

# LANDSCAPE & VISUAL SETTING ANALYSIS

## PROPOSED LANDSCAPE GAP, NORTH BRADLEY, TROWBRIDGE

for  
North Bradley Parish Council Neighbourhood Steering Group

September 2018

# LANDSCAPE & VISUAL SETTING ANALYSIS

## PROPOSED LANDSCAPE GAP, NORTH BRADLEY, TROWBRIDGE

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### CONTENTS

- 1.0 INTRODUCTION
- 2.0 PLANNING AND LANDSCAPE CONTEXT
- 3.0 LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS SUMMARY WITHIN THE STUDY AREA
- 4.0 VISUAL ANALYSIS
- 5.0 LANDSCAPE GAP RECOMMENDATIONS
- 6.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

### FIGURES

- FIG.1 – STUDY AREA
- FIG.2 - LOCATION OF NORTH BRADLEY ROLLING CLAY LOWLAND LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA E3
- FIG.3A - EXTENT OF SITE 3565: SOUTHWICK COURT - WILTSHIRE HOUSING SITE ALLOCATIONS PLAN  
(WILTSHIRE COUNCIL DRAFT JULY 2018)
- FIG.3B - EXTENT OF SITE 613: ELM GROVE FARM - WILTSHIRE HOUSING SITE ALLOCATIONS PLAN  
(WILTSHIRE COUNCIL DRAFT JULY 2018)
- FIG.3C - EXTENT OF SITE 298: LAND OFF THE A363 AT WHITE HORSE BUSINESS PARK  
(WILTSHIRE COUNCIL DRAFT JULY 2018)
- FIG. 4 - PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY NETWORK WITHIN THE STUDY AREA
- FIG. 5 - LANDSCAPE CONTEXT & DESIGNATIONS
- FIG. 6 - VIEWPOINT LOCATIONS
- FIG. 7 - LANDSCAPE GAP RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

##### Reason for the report

Indigo Landscape Architects were commissioned by North Bradley Parish Council Neighbourhood Steering Group to undertake a Landscape and Visual Setting Analysis of the landscape area between North Bradley and Trowbridge and make recommendations on the extent of a 'North Bradley Landscape Gap' between North Bradley and Trowbridge. Figure 1 shows the Study Area.

##### Scope of the work

Undertake a desk study exercise to review existing Landscape Character Assessment and designations associated with the area to understand the Landscape Character of the site and its surrounding context. Check public right of way access within the Study Area including footpaths, bridleways, roads, etc.

Carry out a site visit to check / assess the Landscape Character of the Study Area and confirm key views from publicly accessible areas of the surrounding landscape which affect the setting of the village to inform the proposed extent of the 'North Bradley Landscape Gap'.

Following completion of the desk study and site work prepare a Landscape and Visual 'Analysis' report to include the following:

- The landscape context of the land between the village and Trowbridge and in particular that within the potential 'North Bradley Landscape Gap' – looking at physical influences; influences of human activity; and Aesthetic and Perceptual factors.
- Set out the landscape planning context including any relevant landscape-based planning policies / designations / guidelines etc.
- Set out the visual characteristics of the village and surrounding landscape focusing on the setting of the village; separation / coalescence between the village and Trowbridge and the White Horse Business Park; including representative views.
- Undertake a narrative analysis of the issues and make recommendations on the need for and extent of the 'North Bradley Gap' in landscape setting terms.
- To consider the impact of the three Wiltshire Housing Site Allocation Plan sites.

The Landscape and Visual Setting Analysis was carried out from a range of publicly accessible land within the Study Area. The analysis was carried out at eye level and on foot and included a relevant selection of publicly accessible open space, roads and footpaths.

The site was visited on the 30th June 2017 and the weather was dry but overcast with good visibility. Representative photographs were taken using a standard 50mm lens at eye level.

#### Report Structure

The structure of the report is summarised below:

- **Definition and purpose of a Landscape Gap:** This section explains what Landscape Gaps are and why they are considered important in the planning and decision-making process in order for settlements to maintain their identity and a sense of separation from larger urban neighbours.
- **Landscape Character:** This section provides a summary of existing relevant landscape character assessments which have been reviewed and checked / assessed following site work to identify the key characteristics that apply to the Study Area; providing an assessment of its strength of character and landscape condition.
- **Landscape Planning Context:** This section includes a review of relevant landscape-based planning policy from national policy context through to the local planning framework; identifying the key landscape planning issues and constraints in respect of the Study Area.
- **Landscape Analysis:** This section provides a review of the landscape resource of the Study Area in more detail to identify its key constituent elements including physical influences (eg vegetation), influences of human activity (eg heritage assets) and aesthetic and perceptual factors (eg sense of place).
- **Visual Analysis:** This section identifies the visual characteristics of the Study Area with representative views which include looking at the setting of North Bradley and the degree of separation / coalescence between the village and Trowbridge.
- **Recommendations:** This section of the report makes recommendations for defining the extent of the proposed North Bradley Landscape Gap that is based on both the visual and landscape character analysis carried out, and taking into account any landscape-based / site allocation planning policies that are applicable to the Study Area.  
  
This includes strategic landscape and site layout recommendations for Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) Site 298 / Wiltshire Housing Site Allocation Plan (HSAP) Site H 2.2 in conjunction with advice from the County Ecologist regarding impact on bats from the Bath & Avon SAC.
- **Summary & Conclusions:** This section pulls together the report's findings in respect of the proposed North Bradley Landscape Gap.

### 1.2 LANDSCAPE GAP DEFINITION AND PURPOSE

Landscape Gaps are spatial planning tools designed to shape the pattern of settlements, they are not countryside protection or landscape designations. They generally command wide public support and have been used with success in previous strategic plans to influence the settlement pattern. Nationally, the most significant application of policy to maintain settlement separation and avoid coalescence is Green Belt Policy.

Previous National Guidance (in PPS's and PPG's) on gaps and green wedges has subsequently been revoked but the importance of maintaining physical separation between settlements and avoiding coalescence is still an important consideration for many communities. For example, maintaining visual separation and protecting the identities of villages was an important policy included within The Idmiston Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan Neighbourhood Plan (2015-2026) as follows:

#### *Policy 1 - Village Separation*

*For the villages to remain as recognisably separate places, with their own identities, it is critical that these physical and visual breaks between our settlements are retained. Consequently, any development which prejudices the continued separation of our existing villages from each other, and from those in neighbouring parishes, will not be supported.*

The importance of a Landscape Gap is therefore more concerned with its '**setting**' function (visual and physical separation) rather than a consideration of intrinsic '**landscape value**'; thus, helping to preserve landscape areas which contribute to the setting, identity or backdrop of settlements.

The idea of a 'meaningful gap' is incorporated within the North Warwickshire Borough Council Draft Local Plan (August 2016). This forms part of North Warwickshire Borough Council's spatial strategy and seeks to prevent new development from significantly diminishing the extent of a Landscape Gap. Thus, small-scale changes are possible but a core area for protection should be maintained in order to prevent the coalescence of settlements and maintain their identity.

A Landscape Gap should also be a contiguous, uninterrupted, integral whole to be a 'meaningful gap' and not broken or partially subdivided by significant development; thereby undermining its landscape setting function.

Landscape quality and amenity can also contribute towards determining which areas of a Landscape Gap are most sensitive and should also be considered when determining the specific area that constitutes the Landscape Gap.

It is recognised that the provision of significant green infrastructure such as Landscape Gaps offer important recreational, health and landscape benefits to local communities as well as potentially valuable habitat and biodiversity benefits.



# LANDSCAPE & VISUAL SETTING ANALYSIS

## PROPOSED LANDSCAPE GAP, NORTH BRADLEY, TROWBRIDGE

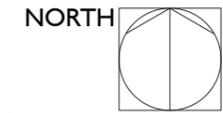
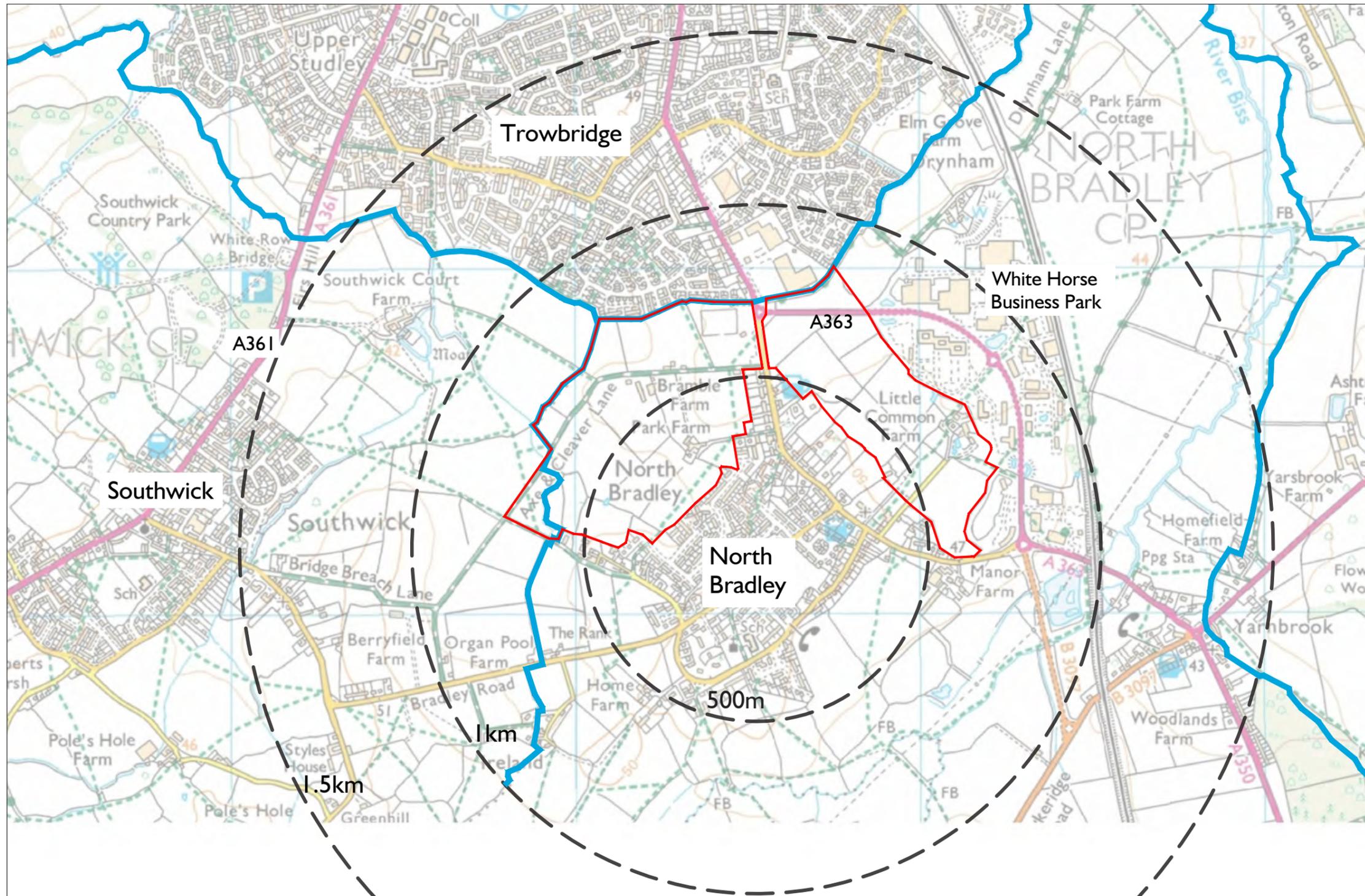


FIG. I - STUDY AREA

## 2.0 PLANNING AND LANDSCAPE CONTEXT

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

This section of the report looks at the landscape character of the study area with reference to existing studies at a National, County and Regional level; and considers the character of the study area based on the site work undertaken. It then considers the planning context at both National (NPPF) and Regional (WCC Core Strategy) level.

