

An aerial photograph showing a rural landscape. The foreground is dominated by large, brownish-tan agricultural fields, some of which are divided by narrow tree-lined paths. To the right, a road with a roundabout leads to a residential area with numerous houses and a larger building complex. The background features more green fields and a dense line of trees.

**Cherwell District Council  
Site LSCA51/ PR9**

**Landscape Analysis to support the Response to  
the Inspector's Advice Note**

WYG/ A088250-2

September 2019

# Cherwell District Council

## Site LSCA51/ PR9

### Landscape Analysis to support the Response to the Inspector's Advice Note

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## Report Overview

1. This report assesses in landscape terms, the potential westward extent of an allocation for site PR9.
2. Under the transitional arrangements, the Partial Review is being examined against the NPPF 2012. One of the purposes of Green Belt is to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. Once defined, local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt. Green Belt boundaries should be clearly defined, “using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent”.
3. The LSCA51 area, defined in the Landscape Character Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment Study (LCSCA), borders Begbroke Wood, an Ancient Woodland and Local Wildlife Site, and within the area are Important Hedgerows and other strong hedgerows with mature and veteran trees. There are heritage features in the vicinity of the site: the Grade 2 listed Springhill Farm, Begbroke conservation area, the historic routes along Dolton and Frogwelldown Lanes, and ridge and furrow earthworks still extant in some fields.
4. The LCSCA identified the factors contributing to Site LSCA51’s landscape character, its sensitivity and capacity for residential development. The important characteristics of the site were identified as the ‘domed’ landform, the access or views across the landscape of the site provided by the footpath network, the mix of arable and pastureland, Important Hedgerows, linear woodland features and other hedgerows with mature trees.
5. The capacity of LSCA51 for residential development was judged to be ‘medium to low’ for most of the site.
6. Landowners, Merton College, submitted a representation to the Local Plan EIP which proposed a larger site, extending into fields to the west of those allocated by the Council, because it would allow for a central open greenspace, “create a stronger sense of place”, restore former hedgerow boundaries and provide “a robust and enduring Green Belt boundary”. The greater depth of development would “enable a higher standard of design”. Development could be phased so that advance landscape works could be implemented.
7. Main findings:
  - Factors influencing the westward extension of site PR9 include: the landform relationship of the low surrounding hills and ridges to the broad low-lying vale, where settlement is concentrated; the progression of shallow lower slopes to steeper mid-slopes, generally above the 75m contour, and the strong vegetation pattern, which reinforces the sense of enclosure of the landform, adding a sense of maturity to the landscape.
  - Effects on the landform and vegetation characteristics of the site could be mitigated by limiting the westward extent of built development so that it respects this landform relationship.
  - A buffer of publicly accessible greenspace would take the pressure off active agricultural land and protected woodland, with connections out into the wider countryside.

- Visual amenity considerations include views of the development and views within the development; the visual relationships with the road frontage to the A44, to the existing urban edge of Yarnton, and the existing footpath network.
- The future built development could be permeated by a substantial green infrastructure, accommodating surface water management, retention and enhancement of hedgerows, habitats and habitats linkages, an access network and amenity open space, and providing a setting to the new residential areas.
- A long-term management plan will be needed if the green infrastructure within the development is to achieve its objectives.

#### 8. Review against policy:

- Following the guidance in NPPF and CDC's Green Belt Study, the revised Green Belt boundary should be drawn along the edge of the built development to provide a "strong boundary", with road frontage to the greenspace beyond rather than rear garden boundaries.
- The buffer of accessible greenspace would provide a defensible transition to the land retained in agricultural use.

#### 9. Conclusions:

- The landscape of LSCA51 could accommodate residential development on the lower slopes in the east of the area, avoiding rising up the steeper mid-slopes, so that the enclosing function of the landform to the lower-lying broad vale would be retained.
- The westward extent of development should be related to the 75m AOD contour, although the strong vegetation structure to the large central field could accommodate development to about the 78m contour.
- A substantial green infrastructure for the development and the outer buffer of accessible greenspace will need to be secured through a development brief and a long-term management plan.

## 1.0 Introduction

1.1.1 WYG is instructed by Cherwell District Council (CDC) to assess, in landscape terms, the potential westward extent of an allocation for site PR9, and advise on the possible treatment of the new urban edge. A proposal for a school playing field in the south of the area is also to be evaluated.

1.1.2 At the Examination in Public (EIP) Hearings in February 2019, CDC site proposals included part of the study area for the Landscape Character Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment Study (LCSCA)<sup>1</sup> identified as site LSCA51. This was an area along the

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<sup>1</sup> WYG Environment Planning Transport Limited for Cherwell District Council, Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review, Landscape Character Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment June 2017:

eastern edge of LSCA51, identified as PR9. A more extensive site was put forward by the Merton College, the Proposers, supported by a landscape and urban design study by Define, known in this report as the “530 dwelling site” or “530 scheme”.

1.1.3 In his Post Hearing Advice Note, the Inspector had some sympathy with the points made by the site promoters in relation to the depth of development allowed for in the overall allocation. He considered that there was scope for the developable area to extend westward and this might well provide the scope for a development more interesting in its design and layout. This report sets out:

- The factors influencing the possible extension of site PR9 westward into LSCA51, that could accommodate residential development in a way that would fit with its landscape context and relate well to the settlement of Yarnton;
- An assessment, in landscape terms, of the Proposers’ ‘530 dwelling site’ proposal, as shown on the plans prepared by Define on behalf of the Proposers;
- Analyses to identify key features of the site to be protected and mitigation measures for the potential allocation;
- Advice on the possible treatment of a new urban edge to the new Green Belt boundary.
- Comment on the school playing field proposal.

1.1.4 This report provides part of the evidence base for CDC’s assessment of the alternative options and modifications proposed. It is illustrated by plans and photographs included within **Appendix 4**, as follows:

- Figure 01 LSCA51 Site Plan
- Figure 02 Site Plan - Aerial
- Figure 03 Landscape Designations
- Figure 04 Topographic analysis: wider context
- Figure 05 Topography & vegetation - Site
- Figure 06 Landform, Vegetation & PR9 Boundaries

## 1.2 Policy & Designations

### National Planning Policy Framework 2012 (NPPF)

1.2.1 The NPPF “sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how these should be applied”. It was first published in 2012 and revised in 2018, with “minor clarifications to the revised version” in 2019. Section 13 is titled “Protecting Green Belt Land”. Under the transitional arrangements, the Partial Review is being examined against the NPPF 2012.

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<https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/downloads/download/388/landscape-character-sensitivity-and-capacity-assessment-june-2017-part-1> [accessed 190909]

1.2.2 Under the heading 'Achieving sustainable development', section 9 deals with 'Protecting Green Belt land'.

1.2.3 Paragraph 79 is introductory and 80 sets out five purposes of Green Belt:

79. The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.

80. Green Belt serves five purposes:

- to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

1.2.4 Of these, the 3<sup>rd</sup> purpose is most relevant to landscape considerations of potential development proposals. Paragraph 81 provides further guidance relevant to landscape and visual amenity:

81. Once Green Belts have been defined, local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity; or to improve damaged and derelict land.

1.2.5 Paragraph 85 advises local planning authorities on defining Green Belt boundaries, including that boundaries should be clearly defined, "using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent".

## Local Plan

1.2.6 In preparing its draft local plan, Cherwell District Council carried out a Green Belt Study and the LCSCA .

### **CDC Green Belt Study, 2017<sup>2</sup>**

1.2.7 This study appraised strategic development sites against the five purposes of Green Belt set out in NPPF, and "the relative harm (or otherwise) to the Green Belt that may result from their potential release for development".

1.2.8 §5.9 states: "Should the District decide to release land from the Green Belt, we recommend that outline policy guidance or masterplans are prepared as part of the

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<sup>2</sup> LUC for Cherwell District Council, [Cherwell Green Belt Study Final Report](https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/downloads/download/375/cherwell-green-belt-study-april-2017-and-addendum-june-2017-part-1), April 2017: <https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/downloads/download/375/cherwell-green-belt-study-april-2017-and-addendum-june-2017-part-1> [accessed 190909]



Local Plan process. These masterplans should draw on the findings of this Green Belt Study to indicate precise development areas, new defensible Green Belt boundaries (existing or new features) and appropriate development heights and densities. Such an approach, together with specific policies for the development of the land, would help to engender public confidence and support, as well as mitigate harm to the remaining Green Belt”.

- 1.2.9 §3.32-3.33 of the study report considered beneficial uses of Green Belt land and mitigation measures to reduce harm to the Green Belt where areas are removed from it.

