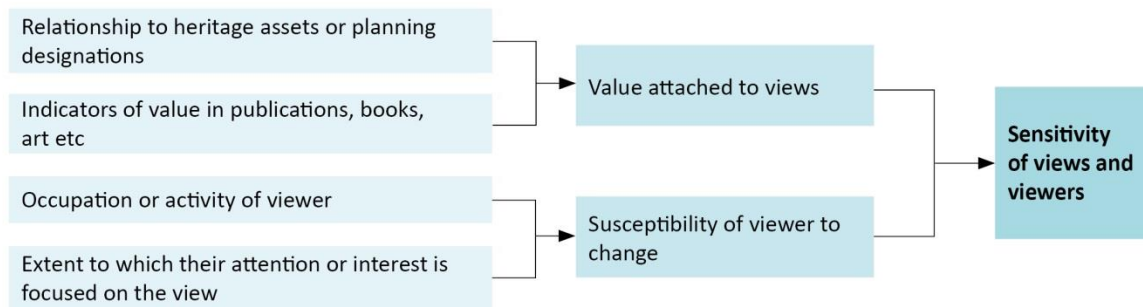
Diagram 1: Considerations contributing to establishing the significance of landscape effects.

A Overall Judgement in respect of sensitivity: Combines all of these considerations and is explained in text. It will be described as *High, Medium, Low or Negligible* depending on the combination of circumstances

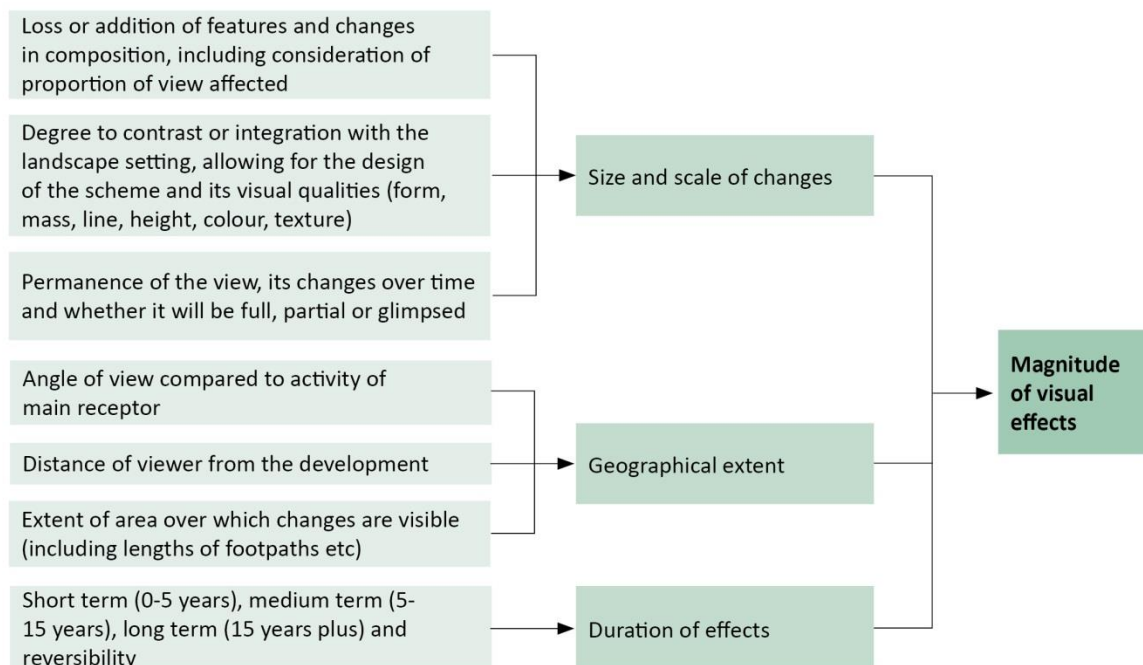


B Overall judgement in respect of magnitude of landscape effects: Combines all of these considerations and is explained in text. It will be described as *High, Medium, Low or Negligible* depending on the combination of circumstances

A + B = C Judgement of effects: Combines sensitivity and magnitude in a considered way and will be described as *Major, Moderate, Minor, Negligible, and as Beneficial, Adverse or Neutral* depending on the circumstances

Diagram 2: Considerations contributing to establishing the significance of visual effects.**A**

Overall Judgement in respect of sensitivity: Combines these considerations which are explained in the text. It will be described as *High, Medium or Low* depending on the combination of circumstances

**B**

Overall judgement in respect of magnitude of visual effects: combines these considerations which are explained in text. It will be described as *High, Medium, Low or Negligible* depending on the combination of circumstances

A + B = C

Judgement of effects: Combines sensitivity and magnitude in a considered way taking into account the pleasantness of the existing and resultant view, and will be described as *Major, Moderate, Minor or Negligible*, and as either *Beneficial, Adverse or Neutral* depending on the circumstances

- 2.14. The effects of the proposed development on the landscape and visual receptors identified above will be described as being Major, Moderate, Minor, Negligible or Neutral and either Adverse or Beneficial. The scale at which the effect will be felt will be identified (i.e. at site level, within the immediate setting of the site, at the scale of a landscape character type or

character area, effects spread over a wider area).

- 2.15. **Diagram 3** below indicates the general relationship between sensitivity and magnitude. However, this is not to be applied in a prescriptive manner and professional judgement will be used to assess the balance of the effect according to the individual circumstances.

Diagram 3: Indicative guide to relationship between sensitivity and magnitude

Magnitude	Sensitivity		
	High	Medium	Low
High	Major beneficial or adverse effect, or Neutral effect	Major or Moderate beneficial or adverse effect, or Neutral effect	Moderate or Minor beneficial or adverse effect, or Neutral effect
Medium	Major or Moderate beneficial or adverse effect, or Neutral effect	Moderate beneficial or adverse effect, or Neutral effect	Minor beneficial or adverse effect, or Neutral effect
Low	Moderate or Minor beneficial or adverse effect, or Neutral effect	Minor beneficial or adverse effect, or Neutral effect	Minor beneficial or adverse effect or negligible effect
Negligible	Negligible effect	Negligible effect	Negligible effect

Mitigation

- 2.16. Landscape mitigation is most effective if considered as an integral part of the site layout and design in order to avoid, reduce or offset any adverse effects on the landscape or wider environment. Landscape mitigation was part of an iterative process of project planning.
- 2.17. Avoidance of impact through site planning and design has been the preferred and primary mitigation strategy for the avoidance of adverse landscape and visual effects.
- 2.18. Where landscape features cannot be avoided and will be lost, compensation in the form of replacement or creation of other appropriate substitute features are proposed as deemed appropriate.

Assumptions and Limitations

- 2.19. The assessment is based on the following drawings:

- P21-2628-100A Landscape Masterplan (Pegasus)
- P21-2628_003Q Detailed Layout (Pegasus)

- 2.20. The assessment considers daytime effects during construction, at initial completion of development and 15 years post completion. The assessment at initial completion of the proposed development takes in to account that the planting shown on the planting plans would not be fully established and would not have reached heights to provide effective screening. The 15 year post completion assessment assumes that trees would have reached heights of at least 8m. The 15 year post planting assessment represents the residual, long term and permanent effects.
- 2.21. A computer generated Zone of Theoretical Visibility has not been undertaken, *“this treats the world as bare earth and does not take account of potential screening by vegetation or buildings”* (GLVIA3, 2013). Due to the location of the site on the edge of existing settlement and the screening properties of the built form, a manual approach to mapping visibility has been adopted in accordance with the recommendations of GLVIA3 (2013). Visual analysis has relied upon study of the existing topographical baseline and site observation taking in to account the existing terrain, vegetation and intervening development.
- 2.22. Photomontages have been undertaken in accordance with the Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 06/19 (2019) – Visual Representation of Development Proposals. The photomontage locations have been selected to show the worst-case scenario from publicly accessible viewpoints. The assessment of visual effects takes in to account the views from a length of public footpath/road and the photomontage shows the predicted view from a single point on that route. For example, the views from a route may be generally screened by intervening vegetation but there may be a glimpsed view where there is a break in that vegetation and the photomontage illustrates this view.

Scoping

- 2.23. An LVIA scoping report was sent to Rochdale Borough Council on 28th February 2018. This included a proposed study area, methodology and landscape and visual receptors to be included.
- 2.24. Rochdale Borough Council confirmed that the content and methodology for the LVIA was acceptable on 4th May 2018. Additional viewpoints were requested and a site meeting with Randall Thorp and Rochdale BC took place on 18th May 2018.
- 2.25. Rochdale BC confirmed that they were in agreement with the additional viewpoints included on the 1st June 2018 and the locations of the photomontages on the 19th June 2018.

3. Planning and Policy Framework

National Planning Policy

3.1. The National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021) promotes a presumption in favour of sustainable development for both plan-making and decision-taking (Paragraph 11).

3.2. Of most relevance are:

- Section 12, Achieving Well-Designed Places (paragraphs 126, 130, 131 and 134)
- Section 15, Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment (paragraph 174)

National Design Guide

3.3. The Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government published the National Design Guide in January 2021. Together with the National Model Design Code and Guidance Notes for Design Codes, the documents '*illustrate how well-designed places that are beautiful, healthy, greener, enduring and successful can be achieved in practice*'. It encompasses all current best practice thinking in urban design.

3.4. The National Design Guide identifies the components for good design and emphasises that good design should not only pay attention to buildings. Careful attention should also be given to the context for places and buildings, hard and soft landscape, technical infrastructure - transport, utilities and services such as drainage, and social infrastructure - social commercial, leisure uses and activities.

National Designations

3.5. There are no national statutory landscape designations within the site boundary; the Rochdale Canal SAC/SSSI is located 450m to the south of the site and lies within the study area.

Local Planning Policy

3.6. The Unitary Development Plan (UDP) was adopted by Rochdale Borough Council in 2006 the document and the proposals map remain current at this point. Some of the planning policies within the UDP have been replaced by policies set out in the Adopted Core Strategy adopted 2016; however saved policies from the UDP are to be read in conjunction with relevant policies outlined in the Core Strategy. It is proposed that the policies set out in the UDP will be superseded once the Allocations Development Plan Document is published. At this point the DPD will support the Core Strategy and together they will replace the UDP.

3.7. **Figure 1 (Appendix A)** shows the current planning policy taken from the proposals map.

