

Land at Rockfield Farm, Undy  
**Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment**



**July 2016**

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Revisions				
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A	25.07.2016	Minor typographical errors corrected	JBG	PJR

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# Section 1

**Introduction**



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## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Richards Partnership have been appointed to carry out a landscape and visual impact assessment for a proposed mixed used development, at Rockfield Farm, Undy, Monmouthshire (the Site). The planning application is submitted in outline, with all matters reserved except for access.
- 1.2 The Site is approximately 13.8ha in area and lies immediately to the north-east of the urban edge of Undy and to the south of the M4 motorway.
- 1.3 The provision of a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) to accompany the application has been agreed with Monmouthshire Council's landscape officer, Ben Terry. The locations of the photographs included within this appraisal have also been agreed in advance with Mr Terry.
- 1.4 The landscape and visual impacts referred to later in the report are assessed separately in accordance with good practice<sup>1</sup>. They may be defined as follows:
- (I). Landscape character: impacts on the landscape or townscape may arise where the character of areas with a particular scenic quality or merit are modified by the development.
  - (II). Landscape features: impacts on landscape features such as hedgerows, trees or landform may arise where features are lost or substantially modified as a result of the development.
  - (III). Visual amenity: impacts on visual amenity may arise where features intrude into or obstruct the views of people, or where there is some other qualitative change to the view seen.
- 1.5 It should be stressed that the resulting effects can be changes for the better (positive effects) as well as changes for the worse (adverse effects).

<sup>1</sup> Best practice guidelines for landscape and visual assessment include:

- An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment – October 2014. Christine Tudor, Natural England.
- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (2013) Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment.

- 1.6 The landscape and visual assessment was carried out through a desk study of relevant documents and by field study work undertaken during March 2016. The purpose of the Site visit was to establish:
- The content and quality of the Site's existing landscape features.
  - The character of the Site and its immediate environs.
  - The Site's visual relationship with its surroundings.
  - The contribution of the Site to the wider landscape.
  - The people most likely to be affected by development on all or part of the Site.
- 1.7 For ease of reference the LVIA methodology tables and diagrams showing the visual and landscape sensitivity scales and resulting significance of effects diagram are provided on the following pages.



Landscape Sensitivity	
Sensitivity	Typical Examples
Very High	<p>Highly valued landscapes, which by their nature would be unable to accommodate the type of change proposed. Typical examples may be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Landscapes of national significance, likely to be recognised through formal designation e.g. World Heritage Sites, National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) or containing attributes of these recognised landscapes</li> <li>Landscapes with highly valued elements/characteristics, possibly rare, in good condition which make a strong positive contribution to the landscape character and sense of place and could not be replaced or would take some considerable time to replace eg. mature woodlands or trees.</li> </ul> <p>Areas of special recognised value through use, perception or historic and cultural associations.</p>
High	<p>Highly valued landscapes, which by their nature would be less able to accommodate the type of change proposed. Typical examples may be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Landscapes of national or regional significance, not in the highest condition, which may to be recognised through formal designation e.g. National Parks, AONBs Local Landscape Designation or containing attributes of these recognised landscapes</li> <li>Highly valued landscape elements/characteristics (mature woodlands and/or trees) in fair condition or moderately valued elements (eg trees that contribute less positively to the local landscape) in good condition that make a positive contribution to local character and sense of place and that would take some considerable time to replace.</li> </ul> <p>Areas of special recognised value through use, perception or historic and cultural associations.</p>
Medium	<p>Landscapes, which by their nature would be partly able to accommodate the type of change proposed. Typical examples may be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Landscapes which are unlikely to be nationally designated, but may be locally designated.</li> <li>Moderately valued landscape elements/characteristics in fair condition, which are replaceable but may take some time.</li> </ul> <p>Areas containing some features of value thorough use, perception or historic and cultural associations</p>
Low	<p>Landscapes, which by their nature would be more able to accommodate the type of change proposed. Typical examples may be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Landscapes which are unlikely to be designated</li> <li>Landscape with commonplace elements/characteristics in poor condition, which may be easily replaceable or repaired.</li> </ul> <p>Areas containing few, if any, features of value through use, perception or historic and cultural associations.</p>
Very Low	<p>Landscapes, which by their nature would be able to accommodate the type of change proposed. Typical examples may be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Landscapes which are not designated.</li> <li>Landscapes with elements/characteristics in poor condition and may be discordant, derelict or in decline and which may be easily replaced.</li> </ul> <p>Areas containing few, if any, features of value through use, perception or historic and cultural associations.</p>

Figure 1a - Landscape Sensitivity Criteria

Magnitude of Effect - Landscape	
Very High	<p>The proposed development would lead to an extensive or widespread, irreversible complete alteration of existing landscape character/elements with large scale new features and elements.</p> <p>The addition of new and uncharacteristic conspicuous features and elements (adverse change);</p> <p>The removal, restoration and/ or replacement of existing highly conspicuous and uncharacteristic features and elements (beneficial change).</p>
High	<p>The proposed development would lead to a notable but not extensive change to existing landscape character/elements over a wide area or an intensive change over a more limited area.</p> <p>The addition of new but uncharacteristic prominent features and elements (adverse change);</p> <p>The removal, restoration and/ or replacement of existing highly uncharacteristic features and elements (beneficial change).</p>
Medium	<p>The proposed development would lead to a partial change to existing landscape character/elements which may be partially reversible.</p> <p>The addition of new but uncharacteristic noticeable features and elements (adverse change);</p> <p>The removal, restoration and/ or replacement of existing moderately uncharacteristic features and elements (beneficial change).</p>
Low	<p>The proposed development would lead to a small or relatively localised change in the existing landscape character/elements</p> <p>The addition of new but uncharacteristic perceptible features and elements (adverse change);</p> <p>The removal, restoration and/ or replacement of existing perceptibly uncharacteristic features and elements (beneficial change).</p>
Very Low	A negligible, potentially reversible change in existing landscape character or landscape elements.
None	No Change

