

19th December 2025

By email (ncp.engagement@milton-keynes.gov.uk)

Development Plans,
Milton Keynes City Council,
Civic,
1 Saxon Gate East,
Milton Keynes
MK9 3EJ

Dear Sir/Madam

**MK CITY PLAN 2050 – REGULATION 19 CONSULTATION
REPRESENTATIONS ON BEHALF OF RAINIER DEVELOPMENTS LTD**

We write on behalf of our client Rainier Developments Ltd ('Rainier') to submit representations on the MK City Plan 2050 (Regulation 19) which has been published for public consultation. These representations are made in relation to the land promoted by Rainier to the east of Olney Road, Lavendon. These representations are prepared on the basis of the current version of the NPPF (December 2024) and we therefore reserve the opportunity to make further comments depending on the revised NPPF.

THE OPPORTUNITY ON LAND EAST OF OLNEY ROAD, LAVENDON

The land promoted by Rainier measures 2.7 hectares and is located on the south western edge of the settlement of Lavendon. It lies to the south east of Olney Road and comprises the northern part of an arable field. To the east, the field is bound by the banks of the brook. Further east, beyond the brook is a recent development of 95 dwellings.

The village of Lavendon lies approximately 10 miles (16km) north east of Milton Keynes and is the most northern village in the Borough of Milton Keynes, located near the market town of Olney. It sits 8 miles (12.8km) north west of Bedford and 11 miles (17.7km) south east of Northampton.

The Site is well-served by a number of services and local facilities which are concentrated around the junction of Northampton Road (A428) and Olney Road.

The village has a combined school for children from reception through to year 6. It also has a village store and Post Office, an independent garage, village hall and two public houses, the Green Man and The Horseshoe. There is also a pre-school and a nursery.

These representations are supported by a Vision Document (**Annex 1**) produced by Edge Urban Design on behalf of Rainier which has been informed by inputs on a number technical matters and which presents a scheme for up to 52 dwellings, including the provision of affordable housing as part of a well-designed, high quality development. Flood risk and drainage measures, as well as open space are incorporated into the eastern part of the scheme, with a 20 metre wide woodland buffer along the southern boundary.

In contrast to site 110558 as assessed in the SHELAA, the site boundary shown in the accompanying Vision Document does not include the area on the eastern edge within the Flood Zone (with the exception of a very small area which provides for pedestrian and cycle access. Despite our previous representations in 2024, the latest (2025) version of the SHLAA has not been revised.

REPRESENTATIONS

Policy GS1: Our Spatial Strategy

We welcome the inclusion of a policy which sets out a spatial strategy for growth and recognise that this should direct the majority of development to the urban area of Milton Keynes City (tier 1). However, at tier 2 locations (development in Olney and the villages beyond the City of Milton Keynes), the policy explains that the focus should be on meeting local need. In our view that is a broad and overly generic term as there is no explanation in the Plan as to how those needs should be identified or what is meant by the word 'focus'.

Policy GS2 also discusses that, at tier 2 locations, development should be located within defined settlement boundaries. As we explain elsewhere in these representations, the proposed approach to restrain and the restriction of development outside of settlement boundaries is inconsistent with the NPPF. We draw attention to the fact that the land promoted by Rainier is adjacent to the proposed settlement boundary (as depicted by the Policies Map accompanying this consultation) on its northern, eastern and western boundaries.

Policy GS2: Strategy for Homes

We welcome the scale of the ambition set out in this draft Local Plan, that between 2022 – 2050 a minimum of 50,372 (net) new homes will be provided for over the period 2022 – 2050 compared to a total anticipated supply of 59,779 dwellings.. However, in Rainier's submission, if the Plan is to be that bold, then the minimum housing requirement should be increased to reflect the Council's ambitions on supply

Our main concerns with the approach set out in Policy GS2 are as follows:

- The majority of new planned supply (i.e. excluding commitments and completions 22,705 dwellings) is to be delivered through a small number of large to very large strategic allocations (with 34,084 dwellings expected from just ten sources). In our view, that approach is flawed as it does not contain sufficient flexibility to reflect to changing circumstances.
- It is also clear that the majority of new supply is focused on a single part of the housing market area, namely Milton Keynes City itself. We understand the rationale for that approach, although we note that it fails to provide for any significant variety which may lead to concerns over market saturation for example.
- Focusing new planned supply almost exclusively at Milton Keynes City itself also fails to support the vitality and vibrancy of other communities in the area and runs contrary to the position in Policy GS2 which itself seeks to support villages beyond the City of Milton Keynes (

- Focusing new planned supply in a small number of large to very large allocations fails to support the small to medium sized housebuilder. The current version of the NPPF includes, at paragraph 73, the explanation that “Small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area, are essential for Small and Medium Enterprise housebuilders to deliver new homes, and are often built-out relatively quickly”.