### **LCSCA, 2017**

- 1.2.10 This study analysed the landscape and visual sensitivity and capacity of a range of areas for different kinds of development, including area LSCA51: see §2 below for a summary of its findings.
- 1.2.11 The LCSCA study was carried out by WYG on behalf of Cherwell District Council (CDC), as part of the evidence base for the Partial Review of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan Part 1. It considered 41 sites in the south of Cherwell District, around the settlements of Kidlington, Yarnton, Begbroke, Islip and Shipton on Cherwell. The study area for this site was identified as site LSCA51 for the purposes of the study.
- 1.2.12 The evaluation of the study site LSCA51, of which PR9 is a part, is provided in section 23 of the report. The LSCA51 study area extends westward from the A44 and the western edge of Yarnton to fields to the west of Frogwelldown Lane, south to Cassington Road and north west to a field beyond Springhill Road, bordering Bladon Heath. The study site encircles Begbroke Wood, but does not include it.
- 1.2.13 The area under consideration for Policy PR9 lies to the west and north-west of Yarnton, bounded to the east by the A44 Woodstock Road and extending into fields to the west of those allocated by the Council in the submission Local Plan (Policy PR9). To the north and east of the A44 Begbroke Policy site PR8 extends from the eastern side of the A44 between Begbroke, Yarnton and Kidlington further to the east.
- 1.2.14 The site is within National Character Area 108: Upper Thames Clay Vales, Regional Character Area Upper Thames Vale, Wooded Estate Lands landscape type, and Local Character Area Lower Cherwell Floodplain, landscape types R2: Large Scale Undulating Farmland/ R2b Rolling Arable Landscape with Strong Field Pattern, Copses & Hedgerow Trees, and type R3: Large-Scale Enclosed Farmland/ R3a Large-Scale Arable Farmland Enclosed by Woodland Belts<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> LCSCA, §23 LSCA51 (see Appendix 2 )

- 1.2.15 Key characteristics identified in these landscape character assessment, relevant to the site and its landscape context include:
- At National level: low-lying clay-based flood plains ... the large river system of the River Thames drains the Vales, their headwaters flowing off the Cotswolds to the north;
  - At Regional level: rolling topography with localised steep slopes; large blocks of ancient woodland and mixed plantations; regularly shaped field pattern dominated by arable fields.
  - At Local level: arable farming facilitated by improvements in drainage resulting in large flat fields used for cereal crops; major roads are dominant features including the A44.
- 1.2.16 The area under consideration for Policy PR9 reflects these landform characteristics. It is in agricultural land use both arable and pastureland, and borders Begbroke Wood, which is an Ancient Woodland and a Local Wildlife Site. Within the area are Important Hedgerows and other strong hedgerows with mature trees. The arable fields are large and on the higher land to the west, and the southern arable field slopes distinctly eastwards towards the edge of Yarnton. The southern arable field was enlarged through hedgerow removal between 1955 and 1981<sup>4</sup>.
- 1.2.17 The PR9 area is on land rising from a broad lowland vale, generally below the 75m AOD contour, which is surrounded by low hills and ridges rising to about 120m, with a few higher points, such as Wytham Hill, 3.5-4km to the south, at about 160m AOD. These give a sense of edge definition to the broad vale.
- 1.2.18 Settlement in the near and wider landscape context, including Yarnton, Begbroke and Kidlington, is generally located in the lowland, below the 70m AOD contour.
- 1.2.19 The LCSCA identified the factors contributing to Site LSCA51's landscape character, its sensitivity and capacity for residential development as:
- Domed landform, the land gradually climbing to a high point immediately to the north-west of Begbroke Wood;
  - Good footpath network crossing the site enabling either access to most areas or views across the agricultural landscape of the site;
  - Land use a mix of arable and pasture divided by mature hedgerows and fences with hedgerow trees and 'linear woodland features';
  - Drainage ditches following several field boundaries, draining generally to the south;

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<sup>4</sup> See historic maps 1811-2018 in Gerald Eve, [Partial Review of the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031, Hearing Statement in respect of Matter 7: Yarnton, on behalf of Merton College Oxford](https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/6247/pr-c-1397-gerald-eve-on-behalf-of-merton-college.pdf) (Gerald Eve Hearing Statement): <https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/6247/pr-c-1397-gerald-eve-on-behalf-of-merton-college.pdf> [accessed 190909]

- Springhill Farm, a Grade2 listed building immediately south of Begbroke Wood, prominent in views from within the site;
- Variety of views from different parts of the site: long and short distance, panoramic and confined views, depending upon location and direction of view, for example:
  - From centre of the site, long distance panoramic views to the south, west and north-west over the rolling landscape to the distant landscape horizon and, to the south-east, towards Yarnton;
  - From lower lying land in the north-east of the site, more constrained views, filtered by vegetation within the site and the wider landscape.

### **Landscape character sensitivity**

- 1.2.20 The LCSCA judged landscape character sensitivity from a combined consideration of landscape sensitivity and visual sensitivity. Landscape sensitivity in turn comprised judgements of 'natural', 'cultural', 'aesthetic' and 'landscape quality and condition' factors. Visual Sensitivity comprised judgements of 'general visibility', 'sensitivity of population' and 'mitigation' factors.
- 1.2.21 The combined landscape sensitivity of the site was assessed as 'medium', and the combined visual sensitivity of the site was also assessed as 'medium', together giving an overall sensitivity of 'medium'.
- 1.2.22 In addition, landscape value was assessed, taking into account valued natural elements present in the site or environs, cultural elements, scenic value and tranquillity, as well as perceived value, as expressed in, for example, recreation value. The combined landscape value of the site was assessed as 'medium'.
- 1.2.23 In relation to the capacity of the study site (LSCA51) for residential development, the study concluded it to be 'medium to low' for most of the site, the main reason being that "the land rises to a localised plateau making it highly visible within the surrounding area" (LCSCA §23.8). It also advised that there may be "localised opportunity in the south east of the site adjacent to the existing urban edge of Yarnton".
- 1.2.24 The study identified potential for the existing green linkages and footpath network to be enhanced and potential for woodland development, through "enhancement of the green linkages already present within the site area and connecting to the Local and District Wildlife Sites beyond the site area".
- 1.2.25 In relation to future management and maintenance of the area, it recommended enhancement of the network of mature hedgerows and providing connection to the Local Wildlife Site.

## Additional description

- 1.2.26 The LSCSA considered the area of LSCA51, a considerably more extensive area than being considered for allocation in the Local Plan. Additional appraisal was carried out for the purposes of the EIP, focussed more on the specific characteristics of the area that could inform allocation decisions.
- 1.2.27 The important characteristics of the site have been identified as the landform, the access or views across the landscape of the site provided by the footpath network, Important Hedgerows, linear woodland features and other hedgerows with mature trees. There are also heritage features in the vicinity of the site: the Grade 2 listed Springhill Farm, Begbroke conservation area, the historic routes along Dolton and Frogwelldown Lanes, and ridge and furrow earthworks still extant in some fields<sup>5</sup>.
- 1.2.28 The footpath network includes the footpath and bridleway route along the historic Dolton Lane in the north of the area and Shakespeare Way long distance footpath along Frogwelldown Lane, from Yarnton and continuing north around Begbroke Wood.
- 1.2.29 Landform is the defining characteristic of the area under consideration. The site is located on slopes rising to one of these enclosing ridges, from about 70m AOD at the A44 to a broad plateau between about 96m – 100m AOD, open in the south, corresponding with Frogwelldown Lane to the west, and wooded at Begbroke Wood to the north-west. The lower slopes are gentle, shallower than 1:20; the mid-slopes are steeper at between 1:20 and 1:12 and steeper in part of the south; the plateau is shallower than 1:50. The steeper mid-slopes are generally between the 75m and 93m AOD contours in the southern part of the area and between 79m and 101m AOD ( within Begbroke Wood) in the north of the area.
- 1.2.30 The shallow lower slopes relate well with the landform pattern of the built up area of Yarnton and Begbroke (and allocation PR8), and with the A44 corridor. The open plateau and the wooded part of the plateau are contrasting features, and their enclosure of the lower slopes is emphasised by the relative steepness of the mid-slopes.
- 1.2.31 The historic maps also show that the large arable field occupying much of the south of the site (LSCA51) was created by the removal of hedgerows defining an irregular field pattern, between 1955 and 1981.
- 1.2.32 The remaining hedgerows and linear woodland features augment the enclosing function of the landform, with many large and veteran trees<sup>6</sup> adding a sense of maturity to the landscape. This is a landscape structure that development proposals can be related to. It can provide a sense of place, as ready-made mature landscape features and a skeleton on which to build a green infrastructure: habitats and habitats linkages, cultural heritage, greenspaces and corridors along which an access network for existing

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<sup>5</sup> Historic maps 1811-2018 in Gerald Eve Hearing Statement

<sup>6</sup> Gerald Eve Hearing Statement, pp44-47

and future residents could be developed. It can also provide a backdrop and setting to the new residential areas.

## 2.0 CDC's allocation of land for Draft Policy PR9

- 2.1.1 The Council's Written Statement for the EIP7 focuses on site specific issues relating to the allocation of land at Yarnton proposed by Policy PR9.
- 2.1.2 Section 10 of the Statement states: The Council considers that the landscape constraints and lack of clear features immediately to the west of the proposed allocation are such that it would not be acceptable to revise either the site or proposed Green Belt boundary.
- 2.1.3 Section 14: The Cherwell Green Belt Study (CD PR40) considered the larger area as site PR51 (equivalent to LSCA51), and assessed it in three parcels:
- PR51a: between Begbroke, Begbroke Wood and the A44;
  - PR51b: between Yarnton, the Frogwelldown Lane track and Begbroke Wood;
  - PR51c: the hilltop and land sloping away to the west, north and south.
- 2.1.4 The Study concluded that the release of PR51a and PR51c would have high harm to the purposes of the Green Belt, and PR51b would have from moderate to high harm (p.163-169).
- 2.1.5 Section 18 refers to the larger area of site LSCA51 and noted the assessment of capacity for residential development, and the conclusion of 'medium capacity' in the south-east of the site adjacent to Yarnton. The Council considered (Section 18) that, in landscape terms, "there is a strong sense of distinction between the elevated farmland to the west, north and south and the low lying situation of Yarnton to the east. There is the opportunity for some residential development on the lower slopes immediately to the north and west of the village without undue harm to the purposes of the Green Belt in that location and the wider landscape more generally. The development in that area could be integrated with Yarnton but would take a broadly linear form along the A44. However, it would have strong visual link with the land to the east of the A44 – the approach to Begbroke Science Park – particularly if development is also taken forward in that location".
- 2.1.6 The proposed submission allocation was limited to lower-lying land adjacent to Yarnton, entirely below the 75m AOD contour and mainly below the 73m contour. The area is

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<sup>7</sup> Examination of the Partial Review of the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031: Oxford's Unmet Housing Needs Hearing – 12 February 2019 Written Statement by Cherwell District Council: Matter 7 – Yarnton (CDC Hearing Statement): <https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/8685/matter-7-written-statement-%E2%80%93-cherwell-district-council.pdf> [accessed 190909]

bounded by existing hedgerows that would define the revised Green Belt boundary. Other considerations were: protecting the setting of Begbroke Conservation Area, identifying opportunities for improving access to the countryside and informal recreation while protecting important landscape, a new Local Nature Reserve proposed near the existing school, a new community woodland close to Begbroke Wood, and opportunity for enhanced green infrastructure within the Green Belt, with connected wildlife corridors.