Figure 1b - Landscape Magnitude of Effect

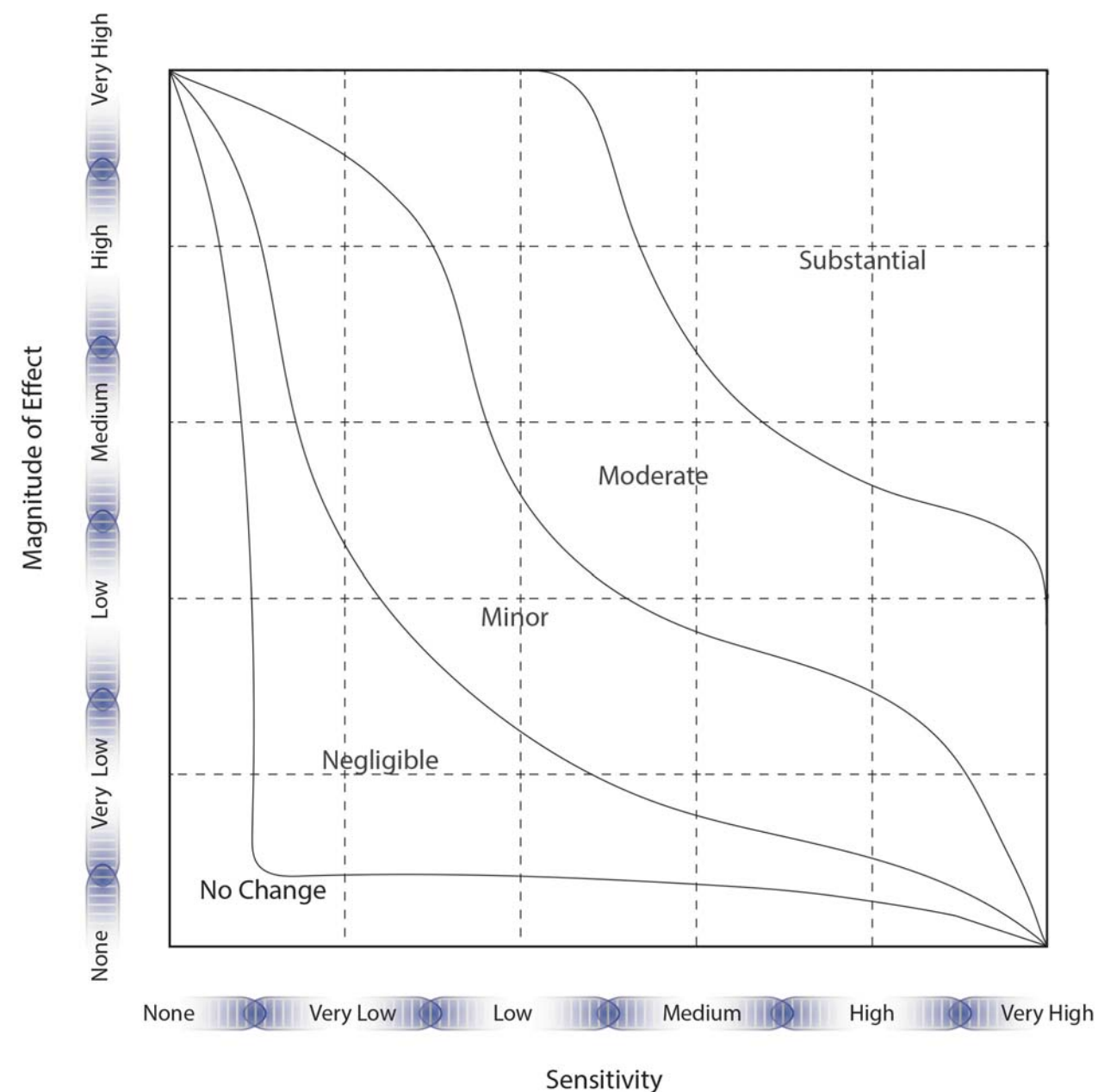


Figure 1c - Significance of Landscape Effects

Visual Sensitivity	
Sensitivity	Typical Examples
Very High	<p>Viewers who are very sensitive/highly attuned to their surroundings with a prolonged intact viewing opportunity of the landscape. Views are likely to be of internationally or nationally designated landscapes or heritage assets. Views may be recognised in art or literature and noted in guide books: Examples may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visitors to recognised viewpoints/look-out points such as hillforts</li> <li>• Visitors to heritage assets of which visual setting is a key component.</li> <li>• Walkers/Riders using national trails through nationally designated landscapes</li> <li>• Motorists using recognised 'scenic' routes.</li> </ul> <p>Residents whose properties have been orientated to take advantage of a view, or for whom the view comprises a key component of their daily lives</p>
High	<p>Viewers who are highly attuned to their surroundings but their interest and viewing opportunity may not be prolonged but broken or interrupted. Views may be of nationally or locally designated landscape or of heritage assets and may be noted in local guide books and recognised in art and literature. Examples may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walkers/Riders using national trails or popular footpaths/Bridleways</li> <li>• Visitors to some heritage assets</li> <li>• Motorists travelling through high quality landscapes</li> </ul> <p>Local residents who may be able to see the view from rooms normally occupied during waking hours.</p>
Medium	<p>Viewers with a moderate awareness of their surroundings and whose occupation is such that while they may appreciate the view, it would not be fundamental to the satisfaction of the viewers' activity. Views may be of a locally designated landscape or a heritage asset, but it is unlikely to figure in guidebooks, art or literature. Examples may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less well used public footpaths/Bridleways</li> <li>• Travellers on local roads through a moderate quality landscape</li> </ul> <p>Local residents with views from rooms not normally occupied during waking hours</p>
Low	<p>Viewers with a passing awareness and limited interest in their surroundings. Views unlikely to be of designated landscape or noted in guidebooks, art or literature. Views may have a number of overt or intrusive elements. Examples may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People engaged in outdoor recreation/sport which does not depend upon the appreciation of the view.</li> <li>• People at their place of work</li> </ul> <p>Travellers on fast moving roads</p>
Very Low	<p>Viewers with a passing awareness and limited interest/focus in their surroundings. Views not designated or noted in guidebooks, art or literature. Views of a degraded landscape with a number of overt or intrusive elements: Examples may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People at their place of work</li> </ul> <p>Travellers on fast moving roads with only transient views</p>