### 2.2 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Landscape Character Assessment is the process of identifying and describing variation in the character of the landscape. It seeks to identify and explain the unique combination of elements and features (characteristics) that make landscapes distinctive.

The landscape character of the area has been analysed at a number of scales. Brief outlines are included here to bring out elements and features relevant to the Site and surrounding area.

### 2.3 NATIONAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

Natural England published an updated profile for the area in 2014. The Site is located in National Character Area Profile 117: Avon Vales. Whilst the National Character Area profiles provide some insight into the landscape around the Study Area, they cover large areas and only provide a broad overview.

In summary, the NCA is described as follows:

*'The Avon Vales form a low-lying, clay-dominated open landscape, with the higher ground of the Salisbury Plain and West Wiltshire Downs National Character Area (NCA) to the south, Berkshire & Marlborough Downs NCA to the east, and the Cotswolds NCA to the west. In the south and north there is a gradual merging with the clay of the Blackmore Vale and Vale of Wardour NCA and the Upper Thames Clay Vales NCA respectively.'*

The key characteristics identified in the NCA and considered relevant to the Site are summarised below:

- *An undulating clay vale with a mix of arable and pasture.*
- *Small and medium-sized fields with mostly hedgerow boundaries with few hedgerow trees, varying in shape from irregular piecemeal enclosure to rectilinear planned enclosure.*
- *Numerous low ridges with local views over towns and villages.*
- *Transport corridors along roads and watercourses, heavily influential on all development in the NCA.*

### 2.4 WILTSHIRE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT (COUNTY LEVEL)

Of more direct relevance to the Study Area is the Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment (Land Use Consultants, December 2005). The purpose of this assessment is to document the current status of the Wiltshire landscape, furthering the understanding of the landscape resource available in the area and giving an indication of areas in need of enhancement and of conservation.

The Study Area falls within Landscape Character Type 11: Rolling Clay Lowland. Landscape Types have a distinct and relatively homogenous character with similar physical and cultural attributes, including geology, landform, land cover, and historical evolution. The Landscape Type has been further sub-divided

into component Landscape Character Areas (LCAs). LCAs are described as discrete geographic areas that possess the common characteristics described for the Landscape Type. Each LCA has a distinct and recognizable local identity.

The Site falls within LCA 11C: Trowbridge Rolling Clay Lowland and its key characteristics are described below:

#### Key Characteristics

- *Gently rolling lowland based on Clay.*
- *Mixed arable and pastoral land use with pasture concentrated around the water courses.*
- *Variable field pattern with network of full hedgerows and mature hedgerow trees.*
- *Presence of streams marked by lines of willows and crossed by modest bridges.*
- *Woodland blocks including some ancient woodland and wet woodland of high ecological value plus scattered mature trees.*
- *Small number of meadows of neutral and unimproved grassland.*
- *Scattered settlement of towns, small villages and farmsteads, many using vernacular materials of brick, half timber, stone, tiles and thatch.*
- *Roads largely minor and rural with a few trunk roads and sections of motorway.*
- *Views vary from semi-enclosed by intact hedgerows, riparian vegetation and woodland blocks to more open with views to the rising scarps of the chalk uplands.*
- *A largely peaceful, rural landscape.*

#### Summary of Landscape Character

The assessment describes the Landscape Character Area as follows:

*'Trowbridge Rolling Clay Lowland is a gently undulating, largely rural area of mixed arable and pasture land. Medium to large rectangular fields are bounded by thick hedgerows with mature hedgerow trees. Combined with scattered woodland blocks (some ancient) and rich riparian vegetation along the stream lines, the hedgerows make this a semi-enclosed landscape allowing intermittent views to the steep scarps of the Chalk uplands. Settlement is sparse to the east of the area with scattered nucleated and linear villages and farmsteads.'*

*To the west there is more settlement including the southern part of Trowbridge with some large scale industrial buildings and modern housing estates tending to extend along roads south towards North Bradley, Southwick and Westbury. This western section of the area, which also contains the A350 trunk road and a concentration of railway lines, is considerably less rural and tranquil than the east of the area'.*

#### Evaluation

##### Positive landscape features of significance:

- *Largely rural, tranquil landscape.*
- *Strong pattern of hedgerows and mature hedgerow trees.*
- *Many streams with rich riparian vegetation.*
- *Woodland blocks of high ecological value.*
- *Small scattered villages of traditional pattern and vernacular materials.*
- *Views to Chalk scarps and Limestone ridge.*

Forces for change

- Agricultural intensification and introduction of arable rotation threatens the remaining medieval field patterns and traditional pastoral landscape.
- Hedgerow trees are generally mature with few new trees to replace them.
- Elm loss of 1970s.
- Need for sustainable woodland management including traditional maintenance techniques where appropriate to maintain ancient woodlands and particularly areas of coppice and wood pasture.
- Pressure for further expansion of settlement and new development threatening the character of the small villages and scattered farmsteads.
- Pressure to build new roads and upgrade existing roads through additional kerbing and signage to accommodate an increase in traffic volume.

Landscape Condition: This is generally judged as **good**. 'These are areas of mixed pastoral and arable farmland with intact hedgerows, some woodlands and hay meadows of high ecological value and villages of vernacular materials. There are a few elements in poorer condition such as hedgerow trees that are over-mature with few replacement young trees'.

Strength of character: 'The Rolling Clay Lowland is in places a peaceful rural landscape with intact hedgerows, woodland blocks and small villages and scattered farmsteads of vernacular materials. However, the varied land use of mixed arable and pastoral farming, the coniferous planting which has affected the character of the historic woodlands and the influence of prominent urban edges and transport corridors including noise and light pollution make the strength of character of the type **moderate** overall'.

Inherent landscape sensitivities:

- Rural tranquillity.
- Hedgerow pattern.
- Isolated remnant hay meadows.
- Woodlands of ecological value.
- Views to the scarp slopes of the adjacent chalk downlands.
- Settlement pattern of nucleated villages with variety of vernacular building materials.

Broad management objectives considered relevant to the Study Area:

- Retain and manage the dense hedgerow network and nurture new hedgerow trees.
- Enhance woodland, cattle and horse pasture habitats for bats.
- Minimise small scale incremental change such as signage, fencing or improvements to the road network which could change the rural peaceful character of the landscape.
- Ensure that landscape is at the foundation of decisions about the growth of settlements and that landscape is used to provide a strong framework within which changes can happen in a sustainable way.
- Consider strengthening the enclosed character of the landscape and screening views to intrusive urban edges through nurturing existing and planting new woodland.
- Consider developing guidance for built development to ensure both future construction and changes to existing buildings are designed to integrate with the existing character and structure of settlements.

**2.5 WEST WILTSHIRE DISTRICT LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT (REGIONAL LEVEL)**

The West Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment 2007 (Chris Blandford Associates) was produced on behalf of the old West Wiltshire District Council and provides a further level of detailed assessment at 1:25,000 scale.

The Study Area is situated within the North Bradley Rolling Clay Lowland Landscape Character Area E3. The area is situated between the towns of Trowbridge and Westbury, and extends to the western boundary of the district. It is bounded in the North by the A361 and the southern edge of Trowbridge.

Key characteristics of the LCA are as follows:

- Gently rolling farmland based on clay, with extensive views, including views on the chalk downland in the east and south;
- Distinct pattern of small to medium sized fields enclosed by mainly intact hedgerows with mature trees;
- Predominantly pasture with a few scattered ancient woodland blocks;
- Settlements consist of several villages and farmsteads linked by a dense network of mainly secondary roads and footpaths;
- Pylons as a dominant vertical element.

The location the North Bradley Rolling Clay Lowland Landscape Character Area E3 is shown in Fig 2.

**Evaluation**

This section highlights that hedgerow field boundaries are generally in good condition and most of the traditional field pattern remains intact. The landscape is described as having inherent landscape sensitivities which include the scale and landscape setting of Southwick and North Bradley, the remaining traditional field pattern and the open views.

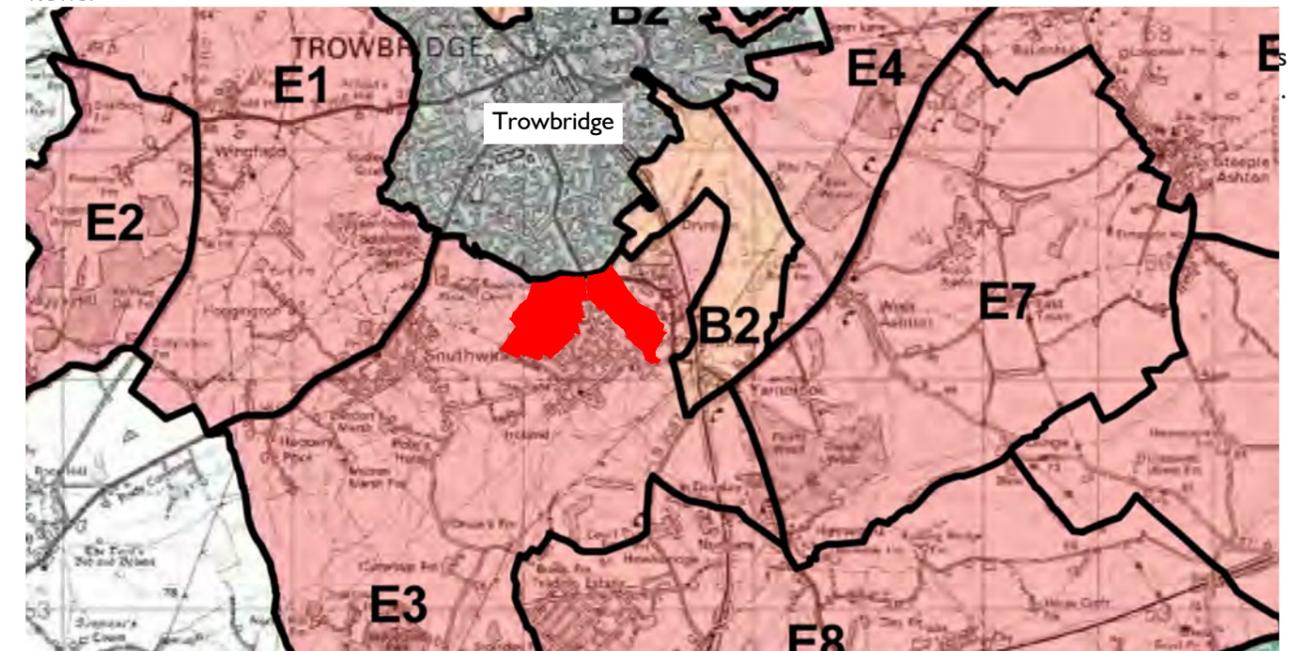


FIG.2 LOCATION OF NORTH BRADLEY ROLLING CLAY LOWLAND LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA E3 WITH THE STUDY AREA IDENTIFIED IN RED FOR CONTEXT.