- 2.1.7 The Written Statement concludes that “the development of site PR9 would be reasonable and sustainable to help meet Oxford’s pressing housing needs, deliver the Plan’s vision and achieve its objectives”, that “high quality development can be achieved while avoiding unacceptable harm to interests of acknowledged importance and maintaining the overall integrity of the Green Belt and its essential characteristics”, and would offer the opportunity to “provide benefits for the local community and achieve positive use of land within the Green Belt”.

## 3.0 Review of Proposer’s Representation

- 3.1.1 Landowners, Merton College, submitted a representation to the Local Plan EIP regarding potential residential development on part of LSCA51, under Matter 7, Policy PR9 Yarnton<sup>8</sup>. They propose a larger site than the Council, extending into fields to the west of those allocated by the Council.
- 3.1.2 Appendix A of the Representation was a “Design Quality and Delivery Statement”, prepared by Define and dated January 2019, in the Introduction to which it is described as assessing “Merton College’s preferred development scenario against Cherwell District Council’s (CDC) policy preference for 440 dwellings over a gross site area of around 16 hectares (which delivers just under 10 hectares of net development area)”. The 440 homes figure was proposed by the Council as a focussed change thereby reducing the submission proposed capacity of 530 homes. This change was proposed in response to objections received and to “improve the deliverability of the site and achieve a high quality of design”.
- 3.1.3 It presents a ‘Framework Plan’ as Figure 05, with a Summary: “... having assessed and mapped technical site constraints including ecology, drainage, arboricultural, acoustic, transportation, landscape and visual and utilities, development scenario PR9 can deliver 530 dwellings and a home work/ community hub at around 35 dwellings per hectare (with a net developable area of just over 15 hectares). The ‘development scenario PR9’ referred to in the document is a larger site than the Council’s proposed submission allocation, extending it westwards beyond the existing hedgerows that defined the allocated Draft Policy PR9 site.

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<sup>8</sup> Gerald Eve Hearing Statement

- 3.1.4 The justification for the larger site included that it would allow for a central open greenspace, which could be overlooked from the housing areas, that it would be possible to “create a stronger sense of place”, to restore hedgerow boundaries along lost historic alignments for “a robust and enduring Green Belt boundary”, and development could be phased so that it need not take place adjacent to the new Green Belt boundary for 5 years, allowing “implementation of advance landscape works, which creates sufficient time for this boundary to mature and be robust”.
- 3.1.5 It also concludes that the development envisaged on the extended site would deliver “high quality design” and a more cohesive relationship with Yarnnton, connected by “a well overlooked route to the existing Primary School”, and the “greater depth of development [would allow] for increased variety and facilities within the scheme, enabling a higher standard of design”.

## 4.0 Analysis

### 4.1 Factors influencing the westward extension of site PR9

- 4.1.1 From the landscape analysis of the site in LCSCA, discussions with CDC and from observations and analysis on site, the following criteria or guidelines for locating a possible development area within the LSCA51 site were derived:
- The existing relationship of built up areas to the landform of the area is that development is located on the lower land of the broad vale, generally below the 70m AOD contour;
  - It is important to the landscape character of the area that the edges of the broad vale, defined by low hills and ridges, rising to about 120m AOD, are not breached by built development;
  - As noted in the landscape description, the steeper mid-slopes of the LSCA51 area are generally above the 75m AOD contour (or 79m in the north of the site). The objective of keeping the built development in the lower landform can be judged in relation to the 75m contour, as a starting point;
  - The vegetation pattern may offer a structure to define both the character of a new residential area and a boundary to the Green Belt, and has potential for enhancement by restoring weak or gappy hedgerows, restoring some of the former smaller-scale fieldscape, and managing and maintaining the mature/ veteran trees.
- 4.1.2 Taking the 75m AOD contour as a baseline, the ‘530 scheme’ would be largely below this level and below the steeper mid-slopes of the LSCA51 area. The part that would extend above the 75m contour (to about 76m) would be on gentler lower slopes of a spur of land contained within the large central field which is strongly enclosed by important hedgerows and ‘linear woodland features.

## 4.2 Key features of the site and mitigation measures

4.2.1 The key features or characteristics of the site identified in the LCSCA are summarised in §1.3.9 and §1.3.17 above.

4.2.2 Features of the site to be considered in relation to the proposals include:

- The rising landform;
- Mix of arable and pasture land use;
- Good footpath network;
- Mature hedgerows with mature and veteran trees, and 'linear woodland features';
- Variety of views from different parts of the site.

4.2.3 CDC's Hearing Statement also noted that "there is a strong sense of distinction between the elevated farmland to the west, north and south and the low lying situation of Yarnton to the east".

4.2.4 In addition, ridge and furrow earthworks occur in the large central field and the hedgerows on the western, southern and eastern sides of this field are Important Hedgerows.

### Mitigation measures

4.2.5 Effects on the landform characteristic of the site can be mitigated by limiting the westward extent of built development so that it respects the relationship of the rising landform to the pattern of settlement in the lower land.

4.2.6 Development for housing would inevitably take land out of agricultural land use. A buffer of open spaces formed as fields of pasture (or, potentially, meadow) as publicly accessible greenspace, would take the pressure off potential desire to access what would be active agricultural land. It would also relieve pressure to access the protected woodland, especially if woodland were developed within or close to the new residential areas.

4.2.7 The footpath network available can provide the basis for connectivity from the development area out into the wider countryside, while providing a local network within the new residential areas, integrated with its green infrastructure.

4.2.8 Visual amenity considerations apply both to views of the development and views from within the development and will need to be addressed in the design of the development. There will be visual relationships with the road frontage to the A44 and to the existing urban edge of Yarnton, as well as the existing footpath network.

4.2.9 Views from within the development may be close views of the development and its landscape infrastructure as well as out to the landscape setting, both the countryside and local settlement.



- 4.2.10 Westward extension of the proposed development area could result in up to half the central field being built over, with permanent loss of some ridge and furrow earthworks. The remaining ridge and furrow earthworks could be retained within the proposed buffer green spaces and peoples' appreciation and knowledge could be boosted by interpretive material.
- 4.2.11 The design approach of laying out a residential development in this area could place emphasis on permeation of the built development areas with a substantial green infrastructure. Surface water management via a SuDS approach could be accommodated, as well as retention and enhancement of existing hedgerows with their mature and veteran trees, habitats and habitats linkages, an access network and connections into the wider surroundings, amenity open space and providing a setting to the new residential areas.
- 4.2.12 A long-term management plan will be needed if the green infrastructure within the development is to achieve its objectives, and especially for the publicly accessible greenspace in the fields bordering the built development and providing a buffer to the agricultural countryside beyond.

### 4.3 Treatment of a new edge to the Green Belt

- 4.3.1 NPPF advises that boundaries should be clearly defined, "using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent".
- 4.3.2 The Green Belt Study considered how new boundaries to the revised Green Belt should be determined, in "Task 4: Assessment of Potential Alternative Boundaries". These included the contribution of boundary features to Green Belt purposes, as separating or connecting features and noted:

3.32 Features considered to constitute **strong potential Green Belt boundaries** include **natural features such as substantial watercourses and water bodies**, and **man-made features such as motorways, A and B roads and railway lines**. Less prominent or less permanent features such as **walls, woodland, hedgerows, tree lines, streams and ditches are considered to constitute moderate strength boundaries**, and edges lacking clear definition on the ground will form weaker boundaries.

3.33 The suitability of an alternative Green Belt boundary also depends on its **relationship with existing boundaries** in terms of the resulting form. **An overly extended or convoluted shape is likely to cause greater harm** than a simpler, more direct alignment in terms of its impact on the relationship between built development and open countryside. For each of the assessment parcels, commentary is provided on the nature of the existing boundary and any suggested alternatives.

- 4.3.3 Following NPPF §85 that new boundaries should be physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent, and §3.32 of the Green Belt Study, the revised Green Belt boundary would be drawn along the edge of the built development. To

provide a “strong boundary”, this should preferably have road frontage to the greenspace beyond, rather than rear garden boundaries.

- 4.3.4 The buffer of accessible greenspace as fields bound by hedgerows would be in the Green Belt and would provide a defensible transition to the land retained in agricultural use, and would both reinforce and soften the “harder” boundary at the edge of the built development. As noted already, this will need to be secured through the development brief and a long-term management plan.

## 5.0 Summary and Conclusions

- 5.1.1 The Inspector at the Examination in Public hearings considered that there was scope to extend the PR9 site westwards to accommodate development in a “more interesting design and layout”. The landscape and visual factors that would support setting the extent of a westward extension of site PR9 were examined. The establishment of a clearly defined new boundary to the Green Belt was considered, and ways of “enhancing the beneficial use of the Green Belt land”, as sought by NPPF 2012.
- 5.1.2 Cherwell District Council had carried out a Green Belt Study and a Landscape Character Sensitivity & Capacity Assessment (LCSCA) in preparing the Draft Local Plan.