Although the land promoted by Rainier is larger than 1 hectare, we nevertheless question the extent to which the Plan satisfies paragraph 73a of the NPPF which states local planning authorities should “identify, through the development plan and brownfield registers, land to accommodate at least 10% of their housing requirement on sites no larger than one hectare; unless it can be shown, through the preparation of relevant plan policies, that there are strong reasons why this 10% target cannot be achieved”. Even if this cannot be achieved, it would be reasonable for the Council to consider other ‘smaller’ sources of supply.

We understand from the ‘Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment Update 2025’ that the Local Housing Need is now assessed to be 1,799 dwellings per annum (equating to 50,372 dwellings over the 28 year plan period).

We note that the Local Plan states:

“25 The scale of housing growth that will take place through to 2050 will enable us to deliver significant numbers of affordable houses.”

That must be set against the HEDNA which states that

“The HEDNA Update analysis identifies that there will be an annual need from 2,471 new households unable to afford to rent or buy market housing and a further 599 existing households falling into need each year. Together, these yield an annual projected new need from 3,070 new and existing households unable to afford to rent or buy market housing in Milton Keynes.”

It is true that the HEDNA then seeks to suppress or offset the level of affordable housing need, but it does so by, amongst other aspects, assuming that there would be “households moving away from the area, and improved circumstances for some existing households which meant that they are now able to afford suitable housing”. It appears as though ORS (the authors of the HEDNA) assume that moving away from the area becomes necessary for these households and we assume this is because they will not be able to access housing in the Plan-area. In our submission that is not a credible claim. Furthermore, the claim that the situations of households improving is unsubstantiated.

That evidence must also be seen in the context that the HEDNA states:

“For the base date of the Plan, the HEDNA Update identifies a current unmet need of 5,704 households living in unsuitable housing and unable to afford to rent or buy market housing in Milton Keynes. Some of these households currently occupy Affordable Housing, and taking account of those properties results in a net current need of 3,556 households at the start of the Plan period in 2022.”

In this sense (in relation to affordable housing), it is concerning that the Plan requirement appears to be simply be the outcome of the LHN, rather than to address the assessed needs of the area.

Policy GS6: Open Countryside

In our view, the approach set out in Policy GS6 is inconsistent with the NPPF which does not contain any requirement for such restrictive approaches, but which is based on an approach of balancing the benefits and adverse impacts of proposals.

Policy CEA12 Conserving and Enhancing Landscape Character/Special Landscape Areas

The land promoted by Rainier to the south of Lavendon is proposed to be within a Special Landscape Area as defined by the Policies Maps which accompany this consultation. We note that no such designations are contained within the adopted Local Plan.

The Special Landscape Area proposed to the north of Milton Keynes City (including Lavendon) is broadly consistent with the former Area of Attractive Landscape (see Figure 2.2 of the 'Milton Keynes Review of Local Landscape Designations', LUC, May 2024). We understand that the Areas of Attractive Landscape were defined in the Local Plan 2005, but that these were not taken forward into the Plan:MK.

These representation are accompanied by a Landscape Note (**Annex 2**) produced by EDP in response to Policy CEA12 and the proposed Special Landscape Area.

The Site forms part of an arable field, and adjoins the southwestern built edge of Lavendon, to the northeast of Milton Keynes. Neither the Site nor the immediate landscape is covered by any statutory designations for landscape character or quality. The Site is well related to the existing settlement to the north and northwest, with a recently constructed development for up to 95 dwellings and public open space to the east and northeast of the Site.

Olney Road passes alongside the northwestern Site boundary, and a line of high voltage electricity cables with a supporting metal pylon extends along the outside edge of the southwestern Site boundary, which is a detracting feature.

The Site's landscape features are generally pleasant and are confined to the northern and northwestern boundaries. As EDP explain, this Site (and likely the other vast swathes of land identified within the emerging evidence base) does not demonstrate the presence of a sufficient number of indicators of landscape value, nor does it have a single indicator of such importance, to elevate it above other more everyday landscapes. Furthermore, the evidence base does not provide a sufficiently robust and objective assessment to support this restrictive policy.

Housing Trajectory

The draft Local Plan includes a housing trajectory.

Given the proportion of the housing supply which is expected from large and very large strategic sites, Rainier consider that the Council should have regard to the merits of other, smaller, sites which can deliver early in the plan period so as to help maintain housing land supply and the delivery of affordable housing.

Policies Map

The land promoted by Rainier is adjacent to the proposed settlement boundary (as depicted by the Policies Map accompanying this consultation) on its northern, eastern and western boundaries.

The land promoted by Rainier is also shown in the accompanying Policies Map, as being within a 'Special Landscape Area'. We have expressed concerns regarding Policy CEA12 and this designation elsewhere within these representations.

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)

The land promoted by Rainier has been promoted to a 'call for sites' undertaken by the Council in relation to its emerging Local Plan and assessed under 110558 as part of the SHLAA (although we note that the boundary of the land shown in the SHLAA is not entirely consistent with that shown in the accompanying material to these representations). Our previous representations highlighted this inconsistency, but the HELAA has not been updated since 2024.