Rochdale Borough Unitary Development Adopted 2006

3.8. The site falls within an area of "Protected Open Land" defined by Policy D/10 of Rochdale's

UDP.

D/10 Protected Open Land:

'Within the areas of Protected Open Land defined on the Proposals Map, development proposals will be permitted that fall within one or more of the following categories:

- a) development which would be acceptable were it in the Green Belt; or*
- b) limited infilling within an established pocket of housing or industry where this is in scale with the area and will not adversely affect its character or surroundings; or*
- c) a limited extension to an existing building which:*
 - i. forms part of an existing source of employment; or*
 - ii. is necessary for the establishment of a new enterprise or business which satisfies other policies of the Plan; and*
 - iii. is sited within the existing curtilage of the business concerned and will not adversely affect the character of the surrounding land and its openness.*

Where new buildings are permitted, they should be sited to form a group with existing buildings. Where this is not possible, buildings, car parking areas and other new structures, should be sited where they will be well screened and unobtrusive in the landscape. All buildings and extensions should be of a high standard of design, using materials that are compatible with the landscape, and should not detract from the visual amenity and environment of adjacent Green Belt'.

- 3.9. The policy concludes that some forms of development are acceptable in these areas providing there is no significant impact on the character and quality of the open land.
- 3.10. The site also falls with an area defined by Policy G/8 "Greenspace Corridors" of Rochdale's UDP.

G/8 Greenspace Corridors:

'Greenspace Corridors shown on the Proposals Map will be protected. Development and other measures which will enhance their recreational, ecological or landscape and amenity value will be permitted. In those parts of the corridors which are outside the Defined Urban Area, the provisions of Policy D/10 will also apply. Within all parts of Greenspace Corridors, the Council will not permit development proposals which would:

- a) Lead to an unacceptable narrowing or a division of the corridor into sections, thereby,*
 - i. restricting the movement of wildlife along it, or*

ii. restricting the movement of people along established or proposed recreational routes or rights of way;

b) Result in the loss or severance of links between areas of recreational open space;

c) Result in the loss of existing valued recreational facilities or prejudice proposed new facilities; or

d) Prevent public access into the corridor at strategic locations; or which would result in unacceptable harm to:

e) The better landscape qualities and character of the corridor;

f) The amenity value of the corridor where it provides welcome visual relief from urban development, including attractive views in and out of the corridor;

g) Features of nature conservation interest, including designated and non designated sites; or

h) Viable agricultural operations, including good quality grazing land and allotments.

Any new development permitted within or adjacent to the corridors will be of a design, and use materials appropriate to, the character and setting of the corridor. Boundary treatments and landscaping should help to retain or re-establish a 'countryside' character in the corridors and contribute to nature conservation interest through design and use of appropriate species.

Proposals for open or built recreational facilities should be of a scale and nature appropriate to the location and should not lead to an unacceptable level of recreational activity having regard to visual amenity, nature conservation interests and the need to retain an informal or unspoilt character. Development or activities should not conflict with existing uses or activities (e.g., grazing) and should not create disturbance for local residents.

Development proposals will be permitted that protect and enhance Greenspace Corridors and realise their potential for recreation and nature conservation'.

3.11. This policy sets out the importance of retaining corridors for connectivity and amenity; the policy does not preclude sympathetic development within the green corridors which is appropriate to the surroundings character and retains visual amenity.

3.12. Also relevant to the site is an area to the south-eastern boundary that is indicated as 'Development and Flood Risk' EM/7. Any development proposals will need to provide the appropriate flood risk assessments and mitigation in areas identified as Flood Risk.

Rochdale Adopted Core Strategy Plan 2016-2028

- 3.13. Saved policy D/10 Protected Open Land should be read in conjunction with Core Strategy Strategic Objectives - Promoting a greener environment (SO4), Policy G5 Managing protected open land.

G5 -Managing protected open land

1. *'Protecting open land outside the urban area and not in the green belt.'*

We will continue to protect from development open land outside the urban area and not in the green belt in the following broad areas:

- *Land west and south of Middleton;*
- *Land north of Langley/Hollins, Middleton;*
- *Land adjoining the Rochdale Canal and Whit Brook, Middleton;*
- *Roch river valley, Heywood to Rochdale Town Centre;*
- *Roch river valley, Rochdale to Littleborough; and*
- *Land straddling the A627M corridor between Castleton and Kirkholt.*

2. Development in Protected Open Land

a. Development on open land outside the urban area and not in the green belt will be resisted unless: it is limited development that would be acceptable were it in the green belt; or

b. it is small scale development which is consistent with other detailed policies and site allocations in the Local Development Plan; or

c. it satisfies 3 below.

3. Release of Protected Open Land

Protected Open Land will not be released for development unless all the following apply:

a. there is evidence that the development is needed and that 'urban' brownfield and greenfield sites are not available to meet those needs;

b. the location of the site is sustainable and is in accordance with the overall Spatial Strategy;

c. the development does not undermine the delivery of other currently allocated sites or key regeneration priorities and can help to deliver wider regeneration;

d. development could be accommodated without an unacceptable impact on the area's landscape, biodiversity or wider green infrastructure value;

e. there is evidence that the land is physically suitable for the scale and type of development proposed; and

f. the development and supporting infrastructure is capable of being delivered.

Where the release of protected open land can be justified, the Council will seek to identify it as an allocation in a future DPD. Any proposals that come forward would need to:

g. involve a comprehensive scheme for the delivery of the development, transport and other necessary infrastructure to serve the development; and

h. identify measures to address environmental impacts and where possible provide local benefits’.

- 3.14. As with policy D/10 this policy agrees that development is acceptable in these areas providing there is no significant impact on the landscape, biodiversity and green infrastructure.
- 3.15. Saved policy G/8 Green Corridors should be read in conjunction with Core Strategy Strategic Objectives - Promoting a greener environment (SO4), Policy G6 Enhancing green infrastructure.

G6 – Enhancing green infrastructure

‘We will sustain and enhance a green network to support growth and regeneration in the borough and provide a high quality environment that meets the needs of our community and visitors to the borough. We will protect and improve green spaces and water bodies and ensure that their value to sustainable development and regeneration is maximised. Our priorities are to improve opportunities for recreation in urban areas and the countryside, improve opportunities for healthy lifestyles, and to help manage and respond to environmental risks such as flooding and the impacts of climate change. We will also ensure that the network supports the sustainable growth of the Greater Manchester city region and links with a wider Greater Manchester strategic green infrastructure network.

We will protect, improve and create green infrastructure to help deliver strategic sustainable development priorities and meet local needs in the following locations:

- 2. **The Roch Valley corridor** where the focus will be on establishing a Roch Valley Trail between Heywood and Littleborough, opening up visibility, creating and enhancing recreation destinations and improving access to and from urban communities. The valley will be enhanced as a key landscape feature forming a part of Greater Manchester's strategic green infrastructure network providing high quality recreational and tourism opportunities, an ecological corridor, stimulus and support for regeneration and growth along the river valley corridor in Heywood, Rochdale

and Littleborough and key flood risk management assets e.g. for flood storage and sustainable drainage. Opportunities to create a recreational link between the Roch Valley, Rochdale town centre and Healey Dell Local Nature Reserve along the Spodden Valley will also be supported.

We shall take into account local and national planning policy requirements when considering the appropriateness of development proposals that may affect sports, recreation and open space provision.

A Green Infrastructure Strategy for the borough and Green Infrastructure Action Plans for each Township will inform and support area based masterplans and initiatives, development proposals and associated developer contributions, regeneration programmes and environmental management schemes.'

- 3.16. This policy focuses on the importance of the green network and the need to protect and enhance these green spaces for recreation and environmental improvements.

4. Baseline Landscape Conditions

- 4.1. Landscape character is a landscape resource resulting from the interplay of the physical, natural and cultural components of the site and its surroundings.
- 4.2. **Figure 2 (Appendix A)** shows the extent of the different national and local character areas within the study area.

National Character Area Context

- 4.3. The vicinity of the site is identified by Natural England as falling within National Landscape Character Area (NCA 54) – Manchester Fringe.
- 4.4. An extract of the National Landscape Character Area 54 Manchester is included within **Appendix B**.
- 4.5. The Key Characteristics noted in the Landscape Character Assessment are:
- *‘Transitional zone between elevated, open moorlands and densely populated urban areas on lower ground.*
 - *Landform is transition from upland to lowland, with smooth shoulders of land divided by steep-sided valleys with fast flowing rivers.*
 - *Elevated vantage points provide extensive views across the adjacent Manchester Conurbation NCA.*
 - *Fringe area underlain by the Carboniferous Coal Measures rising to the north and east, into the Carboniferous Millstone Grit uplands.*
 - *Several rivers flow through the area from the Pennine uplands, linking adjacent lowland areas.*
 - *Woodland cover is characterised by a range of woodland types concentrated along river valleys, as well as some newer community woodlands in the urban areas.*
 - *Field boundaries include dry ‘gritstone’ walls at higher elevations and hedgerows at lower elevations.*
 - *Limited semi natural habitats include broadleaved mixed and yew woodland, lowland dry acid grassland, lowland meadows, lowland heathland, and purple moor-grass and rush pasture, which are often fragmented.*
 - *Extensive evidence of 18th and 19th Century stone and brick built industrial buildings, including mill lodges and reservoir originating from the woollen and cotton industries.*
 - *Historic trans-Pennine communication routes, especially railways and canals.*
 - *Much of the countryside is influenced by recreational use from adjacent urban areas and the diversification of farmland, giving the area a distinct urban fringe character.*
 - *High population densities across a belt of industrial towns, with busy transport networks and motorways. Almost half of this NCA is classed as urban’.*

- 4.6. The Manchester Pennine Fringe NCA wraps around Manchester occupying the transitional zone between the urban areas of the Manchester Conurbation (NCA55) to the moorlands of the Southern Pennines (NC36) to the north. NCA 54 includes the industrial towns of Bolton, Bury, Rochdale and Oldham.
- 4.7. The National Character Areas provide a general overview of character and set out the landscape context. Many of the key characteristics are relevant to the study area which lies within the transitional zone between the urban area of Rochdale and open land at the South Pennine Moorlands. The study area is dissected by the valley of the River Roch which includes the Rochdale Canal and the Caldervale Railway line. Vegetation within the valley is sparse allowing some long views to the moorlands. However, the views include the urban settlements of Littleborough, Smallbridge and Smithy Bridge, as well as some larger industrial buildings and the transport corridors.