### Main findings

- 5.1.3 Site PR9 is part of study site LSCA51 of the LCSCA. Factors contributing to its landscape character, sensitivity and capacity for residential development included: the landform, rising westwards; good footpath network; mixed arable and pasture land use; mature hedgerows (some ‘Important’) and hedgerow trees; variety of views from different parts of the site, Begbroke Conservation Area to the north and Spring Hill Farm Grade II listed building.
- 5.1.4 The capacity of the study site for residential development was judged to be ‘medium to low’ for most of the site, as the land rising to a local plateau to the west makes it highly visible from the surrounding area. Potential for enhancement of the access network and woodland development was identified, and for enhancement of the network of mature hedgerows.
- 5.1.5 Additional detailed appraisal for this report identified landform as the defining characteristic of the area under consideration. The wider area is a broad vale enclosed by gentle hills and ridges, on one of which area LSCA51 is located. Within LSCA51, the land rises westward from about 70m at the A44, first in shallow slopes, then more steeply to a plateau at about 100m.

- 5.1.6 The strong hedgerows and linear woodland features augment the enclosing function of the landform. The southern open arable field is the product of hedgerow clearance between 1955 and 1981.
- 5.1.7 These features provide a landscape structure that development proposals can be related to: a skeleton on which to build a green infrastructure, provide a sense of place, and access and greenspace network for existing and future residents. It can also provide a backdrop and setting to the new residential areas.
- 5.1.8 CDC's submission land allocation for Policy PR9 was limited to lower-lying land adjacent to Yarnton, below the 75m contour, and existing hedgerows would define the revised Green Belt boundary. Other considerations were: protecting the setting of Begbroke Conservation Area, improving access to the countryside and informal recreation, protecting important landscape, a new Local Nature Reserve and new community woodland close to Begbroke Wood, and enhanced green infrastructure within the Green Belt, with connected wildlife corridors.
- 5.1.9 The Council's Written Statement states that "high quality development can be achieved while avoiding unacceptable harm to interests of acknowledged importance ..." and would "provide benefits for the local community and achieve positive use of land within the Green Belt".
- 5.1.10 Landowners, Merton College, submitted a representation to the Local Plan EIP regarding potential residential development on part of LSCA51, but a larger site extending into fields to the west of those put forward by the Council.
- 5.1.11 A 'Framework Plan' was presented with the justification for the larger site that it would allow for a central open greenspace, "a stronger sense of place", restoration of hedgerow boundaries along lost historic alignments for "a robust and enduring Green Belt boundary". Development could be phased so that "advance landscape works" could be carried out. It also concludes that the "greater depth of development [would allow] for increased variety and facilities within the scheme, enabling a higher standard of design".

## Analysis and potential for mitigation

- 5.1.12 The landform relationship of the low surrounding hills and ridges to the broad low-lying vale, where settlement is concentrated, is one of the main considerations when locating development within LSCA51. This is emphasised by the progression of shallow lower slopes to steeper mid-slopes, generally above the 75m contour. The strong vegetation pattern reinforces the sense of enclosure of the landform,<sup>9</sup> adding a sense of maturity to the landscape.

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<sup>9</sup> Gerald Eve Hearing Statement, pp44-47

- 5.1.13 Effects on the landform and vegetation characteristics of the site could be mitigated by limiting the westward extent of built development so that it respects the relationship of the rising landform to the pattern of settlement in the lower land.
- 5.1.14 A buffer of publicly accessible greenspace would take the pressure off what would be active agricultural land as well as the protected woodland, with a local network within the new residential areas, integrated with its green infrastructure, and connections out into the wider countryside.
- 5.1.15 Visual amenity considerations apply both to views of the development and views from within the development, the visual relationships with the road frontage to the A44, to the existing urban edge of Yarnton, and the existing footpath network.
- 5.1.16 The future built development could be permeated by a substantial green infrastructure, accommodating surface water management, retention and enhancement of existing hedgerows, habitats and habitats linkages, an access network and connections into the wider surroundings, amenity open space, as well as providing a setting to the new residential areas.
- 5.1.17 A long-term management plan will be needed if the green infrastructure within the development is to achieve its objectives, and especially for the accessible greenspace in the fields put forward as bordering the built development and providing a buffer to the agricultural countryside beyond.
- 5.1.18 There is some ridge and furrow earthworks in the large central field, up to half of which could be lost, but the remainder could be retained within the proposed buffer green spaces and peoples' appreciation and knowledge could be boosted by interpretive material.

## 5.2 Policy considerations

- 5.2.1 The 3<sup>rd</sup> purpose set out in NPPF 2012 paragraph 80 is most relevant to landscape considerations of potential development proposals. Paragraph 81 provides further guidance, to “plan positively” to enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt; opportunities for access, for outdoor sport and recreation, and to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity.
- 5.2.2 Following the guidance in NPPF paragraph 85 and the Green Belt Study, the revised Green Belt boundary should be drawn along the edge of the built development. To provide a “strong boundary”, this should preferably have road frontage to the greenspace beyond, rather than rear garden boundaries.
- 5.2.3 The buffer of accessible greenspace would provide a defensible transition to the land retained in agricultural use, and would both reinforce and soften the “harder” boundary at the edge of the built development.

## 5.3 Conclusions

- 5.3.1 The landscape of LSCA51 could accommodate residential development on the lower slopes in the east of the area, avoiding rising up the steeper mid-slopes, so that the enclosing function of the landform to the lower-lying broad vale would be retained.
- 5.3.2 The westward extent of development should be related to the 75m AOD contour, although the strong vegetation structure to the large central field and the shallower slopes continuing to about the 78m contour here could accommodate development to about that level.
- 5.3.3 A substantial green infrastructure for the development and the outer buffer of accessible greenspace will need to be secured through the development brief and a long-term management plan.

## Appendix 1 Landscape Character<sup>10</sup>

<p><u>National Character Area 108: Upper Thames Clay Vales</u></p> <p>Key Characteristics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low-lying clay-based flood plains encircle the Midvale Ridge.</li> <li>• The large river system of the River Thames drains the Vales, their headwaters flowing off the Cotswolds to the north or emitting from the springline along the Chilterns and Downs escarpments.</li> <li>• Woodland cover is low at only about 3 per cent.</li> <li>• Wet ground conditions and heavy clay soils discourage cultivation in many places, giving rise to livestock farming.</li> <li>• In the river corridors, grazed pasture dominates, with limited areas of historic wetland habitats including wet woodland, fen, reedbed and flood meadow.</li> <li>• Gravel extraction has left a legacy of geological exposures.</li> <li>• Wetland habitat attracts regionally important numbers of birds including snipe, redshank, curlew and lapwing and wintering wildfowl such as pochard.</li> <li>• Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site, including its Capability Brown landscape, is the finest of many examples of historic parkland in this NCA.</li> <li>• Brick and tile from local clays, timber and thatch are traditional building materials across the area.</li> <li>• Settlement is sparse on flood plains, apart from at river crossings, where there can be large towns.</li> </ul>	<p><u>(OWLS) Regional Character Areas:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upper Thames Vale</li> </ul> <p><u>(OWLS) Landscape Type: Wooded Estatelands</u></p> <p>Key Characteristics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rolling topography with localised steep slopes.</li> <li>• Large blocks of ancient woodland and mixed plantations of variable sizes.</li> <li>• Large parklands and mansion houses.</li> <li>• A regularly shaped field pattern dominated by arable fields.</li> <li>• Small villages with strong vernacular character.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Cherwell District Landscape Assessment</b></p>	
<p><u>Character Area: Lower Cherwell Floodplain</u></p> <p>Key Characteristics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fringe landscapes associated with Kidlington.</li> <li>• Surface geology of terrace gravels and alluvial deposits associated with the River Cherwell and River Thames.</li> <li>• Arable Farming facilitated by improvements in drainage resulting in large flat fields used for cereal crops.</li> <li>• Influence of Oxford is substantial.</li> <li>• Pylons and overhead cables radiate from a substation at Yarnton which dominate the skyline.</li> <li>• Major roads are dominant features including the A40, A44, A4260 and the A34.</li> <li>• Around Kidlington the visual influence of the urban edge extends over considerable distances resulting in an urbanised effect.</li> </ul>	<p><u>Landscape Type: Rural Type R3a Large-scale arable farmland enclosed by woodland belts</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A landscape of level or gently rolling arable land with large fields and a weak hedgerow structure. Unlike the other large-scale arable farmland types, views are interrupted and contained by strong belts of trees and woodland which also provide a definite structure to the landscape.</li> </ul> <p><u>Landscape Type: Rural Type R2b Rolling arable landscape with strong field pattern, copses and hedgerow trees</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The topography of this type is as variable as for type R2a, but the landscape is more clearly defined. Dense hedges and lines of hedgerow trees provide a good structure, and small copses and coverts puncture views over rolling arable fields; Many of the hedgerow trees are still in very good condition, although mature.</li> </ul>

<sup>10</sup> WYG Environment Planning Transport Limited for Cherwell District Council, Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review, Landscape Character Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment June 2017



## Appendix 2 LSCSA, June 2017 - §23 LSCA51

### **23. LSCA51 Land to West of A44/Rutten Lane, North of Cassington Road, surrounding Begbroke Wood**

#### **23.1 Site Overview**

23.1.1 The site is located to the west of Begbroke and Yarnton, immediately west of the A44 Woodstock Road and approximately 0.5 km north of Worten. The site area comprises approximately 230.80 ha of agricultural land which is in a mix of arable and pastoral use; the land in the south west primarily being arable land and in the north east pastoral. Immediately north east of the site is Begbroke and to the east is Yarnton with the site boundary bordering the village of Yarnton. To the south and west the land is primarily a rolling arable landscape. To the north-west beyond the site and District boundary there are large areas of woodland which are Ancient and Semi-Natural woodland and Ancient Replanted woodland.