Figure 1d - Visual Sensitivity Criteria



Magnitude of Effect - Visual	
Very High	<p>The proposed development would result in a complete alteration to the characteristics of the view such that post development the existing view would be completely changed.</p> <p>The addition of new and uncharacteristic conspicuous features and elements (adverse change);</p> <p>The removal, restoration and/or replacement of existing highly conspicuous and uncharacteristic features and elements (beneficial change).</p>
High	<p>The proposed development would result in a change in the view such that it becomes the key influence and focus in the view</p> <p>The addition of new and obvious uncharacteristic features and elements (adverse change);</p> <p>The removal, restoration and/ or replacement of existing uncharacteristic features and elements (beneficial change).</p>
Medium	<p>The proposed development is clearly visible in the view and forms an important but not defining element of the view. The feature may integrate partially.</p> <p>The addition of new and noticeable uncharacteristic features and elements (adverse change);</p> <p>The removal, restoration and/or replacement of existing moderately uncharacteristic features and elements (beneficial change).</p>
Low	<p>The proposed development is visible, but forms a small element and minor alteration in the view and integrates well with existing landscape/ features.</p> <p>Slight change to the existing character or features and elements;</p> <p>The addition of new but perceptible uncharacteristic features and elements (adverse change);</p> <p>The removal, restoration and/or replacement of existing perceptibly uncharacteristic features and elements (beneficial change).</p>
Very Low	<p>The proposed development may go unnoticed as a small element in the view, or is not readily visible.</p>
None	No change