### 2.5 CHARACTER OF THE STUDY AREA

It is considered that the Study Area is typical of the North Bradley Rolling Clay Lowland character area description above.

The key characteristics specific to the Study Area are summarised below:

- Gently undulating lowland landscape.
- Mainly pastoral land use with some 'horsiculture'.
- Variable and traditional field pattern of small-medium size with network of full hedgerows and mature hedgerow trees.
- Views vary from semi-enclosed by intact hedgerows to more open with views to the rising scarps of the chalk uplands to the south / south-east.
- A largely peaceful, rural landscape away from Woodmarsh.
- Woodmarsh is a busy inter-urban road (located between two roundabout junctions associated with the A363) and has an influence on the Study Area.

The Study Area is a rural and enclosed landscape with mature hedgerows including numerous trees create an intimate landscape in places. It has a distinct pattern of small to medium sized fields enclosed by mainly intact hedgerows with mature trees. This character extends westwards towards Southwick although topography becomes a more noticeable feature to the west with land rising up to a gentle ridge to the north of Southwick. It's important to note that the landscape of the Study Area is assessed within the wider context of the broader landscape area between Southwick and Trowbridge.

Away from the busy Woodmarsh and the A363, the landscape to the north-west of the village is largely peaceful and has a rural character.

Views are often restricted by intervening vegetation and in some places by the nature of the gently rolling topography.

Axe & Cleaver Lane (Bridleway) forms a strong 'Green Edge' to the north and west of the village with mature hedgerows on both sides and numerous mature trees. It forms an attractive rural lane along most of its length except the section between Bramble Farm & Woodmarsh which has recently be surfaced with a coarse stone surfacing to improve access to Bramble Farm. The lane is also well connected to the network of public footpaths that connect with North Bradley, Southwick to the west and Trowbridge to the north.

At the time of the visit the footpath network was being well used by dog walkers throughout the broader landscape area, including the landscape area between Southwick and Trowbridge.

Generally, intervisibility between North Bradley village and Trowbridge is restricted. It is limited to the narrow section of landscape between Axe & Cleaver Lane to the north of the village and the southern edge of Trowbridge. At this point, the physical separation is as little as 150m. Similarly, the gap is also squeezed to the east of Woodmarsh. Here, the landscape gap is at its weakest; bisected by the urban character of Woodmarsh and its junction with the busy A363 further to the north. In addition, part of this narrow strip of landscape to the west of Woodmarsh is currently being used by Trowbridge FC and is formally managed. However, mature hedges along the football pitch boundary and both sides of Woodmarsh restrict views towards Trowbridge; limiting views at this point to glimpses though the football club access.

Recent development (Hitachi Capital Vehicle Solutions) has taken place to the west of the A363 at the junction with Westbury Rd (opposite the White Horse Business Park) and is encroaching on the landscape gap here. However, mature hedgerows along Little Common Lane help to restrict views to the east. It should be noted that the scale of this development in combination with existing residential development along Westbury Rd and the urban character of the roads and junction is weakening a sense of separation here.

In the wider landscape, a number of buildings can be seen such as Bramble Farm and Park farm. There are also occasional long distance views of chalk hills to the south-east are possible including the Westbury White Horse.

In summary, the Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment assesses the strength of character of this landscape to be **moderate** and in a **good** condition. It is considered that the Study Area is largely consistent with this assessment.



View along Axe & Cleaver Lane (Bridleway). It forms a strong 'Green Edge' to the north and west of the village with mature hedgerows on both sides and numerous mature trees

# LANDSCAPE & VISUAL SETTING ANALYSIS

## PROPOSED LANDSCAPE GAP, NORTH BRADLEY, TROWBRIDGE

### 2.6 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER CONTEXT

The following photographs provide representative views of the landscape character of the area around the Site.



View looking north across Trowbridge FC ground with the edge of Trowbridge visible.



View along Axe & Cleaver Lane showing the rural character evident within most parts of the landscape area between North Bradley and Trowbridge.



View of landscape looking north with the 'Green Edge' of Axe & Cleaver Lane in the background showing numerous mature trees and the enclosed character of much of the area restricting views.



Another view along Axe & Cleaver Lane with mature and intact hedgerows with mature trees.



View from Axe & Cleaver looking north from Bramble Farm. At this point, the landscape gap is very narrow and at its weakest and requires enhancement to reinforce and preserve the sense of separation between North Bradley and Trowbridge.



View looking north-east from public right of way towards Little Common Farm (east of Westbury Rd) with memorial gates and small orchard. The mature trees beyond the farm (adjoining the White Horse Business Park) create an important and significant backdrop to the landscape here.

2.7 PLANNING CONTEXT

**NATIONAL PLANNING CONTEXT – THE NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK**

National planning policy contains guidance on planning and related issues from a national perspective. From the 27th March 2012, this has primarily been set out within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) document.

The NPPF is a wide-ranging document which sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraphs 11 to 16) and core planning principles (paragraph 17) before detailing (in paragraphs 18 to 219) policies which, taken as a whole, constitute the Government’s view of what sustainable development in England means in practice for the planning system.

These policies are broken down into 3 main parts under the headings:

- Delivering Sustainable Development (which itself is divided into 13 sub-sections).
- Plan making
- Decision taking

Of particular relevance to the Study Area are policies in the following sections of the first part of this document:

- NPPF Section 7 - Requiring good design
- NPPF Section 11 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- NPPF Section 12 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Section 7, Paragraph 58 states that local and neighbourhood plans should develop robust policies which set out the quality of any new development which will be expected based on stated objectives for the future of the area and an understanding and evaluation of its defining characteristics. Planning policies and decisions among others should aim to ensure development:

- Will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- Respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation; and
- Are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.

Section 11, Paragraph 109 of the document states that the planning system should contribute to the protection and enhancement of the natural and local environment through, among others protecting and enhancing valued landscapes.

**WCC CORE STRATEGY**

The Wiltshire Core Strategy was adopted by Wiltshire Council in January 2015 and sets out the planning policy within the district up to 2026. A number of policies from the West Wiltshire District Plan 2004 and West Wiltshire Leisure and Recreation DPD 2009 have also been saved within the Core Strategy and remain relevant in so far as they accord with the NPPF. The main landscape policies from these documents relevant to the Study Area are as follows:

- Policy CP51 requires any new development to preserve, conserve and where possible enhance landscape character, mitigating any negative effects through sensitive design and landscape measures. Proposals should be informed by the relevant landscape character assessments.
- Policy CP52 requires development to retain and enhance Wiltshire’s green infrastructure network, linking to the network, providing accessible open space in accordance with Wiltshire Open Space Standards and ensuring appropriate long-term management.
- Policy CP57 requires development to be of a high standard of design, in particular retaining and enhancing existing important landscaping, responding to and retaining important views into and out of the site and ensuring public realm

*proposals create places of character.*

- Saved Policy C40 requires trees of visual amenity value to be retained, especially those in Conservation Areas and those covered by Tree Preservation Orders.
- Saved Policy CR1 seeks to protect the public rights of way network from development and seek extensions and improvements where appropriate, as part of development proposals.
- Saved Policy CR3 seeks to develop a greenspace network around the urban areas within the district, encouraging development proposals to provide recreational areas and extend and enhance fragmented habitats.

The strategy for the Trowbridge Area

Under the ‘Issues and Considerations’ section, Paragraph 5.150 states:

*‘It is recognised that the villages surrounding Trowbridge, particularly Hilperton, Southwick, North Bradley and West Ashton, have separate and distinct identities as villages. Open countryside should be maintained to protect the character and identity of these villages as separate communities. The local communities may wish to consider this matter in more detail in any future community-led neighbourhood planning’.*



View of traditional caravan and agricultural equipment on display at Little Common Farm.

2.7 PLANNING CONTEXT CONT'D

DRAFT WILTSHIRE HOUSING SITES ALLOCATION PLAN (JULY 2018)

This document identifies development sites that have implications for the North Bradley Landscape Gap recommendations. These are summarised below with site references from the Housing Sites Allocation Plan (HSAP):

Site Ref: Site 3565 – Southwick Court

Land at Southwick Court Farm is allocated for development of up to 180 dwellings (Refer to Figure 3A). The site would extend into the north-western corner of the Study Area contained by the edge of Trowbridge to the north, Southwick Parish Council boundary to the west and extending southwards to Axe & Cleaver Lane. The scale of such proposals would clearly have implications for a Landscape Gap and could weaken the sense of separation between the village and Trowbridge.

The allocated site at Southwick Court extends over a significant area of agricultural land. The land here is relatively open and offers views to the north towards the existing urban edge of the town and south over land that forms a natural buffer to maintain the separate identity of the village of North Bradley.

Referring to Southwick Court, the HSAP states that an ‘essential objective of detailed design will be to minimise harm to its significance. The setting to this heritage asset will be preserved, to the greatest extent possible, informed by the results of a more detailed Heritage Impact Assessment’. It goes on to say that ‘taking account of the weight attached to the significance of the asset any residual harm requires a clear and convincing justification and should not be substantial’

Careful consideration of the impact on the setting / identity of North Bradley will be necessary to help inform the location and siting of any development. The HSAP identifies that any proposed development will therefore need to ensure that new homes are directed to the east of the Lambrok Stream; with land to the west of the stream being used either for open space or to remain in agricultural use but not developed for new homes.

For the area of the allocation that would be developed for housing (the eastern part of the allocation), the HSAP identifies that a comprehensive landscape treatment would provide an opportunity to improve the impact of the town on the wider landscape and protect and enhance the setting of the Southwick Court Farmstead.

The HSAP highlights that the allocated site is in an area likely to be used by Bechstein’s bats associated with the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC. In addition, sensitive habitat features on or adjacent to the site that would need to be retained / buffered from development include:

- Boundary hedgerows / tree lines;
- Axe and Cleaver Lane;
- The Lambrok Stream;
- The moat and grounds at Southwick Court.