A further site is assessed in the SHLAA under reference 110559 which also includes land to the south.

The SHLAA report explains that site 110558 is Suitable, Deliverable and with a capacity of 50 dwellings.

The previous assessment in 2024 found the site was unsuitable as: 'Unsuitable - Failed 1500m2 area test'; that it is Grade 2 agricultural land; partly within Flood Zones 2 and 3; partly at risk of surface water flooding; within the countryside and proposed Special Character Area.'

The 2025 assessment in the SHLAA of site 110558 is as follows:

Suitability Commentary	Suitable - however site is likely to be less preferable due to presence of agricultural land and concerns over Lavendon as a sustainable location for growth. Other constraints may also limit suitable area of the site upon further detailed assessment.
Availability Commentary	Available - site has been submitted through the CFS with landowner consent.
Achievability Commentary	Achievable - site is a greenfield abutting the village of Lavendon and would likely be viable as evidenced by sales of homes on a recently developed neighbouring site. Sustainability of Lavendon as a location for further growth is however a concern and other constraints may also limit the area of the site upon which development is achievable.
Policy Constraints	The site has open countryside designation and is also located within the proposed Ouse Valley Special Landscape Area which may prevent or restrict development.
Constraints Summary	The site has a low balance score due to it being entirely Grade 2 Agricultural Land for which there would be a preference to not develop. The eastern boundary is within Flood Zone 2 and in places 3 which reduces the suitable area of the site. Whilst highways access can be achieved and impact on of traffic from development of site would not adversely affect the operation of the network in the local area, the facilities in Lavendon are limited and public transport and pedestrian & Cycle connectivity is poor therefore the sustainability of this location for development and the further growth of Lavendon raises concerns. The site is also located within the proposed Ouse Valley Special Landscape Area which may prevent or restrict development. The site is within 400m of a Water Recycling Centre (WRC); odour from which could have an adverse impact on residential amenity on site and lead to a reduction in the suitable area.
Overcoming Constraints	A detailed assessment of Agricultural Land Classification would be required to demonstrate the site is not Best and Most Versatile Land or that its loss can be justified. If this is achievable then a positive allocation of the site would be required through the new Local Plan or an updated version of the Lavendon Neighbourhood

Plan to overcome the existing open countryside designation, this would need to consider the wider suitability of the site and its location for residential development. Consideration of the Special Landscape Area designation will also be required. It would need to be demonstrated that odour from the WRC would not have an adverse impact on residential amenity, considering Anglian Water's Asset Encroachment Risk Assessment Methodology.

Notwithstanding the change in the overall conclusions we maintain concerns with the manner in which the SHLAA assesses this site under reference 110558, as discussed below:

- The Council's assessment appears to raise in-principle concerns regarding the potential loss of Best and Most Versatile Agricultural land, or to require that such a loss (if the site were BMB). However, we note that there is nothing in national planning policy to suggest that this consideration represents a bar to development allocated through the plan-making process.
- In the 'Constraints Summary' the SHLAA states that "The site is also located within the proposed Ouse Valley Special Landscape Area which may prevent or restrict development." However, there is nothing within the proposed Policy (CEA12) which indicates that its purpose is to restrict development and as such it appears as though the SHLAA identifies constraints which should not be applied.
- Whilst we recognise that parts of site 110558 are within the flood zones on the eastern boundary, this matter could be solved through masterplanning, with the development shown in the Vision Document in Flood Zone 1, or via an amended site boundary as is shown in the submitted Vision Document.
- The references to overcoming the Special Landscape Area designation presuppose that this designation endures.

In our submission, further consideration should be given, through the SHLAA process to the benefits which can be derived from smaller sites, including through earlier delivery, and from sites at settlements such as Lavendon which support the vitality of local communities, including through the provision of affordable housing.

SUMMARY

Rainier are promoting land off Olney Road, Lavendon for residential development. A Vision Document produced by Edge Urban Design on behalf of Rainier which has been informed by inputs on a number technical matters and which presents a scheme for up to 52 dwellings, including the provision of affordable housing as part of a well-designed, high quality development.

Milton Keynes City Council is currently consulting on its draft Local Plan, with ambitious levels of housing delivery proposed. As it is currently prepared, the draft Local Plan focuses a very significant proportion of planned housing growth into a handful of large and very large sites. That approach would fail to support the vitality of the more rural settlements, the delivery of affordable housing at those settlements or the SME housebuilder network. We encourage the Council to review their spatial strategy and to include allocations for small and medium sized sites immediately adjoining sustainable rural settlements such as Lavendon. Such sites would be deliverable early in the plan period and will enable the Council to maintain their housing land supply.

Rainier are keen to engage with Officers and other stakeholders to demonstrate how the land off Olney Road, Lavendon could support those ambitious levels of growth, whilst also supporting the role of rural settlements in the area.