Figure 1e - Visual Magnitude of Effect

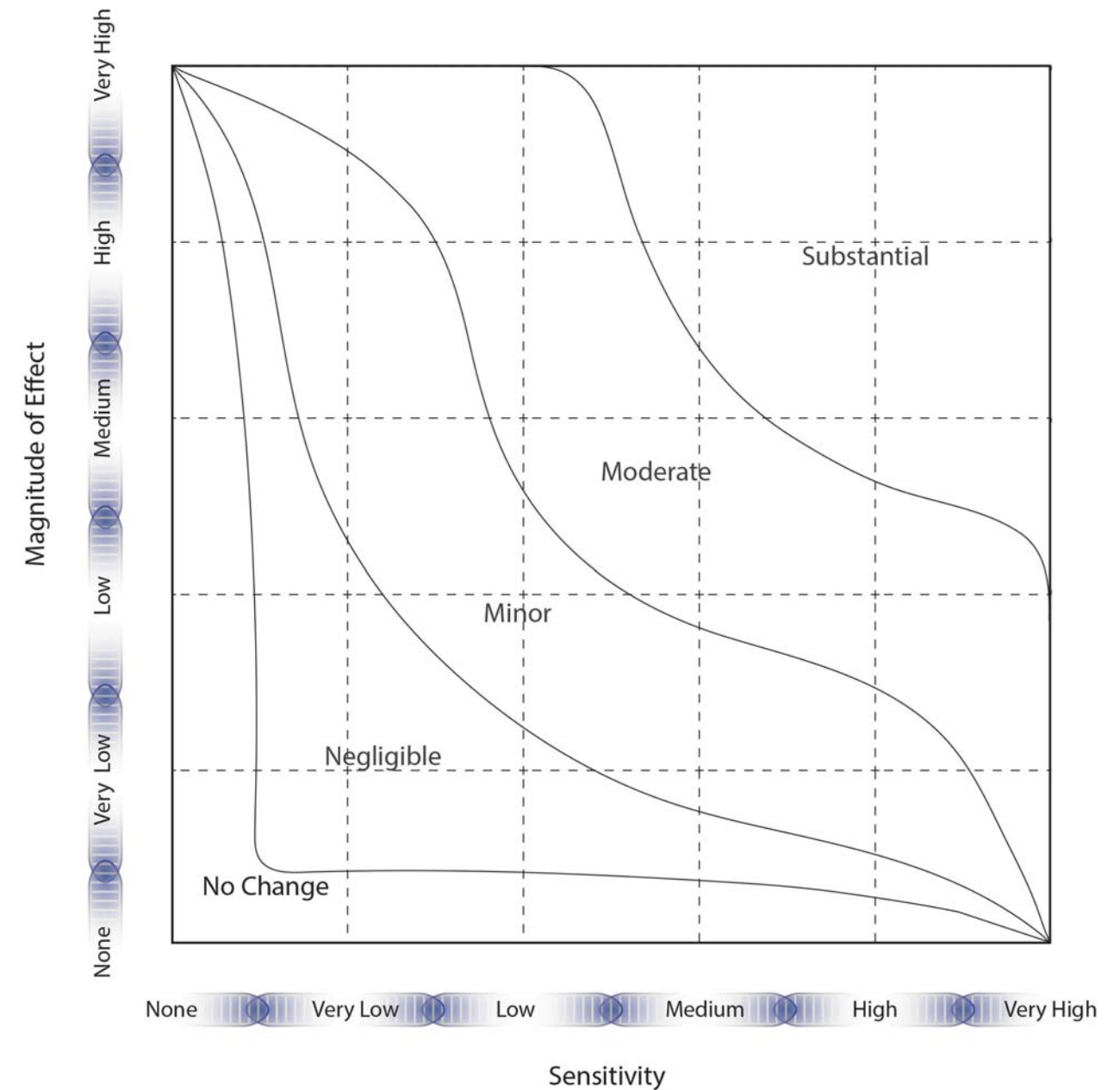


Figure 1f - Significance of Visual Effects

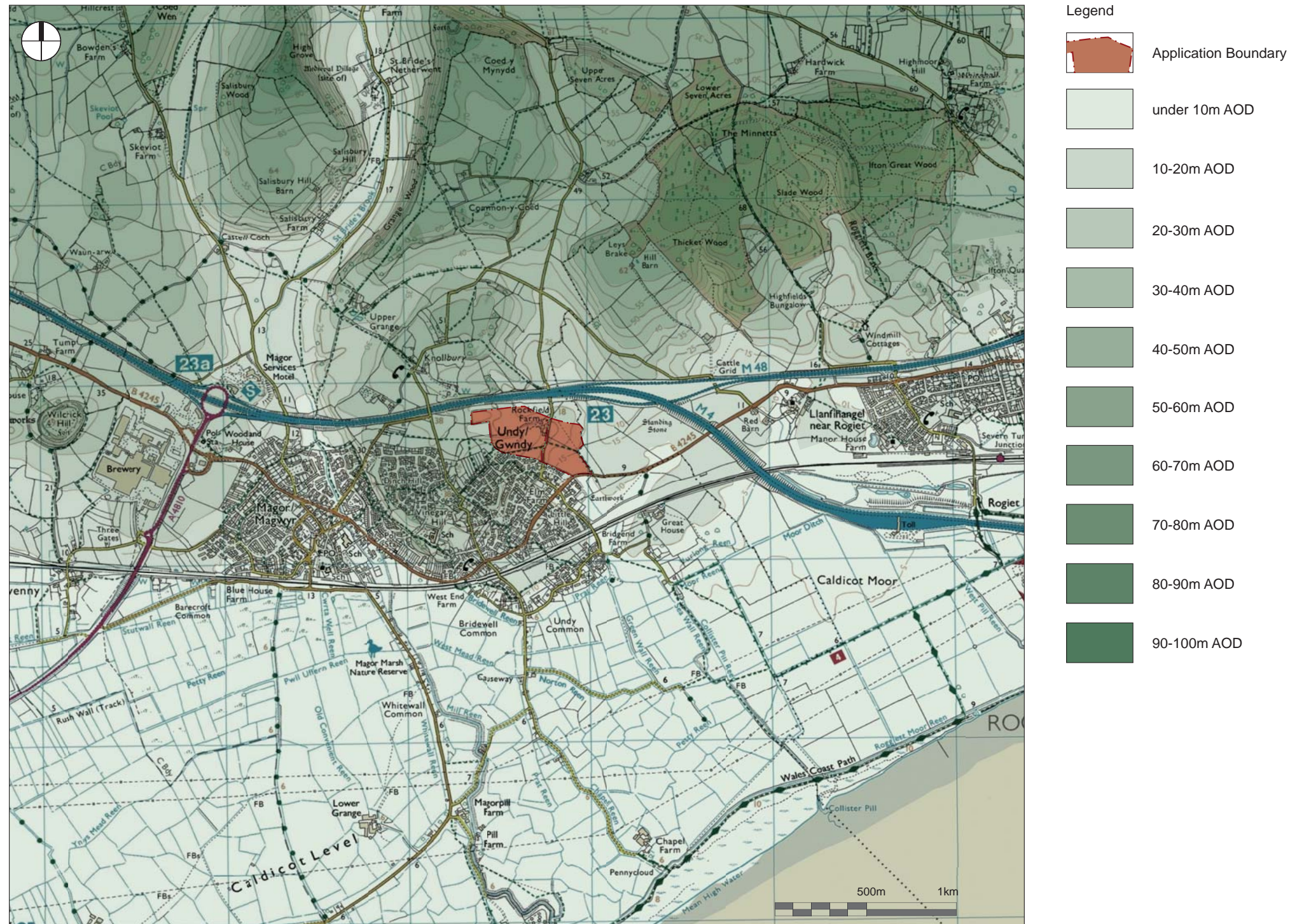


# Section 2

**Description of the Site and its Surroundings**



Figure 2 - Site Location and Topographical Study





## 2.0 Description of the Site and its Surroundings

- 2.1 The Site is located on sloping ground between the north eastern edge of Undy and the M4. The town is located on rising ground immediately to the north of the Gwent Levels, which affords long views to the east and south over the Severn Estuary as well as towards the hills to the north. The landscape is dissected by a number of transport routes including the M4/M48 motorway, the Bristol to Cardiff railway line and the B4245. The M4/M48 is an especially dominant feature in the landscape, both aurally and visually. The landscape surrounding the town is predominantly agricultural, with fields in both arable and pastoral use.
- 2.2 The site occupies an area of approximately 13.8 ha and comprises five irregular shaped fields, Rockfield Farm and its associated outbuildings and a long belt of dense woodland approximately 30m wide. The Site is bisected by a narrow lane, The Elms, which connects Undy with the countryside to the north. For ease of reference the fields have been numbered 1-5 on Figure 3: Existing Site Conditions. The northern boundary of the Site is not delineated by any discernible features on the ground and runs through Field Nos. 2, 3 and 4. On the occasions on which the Site was visited the fields were all given over to grazing.
- 2.3 Rockfield Farm, the woodland and Fields 1-3 are located to the west of The Elms. This land forms a shallow ridge, with Field No 1, adjacent to the urban edge, being visual and physically separate from Fields 2 and 3, adjacent to the motorway. The land slopes steeply from a high point of approximately 43m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) at the western edge of Field No 1 to approximately 20m AOD at its northern edge. Rockfield Farm itself sits on a shallow promontory at approximately 29.5m AOD adjacent to The Elms, where it is afforded views to both the north and south.





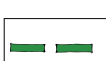



View A looking north across the site from within Field No 1 adjacent to the existing urban edge. The Rockfield Farm woodland forms the skyline from much of the view, albeit longer views to the east are also available.

Figure 3 - Existing Site Conditions



Legend

-  Application Boundary
-  Existing Woods, Trees & unmanaged Hedges
-  Existing Hedges
-  Existing Houses
-  Public Footpath
-  Field Numbers referenced in text



- 2.4 To the east of The Elms the land begins to flatten out, dropping from a level of approximately 27.5m AOD opposite the farm to 10.5m AOD where it meets the B4245 and approximately 19.5m AOD at the foot of the M4 embankment.
- 2.5 The M4 is located immediately to the north of the Site; it is located on a raised embankment which is estimated to be approximately 4.4m high.
- 2.6 The greater part of the southern boundary is formed by the existing urban edge. The houses along this boundary have not been orientated towards the Site and the boundary itself is generally formed by closeboard fencing which precludes views of the Site from the downstairs rooms. The B4245, the primary route into the town from the east abuts the Site's southern boundary for a distance of approximately 100m.
- 2.7 To the east the Site is abutted by a well-used allotment plot adjacent to the B4245 and agricultural fields, the boundary being formed by a well-managed hedgerow. To the west the Site is also abutted by further agricultural land, with the boundary being formed by hedgerows, the northernmost section of which is heavily tree lined.
- 2.8 Vehicular access into the Site is currently via field gates on The Elms and two accesses into Rockfield Farm itself. The site is crossed by two public rights of way (PROW); Footpath 372/23/1 which crosses Field No 1 connecting The Elms with the playground on Rockfield View and Footpath 372/24/1 which crosses Field No 5, connecting The Elms with the allotments to the east.
- 2.9 A line of overhead cables run along the western side of The Elms, just crossing the hedgeline on occasions. A single cable crosses Field No 1 to connect with Rockfield Farm.