‘These features should be retained and / or buffered from development (including residential gardens) by wide (10-16m), dark (<1 lux), continuous corridors of native landscaping which will allow for their long-term protection and favourable management in order to secure continued or future use by Bechstein’s bats. Development will be required to contribute towards the delivery of the Trowbridge Recreation Management Mitigation Strategy’.

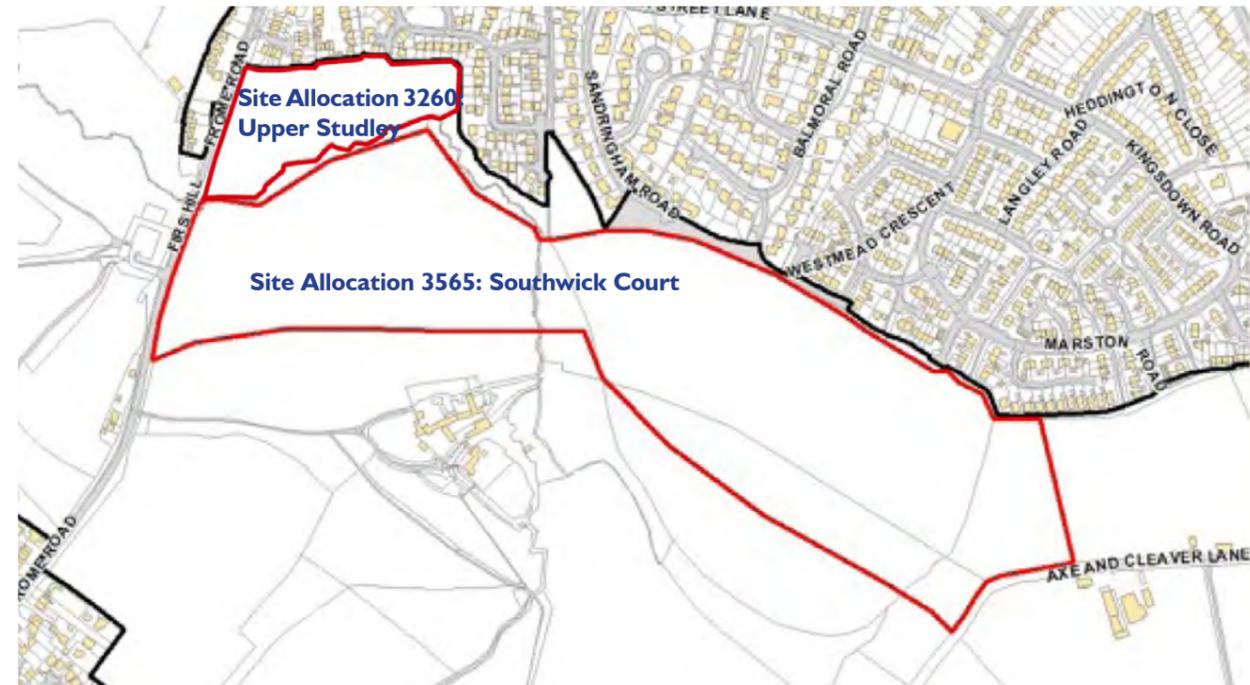


FIG. 3A - EXTENT OF SITE 3565, SOUTHWICK COURT AND SITE 3260, UPPER STUDLEY - WILTSHIRE HOUSING SITES ALLOCATIONS PLAN (WILTSHIRE COUNCIL DRAFT JUNE 2017)

### 2.7 PLANNING CONTEXT CONT'D

#### Site Ref: Site 613 – Elm Grove Farm

This site is allocated for c.200no. dwellings including a new primary school and community facilities. The development site boundary extends south into the Study Area as far as the A363 and as far west to the junction with Woodmarsh and the A363; creating a relatively narrow spur of land here (Refer to Figure 3B).

The HSAP states that development of the site 'would not lead to a significant encroachment of further built form into the countryside'; being 'enclosed to the north-west and south-east by existing development and development proposed further south'.

It goes on to state that the 'existing natural features of the site are significant in the landscape and would need to be incorporated within a detailed layout. These features also provide wildlife corridors that link habitat features within the local area; in particular, 'dark corridors' for foraging bats. These elements should be protected and enhanced where possible by additional planting with native species'.

'The site is in an area likely to be used by Bechstein's bats associated with the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC. Sensitive habitat features on and adjacent to the site. These would include Drynham Lane / Road, the railway line, woodland belts associated with the White Horse Business Park and the small tributary to the River Biss. These features should be retained and / or buffered from development (including residential gardens) by wide (10-16m), dark (<1 lux), continuous corridors of native landscaping which will allow for their long-term protection and favourable management in order to secure continued or future use by Bechstein's bats'.

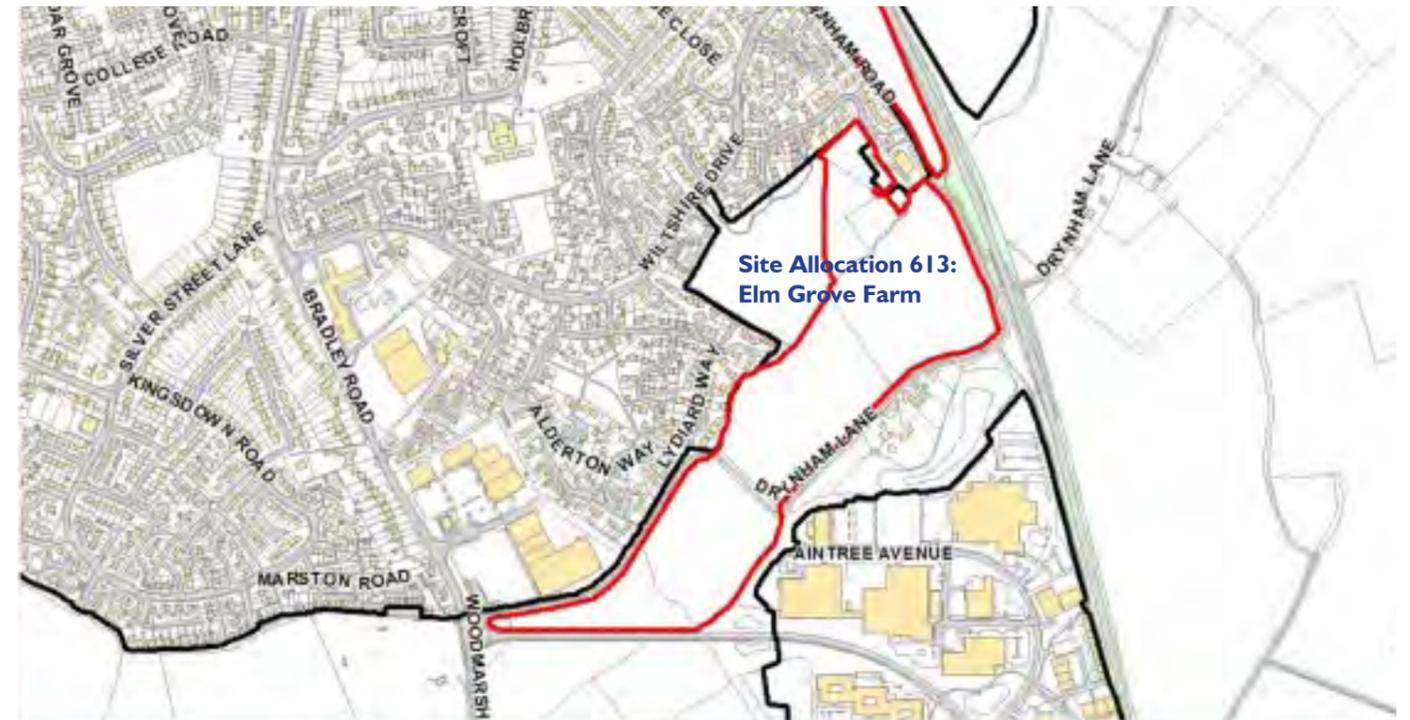


FIG. 3B - EXTENT OF SITE 613, ELM GROVE FARM - WILTSHIRE HOUSING SITE ALLOCATIONS PLAN (WILTSHIRE COUNCIL DRAFT JUNE 2017)

2.7 PLANNING CONTEXT CONT'D

Site Ref: Site 298: Land off the A363 at White Horse Business Park (WHSAP Submission May 2018)

This large site (c.19Ha as amended at Cabinet 3rd July 2018) to the north and east of North Bradley was allocated originally for 150 homes, increased to 225 and subsequently, at the request of the Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group, this number was reduced to 175 homes. The site extends over a significant area of agricultural land used for a mix of grazing and arable cropping.

It is largely contained by North Bradley to the west and the White Horse Business Park to the east. The area contains numerous mature hedgerows creating a matrix of small to medium sized fields as well as a number of mature trees.

The HSAP states that 'an objective of detailed design and layout will be to retain visual separation of the Town's urban area from North Bradley village. To achieve this, development proposals would need to be focussed within the north-east of the site, screened with new planting and provide improvements to walking and cycling routes through to the town'.

It goes on to state that 'the site is characterised by a distinctive pattern of mature and semi-mature hedgerows and trees that form a feature in the landscape. Development of the site would need to retain these features and thereby provide a layout that respects the setting of North Bradley village as an important element of detailed design. Existing hedgerows and trees also provide habitat for protected and non-protected species. These natural features therefore provide wildlife corridors that link habitat features within the local area; in particular, 'dark corridors' for foraging bats'.

'The site is in an area likely to be used by Bechstein's bats associated with the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC. Sensitive habitat features on / adjacent to the site include: woodland belts associated with the White Horse Business Park; a network of mature hedgerows/hedgerow trees; and the grounds of Willow Grove'. These features should be retained and / or buffered from development (including residential gardens) by wide (10-16m), dark (<1 lux), continuous corridors of native landscaping which will allow for their long-term protection and favourable management in order to secure continued or future use by Bechstein's bats. Development will be required to contribute towards the delivery of the Trowbridge Recreation Management Mitigation Strategy. Proposals would need to provide for a high quality, sustainable development that enhances a key gateway approach to the town, whilst protecting the integrity of North Bradley as a village'.

The need to carefully consider site layout and location in order to avoid harm to sensitive bat habitat was made clear to the authors by the County Ecologist and a suitable layout subsequently agreed.