Regional Landscape Character Context

- 4.8. The Greater Manchester Landscape Character and Sensitivity Assessment was prepared by LUC for the Greater Manchester Combined Authority in August 2018 to produce up-to-date landscape evidence to support preparation of the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework.
- 4.9. The report classifies the landscape outside of the urban areas into Landscape Character Types and sub-divides these into Landscape Character Areas. The site and land to the south falls within the Pennine Foothills Landscape Character Type and Landscape Character Area 28. Rochdale and Oldham South Pennine Foothills.
- 4.10. Relevant extracts of the Greater Manchester Landscape Character and Sensitivity Assessment are included within **Appendix C**.
- 4.11. The description for the Pennine Foothills (West / South Pennines) includes the following Key Characteristics which are pertinent to the study area:
- *‘Transitional landscape sloping up from the northern fringes of Greater Manchester towards the uplands of the South and West Pennines.*
 - *Strongly rolling and undulating topography punctuated by locally distinctive hills and carved by intricate stream valleys. Elevation ranges from 100 to over 350 metres AOD at Besom Hill.*
 - *Varied small-medium scale enclosures, divided by a mixture of field boundaries including gritstone walls, hedgerows and post and rail fencing. Field are predominantly piecemeal post-medieval enclosures, with some modern agglomeration.*
 - *Numerous semi-natural habitats scattered throughout the farmland including woodland, grassland, heathland and streams/brooks, some of which are locally designated as Sites of Biological Importance.*
 - *Evidence of the area’s industrial heritage in the form of old mill buildings, chimneys, disused quarries and mines and the Rochdale Canal.*
 - *Numerous footpaths and bridleways cross and provide access to the landscape from*

nearby urban areas and also link to the moorlands. These include the Rotary Way, Oldham Way and Rochdale Way.

- *Road pattern mainly comprises minor winding lanes and tracks connecting farms. Occasionally, more major routes cross through the LCT, including the M62 and several A-roads.*
- *Variable visual character depending on topography and vegetation cover; there are long views across the urban conurbation to the West and South Pennine uplands beyond where vegetation allows. Areas within the Peak District National Park are visible from some vantage points. Other areas are visually enclosed due to valleys or vegetation which creates wooded skylines.*
- *Occasionally, masts and pylons/overhead lines intrude on the wooded skylines. Other intrusive modern influences include the M62 motorway and prominent views of urban development, including tower blocks breaking horizons’.*

- 4.12. The overall assessment of landscape sensitivity for the Pennine Foothills (West /South Pennines) Landscape Character Type is medium for 2-3 storey housing developments.

Local Landscape Character Context

- 4.13. Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council does not have a current standalone Landscape Character Assessment, however the council carried out a landscape character and quality appraisal included within the Unitary Development Plan 2006 under Policy NE/6 landscape Protection and Enhancement.
- 4.14. The Councils appraisal of landscape character and quality includes a series of landscape character areas which are illustrated on a map included within Policy NE/6.
- 4.15. An extract of the Unitary Development Plan 2006, Policy NE/6 Landscape Protection and Enhancement is included within **Appendix D**.
- 4.16. The site lies within Urban Valleys landscape character area for which the brief description is as follows:
- *‘tightly bounded by main urban centres;*
 - *varied character including open farmland, woodland, utilities infrastructure equestrian uses, golf courses, allotments and landfill sites;*
 - *mixed environmental quality;*
 - *continuity of valleys sometimes interrupted by urban development, but extensive stretches of open, well wooded valleys remain;*
 - *secluded feel to some more heavily wooded areas;*
 - *important industrial archaeology in many areas;*
 - *mixed character and quality of buildings;*
 - *extensive and sometimes fragmented network of paths and tracks; and*
 - *intermittent long-distance views to the moorland beyond.’*

- 4.17. The description of the Urban Valleys Landscape Character Area generally reflects the character of the site and land to the south. The site is “*tightly bounded by main urban centres*” as the urban edge of Smallbridge abuts the site along its northern boundary and parts of its east and western boundaries. From the site there are “*long distance views to the moorland beyond*” but these views also include existing housing areas, some larger industrial buildings and transport corridors. The valley is not well wooded, and vegetation is generally sparse.

Description of the Site and its Surroundings

- 4.18. **Figure 3 (Appendix A)** shows the site in its local landscape context. **Figures 4 – 28 (Appendix A)** includes photographs which illustrate the character of the site and the wider area as well as views from surrounding areas.
- 4.19. The site comprises an irregularly shaped parcel of pastoral land located to the south of Smallbridge and to the north of the River Roch.

Site Boundaries and Wider Land Uses

- 4.20. The site is contained by the existing urban edge of Smallbridge to the north and parts of the eastern and western boundaries.
- 4.21. Part of the eastern boundary extends to an open section of Smithy Bridge Road. The boundary of the site with the road comprises a low stone wall.
- 4.22. Existing residential development abuts the remaining eastern and northern boundaries. Houses located on South View Road back on to the site with timber fencing forming the boundary. The short cul-de-sacs of Wuerdle Close and Wuerdle Place run perpendicular to the eastern boundary and there is some separation from the site provided by existing vegetation.
- 4.23. To the north there is a grid of streets which extend south from Halifax Road towards the site. The houses either back on to the site or are located at the end of streets and are side on to the site. The boundary is formed by a mix of timber fencing and some sections of stone wall.
- 4.24. Adjacent to the northern boundary are allotments which are accessed via Brooklyn Avenue. The boundary of the allotments is formed by a close boarded timber fence.
- 4.25. Large detached houses on Lambs Fold are located along the northern boundary. The houses are generally orientated side on to the site with the boundary formed by timber fencing.
- 4.26. The western boundary is partially enclosed by housing located on Tarnside Close which generally back on to the site. Timber fencing runs along the boundary.
- 4.27. The southern site boundary is formed by the River Roch which meanders through the farmland in a relatively narrow and locally steep sided valley.

- 4.28. The land to the south of the River Roch comprises farmland as well as a pocket of residential development and a large industrial building. The urban area of Smithy Bridge is located to the south-east of the site with the railway line and the Rochdale Canal providing some separation.

Built Form

- 4.29. There are no buildings or farmsteads within the site.
- 4.30. There are a number of stone walls, of varying condition, which define former field boundaries within and around the site.

Landform and Drainage

- 4.31. Within the site the land slopes gently from north to south, until it meets the steeper edge of the River Roch valley. Beyond this, to the south, is open land which is currently used for grazing.
- 4.32. The River Roch meanders along the southern boundary within a relatively narrow channel. The banks are initially shallow, rising more steeply on its southern side. Its setting is open with little to no vegetation or riparian trees rendering it visually discrete within the landscape. The River Roch forms part of a wider greenspace corridor connection that runs in an east to west direction.
- 4.33. There is an ephemeral pond and wetland area located adjacent the river in a low point of the site.

Vegetation

- 4.34. Vegetation within the site comprises open grass fields with limited amounts of trees and hedgerow planting around the boundaries and a remnant hedgerow defining a rectangular field parcel within the western part of the site.
- 4.35. The Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) prepared by Urban Green provides details on the existing trees and hedgerows within and around the site.
- 4.36. The AIA confirms that there are no trees within the site or within the vicinity which are protected by a Tree Preservation Order.
- 4.37. The surveyed vegetation is largely peripheral aside from the hedgerows which surround the smaller field on the western boundary.
- 4.38. All of the hedgerows are classified by the AIA as being of low quality. The hawthorn hedgerows defining the field boundary are semi-mature with some sections being in decline.
- 4.39. Most of the groups of trees and individual trees along the northern boundary are of low quality, although there are some moderately valued sycamore trees (G10) and an off-site mixed species group which includes silver birch, cherry, and some evergreen species of

moderate value.

- 4.40. On the eastern boundary there is a group of mature sycamore positioned at the end of South View Road which is classified as category A, high quality. There are also some high quality sycamore trees (G29 and T30) within the south-eastern corner of the site.
- 4.41. Goat willow, silver birch, sycamore, ash and oak trees of higher quality are identified on the southern banks of the River Roch, outside the site boundary.

Public Rights of Way (PRoW)

- 4.42. PRoW FP8 runs through the site from Smithy Bridge Road on the eastern boundary. The route cuts diagonally across the field from the gateway on Smithy Bridge Road, near to the bus stop. As the route nears the rear garden fences of houses located on South View Road it tracks north to run along the eastern boundary, within a corridor which is largely enclosed by existing vegetation. At this point the PRoW is at a slightly lower elevation than the site which further adds to its sense of enclosure. The path emerges on to Wuerdle Farm Way.
- 4.43. PRoW FP6 runs from Wuerdle Farm Way, behind Wuerdle Farm within a corridor enclosed by garden fences. To the west of Wuerdle Farm the footpath emerges from the enclosed section to run along the northern side of a stone wall at the northern boundary of the site. The route enters the site and crosses it diagonally to run alongside the allotments and through an open field. The PRoW runs to the south of the existing hedgerow before leaving the site at the western boundary. To the west of the site, the route follows the highway footpath to the south of housing located on Tarnside Close towards a group of mature woodland, where the footpath becomes more enclosed.
- 4.44. PRoW FP4/260/259 run through fields to the south of the River Roch. From the west, the route initially follows the lower banks of the river before cutting up the slopes, towards Higher Eafield Farm. The route passes through the farm and its associated buildings before following Eafield Road eastwards. Houses at Yea Fold and the industrial building, located to the south of Eafield Road, enclose the route as it tracks east towards Smithy Bridge Road.
- 4.45. PRoW FP263 was impassable at the time of the site visit due to fencing blocking the route. The route should run south from FP260 through fields to link to the footpath network and Fletcher's Road to the south.
- 4.46. PRoW FP261 follows Fletcher's Road from Smithy Bridge Road, past the southern side of the industrial building to link to FP265/266. PRoW FP265/266 is a continuation of the route following Fletcher's Road underneath the railway. PRoW FP262 which continues westwards from Fletcher's Road across a field was impassable at the time of the site visit due to flooding.
- 4.47. PRoW FP258 runs along the north side of the Rochdale Canal.
- 4.48. PRoW FP249 follows Stubley Mill Road to the east of Smithy Bridge Road.