- 2.10 The only light sources within the Site are those associated with Rockfield Farm itself, albeit there are a number of light sources around the boundaries including the residential lighting to the south of the Site, the street lighting along the B4245 and M4 and the lights associated with the passing traffic.
- 2.11 The trees on site have been the subject of an Arboricultural Report undertaken in March 2016 by Broadway Tree Consultancy. This graded the majority of the trees on site as B and C category, with the exception of the belt of woodland which was categorised as A.
- 2.12 One tree, Tree 218 in the report, is the subject of a Tree Preservation Order. This tree, a mature oak, is located within Field No 1 and forms an attractive and prominent site feature which is visible from a number of locations around the area, often forming a skyline feature.
- 2.13 The site has also been the subject of a number of ecological surveys.



View B looking north from The Elms towards M4 across Field No 4. The Site occupies the foreground, with views to the Severn Estuary in the distance.

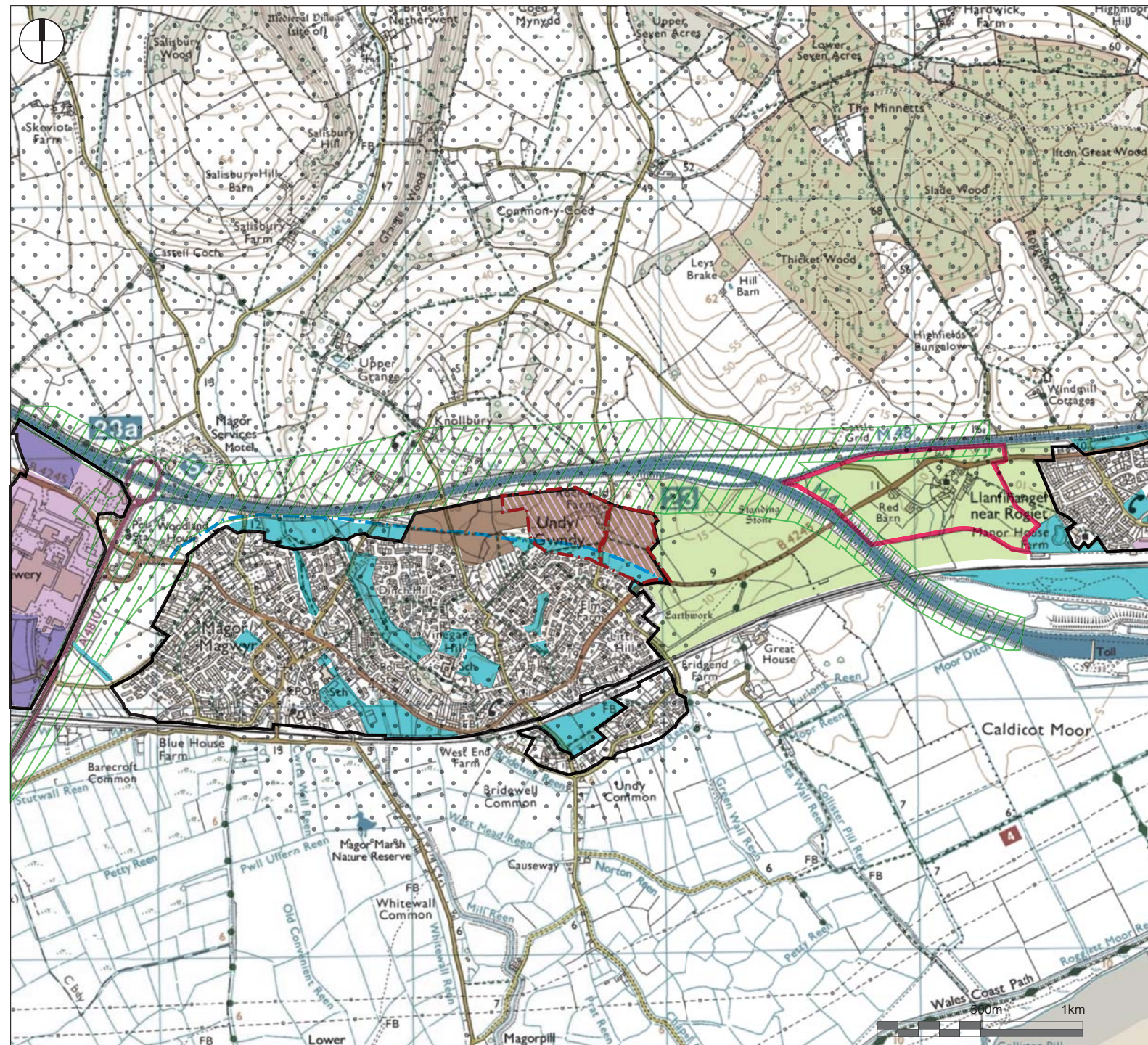


# Section 3

**Landscape Planning Context**



Figure 4 - Landscape Planning Context



Legend

-  Application Boundary
-  Settlement Development Boundary
-  Strategic Sites (SAH1,6 and 7)
-  Strategic Mixed Use Sites (SAH2-5)
-  Areas Amenity Importance (DES2)
-  M4 Safeguarding Route (MV10)
-  Conservation Areas (HE1)
-  Identified Industrial & Business Sites (SAE1)
-  Protected Employment Sites (SAE1)
-  Green Wedge (LC6)
-  Minerals Safeguarding - Limestone M2
-  B4245 Magor/Undy By-Pass MV10

Information taken from the Monmouthshire County Council Local Development Plan Proposals Map February 2014