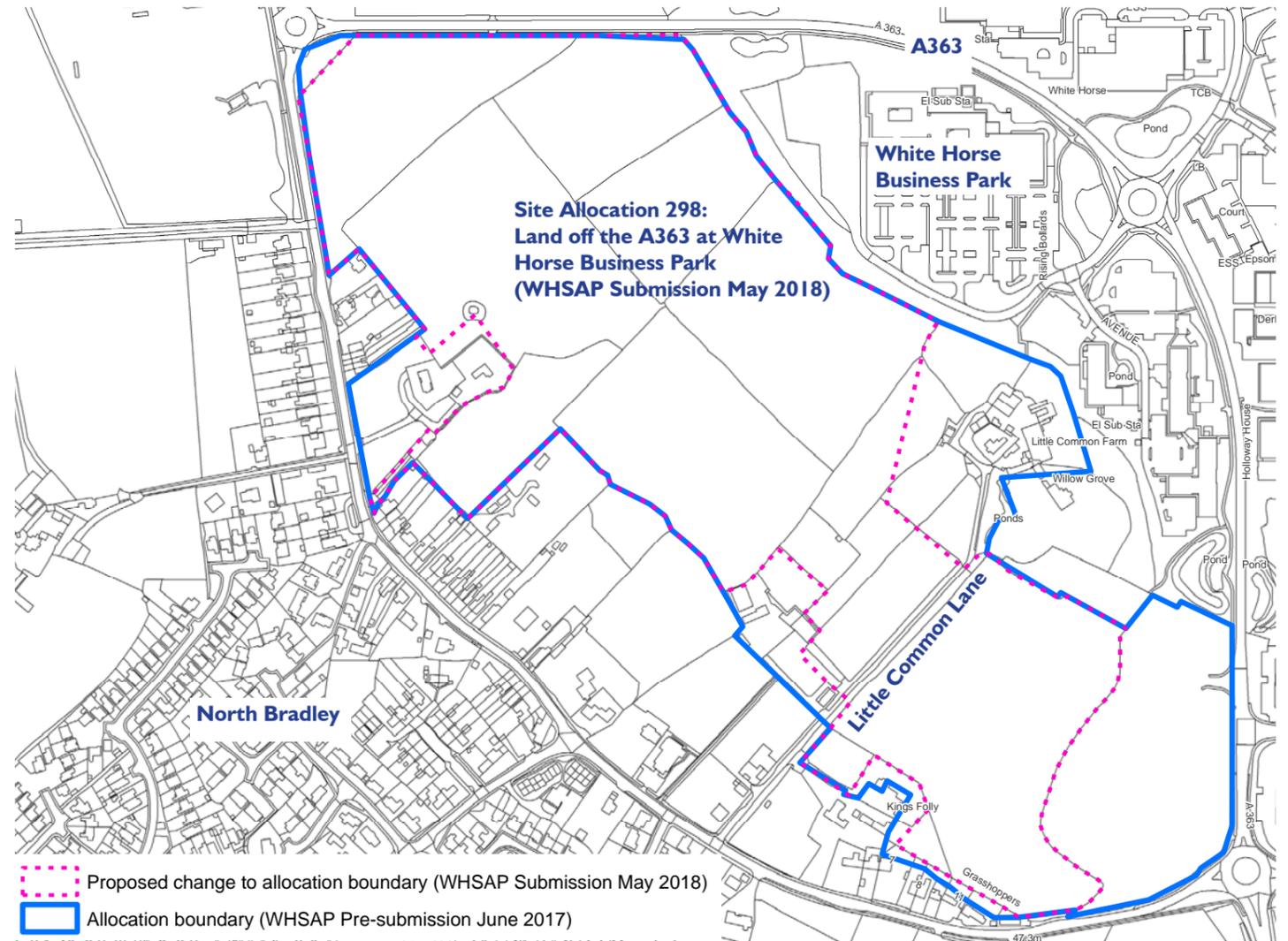


FIG. 3C - EXTENT OF SITE ALLOCATION 298: LAND OFF THE A363 AT WHITE HORSE BUSINESS PARK (WHSAP SUBMISSION MAY 2018)

### 3.0 LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS SUMMARY WITHIN THE STUDY AREA (FIGS.4 & 5)

It is considered that the 'Key elements' that contribute to landscape character in the Study area are as follows:

#### PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Soils: The soils are clay-based and is likely to be a factor behind the number of characterful oak trees in the Study Area.

Vegetation: Mature and intact hedgerows with specimen trees and pasture.

#### Habitats:

- There is no SPA / SAC / LNR within the Study Area.
- The nearest SSSI / SAC is at Picket and Clanger Wood to the south-east at Yarnbrook.
- There are no areas of Ancient Woodland within the Study Area.

Tree Preservation Orders: There are only a handful of TPO trees which are in the grounds of two residential properties east of Woodmarsh (Nos. 16 & 18)

Landform / topography: The Study Area is very gently undulating between 45-50m AOD. To the west, beyond the Study Area, the land falls gently to c.40m AOD towards Southwick Court Farm before rising up again to c. 50m AOD at Southwick. Beyond the Study Area to the east, the elevated landscape of Salisbury Plain can be seen.

Drainage / water bodies: There is a small stream to the west of the Study Area that runs in a roughly north westerly direction towards Southwick Court Farm (Lambrook Stream) with streamside vegetation including some willow.

#### INFLUENCES OF HUMAN ACTIVITY

Heritage assets: There are no Sites of Archaeological Importance / Conservation Areas / Scheduled Ancient Monuments / Registered Parks and Gardens or undesignated heritage assets.

There are Listed buildings within the Study Area (refer to Figure 5) as follows:

- Willow Grove (Grade II) near Little Common Farm to the east of the Study Area
- Two monuments and a gateway in the burial ground of a former Baptist Chapel (Grade II) to the east of the Study Area

Land use / management: Primarily pastoral with recreational and leisure function.

Landscape pattern: Small to medium scale fields separated by established hedgerows with trees although there is some weakness north of Bramble farm where hedgerows have been lost.

Settlement pattern & character of settlement: North Bradley is a large, clustered village that is separate from Trowbridge. The White Horse Business Park to the east forms a separate cluster of a larger scale and commercial nature.

Character of buildings / built form: North Bradley contains largely 2 storey detached and semi-detached properties and bungalows. A large number of these are twentieth century era however there are numerous brick and stone-built properties from the Victorian period and earlier seen most notably along Woodmarsh. The northern edge of the village west of Woodmarsh is characterised by planned residential estate development undertaken over a number of phases during the late twentieth century.

This character is reflected in the southern edge of Trowbridge to the west of the A363. To the east, Trowbridge Retail Park introduces large-scale, commercial buildings (sheds) with significant access and parking infrastructure.

There are a number of farms within the Study Area with an associated cluster of outbuildings. Little Common Farm to the east of Woodmarsh and Park Farm to the west include traditional brick built farmhouses. With the exception of Bramble Farm, which is of more modern construction, these farms provide visual interest and include mature trees and vegetation in close proximity.

Access / movement: There are numerous public rights of way (PROW) within the Study Area and these are shown in Figure 4.

Cultural elements: No references are known.

Community spaces: Trowbridge FC grounds are used informally when not in use by the football club. There is a significant open space area in North Bradley at the Peace Memorial Hall, south of Southwick Rd.

#### AESTHETIC AND PERCEPTUAL FACTORS

Scale: The scale of the landscape created by field sizes / mature hedgerows and trees varies across the Study Area from small-medium scale. Mature trees / hedgerows often form a backdrop restricting views and creating a well contained landscape. The scale of village development is generally small and largely residential.

Larger scale, commercial development associated with White Horse Business Park and Trowbridge Retail Park are largely hidden from view within the Study Area and have little influence in terms of scale.

Complexity: The Study Area is quite a well-defined rural / rural-fringe area with mature hedgerows and specimen trees that largely restrict views of adjoining urban elements and transport corridors. The Study Area is of moderate complexity, consisting of transport infrastructure elements; urban elements (largely residential) and rural elements (including farm buildings, small to medium sized pasture fields, woodlands and hedgerows).

Degree of enclosure / openness: Quite enclosed to the east and west of Woodmarsh and along Axe and Cleaver lane although the area to the north and south of Bramble Farm is more open.

Tranquility: More tranquil to the south-west and east towards Little Common Farm way from Woodmarsh. Traffic noise associated with the A363 and Woodmarsh is apparent to the north of the Study Area.

Wildness & remoteness: It is not a wild or remote landscape but one that is a product of centuries of intervention by man. It is located close to urban areas.

Sense of place: It is a fairly ordinary rural landscape with no specific sense of place such as that created by Oast houses in Kent etc. However, it does have some redeeming qualities described in Section 2.5 and illustrated in Section 4. There are some distant views towards Salisbury Plain and the Westbury White Horse.