- 4.49. PRow FP 250/257/258/259 follows Clegg Hall Road, a single-track route located on higher land to the south of the Rochdale Canal. The route links the western extents of Smithy Bridge, tracking west past Clegg Hall before crossing the canal and railway to link back to Dye House Lane, west of the site.

Views, Visibility and Visual Character

Visual Context and Views from the Site

- 4.50. The site is visually contained to the north by the existing urban edge of Smallbridge.
- 4.51. The main locations in which the site can be appreciated are from footpaths which pass through and along the boundaries of the site (PRow FP6 and FP8). **Photographs 1.1 – 1.7 and 2.1 – 2.9 (Figures 4 – 9, Appendix A)** show the views from these footpaths. The ground levels within the site gently slope from north to south, towards the River Roch, and there are long views southwards from the more elevated parts of site. Looking south-east, these views include the settlement of Smithy Bridge on the lower slopes with the large industrial building prominent in the views. The Southern Pennine Hills are visible on the horizon beyond Smithy Bridge. Looking directly south, the views are across the River Roch valley to the farmland beyond. The landscape is gently undulating and well wooded. There are some isolated farms visible and a group of properties on Clegg Hall Road, including the listed Clegg Hall, and its associated cottages and mill building are visible in the distance.
- 4.52. The River Roch forms part of a wider greenspace corridor connection that runs in an east to west direction. The views along the corridor looking east (**photograph 3.2, Figure 10, Appendix A**) include the housing on the southern edge of Smallbridge and housing located on Yea Fold with the Southern Pennine Hills visible on the horizon. Looking west (**see photograph 3.3, Figure 11, Appendix A**) the housing is visible on the higher slopes with some industrial buildings and a chimney partially visible within the valley of the River Roch. The spire of the Parish Church of Saints Hamer is visible in the distance.

Visual Receptors and Views of the Site

- 4.53. **Figure 3 (Appendix A)** illustrates the locations of the photograph viewpoints taken from visual receptors within and around the site.
- 4.54. **Figures 4 to 28 (Appendix A)** include the **photographs 1.1-16.1** which are taken from publicly accessible viewpoints within and around the site. Views from private residences have been considered. Observations made from selected public viewpoints have been used to make assumptions of the likely visual effect on residential properties and settlements in the area.
- 4.55. The visual envelope is generally limited and well contained. Where views are experienced these generally occur in the context of existing housing.
- 4.56. The site contributes to the setting of PRow FP8 and FP6 which pass through the site. Some sections of these routes are enclosed with vegetation and boundary fencing. From the remaining sections there are open views south, east and west which include the land within

the site and the River Roch valley with the development on the edges of Smithy Bridge in the middle distance. The South Pennine Hills are visible in the distance looking south-east. Looking north the housing and allotments enclose views.

- 4.57. Whilst the Southern Pennine Hills are visible in the distance from the site, they lie around 3 km away. As such the site cannot be clearly delineated in the long-distance views from the hills, particularly in the context of the existing settlement of Smallbridge.
- 4.58. From some sections of PRoW FP4, 260 and 259 there are long views along the river valley looking east and west, as the route tracks alongside the River Roch. To the south the ground levels slope up so that views are partially enclosed. Looking north the site is visible in the foreground with housing on the edge of Smallbridge enclosing the view.
- 4.59. There are views of the site looking north from some sections of PRoW FP261, 265 and 266 which run through the landscape to the south of the River Roch. Views include the intervening farmland with the existing housing on the edge of Smallbridge visible in the distance and Higher Eafield Farm prominent in the middle distance. Views of the land within the site itself are limited due to the rolling topography. FP266 crosses underneath the railway and in views north the railway embankments generally screen views of the site.
- 4.60. PRoW FP262 and FP263 were not passable at the time of the site visit and therefore no photographs were taken from these footpaths. Numerous views from other footpaths located to the south of the site have been included to provide an overview of the visual effects for pedestrians.
- 4.61. The site is partially visible from a short section of PRoW FP 258 which runs alongside the Rochdale Canal. The embankments and vegetation along the railway provide partial screening but the site is partially visible around 500m away, with the housing immediately north of the site and the hills beyond forming a backdrop.
- 4.62. Views from the western end of PRoW 249, which follows Stubley Mill Road, include Smithy Bridge Road with the eastern parts of the site visible beyond. As the route tracks eastwards, it is well enclosed by existing vegetation which limits views. The site is therefore not visible from the sections of the route further east due to intervening vegetation.
- 4.63. The site is partially visible from some sections of PRoW FP 250/257/258/259, near to Clegg Hall, at a distance of 650m. Views northwards from the route are from a slightly elevated position and include some longer views in which the site can be seen in the context of the existing urban edge of Smallbridge. Views are partial as existing vegetation alongside the route provides some enclosure.
- 4.64. When travelling south on Smithy Bridge Road there are oblique, peripheral views across the eastern parts of the site which include the existing housing at Yea Fold and buildings on the edge of Smithy Bridge. When travelling north there are oblique, peripheral views to the west which include much of the site. The houses located on South View Road are prominent in the

view and houses located to the north of the site are visible in the distance.

- 4.65. The site is visible in the context of the existing urban edge of Smallbridge, at a distance of around 400m away, from the railway which is on embankment. For a short section directly south of the site, before reaching Smithy Bridge station, there are open views northwards from an elevated position.
- 4.66. In views from the allotments there may be filtered views through the fencing southwards across the site.
- 4.67. Private residents within Smallbridge which border the site to the north, east and west are likely to have some views of the site in the foreground with development in Smithy Bridge visible beyond and the Pennine Hills on the horizon.
- 4.68. A limited number of private residents on the northern outskirts of Smithy Bridge, are expected to have some oblique views of the field within the site, with housing located on the northern site boundary visible beyond.
- 4.69. A limited number of private residents on the northern edge of Milnrow, where ground levels are elevated, are expected to have some oblique views north towards the site. The existing edge of Smallbridge is visible at a distance of around 2km away.
- 4.70. Visual tables included within **Appendix E** describe the existing views from each of the following visual receptors in more detail:
 1. Pedestrians using PRoW FP8
 2. Pedestrians using PRoW FP6
 3. Pedestrians using PRoW FP4/260/259
 4. Pedestrians using PRoW FP261
 5. Pedestrians using PRoW FP265/266
 6. Pedestrians using PRoW FP258 along the Rochdale Canal
 7. Pedestrians using PRoW FP 249/240
 8. Pedestrians using PRoW FP 250/257/258/259 near to Clegg Hall
 9. Motorists and pedestrians travelling on Smithy Bridge Road
 10. Passengers travelling on the railway
 11. Views from the Allotments to the north of the site
 12. Private residents of South View Road
 13. Private residents of Wuerdle Close, Wuerdle Place
 14. Private residents of housing to the north of the site (Wuerdle Farm, Brooklyn Avenue, William Street, Holland Street, George St, houses built as part of application 15/00413 and 14/01412/FUL
 15. Private residents of Yea Fold and Higher Eafield Farm
 16. Private residents of Bealcroft Close and Weir Road, Milnrow

5. Value and Sensitivity of the Landscape and Views

Landscape value

- 5.1. The landscape character of the wider context and the site has been described above, making reference to the regional and local landscape character areas. This section sets out the value of the landscape within the study area using the guidelines of GLVIA3 Box 5.1, Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 02/21 – Assessing landscape value outside national designations and Diagram 1 included within the Methodology above.

Table 1: Landscape Value

Criteria for establishing value	Observations/comments
Designations attached to the landscape	There are no landscape designations such as special landscape area or AONB within the site or the study area. Land within the site is allocated within the UDP as 'Protected Open Land' (policy D/10) which is a spatial policy similar to Green Belt. Land within the site is also allocated as 'Greenspace Corridor' (policy G/8) where development and other measures which will enhance the recreational, ecological, landscape and amenity value will be permitted. Locally valued
Natural heritage	Vegetation is sparse within the site. The River Roch has some wildlife value but otherwise the landscape is ordinary. The Rochdale Canal SSSI is a valuable feature within the study area and is an important habitat for submerged aquatic plants and emergent vegetation. Medium value
Cultural heritage	There are no known heritage assets within the site. There are a number of listed buildings within the study area. Generally these do not lie within the immediate context of the site and there is no intervisibility between them and the site. However, Clegg Hall, Clegg Hall Mill and Clegg Hall Cottages are Grade II listed and are located on higher land to the south which is visible from the site. Medium value
Landscape condition	The landscape is urban fringe, bordered by the edge of Smallbridge to the north and Smithy Bridge to the south. There are no features of particular value within the site and vegetation is sparse. There is a gappy, poorly managed hedgerow within the site and some hedgerows and trees along the site boundaries. Within the site there is a disintegrating stone wall. The landscape has a neglected character although the River Valley is an attractive feature and the site, by virtue of its open nature, provides opportunities for longer views to the wider landscape of the Pennine Hills. Medium-low value
Perceptual (Scenic)	There are views along the River Roch corridor and some long views which include the South Pennine Hills. The urban edge of Smallbridge and Smithy Bridge is closely associated with the site itself which influences its scenic quality. Medium value
Perceptual (Wilderness and tranquility)	It is an urban fringe landscape. The landscape is not considered to be remote or tranquil due to the presence of roads and housing areas. Low value

Criteria for establishing value	Observations/comments
Distinctiveness	The landscape does not include uncommon characteristics or distinctive features which are identified as being characteristic. The landscape is typical of the Urban Valleys character area but does not include particular features which are rare or unusual. Low value
Associations	There is no evidence of any association with artists, writers or historical events which might contribute to its value. Low value
Recreational	PRoW 6 and 8 cross the site and it is therefore locally valued for walking. There are several other PRoW within the landscape to the south of the site. The towpath along the Rochdale Canal is a PRoW and an off-road cycle route. Medium value
Functional	The rural land within the study area functions primarily as agricultural land. The landscape is part of a river valley system which increases its ecological value and natural function. The valley is described by the landscape character assessment as an 'urban valley' due to the presence of urban land uses. Medium-high value
Value of the site – medium/Locally valued	
Value of the landscape within the study area - medium/Locally valued	

- 5.2. There is nothing to indicate that there is anything about the landscape which could be considered to be out of the ordinary. The landscape within the site and the study area are considered to be of **medium/local value**.