### 3.0 Landscape Planning Context

- 3.1 The Site lies within the administrative area of Monmouthshire County Council (MCC) and is allocated as a Strategic Mixed Use Site within the Monmouthshire County Council Adopted Local Development Plan (Adopted 27<sup>th</sup> February 2014) (LPD). There are no specific landscape designations associated with the Site.
- 3.2 A Green Wedge, as designated within the LDP, lies immediately to the east of the Site. The Llanfihangel near Rogiet Conservation Area is located just over half a kilometre to the east of the Site.
- 3.3 The LDP plan also shows the B4245 Magor/Undy Bypass running through the Site; however this is now proposed to run to the north of the M4. A narrow strip of land along the Site's southern boundary is designated as an Area of Amenity Importance. It is understood that this area was allocated in order to provide a buffer to the proposed bypass should it have been located to the south of the motorway.
- 3.4 Two public footpaths cross the Site, Footpath 372/23/1 to the west of The Elms and Footpaths 372/24/1 and 378/23/1 to the east of the Elms.
- 3.5 A single mature oak tree to the south west of Rockfield Farm is the subject of a Tree Preservation Order (TPO).
- 3.6 The woodland belt located in the northern part of the site is locally designated a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC).
- 3.7 Landscape/Environmental policies considered of relevance to this report include the following:
- Planning Policy Wales (Edition 8, January 2016)
  - Monmouthshire County Council Local Development Plan, adopted 27 February 2014
  - Local Supplementary Planning Guidance including the Green Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Guidance Adopted April 2015.

#### 3.8 Monmouthshire County Council Local Development Plan: Policy S13 – Landscape, Green Infrastructure and the Natural Environment states:

*“Development Proposals must:*

1. *Maintain the character and quality of the landscape by:*
  - (i) *identifying, protecting and, where appropriate, enhancing the distinctive landscape and historical, cultural, ecological and geological heritage, including natural and man-man elements associated with existing landscape character;*
  - (ii) *protecting areas subject to international and national landscape designations;*

- (iii) *preserving local distinctiveness, sense of place and setting;*
  - (iv) *respecting and conserving specific landscape features, such as hedges, trees and ponds;*
  - (v) *protecting existing key landscape views and vistas.*
2. *Maintain, protect and enhance the integrity and connectivity of Monmouthshire’s green infrastructure network.*
  3. *Protect, proactively manage and enhance biodiversity and geological interests, including designated and non-designated sites, and habitats and species of importance and the ecological connectivity between them.*
  4. *Seek to integrate landscape elements, green infrastructure, biodiversity features and ecological connectivity features, to create multifunctional, interconnected spaces that offer opportunities for recreation and healthy activities such as walking and cycling.*

#### 3.9 Monmouthshire County Council Local Development Plan: Policy S17 – Place Making and Design states:

*Development shall contribute to creating high quality, attractive and sustainable places. All development proposals must include and promote high quality, sustainable inclusive design which respects local distinctiveness, respects the character of the site and its surrounding in order to protect and enhance the natural, historic and built environment and to create attractive, safe and accessible places.*

#### 3.10 Monmouthshire County Council Local Development Plan: Policy LC5 Protection and Enhancement of Landscape Character states:

*Development proposals that would impact upon landscape character, as defined by LANDMAP Landscape Character Assessment, must demonstrate through a landscape assessment how landscape character has influenced their design, scale, nature and site selection.*

*Development will be permitted provided it would not have an unacceptable adverse effect on the special character or quality of Monmouthshire’s landscape in terms of its visual, historic, geological, ecological or cultural aspects by;*

- a) *causing significant visual intrusion;*
- b) *causing significant adverse change in the character of the built or natural landscape;*
- c) *Being insensitively and unsympathetically sited within the landscape;*
- d) *Introducing or intensifying a use which is incompatible with its location;*
- e) *Failing to harmonise with, or enhance the landform & landscape; and/or*

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- f) Losing or failing to incorporate important traditional features, patterns, structures and layout of settlements and landscapes of both the built and natural environment.”

Particular emphasis will be given to those landscapes identified through the LANDMAP Landscape Character Assessment as being of high and outstanding quality because of a certain landscape quality or combination of qualities.

**3.11 Monmouthshire County Council Local Development Plan: Policy GI1 – Green Infrastructure** states:

Development proposals will be expected to maintain, protect and enhance Monmouthshire’s diverse green infrastructure network by:

- a. Ensuring that green infrastructure assets are retained wherever possible and integrated into new development. Where loss is unavoidable in order to secure sustainable development appropriate mitigation and/or compensation of the lost assets will be required.
- b. Incorporating new and/or enhanced green infrastructure of an appropriate type, standard and size. Where on-site provision of green infrastructure is not possible, contributions will be sought to make appropriate provision for green infrastructure off-site.

**3.12 Monmouthshire County Council Local Development Plan : Policy DES1 – General Design Considerations** states:

All development should be of a high quality sustainable design and respect the local character and distinctiveness of Monmouthshire’s built, historic and natural environment. Development proposals will be required to:

- a) ensure a safe, secure, pleasant and convenient environment that is accessible to all members of the community, supports the principles of community safety and encourages walking and cycling;
- b) contribute towards sense of place whilst ensuring that the amount of development and its intensity is compatible with existing uses;
- c) respect the existing form, scale, siting, massing, material and layout of its setting and any neighbouring quality buildings;
- d) maintain reasonable levels of privacy and amenity of occupiers of neighbouring properties, where applicable;
- e) respect built and natural views and panoramas where they include historical features and/or attractive or distinctive built environment or landscape;
- f) use building techniques, decoration, styles and lighting to enhance the appearance of the proposal having regard to texture, colour, pattern, durability and craftsmanship in the use of materials;

- g) incorporate and, where possible enhance existing features that are of historical, visual or nature conservation value and use the vernacular tradition where appropriate;
- h) include landscape proposals for new buildings and land uses in order that they integrate into their surroundings, taking into account the appearance of the existing landscape and its intrinsic character, as defined through the LANDMAP process. Landscaping should take into account, and where appropriate retain, existing trees and hedgerows;
- i) make the most efficient use of land compatible with the above criteria, including that the minimum net density of residential development should be 30 dwellings per hectare, subject to criterion l) below;
- j) achieve a climate responsive and resource efficient design. Consideration should be given to location, orientation, density, layout, built form and landscaping and to energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy, including material and technology;
- k) foster inclusive design;
- l) ensure that existing residential areas characterised by high standards of privacy and spaciousness are protected from overdevelopment and insensitive or inappropriate infilling.