# LANDSCAPE & VISUAL SETTING ANALYSIS

## PROPOSED LANDSCAPE GAP, NORTH BRADLEY, TROWBRIDGE

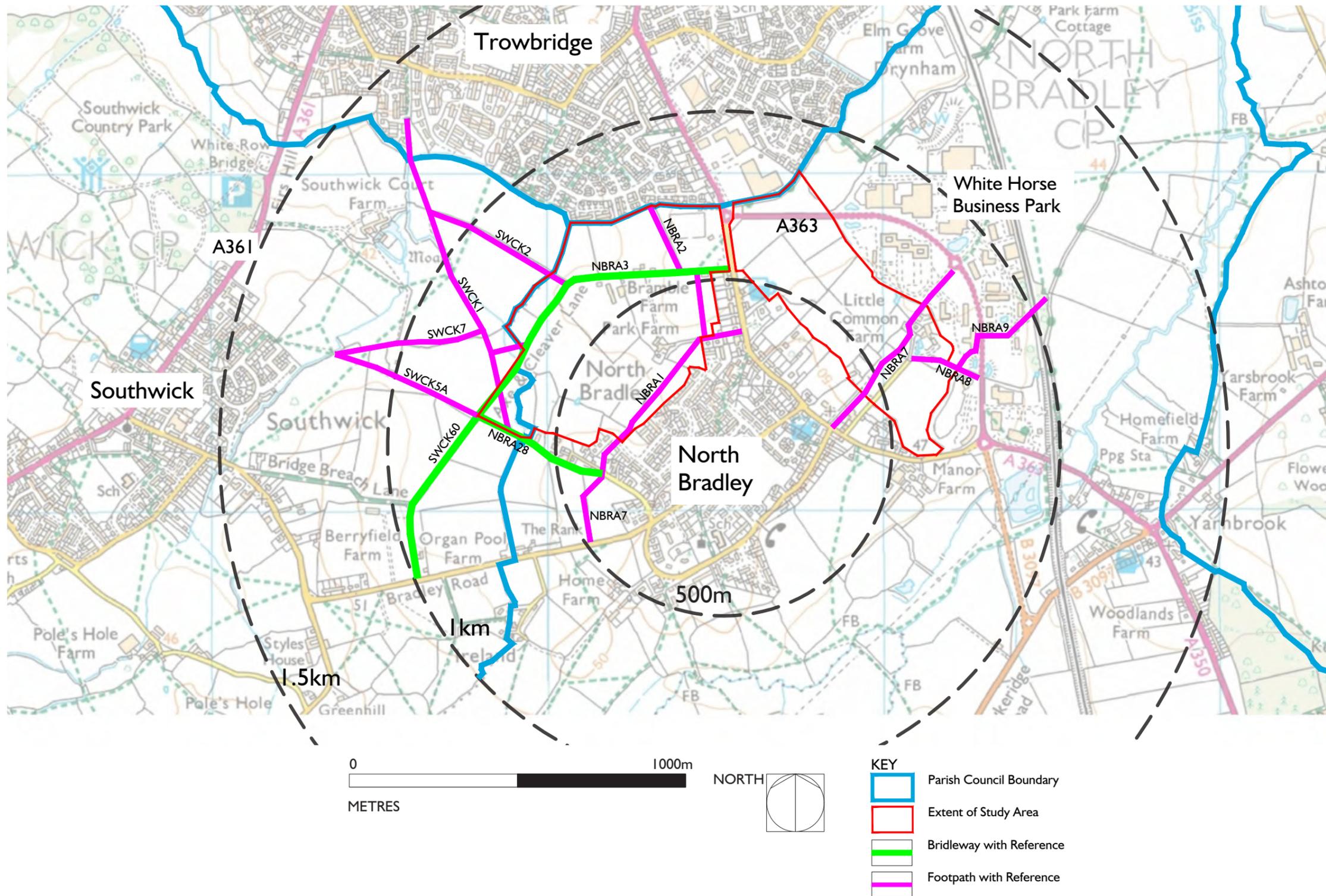
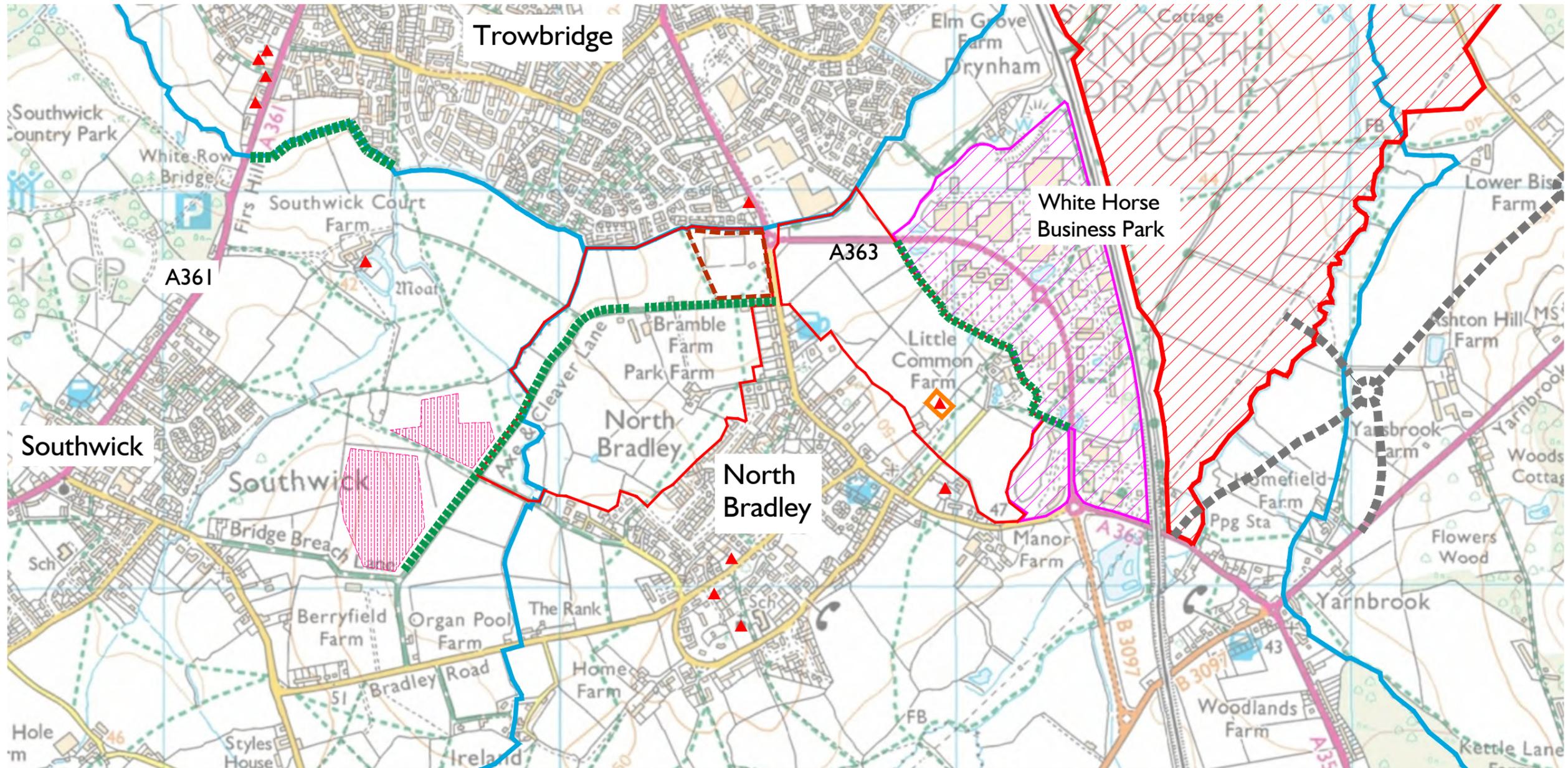


FIG.4 PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY NETWORK WITHIN THE STUDY AREA

# LANDSCAPE & VISUAL SETTING ANALYSIS

## PROPOSED LANDSCAPE GAP, NORTH BRADLEY, TROWBRIDGE



0 500m 1000m  
METRES

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**KEY**

- |  |                           |   |                                |
|--|---------------------------|---|--------------------------------|
|  | Study Area                |  | Cemetery                       |
|  | Parish Council boundary   |  | Listed Building                |
|  | White Horse Business Park |  | Green Edge                     |
|  | Solar farm (Southwick CP) |  | Playing fields (Trowbridge FC) |
|  | Ashton Park Site          |   |                                |



FIG. 5 - LANDSCAPE CONTEXT & DESIGNATIONS

**4.0 VISUAL ANALYSIS**

Representative views are taken from publicly accessible areas surrounding the Site. Some views have been included for the purposes of context. The location of viewpoints are shown on Fig. 6.

The pattern of small to medium sized fields with hedgerows and trees often create an enclosed landscape so that intervisibility between the built edge of Trowbridge and North Bradley is largely restricted and limited to those views possible from along Axe & Cleaver Lane where the physical separation between the two settlements is at its narrowest.

Overall, the landscape within the Study Area is in places quite a complex landscape dominated by mature, intact hedgerows and mature trees that help to create the impression of a well vegetated landscape. In combination, this creates an effective 'cloak' of visual separation; helping to preserve a sense of identity and landscape setting for the village over relatively short distances.

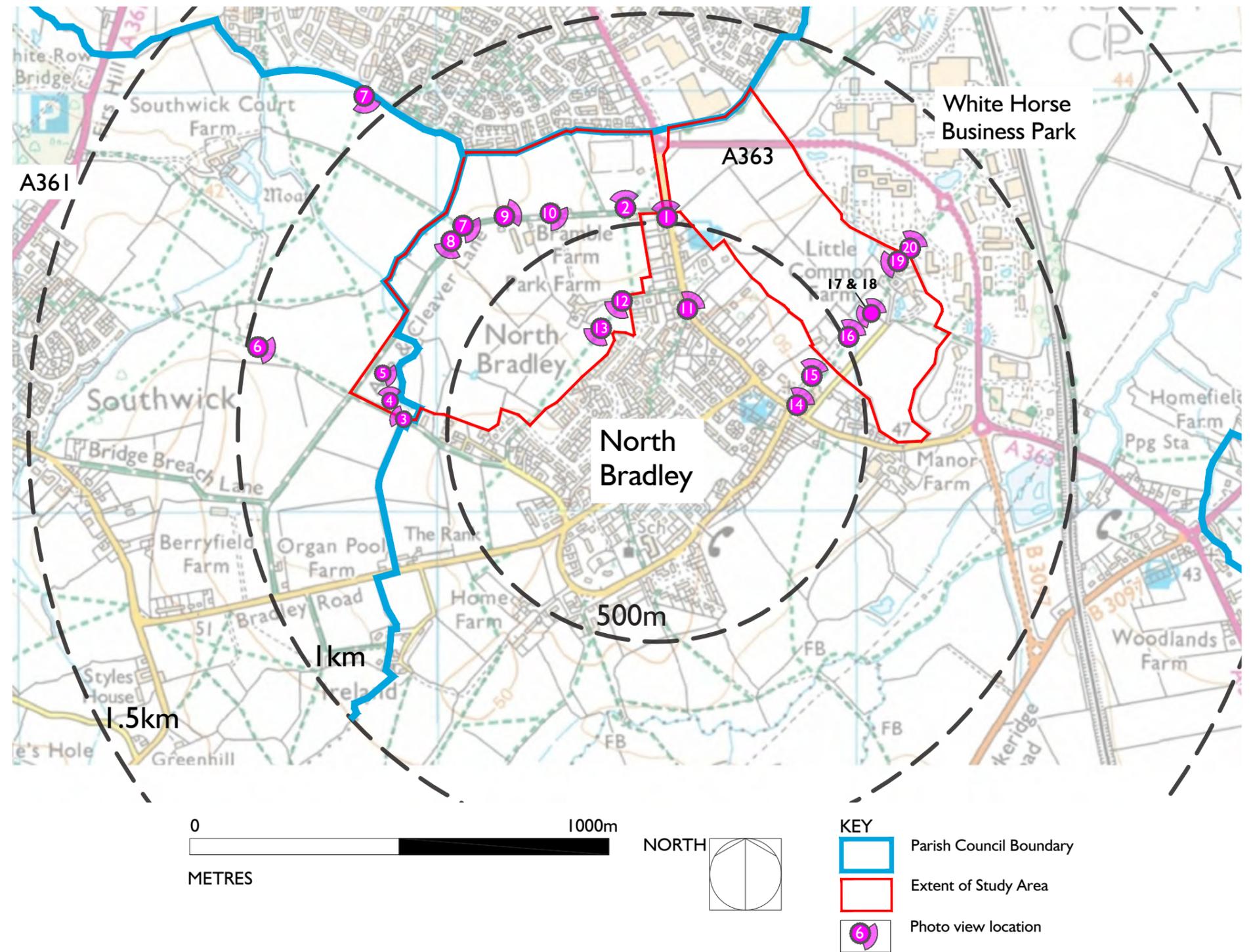


FIG. 6 - VIEWPOINT LOCATIONS

**4.1 PHOTO VIEWPOINTS**



Photograph 01  
View looking north along Woodmarsh from Axe & Cleaver Lane (Public Bridleway NBRA3)

**VIEWPOINT COMMENTARY**

View looking north along Woodmarsh from Axe & Cleaver Lane. The view shows the entrance to Trowbridge FC football ground which is fenced off with steel palisade fencing and largely contained by a mature and intact hedgerow.

At this point the landscape gap is at its narrowest at c.150m and weakest in terms of character. Glimpses of the southern edge of Trowbridge are possible through gaps in the hedge.



Photograph 02  
View from within Trowbridge FC football ground looking north

**VIEWPOINT COMMENTARY**

View from within Trowbridge FC football ground looking north with the built edge of Trowbridge in the background.