Landscape susceptibility

- 5.3. The site adjoins existing housing and urban development is part of the existing character. The development proposed is an extension/continuation of similar residential development, set within a strong framework of green infrastructure.
- 5.4. Land within the study area is not designated for its landscape value and there are no landscape designations within the site itself.
- 5.5. The landscape could accommodate the proposed housing development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline and/or landscape planning policy. There would be no significant change to the character of views. It is therefore considered that the **susceptibility to change is low**.

Landscape sensitivity

- 5.6. Taking in to account the medium value of the landscape and the low susceptibility to change it is considered that the landscape of the site and the wider area is of **medium/low sensitivity**.

Table 2: Landscape Sensitivity

Value of the Landscape	Susceptibility to Change	Resulting Sensitivity
Medium As set out in Table 1 above	Low As set out above	Medium-Low

Value and sensitivity of views

- 5.7. As set out within Diagram 2 of the Methodology and in GLVIA3 the sensitivity of views and viewers derives from a combination of the value to be attached to the view (as indicated by planning designations, relationships to heritage assets, association with art etc.) and the susceptibility of the viewer to change indicated by their occupation or activity and extent to which their attention is focussed on the view.
- 5.8. The landscape is not designated for its scenic quality and does have heritage assets or associations with art. It is considered to be an ordinary landscape which is locally valued.
- 5.9. The susceptibility of a viewer to change in the landscape will vary according to their location and occupation or activity. Table 3 below, sets out the susceptibility to change and sensitivity of the identified visual receptors.

Table 3: Visual Sensitivity

Visual Receptor Type	Value of the View	Susceptibility to Change	Resulting Sensitivity
Pedestrians using PROW through the site and the land to the south of the site	Medium Local value attached to the views in relation to the greenspace corridor planning designation. Some longer views to the wider landscape and views of open land in the context of the existing urban edge. The views do not have heritage value or cultural associations. It is a pleasant but unremarkable landscape which is not considered to be a popular visitor attraction.	High The landscape setting is likely to be valued by those engaged in recreation.	High-medium
Motorists and pedestrians using local roads	Medium Views along the highway corridor. The views do not have heritage value or cultural associations.	Medium Motorists primarily using routes for access rather than focusing on the views. Taking in to account	Medium

Visual Receptor Type	Value of the View	Susceptibility to Change	Resulting Sensitivity
	It is a pleasant but unremarkable landscape which is not considered to be a popular visitor attraction.	their speed of travel, the fleeting views. Pedestrian routes are not through open countryside but adjacent to highway providing convenient access rather than an attractive route.	
Passengers on the Railway	Low Views of open land in the context of the existing urban edge. The views do not have heritage value or cultural associations. Not considered to be a visitor attraction.	Medium Primarily using the route for access rather than focusing on the views. Taking in to account their speed of travel, the fleeting views.	Medium-low
Those using the allotments	Medium Views of gardens and boundary fences. The views do not have heritage value or cultural associations. It is a pleasant but unremarkable landscape which is not considered to be a popular visitor attraction.	Medium Some appreciation of views but not the main focus.	Medium
Private residents	Medium Views of gardens and boundary fences and some longer views from upper storey windows. The views do not have heritage value or cultural associations. It is a pleasant but unremarkable landscape which is not considered to be a popular visitor attraction.	High Experience views for longer than those passing through an area.	High-medium

- 5.10. Residents of private dwellings who currently have a view of the site will be expected to have a **high-medium level of sensitivity** to any changes within the site and will need to be considered in terms of their residential amenity. There is however, no right to an open view in planning decisions and any assessment of changes to these viewpoints will be of less significance than any changes to public views.

6. Scheme Proposals and Mitigation

- 6.1. The scheme proposes a development of up to 199 dwellings and associated public open space, internal highways, car parking, gardens and landscaping with access to be taken from Smithy Bridge Road.
- 6.2. The proposals are set out on the Landscape Masterplan (P21-2628.100A), Detailed Layout (P21-2628_003Q) and explained in the DAS.
- 6.3. The development will comprise mainly 2 storey housing with some 2.5 storey dwellings to create key marker buildings. The DAS provides details of the proposed house types and building materials which reflect the existing surrounding housing in terms of scale and appearance.
- 6.4. The layout is arranged so that proposed housing is confined to the northern part of the site which is surrounded by existing housing on three side.
- 6.5. A wide swathe of land along the River Roch, within the southern part of the site, would be retained as open space in order to preserve a Greenspace Corridor. Areas within this corridor would be contoured to form depressions capable of storing water and providing a sustainable drainage solution. The open land would serve as an ecological area and would be planted with proposed wildflower grassland and trees.
- 6.6. The southern edge of the proposed housing would be punctuated by fingers of open space which extend in to the housing. Fronts of housing would overlook the Green corridor. Views north, from PRoWs located to the south of the of the River Roch, currently include the edge of Smallbridge and there is very little vegetation to break up the urban edge. The intermittent open spaces extending into the housing is intended to soften the transition from the urban edge to the river corridor when viewed from the south.
- 6.7. PRoW FP6 would follow the highway alignment at its western end. Some longer views to the wider landscape and along the river corridor would be retained. Where the current alignment cuts diagonally through the field the route would be diverted to run through open spaces and housing areas. The diverted section of PRoW FP6 would connect back to its current alignment near Wuerdle Farm. PRoW FP8 would run alongside the highway to connect back to Smithy Bridge Road.
- 6.8. The open space corridors which extend into the site would be planted with trees and wildflower grassland and would provide opportunities for informal recreation, as well as play areas for more formal recreational opportunities.
- 6.9. The Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) produced by Urban Green details the existing

tree and hedgerow removal. It states *'The proposed development necessitates the removal of six trees, four hedges and sections of a further one hedge and one group. However, it is noted that all of these removals are of low value'*.

- 6.10. The Landscape Masterplan shows tree planting within the green corridor along the river and along the main road, as well as within the front and rear gardens. Hedgerow planting is shown along the frontage with open spaces and the main road. There would be ornamental planting within the open spaces. Species rich meadow grassland, and overseeding of the existing grassland with species rich wetland mixes, is proposed.
- 6.11. Overall the proposed planting would more than compensate for the loss of existing vegetation.

7. Completion Effects (Yr1)

Landscape Effects at Completion

- 7.1. As set out in Diagram 1 of the methodology, the significance of effect is a combined judgement of the sensitivity and the magnitude of effect.
- 7.2. The sensitivity is a combined judgement of the value and the susceptibility and has been assessed as **medium-low** as set out in Table 2, section 5 above.
- 7.3. The magnitude of effect is a combined judgement of the size/scale of effect, geographic extent and duration of the effect. The paragraphs below set out the magnitude of effect on the landscape at completion.

Size and Scale of Effect

- 7.4. There are few existing features within the site and vegetation along the site boundaries would be substantially retained. The mature sycamore (G25) located on the eastern site boundary would be retained. Tree groups located along Smithy Bridge Road frontage which are recognised for their visual appeal, would also be retained. There would be the loss of six trees, four hedges and sections of a further one hedge and one group. There would be the loss of some open land, but few existing features would be lost.
- 7.5. The River Roch corridor would be retained as open land and would accommodate localised depressions for drainage.
- 7.6. Fingers of open space would permeate the built development area. The framework of green infrastructure within the housing area would include recreational facilities and grassland areas with tree planting.
- 7.7. The effects of the proposed green infrastructure would be a net gain in tree and hedgerow planting. The landscape corridor along the river would be planted with wildflower grassland which would enhance biodiversity and provide an improvement in habitat value. There would be a minor positive effect on the landscape features within the site upon completion.
- 7.8. The existing landscape character type 'Urban Valleys' is *'tightly bounded by main urban centres'*. The housing proposed within an appropriately landscaped setting, is sympathetic to the urban valleys character of the surrounding area. Whilst there would be a perceptible change, with the addition of more built form, the size and scale of the effect would be small.

Geographical Extent of Effects

- 7.9. The effects would be experienced at site level and within the immediate setting of the site. There are some longer distance views of the site from the areas to the south, but the site is always seen in the context of the existing urban edge of Smallbridge.

Duration of Effects

- 7.10. The effects upon completion would be medium term, temporary effects until the proposed planting has had time to fully mature.

Summary of Landscape Effects upon Completion

- 7.11. There would be positive effects on landscape features as a result of the proposed green infrastructure. Housing is part of the existing character of the area and whilst there would be perceptible changes the proposals would fit well with the existing characteristics. The magnitude of effects on the landscape character of the study area as a result of the housing development is assessed as **low adverse**. Combined with medium-low sensitivity the overall effects upon completion would be **minor adverse, local and medium term**.

Table 4: Summary of effect on landscape at completion (Yr1)

Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Resulting Significance of Effect
Landscape within the study area	Medium-Low (Table 2 above)	Low	Minor adverse Local/Medium term

Views and Visual Receptors

- 7.12. As set out in Diagram 2 the significance of effect on visual receptors is a combined judgement of the sensitivity and the magnitude of effect.
- 7.13. The sensitivity is a combined judgement of the value and the susceptibility and has been set out in **Table 3**, section 5 above.
- 7.14. The magnitude of effect is a combined judgement of the size/scale of effect, geographical extent and duration of effect.
- 7.15. **Appendix E** includes visual tables and provides a description of the visual effects from the identified visual receptors upon completion.
- 7.16. **Appendix F** includes photomontages from three locations (as agreed with Rochdale BC) to illustrate the proposals at completion and 15 years post completion, when proposed planting has matured.

Visual Effects on pedestrians using PRow FP8 (Photographs 1.1-1.7)

- 7.17. The route would largely follow the highway footpath and the views would include more built development than is currently visible, seen at closer range, when looking in a north-westerly direction. Views south would remain more open across the open space within the south of the site, with Yea Fold and Smithy Bridge visible on the horizon. Views from the existing enclosed sections of the route would remain enclosed but there would be an increase in the length of the route which is enclosed on both sides.

- 7.18. At completion the magnitude of effect on the views of pedestrians using PRoW FP8 is considered to be medium adverse and the sensitivity of those using the route is assessed as high-medium, resulting in **moderate adverse effects** which would be medium term.