**3.13 Monmouthshire County Council Local Development Plan: Policy SAH5 – Rockfield Farm, Undy** states:

11 hectares at the Rockfield Farm, Undy, site are allocated for a mixed use residential and employment development. Planning permission will be granted provided that:

- a) Around 270 new dwellings are provided during the LDP period;
- c) The master plan for the development takes account of the SINC at the site.

**3.14 Green Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Guidance** states:

In order to encourage best practice, developers should follow the process and principles for embedding GI into development outlining in this section of the SOG. The key steps are:

- 1: identify and map existing GI assets in and around the site
- 2: consider how the development can contribute to local GI needs and opportunities
- 3: incorporate proposals into development design that maintain, protect and enhance GI, ensuring connectivity with the surrounding GI network. (page 25)

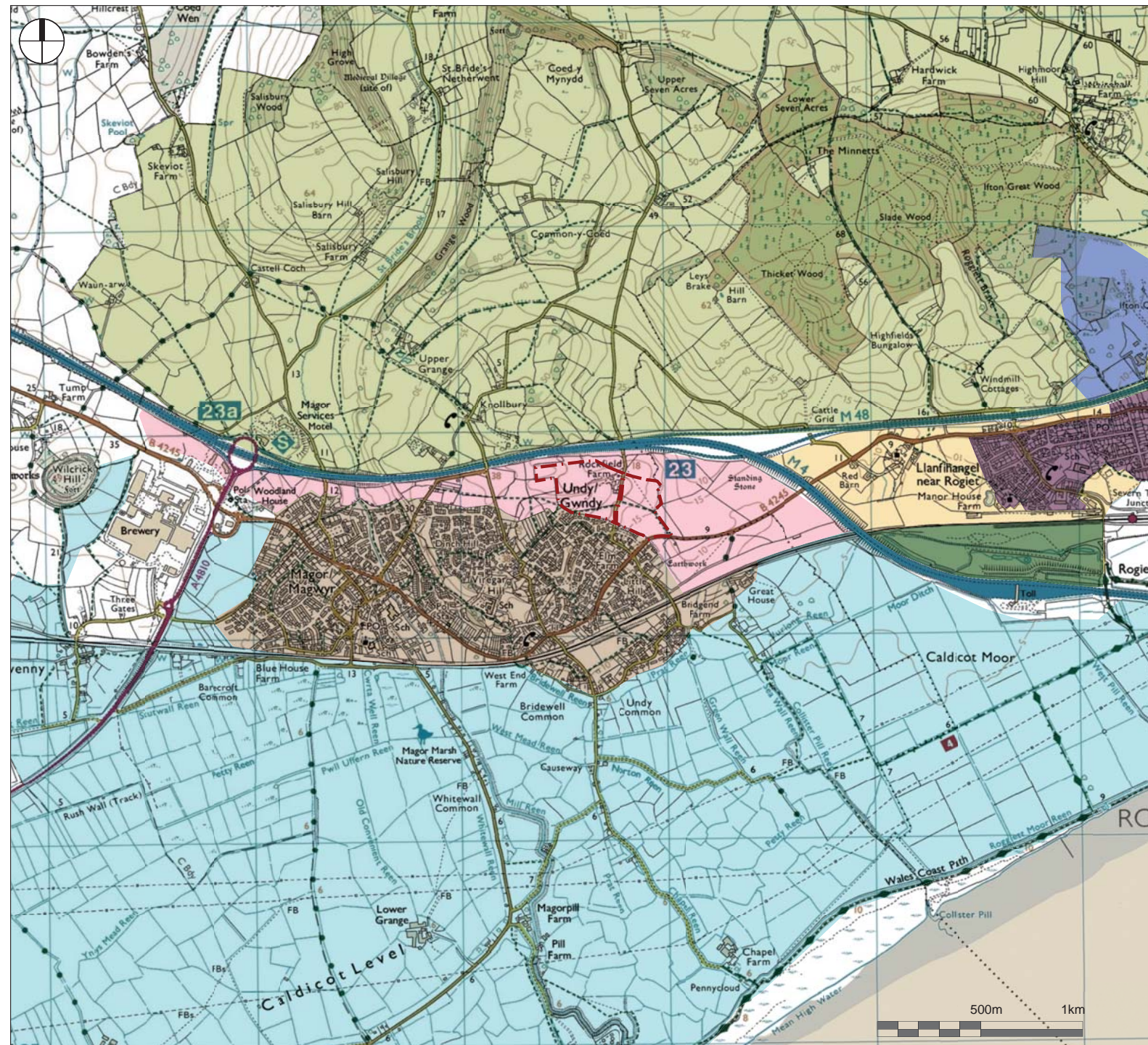


# Section 4

**Landscape and Visual Baseline**



Figure 5 - Landscape Character



Legend

-  Application Boundary
-  Landscape Character Area Chepstow Woods
-  Landscape Character Area East Undy
-  Landscape Character Area Magor
-  Landscape Character Area Western Coastal Grasslands
-  Landscape Character Area Rogiet
-  Landscape Character Area Llanfihangel Rogiet
-  Landscape Character Area Western Coastal Grasslands
-  Landscape Character Area Iffton Quarry

Information provided by: Landmap Natural Resources Wales. Accessed on the 15/03/2016.



## 4.0 Landscape and Visual Baseline

4.1 The Site and the land to the south fall within Natural Resources Wales National Landscape Character Area 34 – Gwent Levels. The land immediately to the north of the M4 falls within National Landscape Character Area 32 Wye Valley and Wentwood. This assessment covers the whole of Wales and was designed to identify landscape character in a way that ‘gives a distinctive sense of place that enables us to recognise it as a single area’, according to their “geological, habitats, historic, cultural and perceptual characteristics”

4.2 These areas have been subdivided according to five aspects by LANDMAP – the Welsh landscape baseline ‘an all-Wales landscape resource where landscape characteristics, qualities and influences on the landscape are recorded and evaluated’. These five aspects are: cultural, geological, historic, habitat and visual & sensory. These aspects may be drawn upon when undertaking landscape character assessment. The site falls within the following categories:

### **Cultural Landscape – Magor with – Undy – Aspect Area Code MNMTHCL006**

*“Magor is included with Undy because the former historic settlements have merged as a result of housing and industrial estate development, resulting in a modern dormitory community of no great distinctiveness”*

The area is evaluated as ‘low’.