The character of this part of the gap is managed or amenity landscape and clearly not countryside, however, it is judged as strategically important in order to prevent coalescence here. There is potential to enhance this part of the gap in landscape terms in the future should the opportunity arise for the football club to be relocated.

**4.1 PHOTO VIEWPOINTS (CONT)**



**VIEWPOINT COMMENTARY**

View looking north-west along Public Bridleway NBRA28 from the edge of North Bradley at the western edge of the Study Area. The view is fairly typical of this part of the Study Area with mature and intact hedgerows with numerous tree specimens creating an enclosed and intimate landscape.

The character here is rural and tranquil.

Photograph 03  
View looking north-west along Public Bridleway NBRA28 from the edge of North Bradley



**VIEWPOINT COMMENTARY**

View looking north-west along Public Footpath SWCK1 at the western edge of the Study Area. The view is fairly typical of this part of the Study Area with mature and intact hedgerows with numerous tree specimens creating an enclosed and intimate landscape.

The character here is rural and tranquil. The 'Green Edge' created by Axe & Cleaver Lane can be seen in the background; effectively restricting intervisibility between North Bradley and Trowbridge. Willows along the edge of the stream (Lambrok Stream) add a riparian character.

Photograph 04  
View looking north-west along Public Footpath SWCK1 at the western edge of the Study Area

**4.1 PHOTO VIEWPOINTS (CONT)**



Photograph 05  
 View looking towards the Site from the existing driveway at the junction with the Bridleway

**VIEWPOINT COMMENTARY**

View looking east from Public Footpath SWCK1 at the western edge of the Study Area. The view shows limited visibility of North Bradley with only a large property at the western end of The Rank clearly visible and glimpsed views of the edge of North Bradley beyond.

Overall, the landscape character is enclosed and intimate.



Photograph 06  
 Broader view from Public Footpath SWCK5A taken from beyond the Study Area looking east towards North Bradley

**VIEWPOINT COMMENTARY**

Broader view from Public Footpath SWCK5A taken from beyond the Study Area looking east towards North Bradley. The 'Green Edge' of Axe & Cleaver Lane restricts any visibility of North Bradley.

The view shows the recently constructed solar farm which is low impact visually and largely contained by the surrounding network of mature hedges and therefore has little influence on the character of the Study Area.

Long distance views of Salisbury Plain including the Westbury White Horse can be seen.

**4.1 PHOTO VIEWPOINTS (CONT)**



**VIEWPOINT COMMENTARY**

View looking south-east from Axe & Cleaver Lane towards North Bradley. The traditional pattern of small to medium sized fields give way to a larger more open landscape here.

The area immediately around Bramble Farm has an untidy appearance with numerous pieces of agricultural equipment visible. Park farm and associated buildings is visible along with the northern edge of North Bradley which can be seen nestled within a mature landscape.

Long distance views of Salisbury Plain including the Westbury White Horse can be seen.

Photograph 07  
 View looking north from Furzey Down Farm along the driveway



**VIEWPOINT COMMENTARY**

View looking south along Axe & Cleaver Lane. It forms a strong 'Green Edge' to the north and west of the village with mature hedgerows on both sides and numerous mature trees.

For the majority of its length it creates a rural lane character.

Photograph 08  
 View looking south along Axe & Cleaver Lane

**4.1 PHOTO VIEWPOINTS (CONT)**



**VIEWPOINT COMMENTARY**

View looking east along Axe & Cleaver Lane from Bramble Farm. The area immediately around Bramble Farm has an untidy appearance with numerous pieces of agricultural equipment visible. The traditional field pattern with hedgerows is at its weakest here. The southern edge of Trowbridge is visible.

Axe & Cleaver Lane has recently been surfaced with coarse stone giving rise to a more urban character at this point.

The mature hedgerows along the lane prevent intervisibility between North Bradley and Trowbridge.

Photograph 09  
 View looking east along Axe & Cleaver Lane from Bramble Farm



**VIEWPOINT COMMENTARY**

View looking south-east from along Axe & Cleaver Lane from near Bramble Farm towards Park Farm and North Bradley.

Residential properties along Woodmarsh can be seen.

Traffic noise along Woodmarsh evident.

On the whole, and despite its close proximity to North Bradley, the landscape here has a rural character.

Photograph 10  
 View looking south-east from along Axe & Cleaver Lane from near Bramble Farm towards Park Farm and North Bradley

**4.1 PHOTO VIEWPOINTS (CONT)**



**VIEWPOINT COMMENTARY**

View from Woodmarsh looking north-east. There is a rural edge character here with a number of detached and semi-detached properties set well back from the road with large gardens including numerous mature trees and vegetation.

There are glimpsed views of the wider landscape beyond to the east.

Photograph 11  
 View from Woodmarsh looking north-east



**VIEWPOINT COMMENTARY**

View from Public Footpath NBRA1 looking south to south-west towards North Bradley.

Small paddock fields enclosed by hedgerow vegetation restrict extensive views of North Bradley even at relatively close range.

Photograph 12  
 View from Public Footpath NBRA1 looking south to south-west towards North Bradley

**4.1 PHOTO VIEWPOINTS (CONT)**



Photograph 13  
View from Public Footpath NBRA1 looking south to south-west towards North Bradley

**VIEWPOINT COMMENTARY**

View from Public Footpath NBRA1 looking south to south-west towards North Bradley.

More extensive views of residential properties along the northern edge of the village are possible. However, even at this close range (less than 50m distance) the edge of settlement is generally seen within a well-established landscape setting.

The small paddock fields with hedgerows and horse grazing reinforce a rural edge character.



Photograph 14  
View along Public Footpath NBRA7 from Westbury Rd

**VIEWPOINT COMMENTARY**

View along Public Footpath NBRA7 from Westbury Rd with the North Badley Baptist church on the left (north side).

A mature hedge to the south of the path restricts views beyond to the south.

**4.1 PHOTO VIEWPOINTS (CONT)**



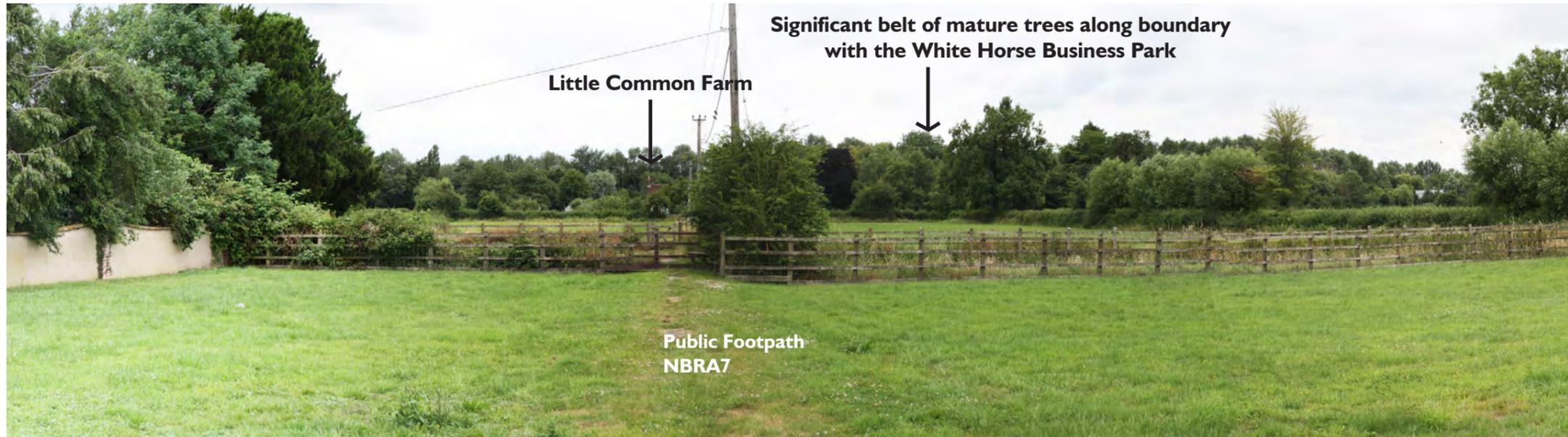
**VIEWPOINT COMMENTARY**

View along Public Footpath NBRA7 looking north from rear of Baptist Church grounds.

The landscape here has a rural character with small to medium-sized fields with mature intact hedgerows with trees, and mature vegetation associated with farm buildings.

There is no intervisibility between North Bradley and the White Horse Business Park to the north-east.

Photograph 15  
 View along Public Footpath NBRA7 looking north from rear of Baptist Church grounds



**VIEWPOINT COMMENTARY**

View along Public Footpath NBRA7 looking north-east towards Little Common Farm.

A significant belt of mature trees along the White Horse Business Park creates a strong 'Green Edge' to the Study Area.

There is no intervisibility between North Bradley and the White Horse Business Park.

Photograph 16  
 View along Public Footpath NBRA7 looking north-east towards Little Common Farm

**4.1 PHOTO VIEWPOINTS (CONT)**



Photograph 17  
 View looking west to north-west from Public Footpath NBRA7

**VIEWPOINT COMMENTARY**

View looking west to north-west from Public Footpath NBRA7.

Views of North Bradley are restricted by intervening vegetation. No views of Trowbridge are possible.

The landscape here has a rural character that is quite tranquil although a distant sound of traffic from the A363 is possible. Groups of mature trees (some of which are TPO) add a richness and complexity to the scene.



Photograph 16  
 View looking north-east from Public Footpath NBRA7 towards Little Common Farm

**VIEWPOINT COMMENTARY**

View looking north-east from Public Footpath NBRA7 towards Little Common Farm.

The landscape here is well vegetated and complex with hedgerows, mature trees and a small orchard.

At this relatively close distance, there is still no perception of the White Horse Business Park.

The gates on this section of the footpath have memorial plaques. There is a small display of a traditional caravan and agricultural equipment adjacent to the path near to the farmhouse providing additional visual interest.

**4.1 PHOTO VIEWPOINTS (CONT)**



**VIEWPOINT COMMENTARY**

View looking west across the Study Area from its eastern boundary looking back towards North Bradley.

Some properties are visible along Woodmarsh but overall it is a landscape that has a rural character with few visual intrusions.

Trowbridge is not visible at this point and there is little perception of the adjoining business park area to the east.

Photograph 19  
View of the western edge of White Horse Business Park from Public Footpath NBRA7



**VIEWPOINT COMMENTARY**

View of the western edge of White Horse Business Park from Public Footpath NBRA7.

This view is taken just beyond the line of the significant belt of trees that form an effective 'Green Edge' along the eastern edge of the Study Area and provides a notable contrast in character between the two areas.

Photograph 20  
View of the western edge of White Horse Business Park from Public Footpath NBRA7

**5.0 LANDSCAPE GAP RECOMMENDATIONS (FIG. 7)**

The report makes recommendations for defining the extent of a North Bradley Landscape Gap that is based on the complex interaction between both the visual and landscape character analysis carried out. In some places, this is driven more by the visual influence such as the narrow section to the north of Axe & Cleaver Lane and in other areas by the nature of the landscape itself eg the strong rural character in the vicinity of Axe & Cleaver Lane to the west.