Visual Effects on pedestrians using PRoW FP6 (Photographs 2.1-2.8)

- 7.19. There would be no changes to the views from the eastern, enclosed section of the route. The central part of the route, which currently runs past the allotments and diagonally across the site, would be diverted to run through the proposed housing and open space. The views would be more enclosed than existing and there would be the loss of some longer views to the Pennine hills from the central section of the route. The western section of the route would run to the south of proposed housing on the highway footpath. Looking north, views would be enclosed by the fronts of proposed houses. Looking south, the views would remain open to the river valley with Smithy Bridge in the middle distance and long-distance views to the Pennine hills. The remainder of the route lies outside the site and there would be little change to these views.

- 7.20. At completion the magnitude of effect on the views of pedestrians using PRoW FP6 is considered to be medium adverse and the sensitivity of those using the route is assessed as high-medium, resulting in **moderate adverse effects** which would be medium term.

Visual Effects on pedestrians using PRoW FP4/260/259 (Photographs 3.1-3.9)

- 7.21. The proposed development would not be visible from the western end of the route. Further east, long views along the river valley looking east and west would be retained, with views across the green corridor within the site. Proposed housing would be visible stepping down the sloping land with any retaining structures located within gardens largely screened by intervening houses. The edge of Smallbridge would appear slightly closer but proposed housing would be seen in the context of the existing urban edge and fingers of green space would extend in to the housing to soften the edge. There would be no views from the eastern section of the route which is enclosed by existing development on Eafield Road and Yea Fold. There would be a glimpsed view of the proposed access road within the south-eastern part of the site from Eafield Road just before the PRoW joins Smithy Bridge Road.
- 7.22. At completion the magnitude of effect on the views of pedestrians using PRoW FP4/260/259 is considered to be medium-low adverse and the sensitivity of those using the route is assessed as high-medium, resulting in **moderate-minor adverse effects** which would be medium term.

Visual Effects on pedestrians using PRoW FP261 (Photographs 4.1-4.2)

- 7.23. There would be no change to the views from the eastern half of the route as it runs to the south of the industrial building. To the west of the industrial building there are existing open views looking north which include Higher Eafield Farm and existing housing on the edge of Smallbridge. The proposed housing would be visible in front of the existing urban edge and behind the Farm, bringing the urban edge slightly closer to the viewer. The rolling topography would mean that only the tops of proposed housing would be visible, and the proposed housing would form a minor part of a wider view which includes housing.

- 7.24. At completion the magnitude of effect on the views of pedestrians using PRoW FP261 is considered to be low adverse and the sensitivity of those using the route is assessed as high-medium, resulting in **minor adverse effects** which would be medium term.

Visual Effects on pedestrians using PRoW FP265/266 (Photographs 5.1-5.3 and photomontage 5.2)

- 7.25. From the lower northern section of the route the tops of proposed housing would be seen in the distance with fields visible in the foreground and the industrial building and Higher Eafield Farm prominent features of the view. The rolling topography means that the lower parts of the site would not be seen. Further south, where the PRoW is at a higher elevation, the views looking north would be similar but more proposed housing would be visible stepping down the sloping land. Proposed retaining structures within gardens would sit behind proposed houses which would largely screen any views of them.
- 7.26. Changes to the views would be minor as existing housing within Smallbridge is visible and proposed housing would form a minor part of a wider view. There would be no changes to the views from the parts of the route north of the railway as the embankments screen views north.
- 7.27. Photomontage 5.2 (**Appendix F**) shows the view from the section of the PRoW which is at a higher elevation, looking north, to represent the worst-case scenario.
- 7.28. At completion the magnitude of effect on the views of pedestrians using PRoW FP265/266 is considered to be low adverse and the sensitivity of those using the route is assessed as high-medium, resulting in **moderate-minor adverse effects** which would be medium term.

Visual Effects on pedestrians using PRoW FP258 along the Rochdale Canal (Photograph 6.1)

- 7.29. The route is generally well enclosed by vegetation but where there is a break in the intervening vegetation there are some more open views northwards in which there would be fleeting glimpses of the proposed development seen in the distance and surrounded by existing housing. The proposed housing would form a minor part of a wider view which includes housing. Views would be oblique as the direction of travel is east-west and intervening vegetation and the railway embankments provide partial screening. The existing urban edge is part of the existing view so the change in view would be minimal.
- 7.30. At completion the magnitude of effect on views of pedestrians using PRoW FP258, which runs along the Rochdale Canal, is considered to be low adverse-negligible and the sensitivity of those using the route is assessed as high-medium, resulting in **Minor adverse-negligible effects** which would be medium term.

Visual Effects on pedestrians using PRoW FP249/240 (Photographs 7.1-7.2)

- 7.31. The proposed development would not be visible from the majority of the route. From the end of the PRoW near to Smithy Bridge Road there would be fleeting views westwards across the road. The proposed access off Smithy Bridge Road and the access road would be partially visible to the south of the existing housing located on South View Road. No proposed housing

would be visible. Further east the route is enclosed and the proposed development would not be visible.

- 7.32. At completion the magnitude of effect on the views of pedestrians using PRow FP249 is considered to be low adverse-negligible and the sensitivity of those using the route is assessed as high-medium, resulting in **minor adverse-negligible effects** which would be medium term.

Visual Effects on pedestrians using PRow FP250/257/258/259 near to Clegg Hall (Photographs 8.1-8.3 and Photomontage 8.1)

- 7.33. The proposed development would be partially visible, in the context of the existing edge of Smallbridge, on the south facing slopes of the valley. The proposed housing would be seen in the distance and would form a minor part of a wider view which includes housing. From the eastern end of the route, which is well enclosed by vegetation, there would be glimpsed views of proposed housing seen in the context of Smallbridge when looking northwards. Further west the proposed development would be partially screened by the railway embankments and intervening vegetation.
- 7.34. Photomontage 8.1 (**Appendix F**) shows the view from the eastern end of the route, looking north through a gap in the vegetation which generally encloses the route. This illustrates the worst-case scenario view from the PRow which is partially screened.
- 7.35. At completion the magnitude of effect on the views of pedestrians using PRow FP250/257/258 is considered to be low adverse and the sensitivity of those using the route is assessed as high-medium, resulting in **moderate-minor adverse effects** which would be medium term.

Visual Effects on motorists and pedestrians travelling on Smithy Bridge Road (Photographs 9.1-9.2 and Photomontage 9.2)

- 7.36. When travelling south on Smithy Bridge Road there would be views of the proposed access and access road seen in the context of existing buildings on the edge of Smithy Bridge. Views would remain largely unchanged.
- 7.37. When travelling north there would be oblique, peripheral views of proposed housing seen in the context of the existing urban edge of Smallbridge. The existing houses located on South View Road would remain prominent in the view. There would be views of the proposed access and access road, but these features are consistent with existing elements in the view.
- 7.38. Photomontage 9.2 (**Appendix F**) shows the view when travelling north on Smithy Bridge Road to demonstrate the worst-case scenario.
- 7.39. At completion the magnitude of effect on the views of motorists and pedestrians using Smithy Bridge Road is considered to be medium adverse and the sensitivity of those using the route is assessed as medium, resulting in **moderate adverse effects** which would be medium term.

Visual Effects on those travelling on the railway (Photographs 10.1-10.2)

- 7.40. Fleeting, oblique and distant views of proposed houses seen in the context of the existing urban edge of Smallbridge. Proposed housing would bring the existing edge of Smallbridge slightly closer to the viewer, although Higher Eafield Farm, existing housing and the Industrial building located on Eafield Road would remain the dominant elements in the view.
- 7.41. At completion the magnitude of effect on the views of passengers using the railway line is considered to be low adverse-negligible and the sensitivity was assessed as medium-low, resulting in **minor adverse-negligible effects** which would be medium term.

Visual Effects on those using the allotments to the north of the site (Photographs 11.1-11.2)

- 7.42. Existing tall fencing around the boundary of the allotments would provide substantial screening of the proposed development. There may be some heavily filtered views in which proposed housing would be partially seen in close proximity, although the allotments largely border open space associated with the road corridors.
- 7.43. At completion the magnitude of effect on the views from the allotments is considered to be low adverse and the sensitivity is assessed as medium resulting in **minor adverse effects** which would be medium term.

Visual Effects on private residents located on South View Road (Photographs 12)

- 7.44. Views south from the ground floor and gardens would be screened by intervening fences and vegetation. The proposed access road may be partially visible from upstairs windows but the change to the view would be minor.
- 7.45. At completion the magnitude of effect on views for residents of South View Road is considered to be low-negligible and the sensitivity of residents is assessed as high-medium resulting in **minor adverse-negligible effects** which would be medium term.

Visual Effects on private residents located on Wuerdle Close and Wuerdle Place (Photographs 13.1-13.2)

- 7.46. The properties are perpendicular to the site and generally do not have windows overlooking the proposed development. Houses right at the end of the cul-de-sacs are side on to the site and may have some oblique views from upper storey windows of proposed roofs. The existing views include housing so the change in view would be negligible.
- 7.47. At completion the magnitude of effect on views for residents of Wuerdle Close and Wuerdle Place is considered to be negligible and the sensitivity of residents is assessed as high-medium resulting in **negligible effects** which would be medium term.

Visual Effects on private residents located to the north of the site (Wuerdle Farm, Brooklyn Ave, William Street, Holland Street, George Street, houses built as part of application 15/00413 and 14/01412/FUL) (Photographs 14.1-14.5)

- 7.48. Boundary fences and vegetation provide partial screening of the proposed development from the ground floor. From upper storey windows proposed housing would be partially visible

within closer proximity than existing visible built form. There would be the loss of some open views across the site and towards the Pennine Hills. Residential development is a characteristic of existing views and there would be no loss of amenity.

- 7.49. At completion the magnitude of effect on views for residents located to the north of the site is considered to be medium adverse and the sensitivity of residents is assessed as high-medium, resulting in **moderate adverse effects** which would be medium term.

Visual Effects on private residents located on Yea Fold and Higher Eafield Farm (Photograph 15)

- 7.50. It is expected that there may be some oblique views of the proposed housing which would be seen within slightly closer proximity than the existing urban edge of Smallbridge. Proposed housing would be set back beyond the open space along the river corridor.
- 7.51. At completion the magnitude of effect on views for residents at Yea Fold and Eafield Farm is considered to be low adverse and the sensitivity of residents is assessed as high-medium resulting in **minor adverse effects** which would be medium term.