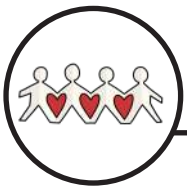
Yours sincerely

David Murray-Cox
Director



Annex 1: Vision Document

Annex 2: Landscape Note



October 2024



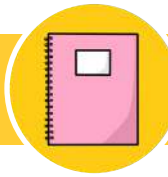
Land off Olney Road

Lavendon

vision document



RAINIER
DEVELOPMENTS & STRATEGIC LAND



Foreword

We are pleased to present this Vision Document which sets out our vision for the development of land off Olney Road, Lavendon, and its capacity to deliver new homes and community infrastructure.

The vision for the Site is to deliver a high quality, locally distinctive and sustainable addition to Lavendon. The new development will provide much needed market and social housing, generous public open space, recreation and play area, woodland buffer along the southern edge and enhanced areas of biodiversity.

The proposals demonstrate how 52 new homes (including a mix of property sizes and tenures and affordable housing) could be provided. The Site presents an exciting opportunity to create a new legacy development to support the sensitive growth of Lavendon, delivering much needed new housing for the District, and a new improved gateway to the village when arriving from the south.



Our Vision

Through the formation of new landscaped and ecologically diverse southern boundary, the vision for the Site is to create a sensitive, **logical extension to Lavendon** for up to 52 dwellings. The Site will utilise main vehicular access point from Olney Road from the west and a pedestrian and cycle access to the east to fully **integrate into Lavendon** and provide options for convenient pedestrian and cycle routes to services and facilities.

The development will be of **high quality and character to improve housing stock** in Lavendon. The Site will also compliment recent development to the east and look to replicate successful design features where possible.

The Site will be landscape-led with **considerable green space** for recreation and nature. A minimum of **10% Biodiversity Net Gain** will be provided.





The Site

Lavendon

The village of Lavendon lies approximately 10 miles (16km) north east of Milton Keynes and is the most northern village in the Borough of Milton Keynes, located near the market town of Olney. It sits 8 miles (12.8km) north west of Bedford and 11 miles (17.7km) south east of Northampton.

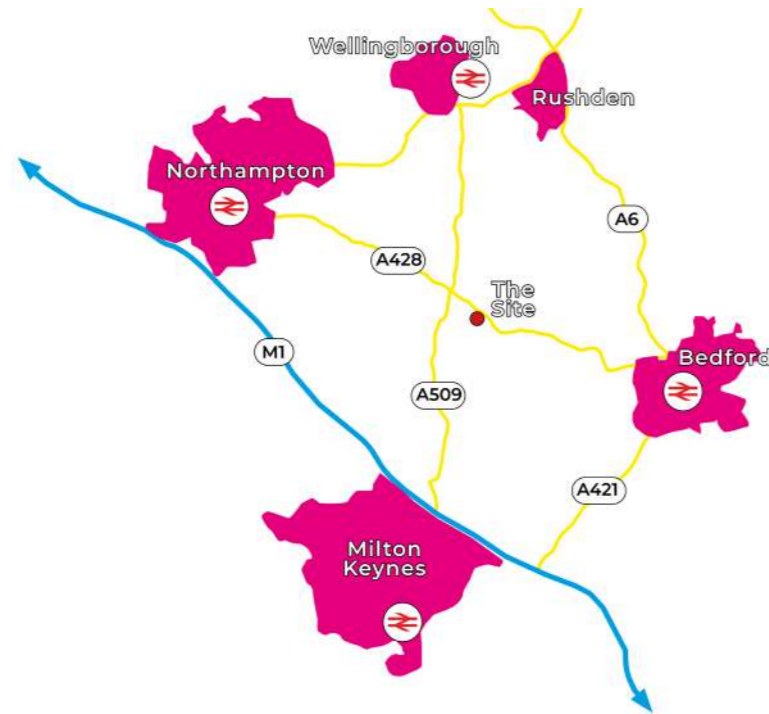
It is well-served by a number of services and local facilities which are concentrated around the junction of Northampton Road (A428) and Olney Road.

The village has a combined school for children from reception through to year 6. It also has a village store and Post Office, an independent garage, village hall and two public houses, the Green Man and The Horseshoe. There is also a pre-school and a nursery.

The company Tusting has a small factory on Olney Road producing a wide range of luxury leather goods which are exported worldwide.

Site Description

The Site measures 2.7 hectares and is located on the south western edge of the settlement of Lavendon. It lies to the south east of Olney Road and comprises the northern part of an arable field. To the east, the field is bound by the banks of the brook. Further east, beyond the brook is a recent development of 95 dwellings.



Wider geographical location



View looking north-east across the site



View looking east across the site



Site looking from north



KEY:

— Site boundary (2.7ha)



Planning Policy Context

The land off Olney Road, Lavendon is located within the administrative area of Milton Keynes Council. In addition to the Development Plan, the Council has produced a Strategy for 2050, adopted in January 2021. That strategy sets out a long-term approach to spatial development, focused on a series of aspirations, including a population to around 410,000 people by 2050.