23.1.2 The site is located within National Character Area 108: Upper Thames Clay Vales. At a regional level, OWLS identifies the site as being located within the Upper Thames Vale character area and the Wooded Estatelands landscape type. At a local level the site is identified in the Cherwell District Landscape Assessment as being within the Lower Cherwell Floodplain character area and landscape type R2: Large Scale Undulating Farmland/R2b Rolling arable landscape with strong field pattern, copses and hedgerow trees; and Rural type R3: Large-Scale Enclosed Farmland/R3a Large-scale arable farmland enclosed by woodland belts.

#### **23.2 Key Features and Site Visit Information**

23.2.1 A site walkover was carried out on 8th September 2016; a copy of the site record sheet is contained within Appendix B of this report. Refer to Figure LSCA51-L for the landscape context and Figure LSCA51-L-P1 for site record photographs.

23.2.2 The site area is generally domed in its landform with localised areas of arable land in the south; the land gradually climbs to a high point located immediately to the north west of Begbroke Wood which is encompassed by the site area although excluded from it. There is a good footpath network crossing the site enabling either access to most areas or views across the agricultural landscape of the site. The land use is a mixture of arable and pasture divided by a combination of mature hedgerows and fences with hedgerow trees; there are also isolated and groups of trees, and shelterbelts within the site area. Following several the field boundaries there are drainage ditches which appear to drain generally to the south. There is an isolated property located immediately south of Begbroke Wood which although beyond the site boundary is prominent from within the site area. Views available within the area comprise long and short distance, panoramic and confined views depending upon location and direction of view. From within the centre of the site there are long distance panoramic views to the south, west and north-west over the rolling landscape to the distant landscape horizon.

To the south east views are available towards existing properties within Yarnton. On the lower lying land in the north east of the site views are more constrained and filtered by vegetation

within the site on field boundaries and within the wider landscape which restrict long distance views to the east. Although the site almost borders the edge of Begbroke, there is limited visual connection between the eastern core of Begbroke and the site area.

### **23.3 Landscape Sensitivity**

23.3.1 The southern area of the site is dominated by arable land surrounded by well-established hedgerows and land in the north is generally semi-improved pasture surrounded again by mature hedgerows. The site surrounds Begbroke Wood and is adjacent to Bladon Heath. These areas of mixed woodland are excluded from the site. Frogwelldown Lane and Dolton Lane cross the site and are both important wildlife corridors containing mature trees and established hedgerows. Because of the varied habitats the site is likely to support protected and notable animals. The sensitivity of natural factors is medium.

23.3.2 The land has remained in agricultural use since at least the 19th century and has strong hedgerow boundaries, some of which reflect Parish and District boundaries; these are therefore considered Important under the Hedgerow Regulations. There is a medium potential for previously unrecorded archaeological remains within the site because of the presence of three Archaeological Constraint Priority Areas within the site boundary. Although not forming part of the site area, the Begbroke Conservation Area is located to the north and the agricultural landscape of the site forms part of the setting of the conservation area. The site also forms the setting of the Grade II listed Spring Hill farmhouse which is located adjacent to Begbroke wood in the centre of the site but excluded from the site area. The overall sensitivity of cultural factors is medium.

23.3.3 Due to the site topography, there is a sense of exposure in much of the area, this is partly due to the long distance views available through the site to the wider landscape. The site is crossed by utility routes however these are carried on low level timber poles and are not intrusive within the area. The sensitivity of aesthetic factors is medium.

23.3.4 The landscape is in reasonably good condition and is representative of the wider landscape that visually connects with the areas located to the north and west of the site. The field boundaries are in most locations in a good state of repair, containing a relatively large number of mature hedgerow trees and the areas of shelter belts appear maintained. The overall landscape quality and condition sensitivity is considered to be medium.

23.3.5 The combined landscape sensitivity of the site is medium.

### **23.4 Visual Sensitivity**

23.4.1 The site is highly visible within the local landscape and wider landscape context as the land rises to a high point immediately north of Begbroke Wood located in the north of the site. The site area forms part of the visual resource of Begbroke and Yarnton however in some locations the views are foreshortened by mature field boundary vegetation. The general visibility sensitivity is considered to be medium to high.

23.4.2 There are views into the site area from surrounding villages and the local road network. There are also prolonged views of the site when passing through it on the local footpath





networks and from the footpath network within the wider landscape. There is a range of viewers with varied sensitivities affording views into the site area and as a result the sensitivity of population is considered to be medium.

23.4.3 Due to the varying nature of the site there is potential to implement landscape and visual mitigation without altering the overall character of the site. The topography of the site would not result in the noticeable foreshortening of views into and out of the site or alter the overall landscape character of the area. The sensitivity to mitigation is therefore considered to be low.

23.4.4 The combined visual sensitivity of the site is considered to be medium.

### **23.5 Landscape Character Sensitivity**

23.5.1 The landscape character sensitivity has been derived using 'Table 3 Overall Landscape Character Sensitivity' as set out within Section 3 Scope and Methodology.

23.5.2 The landscape sensitivity has been assessed as medium and the visual sensitivity assessed as medium. Using the matrix in Table 3 this results in a medium landscape character sensitivity for site LSCA51.

### **23.6 Landscape Value**

23.6.1 There are no landscape designations within the site area however Begbroke Wood located within the centre of the site comprises areas of ancient semi-natural woodland and ancient replanted woodland. Bladon Heath located to the north west of the site is also identified as ancient and semi-natural woodland. There are no statutory ecological designations located within the site area. Frogwelldown Lane District Wildlife Site non-statutory designation follows a woodland corridor leading north west from Cassington Road which passes through Yarnton. Located within the site but not forming part of the site is Begbroke wood which is ancient woodland and a Local Wildlife Site. There are also large areas of ancient woodland at Bladon Heath to the north west of the site which is also a Local Wildlife site. There are no statutory designations located within the site area. Adjacent to Begbroke Wood in the centre of the site however is Spring Hill, a Grade II listed farmhouse and to the north of the site is Begbroke Conservation Area; the site is considered to provide the landscape setting for both of these designations. There are also three non-statutory designations located within the south of the site area within the arable fields. The overall sensitivity of designations is medium to high.

23.6.2 Although there are no recognised views within the site, the site area forms the landscape setting to the east of Begbroke and Yarnton and intervisibility exists to varying extents between the villages and the site area depending upon existing mature vegetation. Along the east boundary of the site where it borders the A44 Woodstock Road the passing traffic disrupts the tranquillity of the site however elsewhere in the site there is a sense of calm and peace. The sensitivity of scenic value and tranquillity is generally therefore considered to be medium to high.

23.6.3 Although much of the land is inaccessible as it is in agricultural use, there is a reasonably good footpath network throughout the site area which in many areas appears well trodden and therefore demonstrates some value placed upon the site area. The perceived value sensitivity is therefore considered to be medium to low.

23.6.4 The combined landscape value of the site is considered to be medium.

### **23.7 Landscape Capacity**

23.7.1 The Landscape Character Sensitivity and Landscape Value are combined as shown in Table 5 to arrive at the potential Landscape Capacity. In general, the potential Landscape Capacity of LSCA51 is medium for some types of development. The potential for each considered development type is discussed further below.

### **23.8 Capacity for Residential Development**

23.8.1 Although the site has a medium capacity for development, the capacity for residential development is considered medium to low within most of the site as the land rises to a localised plateau making it highly visible within the surrounding area. There may however be localised opportunity in the south east of the site adjacent to the existing urban edge of Yarnton which is considered to have a medium capacity.

### **23.9 Capacity for Employment Development**

23.9.1 The site is considered to have a medium to low capacity for either commercial or industrial development as the topography of the land would result in the development of this kind being highly visible from surrounding areas. There may be localised opportunity within the south of the site adjacent to the edge of Yarnton although this is also considered to have a medium to low capacity.

### **23.10 Capacity for Recreational Development**

23.10.1 This site is considered to have a medium capacity for informal recreation using the existing green linkages and footpath network which has the potential to be enhanced. There may be isolated areas of opportunity for formal recreation on the edges of Begbroke and Yarnton but not within the wider site area and therefore a low capacity for formal recreation exists.

### **23.11 Capacity for Woodland Development**

23.11.1 The site has a medium capacity for woodland development which has the potential to be provided through enhancement of the green linkages already present within the site area and connecting to the Local and District Wildlife Sites beyond the site area.

### **23.12 Future Management and Maintenance**

23.12.1 The site has a good network of mature hedgerows however these are gappy in place and should be enhanced if possible; in particular providing connection to the Local Wildlife Site at Begbroke Wood in the centre of the site.



## Appendix 3 The proposed school playing field

A3.1 An "Illustrative Draft" plan has been prepared by Oxford County Council (OCC) to show how playing field could be accommodated within the land identified "to facilitate the potential expansion of William Fletcher Primary School" (see below).

A3.2 The plan shows:

- a dimensioned area of 110m east to west by 154m north to south;
- "assumed" existing levels and the assumed 70m AOD contour;
- proposed levels to accommodate a playing field of 110x76m with cross falls of 1:100 north to south and 1:50 west to east;
- an access road within a corridor along the west of the site to Yarnton Residential and Nursing Home, which is to the south-west of the playing field;
- an access to the playing field from the north and a car park in the south-east corner of the site, accessed from an existing lane along the northern boundary of the school;
- a footpath along the eastern edge of the playing field connecting the northern access to the car park.