Visual Effects on private residents located on Bealcroft Close and Weir Road, Milnrow (Photograph 16)

- 7.52. The proposed housing within the site would be barely discernible and partially screened by existing intervening built form and vegetation. The proposals would be seen in the distance and in the context of the existing urban edge of Smallbridge.
- 7.53. At completion the magnitude of effect on views for residents in Milnrow is considered to be low-negligible and the sensitivity of residents is generally considered to be high-medium resulting in **minor adverse-negligible effects** which would be medium term.

Table 5: Summary of Visual Effects at Completion (Yr1)

	Visual Receptor Type	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Resulting Significance of Effect
1	Pedestrians on PRoW FP8	High-Medium	Medium-adverse	Moderate adverse. Local/Medium term/temporary
2	Pedestrians on PRoW FP6	High-Medium	Medium adverse	Moderate adverse Local/Medium term/temporary
3	Pedestrians on PRoW FP4/260/259	High-Medium	Medium-low adverse	Moderate -minor adverse Local/Medium term/temporary
4	Pedestrians on PRoW FP261	High-Medium	Low adverse	Minor adverse Local/Medium term/temporary
5	Pedestrians on PRoW FP265/266	High-Medium	Low adverse	Moderate-Minor adverse Local/Medium term/temporary
6	Pedestrians on PRoW FP258 Rochdale Canal	High-Medium	Low adverse-negligible	Minor adverse -negligible Local/Medium term/temporary
7	Pedestrians on PRoW FP249/240	High-Medium	Low adverse-negligible	Minor adverse -negligible Local/Medium term/temporary
8	Pedestrians on PRoW FP250/257/258/259 near Clegg Hall	High-Medium	Low adverse	Moderate-Minor adverse Local/Medium term/temporary
9	Motorists/pedestrians travelling on Smithy Bridge Road	Medium	Medium adverse	Moderate adverse Local/Medium term/temporary
10	Passengers travelling on the railway	Medium-low	Low adverse-negligible	Minor adverse -negligible Local/Medium term/temporary
11	Views from the allotments	Medium	Low adverse	Minor adverse Local/Medium term/temporary
12	Private residents of South View Road	High-Medium	Low adverse-negligible	Minor adverse -negligible Local/Medium term/temporary
13	Private residents of Wuerdle Close and Wuerdle Place	High-Medium	Negligible	Negligible Local/Medium term/temporary
14	Private residents of housing to the north of the site	High-Medium	Medium adverse	Moderate adverse Local/Medium term/temporary
15	Private residents of Yea Fold and Higher Eafield Farm	High-Medium	Low adverse	Minor adverse Local/Medium term/temporary
16	Private residents of Bealcroft Close and Weir Road, Milnrow	High-Medium	Low adverse-negligible	Minor adverse -negligible Local/Medium term/temporary

8. Residual Effects (Yr15)

Residual Landscape Effects

- 8.1. As set out in Diagram 1 of the methodology, the significance of effect is a combined judgement of the sensitivity and the magnitude of effect.
- 8.2. The sensitivity is a combined judgement of the value and the susceptibility and has been assessed as **medium-low** as set out in Table 2, section 5 above.
- 8.3. The magnitude of effect is a combined judgement of the size/scale of effect, geographic extent and duration of the effect. The paragraphs below set out the magnitude of effect on the landscape after maturity of the proposed planting.

Size and Scale of Effect

- 8.4. Other than the loss of open land there would be very few existing features lost. Retained existing vegetation along the boundaries would be managed and would have matured to provide screening and enhancement.
- 8.5. Proposed planting of trees and wildflower grasses within the River Roch corridor would have matured to provide an attractive open space with enhanced wildlife value. The new footpath within the open spaces would improve the recreational value of the site and the long views to the south and south-east, towards the Pennine Hills, would be retained.
- 8.6. The proposed green infrastructure and planting within the corridor along the river would have matured to provide visual screening and would help to assimilate the built form in to the surrounding landscape. Groups of trees planted along the southern extents of the developed area would have matured to provide a softer, more diverse and attractive urban edge to Smallbridge when viewed from the south.
- 8.7. Upon maturity of the planting there would be a significant increase in landscape elements within the site which would more than compensate for any losses, would enhance biodiversity and provide an improvement in habitat value.
- 8.8. Overall the proposal would fit in with the character of the area within which it sits and the 'Urban Valleys' character area. The site does not define the character of the area around it and there will be no fundamental change of character, other than that within the site itself.

Geographical Extent of Effects

- 8.9. The effects would be experienced at site level and within the immediate setting of the site. There are some longer distance views of the site from the areas to the south, but the site is always seen in the context of the existing urban edge of Smallbridge.

Duration of Effects

- 8.10. The effects upon maturity of proposed planting would be long term, permanent, residual effects.

Summary of Residual Landscape Effects

- 8.11. Upon maturity of the green infrastructure there would be an increase in landscape features to integrate the proposed development in to the surrounding areas. An open character would be retained along the river corridor and housing is part of the existing character, with the urban edge of Smallbridge prominent. The proposals would be in keeping with the 'Urban Valleys' character. The magnitude of effect on the landscape character of the study area as a result of the proposal is assessed as low adverse-negligible. Combined with medium-low sensitivity the overall residual effects on the landscape character would be **minor adverse-negligible, long term, permanent effects**.

Table 6: Summary of residual landscape effects (Yr15)

Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Resulting Significance of Effect
Landscape within the study area	Medium-Low (Table 2 above)	Low adverse-negligible	Minor adverse-negligible Local/Long term/ permanent

Views and Visual Receptors

- 8.12. As set out in Diagram 2 the significance of effect on visual receptors is a combined judgement of the sensitivity and the magnitude of effect.
- 8.13. The sensitivity is a combined judgement of the value and the susceptibility and has been set out in Table 3, section 5 above.
- 8.14. The magnitude of effect is a combined judgement of the size/scale of effect, geographical extent and duration of effect.
- 8.15. **Appendix E** provides a description of the visual effects from the identified visual receptors upon maturity of proposed planting.

Visual Effects on pedestrians using PRow FP8 (Photographs 1.1-1.7)

- 8.16. Proposed tree planting along the access road and within the River valley corridor would have matured to enhance the existing views along the valley and to help assimilate the proposed housing in to the landscape. The proposed housing would be seen at closer range than the existing housing, but the mature vegetation would provide a softer edge than the current urban edge. There would be a slight increase in the length of the route which is enclosed on both sides and the views would be more urban.
- 8.17. Upon maturity of the landscape the magnitude of effect on the views of pedestrians using PRow FP8 is considered to be medium-low adverse and the sensitivity of those using the

route is assessed as high-medium, resulting in **moderate - minor adverse effects** which would be the long term, residual effects.

Visual Effects on pedestrians using PRoW FP6 (Photographs 2.1-2.9)

- 8.18. Surrounding the central section of the route, proposed planting associated with the open spaces would have matured to provide a good landscape structure. The planting would help soften built form. Further west, the route would run to the south of proposed housing. The proposed planting, along the southern edge of the housing, would have matured to provide a greener edge in views northwards. Views south over the river valley and across as far as the Pennine hills would remain. There would be no change to the views from the sections of the route which lie outside the site.
- 8.19. Upon maturity of the landscape the magnitude of effect on the views of pedestrians using PRoW FP6 is considered to be medium-low adverse and the sensitivity of those using the route is assessed as high-medium, resulting in **moderate-minor adverse effects** which would be the long term, residual effects.

Visual Effects on pedestrians using PRoW FP4/260/259 (Photographs 3.1-3.9)

- 8.20. The proposed planting within the green space along the River Roch would have matured to enhance the amenity value of the corridor. Groups of trees along the southern boundary of the proposed development edge and planting within the play space would soften the urban edge in views north. Tree planting along the access road would have matured to provide some screening of the existing backs of houses located on South View Road.
- 8.21. Upon maturity of the landscape the magnitude of effect on the views of pedestrians using PRoW FP4/260/259 is considered to be low adverse and the sensitivity of those using the route is assessed as high-medium, resulting in **minor adverse effects** which would be the long term, residual effects.

Visual Effects on pedestrians using PRoW FP261(Photographs 4.1-4.2)

- 8.22. There would be no change to the views from the eastern half of the route. Proposed groups of trees located within the corridor along the River Roch would have matured to soften the views of the urban edge. Whilst the proposed housing brings the visible urban edge slightly closer to the viewer, the proposed tree planting would provide some screening of built form breaking down the monotony of the existing continuous urban edge. At this distance and in the context of the surrounding existing built development the proposals would change the view, but the benefits of the proposed mature mitigation would balance the effects of the extension to the urban edge.
- 8.23. Upon maturity of the landscape the magnitude of effect on the views of pedestrians using PRoW FP261 is considered to be low neutral-negligible and the sensitivity of those using the route is assessed as high-medium, resulting in **minor neutral-negligible effects** which would be the long term, residual effects.

Visual Effects on pedestrians using PRoW FP265/266 (Photographs 5.1-5.3 and photomontage 5.2)

- 8.24. The tops of proposed housing would be partially screened by mature groups of trees located along the southern edge of the developed area. The proposed housing would form a new urban edge slightly closer to the viewer, but this would be distant, set beyond fields visible in the foreground and the industrial building and Higher Eafield Farm, and would be softened by mature proposed planting.
- 8.25. Changes to the view would be minor as existing housing within Smallbridge is visible and the planting within the green corridor along the River would soften the urban edge.
- 8.26. Photomontage 5.2 (**Appendix F**) shows the view from the section of the PRoW which is at a higher elevation, looking north, to represent the worst-case scenario.
- 8.27. Upon maturity of the landscape the magnitude of effect on the views of pedestrians using PRoW FP265/266 is considered to be low adverse-negligible and the sensitivity of those using the route is assessed as high-medium, resulting in **minor adverse-negligible effects** which would be the long term, residual effects.

Visual Effects on pedestrians using PRoW FP258 along the Rochdale Canal (Photograph 6.1)

- 8.28. Proposed tree groups within the open corridor along the southern part of the site would have matured to help soften the development edge when viewed from the south. Fleeting, oblique, distant and partial views of the proposed housing looking north, seen in the context of the existing development edge and mature tree groups.
- 8.29. Upon maturity of the landscape the magnitude of effect on views of pedestrians using PRoW FP258, which runs along the Rochdale Canal, is considered to be low neutral-negligible and the sensitivity of those using the route is assessed as high-medium, resulting in **minor neutral-negligible effects** which would be the long term, residual effects.