Plan:MK 2016-3031 (adopted March 2019)

Plan:MK sets out (through Policy DS2) that a minimum of 26,500 homes (net) will be delivered across the Borough between 2016 – 2031.

The the Site is not subject to any specific designations aside from being outside (but adjacent to) the Development Boundary of Lavendon and within the 'Open Countryside'. The Policies Map identifies that land to the north east of this Site was identified as a 'Housing Site – Proposed'.

The Plan:MK does not itself provide a settlement hierarchy for villages. However, in an appeal decision concerning land to the north east (site HS103), it was found that:

"It was agreed that, on balance, Lavendon was a sustainable settlement with a range of shops, services, public transport and community facilities"

Lavendon Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2031

The Lavendon Neighbourhood plan (NDP) was formally made on 18th March 2020, which forms part of Milton Keynes Development Plan. The primary purpose of the NDP is to provide guidance for any parties bringing forward development in and around the town. Any development proposals on the Site will reflect the guidance contained within the NDP.

Emerging Local Plan: MK City Plan 2050

The Local Development Scheme sets out a timetable that covers the period from 2023-2025, envisaging that the draft Local Plan is due to be submitted for examination in May 2025.

Regulation 18 Consultation – July 24

The Council is currently undertaking a further consultation on the emerging Local Plan. This Regulation 18 consultation includes a 'focused consultation' paper which focuses on draft plan objectives and ambitions which are intended to guide the future evolution of the plan in terms of its overall approach and anticipated policy content. To ensure the minimum housing requirement is met, the MK City Plan 2050 will provide for between 53,245 and 63,000 new homes over the period 2022-2050 across Milton Keynes.

This Vision Document should be read alongside the representations submitted by Rainier to the Regulation 18 consultation.



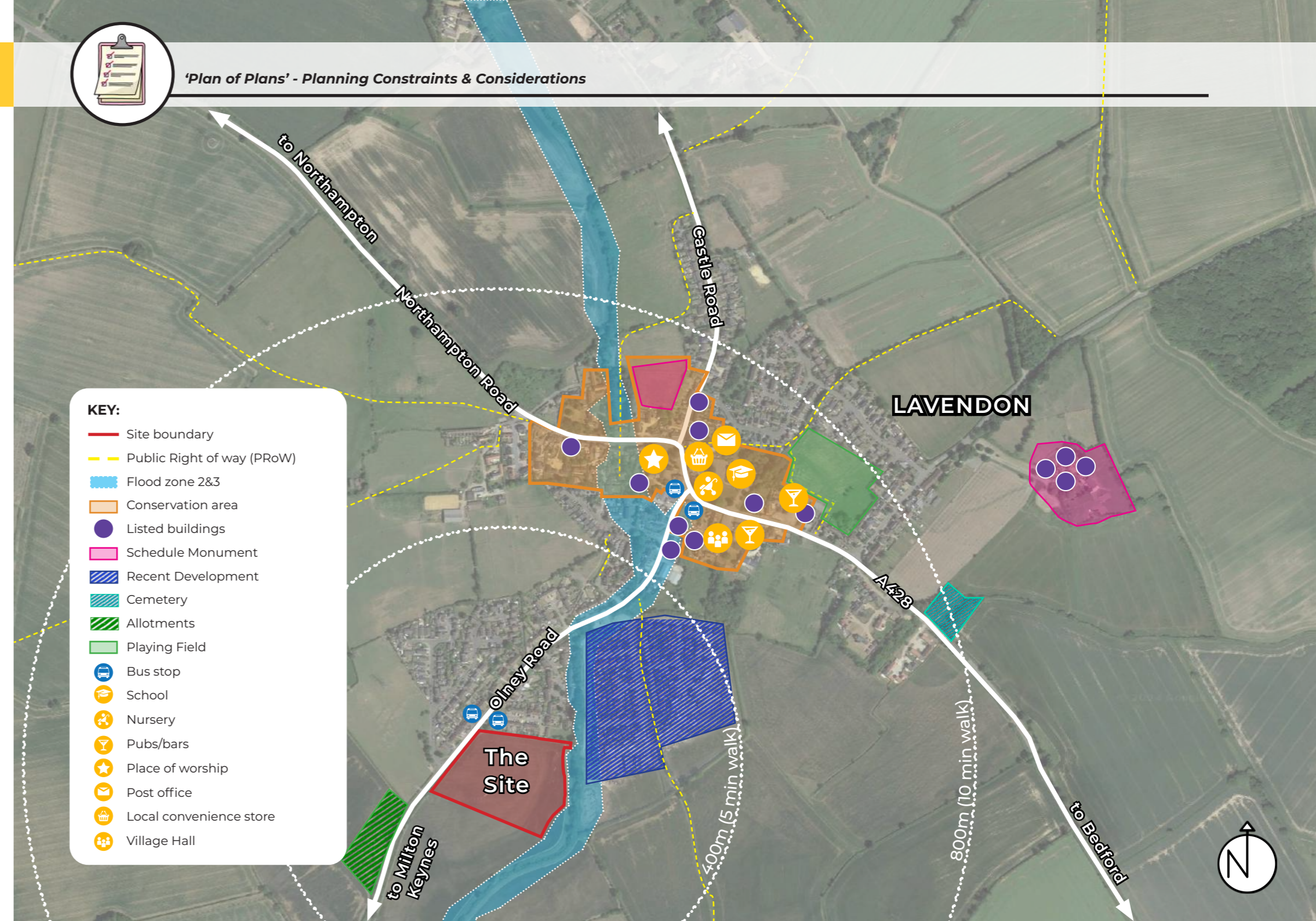
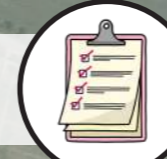
Lavendon