A3.3 The existing land is sloping down approximately west to east to rear boundaries of existing houses on Rutten Lane. The levels at the rear boundaries to the houses are indicated as close to the existing levels, within about 0.5m. Cutting into the landform would be needed to achieve the proposed levels. This is indicated on the plan by banking "no greater than 1:3 with 1m wide level area" to the fence between the playing field and the access road corridor.

### Comment

A3.4 The playing field area would be separated from the rear boundaries of the existing houses by a narrow strip and footpath. Boundary treatments are not indicated, but it is likely a ball-stop fence would be required along this boundary. Consideration needs to be given to the potential effects on the visual amenity of the residents and whether screening vegetation can be incorporated into the proposal.

A3.5 The cut bank to the north and western sides of the playing field may need to be reinforced by retaining structures, as the difference between the "assumed existing level" and the proposed level is between 2m and 3.25m, and space for a level strip beyond the edge of the pitch ("runout area") is not indicated.

A3.6 As the ground modelling would all be cutting and not balanced by filling on site, the cut material would need to be disposed of off-site. A cutting of the depths indicated by the proposed levels may also encounter rock.

A3.7 Any access road corridor in the location suggested is also likely to need ground modelling to achieve appropriate long and cross gradients. A very narrow strip is indicated between the road edge and the boundary to the playing field, which itself would be the top of the cut slope to the playing field. There would be insufficient space

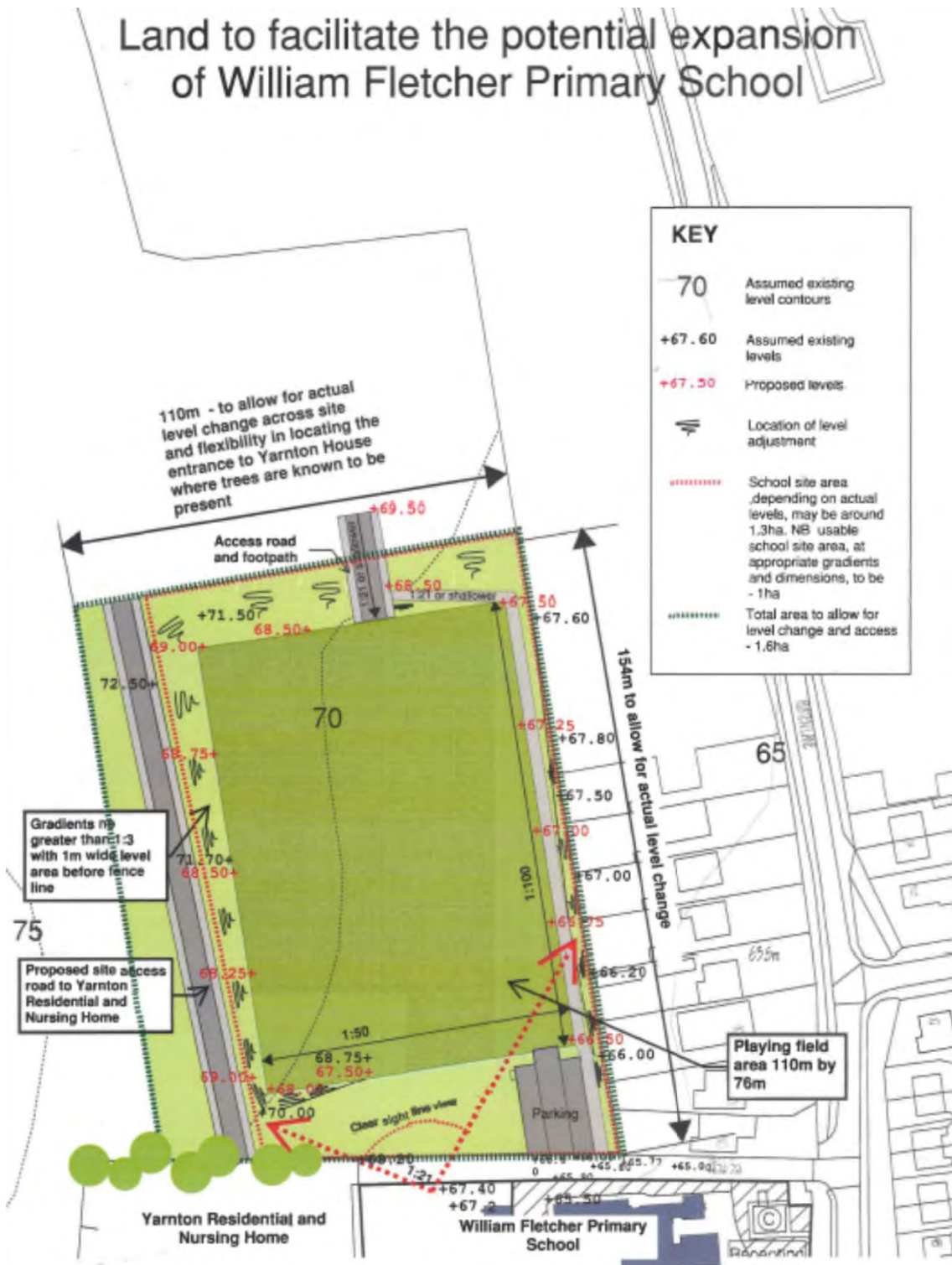
for any e.g. tree planting between the road and playing field, although greater space is allowed to the west of the road where planting could take place. Given the continuous boundary between the road and the playing field, and the overall road corridor being rather narrow, this element of any scheme would need careful consideration. The personal safety of pedestrians using the footways also needs to be considered. Street lighting is likely to be required.

**A3.8** The recommended main playing direction is approximately north (between 285° and 20°) / south, to minimise the effect of a setting sun on the players<sup>11</sup>. The illustrative plan shows an approximate orientation of a little west of north, and within the recommended range.

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<sup>11</sup> The Football Association, The FA Guide to Pitch and Goalpost Dimensions, 2012:  
<https://www.sportengland.org/media/3444/appendix-2-fa-march-2014.zip> [accessed 190913]

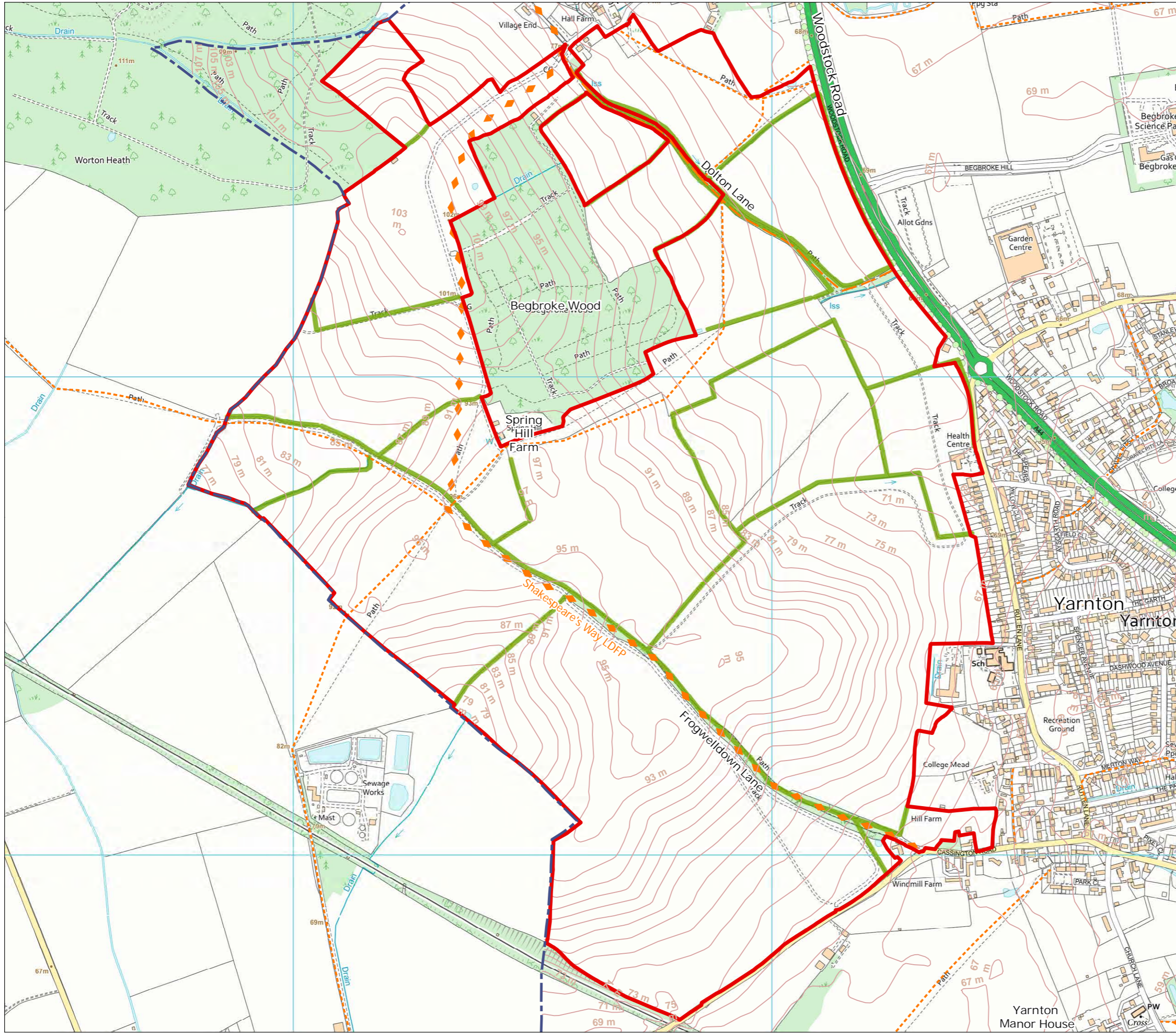
# Land to facilitate the potential expansion of William Fletcher Primary School