Visual Effects on pedestrians using PRoW FP249/240 (Photographs 7.1-7.2)

- 8.30. The proposed development would not be visible from the majority of the route. Proposed tree planting around the site entrance off Smithy Bridge Road and along the access road would have matured to soften views of the access and access road in views from the western end of the route.
- 8.31. Upon maturity of the landscape the magnitude of effect on the views of pedestrians using PRoW FP249 is considered to be negligible and the sensitivity of those using the route is assessed as high-medium, resulting in **negligible effects** which would be the long term, residual effects.

Visual Effects on pedestrians using PRoW FP250/257/258/259 near to Clegg Hall (Photographs 8.1-8.3 and Photomontage 8.1)

- 8.32. The proposed development would form a minor part of a wider view and be partially visible, in the context of the existing edge of Smallbridge. Proposed tree groups within the southern

corridor and within the fingers of open space which protrude in to the developed area would soften the urban edge and provide some screening of the built form. The proposed development would also be partially screened by the railway embankments and mature intervening vegetation.

8.33. Photomontage 8.1 (**Appendix F**) shows the view from the eastern end of the route, looking north through a gap in the vegetation which generally encloses the route. This illustrates the worst-case scenario view from the PRoW which is partially screened.

8.34. Upon maturity of the landscape the magnitude of effect on the views of pedestrians using PRoW FP250/257/258 is considered to be low adverse-negligible and the sensitivity of those using the route is assessed as high-medium, resulting in **minor adverse-negligible effects** which would be the long term, residual effects.

Visual Effects on motorists and pedestrians travelling on Smithy Bridge Road (Photographs 9.1-9.2 and Photomontage 9.2)

8.35. Planting around the access to the proposed development would have matured to help it blend in when viewed from Smithy Bridge Road.

8.36. The proposed tree planting along the access road would have matured to heights of around 8-10m and would provide screening of the existing views of the backs of housing located on South View Road when looking north. Upon maturity of the proposed planting, views looking north would include more tree planting and less built form than the existing situation.

8.37. Proposed groups of trees within the green corridor along the southern edge of the proposed development would have matured to help assimilate the built form in to the landscape.

8.38. Photomontage 9.2 (**Appendix F**) shows the view when travelling north on Smithy Bridge Road to demonstrate the worst-case scenario.

8.39. Upon maturity of the landscape the magnitude of effect on the views of motorists and pedestrians using Smithy Bridge Road is considered to be low beneficial and the sensitivity of those using the route is assessed as medium, resulting in **minor beneficial effects** which would be the long term, residual effects.

Visual Effects on those travelling on the railway (Photographs 10.1-10.2)

8.40. Fleeting, oblique and distant views of proposed houses partially screened by mature proposed trees and seen in the context of the existing urban edge of Smallbridge. Proposed trees within the green corridor south of the proposed housing would have matured to provide intermittent screening of the built form to soften the development edge.

8.41. Upon maturity of the landscape the magnitude of effect on the views of passengers using the railway line is considered to be negligible and the sensitivity was assessed as medium-low, resulting in negligible effects which would be the long term, residual effects.

Visual Effects on those using the allotments to the north of the site (Photographs 11.1-11.2)

- 8.42. Proposed trees within open space and gardens around the boundaries of the allotments would have matured to provide screening of proposed built form in any existing filtered views which are substantially screened by boundary fencing.
- 8.43. Upon maturity of the landscape the magnitude of effect on the views from the allotments is considered to be negligible and the sensitivity is assessed as medium resulting in **negligible effects** which would be the long term, residual effects.

Visual Effects on private residents located on South View Road (Photographs 12)

- 8.44. Views south from the ground floor and gardens would be screened by intervening fences and vegetation. Proposed tree planting along the access road would have matured to filter any views south of the proposed access road.
- 8.45. Upon maturity of the landscape the magnitude of effect on views for residents of South View Road is considered to be negligible and the sensitivity of residents is assessed as high-medium resulting in **negligible effects** which would be the long term, residual effects.

Visual Effects on private residents located on Wuerdle Close and Wuerdle Place (Photographs 13.1-13.2)

- 8.46. The properties are perpendicular to the site and generally do not have windows overlooking the proposed development. Proposed planting along the eastern boundary of the site would have matured to provide screening of the roofs of proposed houses.
- 8.47. Upon maturity of the landscape the magnitude of effect on views for residents of Wuerdle Close and Wuerdle Place is considered to be negligible and the sensitivity of residents is assessed as high-medium resulting in **negligible effects** which would be the long term, residual effects.

Visual Effects on private residents located to the north of the site (Wuerdle Farm, Brooklyn Ave, William Street, Holland Street, George Street, houses built as part of application 15/00413 and 14/01412/FUL) (Photographs 14.1-14.5)

- 8.48. The changes after 15 years would be similar to those upon completion, depending upon the maturity of proposed garden vegetation. It is expected that there would be some views of the backs of proposed housing partially screened by garden vegetation and fences. Residential development is a characteristic of existing views and there would be no loss of amenity.
- 8.49. Upon maturity of the landscape the magnitude of effect on views for residents located to the north of the site is considered to be medium adverse and the sensitivity of residents is assessed as high-medium, resulting in **moderate adverse effects** which would be the long term, residual effects.

Visual Effects on private residents located on Yea Fold and Higher Eafield Farm (Photograph 15)

- 8.50. Proposed mature trees within the corridor along the river would partially screen views of the proposed development from these properties.
- 8.51. Upon maturity of the landscape the magnitude of effect on views for residents at Yea Fold and Eafield Farm is considered to be low adverse- negligible and the sensitivity of residents is assessed as high-medium resulting in **minor adverse -negligible effects** which would be the long term, residual effects.

Visual Effects on private residents located on Bealcroft Close and Weir Road, Milnrow (Photograph 16)

- 8.52. Proposed trees along the southern edge of the proposed housing area would have matured to help integrate the built form in to the surrounding landscape.
- 8.53. Upon maturity of the landscape the magnitude of effect on views for residents in Milnrow is considered to be negligible and the sensitivity of residents is generally considered to be high-medium resulting in **-negligible effects** which would be the long term, residual effects.

Table 7: Summary of Residual Visual Effects (15 years post completion)

	Visual Receptor Type	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Resulting Significance of Effect
1	Pedestrians on PRoW FP8	High-Medium	Medium-low adverse	Moderate-minor adverse Local/ Long term/permanent
2	Pedestrians on PRoW FP6	High-Medium	Medium -low adverse	Moderate-minor adverse Local/ Long term/permanent
3	Pedestrians on PRoW FP4/260/259	High-Medium	Low adverse	Minor adverse Local/ Long term/permanent
4	Pedestrians on PRoW FP261	High-Medium	Low neutral-negligible	Minor neutral-negligible Local/ Long term/permanent
5	Pedestrians on PRoW FP265/266	High-Medium	Low adverse-negligible	Minor adverse-negligible Local/ Long term/permanent
6	Pedestrians on PRoW FP258 Rochdale Canal	High-Medium	Low neutral-negligible	Minor neutral-negligible Local/ Long term/permanent
7	Pedestrians on PRoW FP249/240	High-Medium	Negligible	Negligible Local/ Long term/permanent
8	Pedestrians on PRoW FP250/257/258/259 near Clegg Hall	High-Medium	Low adverse-negligible	Minor adverse-negligible Local/ Long term/permanent
9	Motorists/pedestrians travelling on Smithy Bridge Road	Medium-low	Low beneficial	Minor beneficial Local/ Long term/permanent
10	Passengers travelling on the railway	Medium-low	Negligible	Negligible Local/ Long term/permanent
11	Views from the allotments	Medium	Negligible	Negligible Local/ Long term/permanent
12	Private residents of South View Road	High-Medium	Negligible	Negligible Local/ Long term/permanent
13	Private residents of Wuerdle Close and Wuerdle Place	High-Medium	Negligible	Negligible Local/ Long term/permanent
14	Private residents of housing to the north of the site	High-Medium	Medium adverse	Moderate adverse Local/ Long term/permanent
15	Private residents of Yea Fold and Higher Eafield Farm	High-Medium	Low adverse-negligible	Minor adverse -negligible Local/ Long term/permanent
16	Private residents of Bealcroft Close and Weir Road, Milnrow	High-Medium	Negligible	Negligible Local/ Long term/permanent

9. Summary

Potential Landscape Effects

- 9.1. The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment considers that the effects on landscape features and landscape character as a result of the proposed development are not significant.
- 9.2. The developed area occupies the northern part of the site which is surrounded on three sides by existing housing. A wide swathe of land along the River Roch would be retained as open space in order to preserve a greenspace corridor along the river. There would be a beneficial effect on landscape features through the introduction of open spaces, tree and grassland planting along the site boundaries and within the river corridor. The proposals would be in keeping with the 'Urban Valleys' character and potential effects would be confined to the site itself and the immediate local area. Residual effects, once the proposed planting has matured, are considered to be **minor adverse-negligible**.

Potential Visual Effects

- 9.3. The site's location on the edge of Smallbridge, enclosed by existing housing on three sides, means that views of the proposals are generally experienced in the context of existing housing. The containment provided by the existing urban edge means that visual receptors to the west, north and east are confined to existing residents which abut the site. For these private residents there would be some **moderately adverse visual effects**, although visual amenity would not be affected and in planning terms there is no right to a view.
- 9.4. The site contributes to the setting of PRoW FP8 and FP6 which pass through the site. PRoW FP8 is partially enclosed and where there are more open views the change in the residual views would be minor. Existing housing is prominent in views northwards from PRoW FP8 and proposed mature vegetation would soften the new urban edge resulting in **moderate-minor adverse effects**. There would be some **moderate-minor adverse effects** on the views from PRoW FP6. Whilst some long views from the western end of this route would be retained, the middle section of the route would run through the proposed housing with the loss of some existing longer views.
- 9.5. Residual effects on the views from the PRoW which run through the landscape to the south of the site as a result of the proposals would be **minor adverse or negligible**. The existing edge of Smallbridge is visible and mature proposed planting would soften the urban edge when viewed from the south.
- 9.6. There would be **minor beneficial residual effects** on the views from Smithy Bridge Road as a result of the proposed tree planting which would mature to screen the existing views of housing located on South View Road.

- 9.7. The Proposed Development, as shown on the detailed drawings would not result in any significant adverse landscape and visual effects.

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