St Michael's Church



Lavendon School



KEY:

- Site boundary
- Public Right of way (PRoW)
- Flood zone 2&3
- Conservation area
- Listed buildings
- Schedule Monument
- Recent Development
- Cemetery
- Allotments
- Playing Field
- Bus stop
- School
- Nursery
- Pubs/bars
- Place of worship
- Post office
- Local convenience store
- Village Hall





Constraints & Opportunities

Site Context

A summary of the constraints is presented here, to be considered in the development of masterplan proposals.

Development Potential

The Site proposals provide sustainable growth to Lavendon and the wider area. It has the opportunity to strengthen the local community by providing further housing and community infrastructure, as well as enhancing the biodiversity of the area through new landscaping.

Access & Movement

Access to the Site will be provided along its frontage to Olney Road via a priority 'give-way' arrangement. The access will measure 5.5m in width with 6m radii on either side. Visibility splays of 2.4m x 59m, as agreed with the local highway authority, have been provided at the access.

The nearest bus stop is only 30m away from the Site access making the Site well connected to the wider area.

A pedestrian and cycle access is also proposed to the east to better connect the Site with existing settlement.

Topography

The Site slopes gently down towards the south east. The proposals will carefully consider the topography of the Site.

Landscape

The existing vegetation and Site boundary planting will be retained and enhanced where possible. A new southern boundary will be created by introducing 20m wide woodland buffer planting to protect the views in to the Site and create a soft landscape edge. This will also help to create a sensitive transition boundary from the proposed development to the wider countryside.

Flood Risk and Drainage

There is a foul sewer that crosses the eastern end of the Site with associated easements. The development edge/extent should be informed by this.

The majority of the Site is situated within Flood Zone 1. An attenuation basin will be provided as part of a Sustainable Urban Drainage Strategy to manage surface water and to ensure there will not be an increase in the likelihood of flooding elsewhere. Landscaping in and around the basins will be incorporated to create new habitats.

Utilities

All utilities are available for the proposed development. It is anticipated that the development will make best use of the existing infrastructure located within close proximity of the site, with new supplies and connections taken from the existing local networks.

KEY:

- Site boundary
- Proposed vehicular site access point
- Proposed pedestrian/cycle access
- Existing trees/hedgerows (incl. areas of undergrowth) to be retained (where possible)
- Watercourse
- EA Flood Zone 2 Extents
- EA Flood Zone 3 Extents
- Rear/side residential boundary
- Foul Drain and 3m easement
- Bus stops
- Proposed residential development area (1.49ha)
- Proposed green space
- Area reserved for attenuation (lowest part of site)
- Indicative recreational routes
- Play space with 20m buffer (LEAP)
- Proposed boundary planting
- 20m wide woodland buffer
- Foul drain connection route access





The Proposal

The Concept

We recognise the importance of the countryside and its connections with the settlement and its character. It is vital that any development here provides a green landscape buffer, not just as a provision for recreational public space but also to create a more harmonious relationship between the enhanced settlement edge and the open countryside.

The concept aims to create a legacy - with development becoming a positive gain and complementing its location, setting and landscape context. The Site provides an opportunity to create a new community at the southern edge of the village which will create a soft landscaped gateway to Lavendon and strengthen the approach along Olney Road.

To enhance this sense of place, the proposal should integrate shared streets and a play space to provide opportunities for community interaction and activity, whilst landmark buildings will unite the Site into the Lavendon vernacular.

Emerging Proposals

An Illustrative Masterplan has been prepared to demonstrate one way in which the Site could be realised. The solution takes on board the technical and environmental assessments

that have been undertaken. The Site has the capacity to provide up to 52 dwellings including provision of affordable housing.

The provision of new homes on the Site will promote the highest standards of design. Building heights, massing and detailing/materials will respond sympathetically to the landscape appraisal, technical assessments and Lavendon physical and natural context. A proportion of affordable housing will be provided alongside appropriately accessible and adaptable housing across a mix of sizes and tenures – all in accordance with the Council's policy requirements.

The masterplan will be ecologically sound and will respect habitats and existing green infrastructure on-site, enabling residents to live in harmony with local wildlife.

The proposal also seeks to better integrate the Site with existing settlement by providing pedestrian and cycle connections to the east and convenient access to the existing services and facilities to the north.