Illustrative Plan

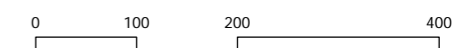
## Appendix 4 Figures

- Figure 01 LSCA51 Site Plan
- Figure 02 Site Plan - Aerial
- Figure 03 Landscape Designations
- Figure 04 Topographic analysis: wider context
- Figure 05 Topography & vegetation - Site
- Figure 06 Landform, Vegetation & PR9 Boundaries



Key

-  Yarnton LSCA51 Site Boundary
-  Contours @ 2m intervals
-  Hedges
-  District boundaries
- Public Rights of Way**
-  Byway Open to all Traffic (BOAT)
-  Public Bridleway
-  Public Footpath
-  Restricted Byway
-  Shakespeare's Way LDFP



Scale @ A3 - 1:7,500

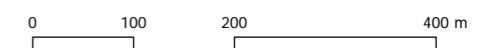


North



Key

- Yarnton LSCA51 Site Boundary
- Contours @ 2m intervals
- Hedges
- District boundaries
- Public Rights of Way**
- Byway Open to all Traffic (BOAT)
- Public Bridleway
- Public Footpath
- Restricted Byway
- Shakespeare's Way LDFP

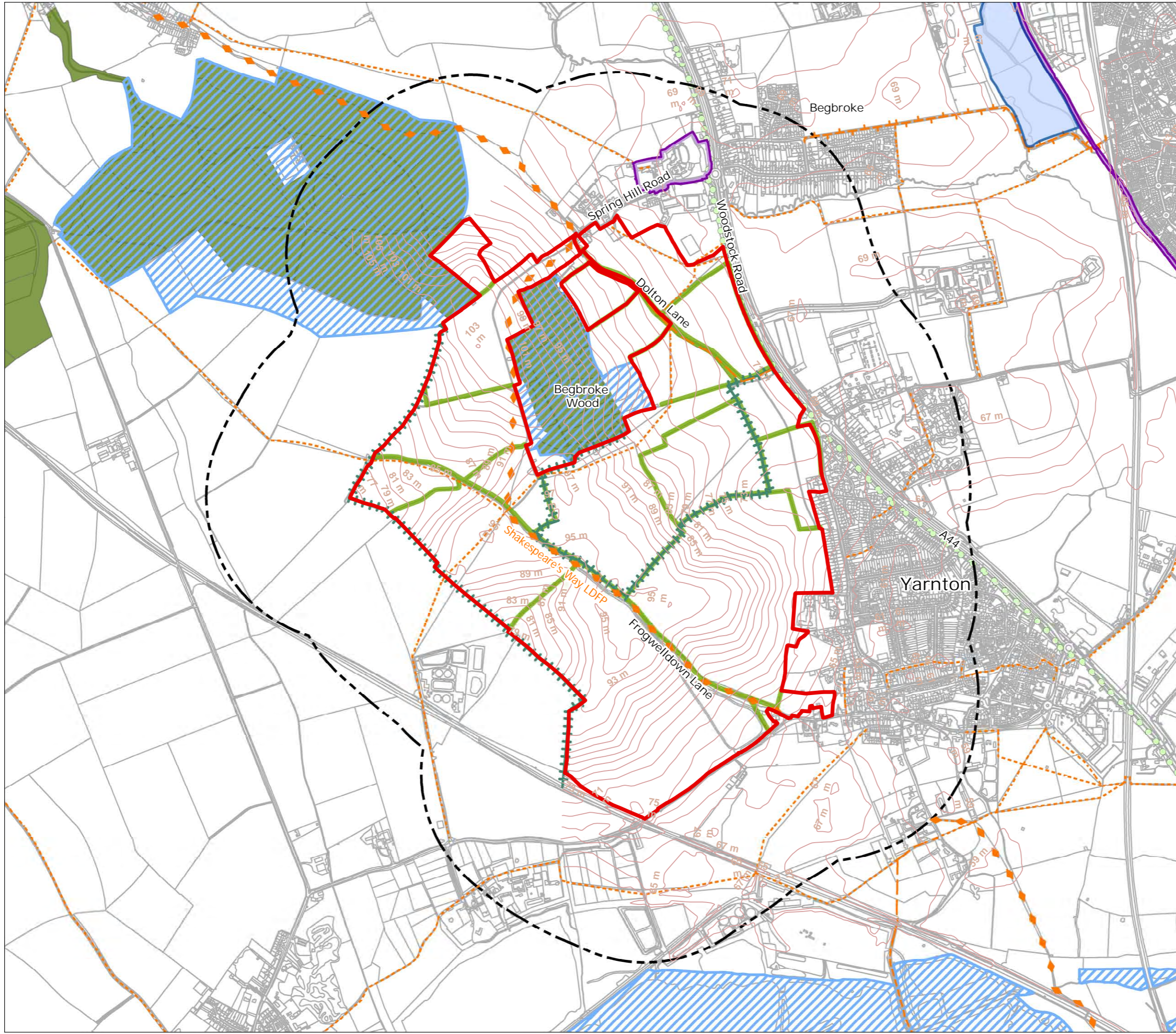


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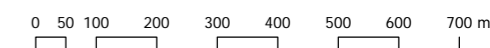
North





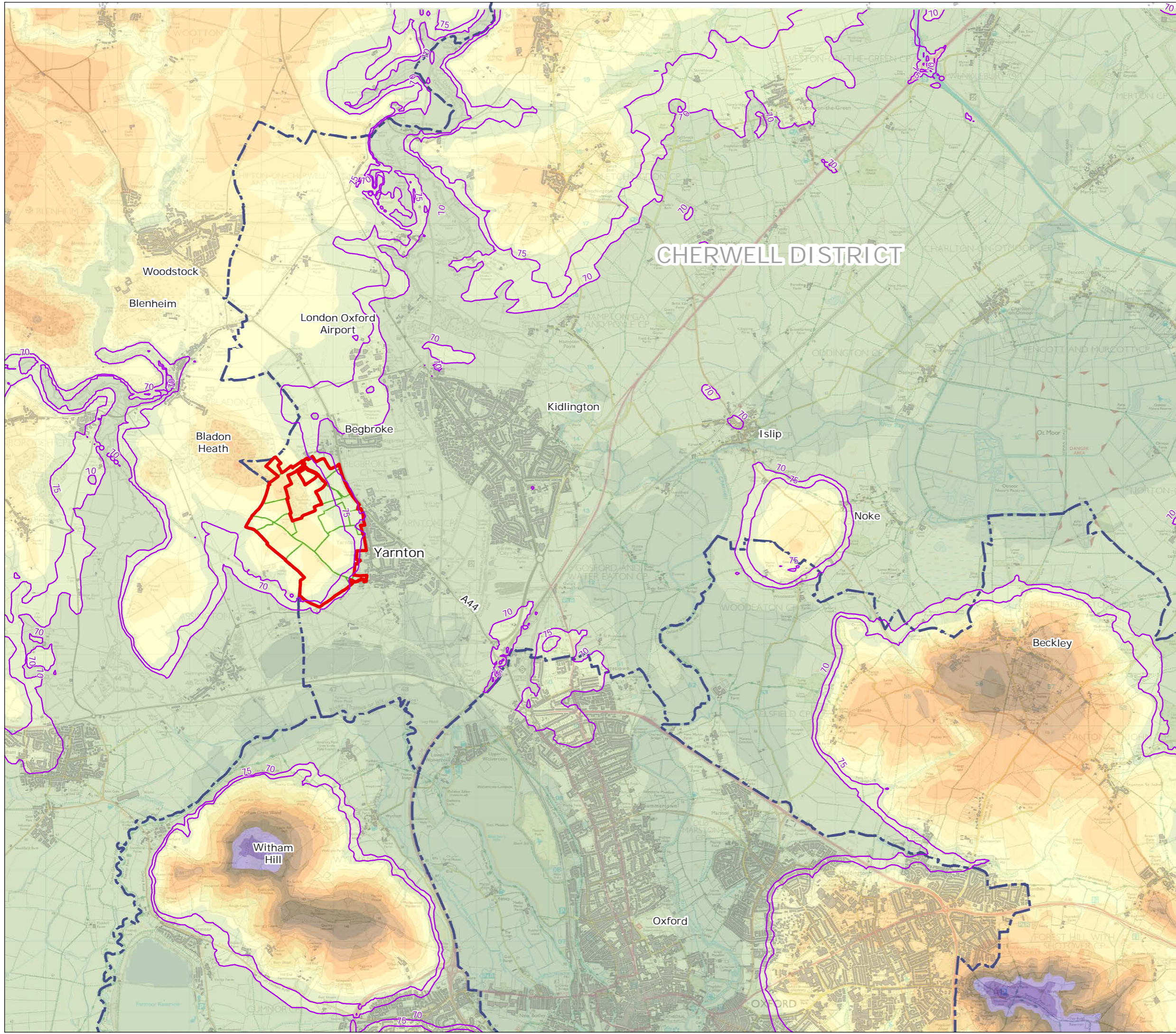
Key

-  Yarnton LSCA51 Site Boundary
-  500m buffer from site
-  Contours @ 2m intervals
-  Conservation Areas
-  Ancient Woodland
-  Local Wildlife Sites
-  Sites of Special Scientific Interest
-  Hedgerows & Linear Woodland Features
-  Important Hedgerows
- Public Rights of Way**
-  Byway Open to all Traffic (BOAT)
-  Public Bridleway
-  Public Footpath
-  Restricted Byway
-  Shakespeare's Way LDFP