The landscape performs many complex functions, of which providing a 'gap' between settlements, to prevent their coalescence and maintaining the identity and setting of individual settlements is an important one. The Landscape Gap is also multi-functional and works on a number of levels including providing land for agriculture, green infrastructure, access, visual amenity and recreation. It is recognised that the provision of significant green infrastructure offers important recreational, health and landscape benefits to local communities as well as potentially valuable habitat and biodiversity benefits. In this case, the landscape also provides valuable habitat for protected bat species associated with the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC.

It is important to note that the Parish Council would prefer that the area of countryside between North Bradley and Trowbridge be preserved. However, with the preferred site allocation identified at Southwick Court, Land off White Horse Business Park and Elm Grove, the Neighbourhood Development Plan needs to respond to this and 'plan positively' (Neighbourhood plans need to be in general agreement with the development plan). Therefore, the recommendations propose a Landscape Gap boundary that takes into account the possibility of future development taking place here; ensuring that the most valuable areas in terms of their importance as a setting for the village and maintaining a sense of visual separation will be protected for many years to come.

These principles underpin the recommendations made in this report. The extent of the proposed North Bradley Landscape Gap is shown on Figure 7. The plan also makes some recommendations for landscape enhancement measures for consideration.

The rationale for the recommended extent of the North Bradley Landscape Gap is summarised below.

**Area West of Woodmarsh**

To the west of Woodmarsh, the landscape falls into two areas; the narrow strip between Axe & Cleaver Lane and Trowbridge that includes the Trowbridge FC ground and Bramble Farm and the more rural landscape to the west and south-west. The former is considered essential to retain simply by virtue of its proximity to Trowbridge although it has limited intrinsic landscape value. The latter area, further west of the football ground, is essential to retain both for its separation and landscape setting function and to protect the rural character of this landscape.

The western edge of the Landscape Gap would generally form a natural boundary with the Southwick Parish Council boundary; creating an obvious extension to the Landscape Gap and helping to maintain separation between the two villages as well as Trowbridge. However, the proposed Landscape Gap boundary has been adjusted to take into account the proposed Southwick Court allocation (Site Ref: 3565). The land between Axe & Cleaver Lane and Trowbridge is seen as strategically important given that this area of the Landscape Gap is at its narrowest but still maintains separation between Trowbridge and North Bradley. Therefore, any proposed development in this location will need to be carefully considered.

There is also potential to enhance the area of land currently being used by Trowbridge FC should the football club be relocated. This area of land could be managed in such a way as to change the character from amenity landscape to countryside. The public right of way across the land linking North Bradley with Trowbridge could

also be reinstated.

**Area East of Woodmarsh**

To the east of Woodmarsh Rd and North Bradley, the area between the village and the significant belt of vegetation located to the west of the White Horse Business Park currently forms an important rural setting for the village; providing a sense of separation and a landscape setting function. It is recommended that a Landscape Gap is therefore proposed between North Bradley and the boundaries with the A363 to the north and the White Horse Business Park to the east and extending south to Little Common Lane.

The area of land to the north of the A363 is separated by the road and is considered to be somewhat remote from village so has not been proposed as part of the Landscape Gap.

**Draft Wiltshire Housing Sites Allocation Plan (July 2018) Commentary**

This document identifies development sites that have implications for the North Bradley Landscape Gap recommendations. These are summarised below with site references from the HSAP:

**Site Ref: 298 Land off the A363 at White Horse Business Park**

Development on land to the east of North Bradley between the village and the White Horse Business Park is now allocated for up to 175 dwellings.

A number of potential development site options were discussed by the Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and Wiltshire Council officers. Key issues considered were the implications for maintaining a sense of separation and identity for the village as well as biodiversity impacts. Advice was sought, without prejudice to any subsequent Habitat Regulations Assessment, from Wiltshire Council's ecologist in respect of offsetting potential impacts on Bechstein's Bats (protected species). The Landscape Gap recommendations responds to the advice received to maintain a good link to the existing woodland habitat along the White Horse Business Park which is also currently used by great crested newts.

The proposed layout is shown on the Landscape Gap recommendations plan (Figure 7). It is considered that in settlement planning terms, the proposed approach would provide a good fit; being seen as a natural extension to the village and helping to maintain a coherent identity for North Bradley. Despite the close proximity of the White Horse Business Park, the existing woodland buffer strip to the west of the business park forms a strong visual edge here. This approach would also maintain a Landscape Gap between the village and Trowbridge along Woodmarsh which is sensitive to further urban influences and coalescence (both east and west of Woodmarsh). All potential site options would be subject to further detailed site assessment work.

Land to the south-east of Little Common Lane is visually separated from the proposed Landscape Gap and could be designed to incorporate significant structure planting to reinforce this visual edge and provide habitat mitigation measures between this site and the Hitachi Capital Vehicle Solutions site to the south.

The layout has been discussed with the County Ecologist and specifically designed to retain existing significant trees, hedgerows and watercourses. As identified in the Draft Wiltshire Housing Sites Allocation Plan (Draft July 2018), these features provide wildlife corridors that link habitat features within the local area; in particular, 'dark corridors' for foraging bats which should be protected and enhanced where possible by additional planting with native species.

**5.0 LANDSCAPE GAP RECOMMENDATIONS CONT'D (FIG. 7)**

**Site Ref: 613 Elm Grove Farm**

Development on land to the north of the A363 is now also identified for residential development of up to 250 dwellings on the Elm Grove Farm site to the north of the A363, between the White Horse Business Park and the edge of Trowbridge. This site is outside the proposed Landscape Gap. Subject to further detailed analysis, it is considered that this more remote site from the Landscape Gap could be supported provided that the 'wedge shaped' area of land at the south-western end of this site is allocated for green infrastructure including significant structure planting. Such measures would provide additional screening benefits between the Landscape Gap and any proposed development as well as reinforcing the sense of separation between North Bradley and Trowbridge.

**Site Ref: 3565 Southwick Court**

Development of land at Southwick Court for approximately 180 dwellings. The site extends over a significant area of agricultural land to the south of Trowbridge and would include land within the Study Area; extending as far south as Axe & Cleaver Lane. The scale of such development would have clear implications for this part of the Landscape Gap and the sense of separation not only for North Bradley but for Southwick also. Such development here could significantly weaken the integrity of the Landscape Gap between Axe & Cleaver Lane and Trowbridge.

It should be noted that any development would need to retain existing significant trees and hedgerows and watercourses. As identified in the Draft Wiltshire Housing Sites Allocation Plan (Draft July 2018), these features provide wildlife corridors that link habitat features within the local area; in particular, 'dark corridors' for foraging bats which should be protected and enhanced where possible by additional planting with native species.

# LANDSCAPE & VISUAL SETTING ANALYSIS

## PROPOSED LANDSCAPE GAP, NORTH BRADLEY, TROWBRIDGE



KEY	
	Parish Council Boundary
	Extent of North Bradley Landscape Gap
	Potential Southwick Landscape Gap
	SHELAA site 298 / HSAP site H 2.2 Land off the A363 at White Horse Business Park
	Areas of development within the SHELAA site 298 / HSAP site H 2.2
	Potential site access
	Landscape buffer zones including the retention of mature trees and hedgerows, proposed green routes and informal open space
	Landscape enhancement within the Landscape Gap delivered as part of future development including reinstating native hedgerows and new woodland structure (buffer) planting
	Public Bridleway (Axe and Cleaver Lane) Public Footpath
	Potential footpath / cycle routes delivered as part of new development
	Potential to reinstate public right of way should the football club be relocated in the future
	Trowbridge FC area with potential for significant enhancement to restore land to countryside should the football club be relocated in the future

FIG. 7 - LANDSCAPE GAP RECOMMENDATIONS

## 6.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In **visual** terms, and beyond the section of narrow landscape either side of Woodmarsh as highlighted previously, there is currently a feeling of separation between North Bradley and Trowbridge. There is no significant intervisibility between the two settlements despite the relatively short distance between them.

In **landscape** terms, the character of the landscape is consistent with that included within the West Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment with the exception of some parts of the Study Area which have been identified. Overall, the strength of character is judged to be **moderate** but is vulnerable to the urbanising influence of Trowbridge, new development and transport routes. The condition of the landscape is judged to be **good**.

*Figure 7 shows the recommendations for the extent of the North Bradley Landscape Gap based on the analysis findings to ensure that the landscape setting for North Bradley is retained; thus, maintaining separation and helping to preserve the sense of identity for the village.*

In visual terms, and beyond the section of narrow landscape either side of Woodmarsh as highlighted previously, there is currently a feeling of separation between North Bradley and Trowbridge. There is no significant intervisibility between the two settlements despite the relatively short distance between them.

In landscape terms, the character of the landscape is consistent with that included within the West Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment with the exception of some parts of the Study Area which have been identified. Overall, the strength of character is judged to be moderate but is vulnerable to the urbanising influence of Trowbridge, new development and transport routes. The condition of the landscape is judged to be good.

Figure 7 identifies the extent of Wiltshire Council's preferred site allocations to the south of Trowbridge (Site Ref: 3565 Southwick Court, Site Ref: 298 Land off the A363 at White Horse Business Park and Site Ref: 613 Elm Grove Farm). The proposed North Bradley Landscape Gap responds in a 'plan positively' sense to take these site allocations into consideration.

It should be noted that the narrow area between Axe & Cleaver Lane and Trowbridge (to the west of Woodmarsh) is considered strategically important both for its separation and landscape setting function as well as sensitivity due to the presence of the rural character of Axe & Cleaver lane and biodiversity considerations (dark corridors for bats).

Any development should respond to the site constraints and incorporate the landscape mitigation recommendations outlined in Section 5.0. The combined nature of these measures could offer significant benefits for visual amenity and biodiversity; with the potential to minimise landscape and visual impact and provide a meaningful legacy for the North Bradley Landscape Gap.

Considering the site allocations described above, the recommendations propose what is considered to be a 'meaningful', and in places a 'necessary' gap to prevent coalescence, and help to preserve a landscape setting and maintain a sense of identity for North Bradley. Careful consideration has also been paid to the advice of the County Ecologist in harmonising landscape and setting objectives and the impacts of proposed SHELAA Site 298 / HSAP Site H 2.2 on the protected bat species associated with the SAC.

Should the site allocations at Southwick Court Farm, White Horse Business Park and Elm Grove Farm come forward for development, any proposals would need to be comprehensively considered in landscape and visual terms to minimise its impact on the setting of the village and on the Landscape Gap itself. A summary of these is outlined in Section 5.0.

10 REFERENCES

**Map References**

1:25,000 Ordnance Survey map.

**General Document References**

Landscape Institute & Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment; (2013); Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition.

Landscape Institute; Landscape Advice Note 01/11, Photography and Photomontage in Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.

**Core Planning Documents**

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