With this in mind, we consider the Site to be well-placed for development and, thereby, make a positive contribution towards meeting the Council's growth requirements.



A framework of green and blue landscape corridors



Well connected network of paths and streets



New homes & spaces for the community, set within the landscape



KEY:

- 1 Proposed vehicular access
- 2 Proposed pedestrian access
- 3 Primary street
- 4 Shared surface
- 5 Private drive
- 6 Indicative recreational routes
- 7 Indicative attenuation basin
- 8 Indicative play space (LEAP)
- 9 Existing boundary planting retained
- 10 Proposed 20m wide woodland buffer





Design Principles

Key design principles underpin the proposals for the Site, focusing on the following three themes:



Creating an integrated neighbourhood

The proposals will:

- Increase local **housing choice** - providing a mix of dwelling types, tenures, and sizes which cater for a variety of households, including the elderly and those wishing to work from home;
- Provide new equipped **play area** for both new and existing residents;
- Promote **sustainable modes of travel** by creating low-speed, pedestrian and cycle-friendly streets with numerous connections to existing routes to provide high active travel permeability;
- Create a **distinctive and walkable new place** to live, with extensive accessible new green spaces and green corridors; and
- Create **sensitive transitions** between new development, existing settlement edges of Lavendon and the wider countryside by providing lower density housing along the edges.



Achieving distinctiveness and identity

The proposals will:

- Create a strong framework of connected and **well-overlooked streets and spaces** - with carefully considered building lines and dual aspect corners;
- **Vary residential density, pattern and form** to create a range of memorable spaces and building groupings that help people find their way around;
- Incorporate positive features of the Site, such as existing **habitats** and **established landscaping** into new green spaces and streets; and
- Create new streets and landscaped spaces which relate well to **topography** and frame **views of the countryside**.



Establishing a strong green and blue infrastructure network

The proposals will:

- Create a connected and accessible **green space network** founded upon the retention of existing landscape features and the provision of new green corridors and 20m woodland buffer to the south;
- Provide a range of green space character areas which encourage **physical activity and social interaction** (such as play areas, wild-flower meadows and tree planting);
- Create streets with trees, SuDS features and locally inspired **hard and soft landscaping areas**;
- Incorporate **soft and native species of trees and planting** to complement the existing landscape assets on Site; and
- Provide a place for wildlife to live and thrive, achieving a **net gain in biodiversity**.



KEY:

- Site boundary
- Development Parcels
- Gateway
- Green Focal Space
- Transition Nodes
- Landmark Buildings
- Primary Street
- Recreational Routes
- Green Corridors/buffers



The Benefits

This Vision Document describes how a high quality and sustainable new community can be created on land off Olney Road, Lavendon.

The new homes and facilities are deliverable based on the Site assessment work that has been carried out to date. The Illustrative Masterplan describes a high quality residential addition to Lavendon, designed to respond to the character of the Site and its context.

The landscape-led scheme provides new green infrastructure to link into the wider green network and addresses views in and out of the Site.

This is an exciting opportunity to create a new legacy development to support the sensitive growth of Lavendon and deliver much needed new housing for the District.

Key benefits of the proposal include:



Up to 52 new high quality family homes in mix of sizes and tenures;



New children's play area promoting outdoor activity;



New footpath and cycle route creating wider connections to the settlement to promote walking and cycling;



New multi-functional open spaces, landscape buffers and sustainable surface water management including attenuation basin with wildlife friendly features, delivering a net gain in biodiversity; and



Contributions to local infrastructure improvements.



Attenuation precedent image



Wildflower precedent image



Natural play precedent image





prepared by:

edga
URBAN DESIGN



for:

RAINIER
DEVELOPMENTS & STRATEGIC LAND



Land off Olney Road, Lavendon

Landscape Note

edp8868_r001

QA: WGa_FJe/FMi_091024

1 POLICY CEA12 CONSERVING AND ENHANCING LANDSCAPE CHARACTER/SPECIAL LANDSCAPE AREAS

- 1.1 The land promoted by Rainier to the south of Lavendon is proposed to be within a Special Landscape Area as defined by the Policies Maps which accompany this consultation. We note that no such designations are contained within the adopted Local Plan.
- 1.2 The Special Landscape Area proposed to the north of Milton Keynes City (including Lavendon) is broadly consistent with the former Area of Attractive Landscape (see Figure 2.2 of the 'Milton Keynes Review of Local Landscape Designations', LUC, May 2024). We understand that the Areas of Attractive Landscape were defined in the Local Plan 2005, but that these were not taken forward into the Plan:MK.
- 1.3 The Site forms part of an arable field, and adjoins the south-western built edge of Lavendon, to the north-east of Milton Keynes. Neither the Site nor the immediate landscape is covered by any statutory designations for landscape character or quality. The Site is well related to the existing settlement to the north and north-west, with a recently constructed development for up to 95 dwellings and public open space to the east and north-east of the Site.
- 1.4 Olney Road passes alongside the north-western Site boundary, and a line of high voltage electricity cables with a supporting metal pylon extends along the outside edge of the south-western Site boundary, which is a detracting feature.
- 1.5 The Site's landscape features are generally pleasant and are confined to the northern and north-western boundaries.
- 1.6 The Site is considered as being of medium landscape quality, value and sensitivity. In visual terms the Site is well contained to the north, north-west, north-east and east by virtue of the built edges of the settlement and by the undulating topography and some vegetation. There are limited views from higher ground to the north-west and west, and from the higher ground on the opposite flank of the valley to the south. Beyond this, the undulating topography and the well vegetated field boundaries generally limit views. In all views of the Site, it is seen in the context of the adjoining and existing settlement.
- 1.7 The accompanying Illustrative Masterplan shows how an appropriate development can be accommodated on the south-western built edge of Lavendon, with most of the landscape

features being retained by significantly enhanced. The Site is well related to the existing settlement, and is well contained from the more sensitive parts, including the Conservation Area, by virtue of the adjoining settlement. New housing will appear as a natural extension to the settlement, softening the current harsh settlement edge in approaches from the south-west, without intruding on the wider landscape of the River Great Ouse valley. As the new planting within the public open space and on the boundaries establishes (note that significant structural landscaping is proposed to the south), views will become filtered and will complement the well vegetated edges of other parts of the settlement. This will assist in visually integrating the development into the settlement and wider landscape, in which trees and woodland are characteristic.

- 1.8 As discussed above, the Site is of medium sensitivity, the Site's character is fairly typical of the 5a Ouse North Undulating Clay Farmland Landscape Character Area as detailed in the Milton Keynes Landscape Character Assessment, although it does not exhibit a tranquil character, as described within the 'Perceptual and Aesthetic' summary in the assessment. This is because of its proximity to the existing urban edge of the settlement, Olney Road which passes the Site's north-western boundary and forms the main road into the village from the south-west, and the high voltage electricity lines and supporting pylon immediately to the southwest of the Site which are detracting features.
- 1.9 The Site's landscape features comprise the well managed hedgerow along the north-western boundary and some vegetation along the northern boundary. In terms of the land use of the Site, it forms part of an arable field, set within a medium to large scale network of arable fields, bound by mature hedgerows with some woodland blocks in the wider landscape and riparian vegetation following the River Great Ouse. The Site comprises arable land, with relatively ordinary characteristics. It lies at the edge of the settlement, with Olney Road, the main road into the settlement from the southwest, passing alongside the northwestern boundary. The line of high voltage overhead cables with a supporting pylon is a detracting feature and lies close to the Site's southwestern boundary. The Site is assessed as being of medium landscape quality. In relation to landscape value, the Site does not carry any statutory designations for landscape quality or character. It does not contain any heritage assets, nor does it fall within a Conservation Area or have any public access. It could not be reasonably considered wild or tranquil, given that it lies on the edge of the settlement and is bound by Olney Road on its north-western boundary. The Site is assessed as being of medium landscape value.
- 1.10 The Site could not be considered a 'valued' landscape against paragraph 180a of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2023) as it is not statutorily designated nor is its landscape quality or value identified to lift it above an 'everyday landscape'. Landscape sensitivity is judged according to the type and scale of development proposed, and the ability of the landscape as a resource to accommodate the development. The Site lies on the edge of the settlement, with existing development along the majority of its north-western boundary and the consented development close to its eastern boundary. It is assessed as being of medium landscape sensitivity. The adjoining townscape is characterised by 20th century suburban housing and is generally pleasant, but without any particular distinguishing features. It is assessed as being of medium townscape quality, value and sensitivity while the Conservation Area at the centre of the settlement to the north is assessed as being of high quality, value and sensitivity. The wider landscape is undulating,

with a good presence of woodland within the riparian landscape associated with the River Great Ouse to Olney Road, the south and south-east. It is considered to be generally pleasant, although electricity pylons and wind turbines in the longer views are detracting elements. It is therefore assessed as being of medium landscape sensitivity, quality and value.

- 1.11 The evidence base to support policy CEA12, can be at best considered 'light touch', considering the extensive swathes of land which is seeks to wash over across the authority. In relation to the Site, having assessed the Site in accordance with GLVIA3 and TGN 02-21, the Site, overall, is of no more than 'ordinary' landscape value. Moreover, there exists no evidence (based on 'demonstrable physical attributes') to suggest that further weight should be attached to the value of the Site derived from the use or enjoyment of this area by local residents (beyond that considered above), or as expressed by any other stakeholder.
- 1.12 Ultimately, the Site (and likely the other vast swathes of land identified within the emerging evidence base) does not demonstrate the presence of a sufficient number of indicators of landscape value, nor does it have a single indicator of such importance, to elevate it above other more everyday landscapes. Furthermore, the evidence base does not provide a sufficiently robust and objective assessment to support this restrictive policy.