Scale @ A3 - 1:12,500

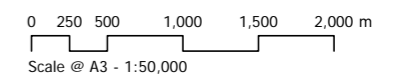
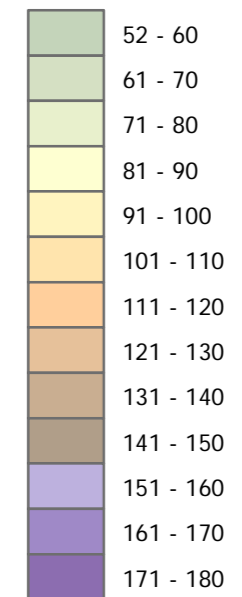


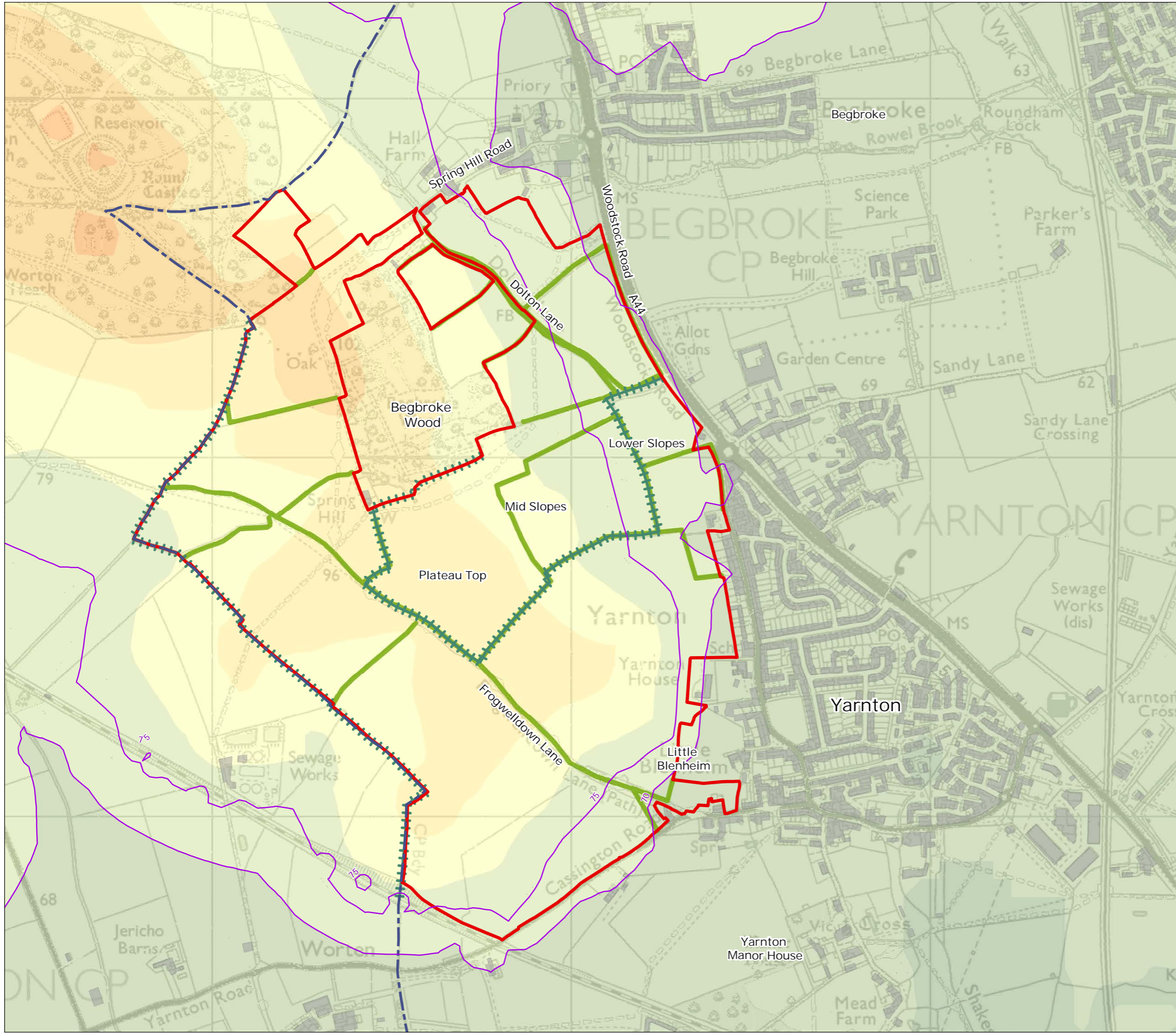


Key







-  Yarnton LSCA51 Site Boundary
-  Existing Buildings
-  Contours @ 70m and 75m
-  Hedges Within the Site
-  District boundaries

Metres AOD

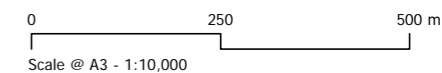
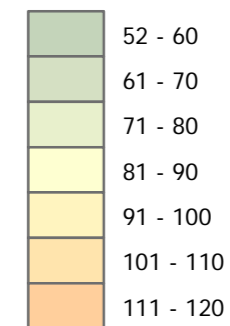


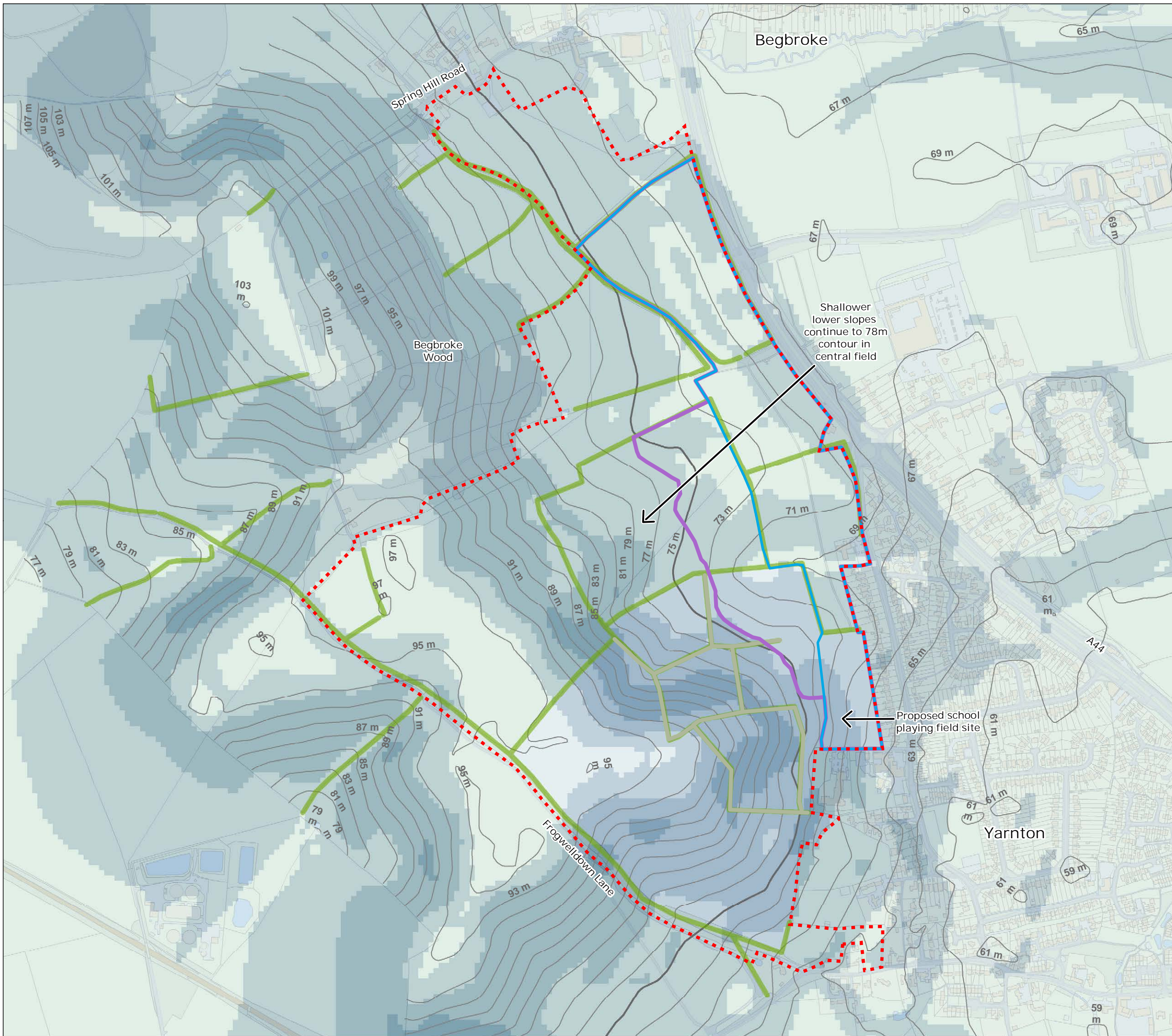


Key

-  Yarnton LSCA51 Site Boundary
-  Existing Buildings
-  Contours @ 70m and 75m
-  Hedges within the Site
-  Important Hedgerows
-  District boundaries

Metres AOD





Key

PR9 Submission Allocation

530 Scheme

LSCA51 Boundary

Vegetation

Existing Hedges

Historic Field Boundaries

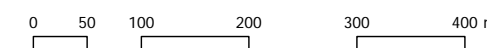
Landform

Contours @ 2m intervals

75m Contour

Slope analysis

	>1:50	} Shallower Slopes
	1:20 - 1:50	
	1:12 - 1:20	} Steeper Slopes
	< 1:12	



Scale @ A3 - 1:7,000







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