### **Geological Landscape – Five Lanes – Undy – Aspect Area Code MNMTHGL090**

*“carboniferous limestone dominated low massif with a low escarpment/ valley slope in the N and W and rising up to c.70m. Lower area to the SE include Triassic sandstones and conglomerates. In the W similar conglomerates fills an ancient branching valley system, now partly exhumed. Includes the urban area of Undy with a probably (sic) section of river terrace platform.”*

The value of this area is considered to be ‘high’.

4.3 The site falls within two Historic Landscape Aspect Areas.

4.4 The Fields to the east of The Ems are located within **Historic Landscape – Rogiet Fen Edge – Aspect Area Code MNMTHHL004**

*“A surviving section of undeveloped fen-edge landscape with medieval villages at Rogiet and Llanfihangel Rogiet. The area contains a potential wealth of undiscovered archaeology.”*

4.5 The Fields to the west of The Ems are located within **Historic Landscape – Modern Magor & Undy – Aspect Area Code MNMTHHL003**

*“The character of the Aspect Area has changed significantly over recent decades due to its proximity to the M4 corridor. Housing estates located on either side of the B4245 road have obliterated traces of earlier field patterns and the historically separate and distinct settlements of Magor and Undy have been submerged within a single conurbation. The dominant landscape pattern is thus one of later 20<sup>th</sup> century residential and industrial development linked to the modern road network with few elements surviving from earlier periods”*

The area is evaluated as ‘moderate’.

4.6 The site also falls within the large **Landscape Habitats – Farmland north of Modern Magor and Rogiet – Aspect Area Code MNMTHLH054**

*“Difficult to evaluation as habitat is generally low although it is recognised that small areas of more ecologically valuable habitats are present most notably some SSSI area and a number of key species are present, overall it could possibly be evaluated as low but on balance moderate is more appropriate”*

4.7 Finally, visual & sensory, with is considered central to this assessment and forms the baseline assessment.

### **Visual and Sensory - East Undy – Aspect Area Code MNMTHVS040**

4.8 The Rockfield Farm site lies within this relatively narrow strip of land located between Magor and Undy and the M4. The area is described as follows:

*“A flat gently undulating lowland, bounded to the west by Magor and to the north and east by the M4 and by the mainline railway to the south. It is an open and exposed landscape with long views from the motorway towards; the Severn Estuary in the distance, Vinegar Hill in Magor (an intrusive new development of modern housing) and across Knollbury in the north. Large fields of mixed arable and pastoral farming are bounded by low intensively managed hedges and ditches, interrupted in places by intrusive lines of post and wire fencing. This landscape provides an important green buffer zone visually separating the settlements of Magor/Undy and Rogiet. To the west, Magor services at Junction 23A of the M4 is located on low lying ground, effectively concealed from eastbound views, however westbound views are particularly open past Knollbury.”*

The assessment evaluates this area as ‘Moderate’, stating:

*“The area is a simple gently rolling landscape which acts as a setting to the adjacent settlement. The area is generally in reasonable condition with consistent character and itself is unspoilt by intrusive development although this lies adjacent. This area has few distinctive features in itself and is defined to extend by adjacent land issues. This arable dominated farmland has low rarity value.”*

### **Visual and Sensory - Chepstow Woods- South West – Aspect Area Code MNMTHVS098**

4.9 The land to the north of the M4, with which the Site has a visual relationship, falls within Chepstow Woods – South West, a much larger character area encompassing the land between the M4 and the A48 some 3km to the north. The assessment describes this area as follows:

*“A gently rolling landscape, with long views towards the Severn Estuary from Shirenewton and adjacent highland.. varied and diverse in character, with a mixture of arable and pastoral farming, becoming more intensively cultivated with a near and clear appearance... On the flat valley floor around Caerwent, and south of Llanvair-Discoed larger more regular fields are enclosed by low intensively managed hedgerows, in places their breakdown resulting in their replacement within intrusive lines of post and wire fencing... Individual mature field tree and occasional hedgerow trees are characteristic of this area”.*

The assessment evaluates this area as ‘Moderate’, stating:

*“Although exhibiting an underlying quality local patterns of boundary, management and development reduce value.”*





**Visual and Sensory - Magor – Aspect Area Code MNMTHVS060**

- 4.10 The land immediately to the south of the site is urban and falls within the Magor character area, which is described as follows:

*“Contained and bounded by the M4 to the north and Severn Tunnel railway to the south, there are few views of the town from the west, located lower than the motorway and concealed by the undulating topography. However, there are long views of the town’s new development from the M4 particularly where it rises intrusively on high hills around Vinegar Hill and at its most modern boundary leaving Undy. Located on low lying land, adjacent to the Caldicot Levels, the medieval villages of Magor and Undy have merged as a result of extensive new residential development, which has little identity and does not reflect the historic character of these villages. Small enclaves of open rough land particular on rising slopes, provide important green lungs, helping to break up the solid lines of housing. Of particular importance are the open views of the remnant levels, immediately adjacent to the B4245, these rough land pastures grazed by horses reinforce the sense of place and historical links.*

The assessment evaluates this area as ‘Low’, stating:

*The settlement has limited scenic quality. New development has swamped historic core. The settlement has a weak sense of place due to the character of new development. The settlement form is the standard estate pattern.*

**Visual and Sensory - Western Coastal Grasslands – Aspect Area Code MNMTHVS053**

- 4.11 The land to the south of the railway line down to the estuary falls within the Western Coastal Grasslands character area, the site has some limited inter-visibility with this character area. The assessment states:

*“Bounded to the west by Cold Harbour Pill and Sudbrook to the east, this landscape is open and exposed with long views across the Severn Estuary, whilst overlooked by the Second Severn Crossing and the settlements of Magor and Caldicot to the north. Forming part of the Caldicot Levels it is a historic landscape of reclaimed pasture, with a variety of regular and irregular field patterns, and drainage channels. Caldicot Moor, Banecroft, Whitewall and Undy Common are reflective of the enclosure of this common land, a unique landscape of neat and clean appearance, these fields of mainly improved grassland have retained their integrity, although Caldicot Moor has been degraded somewhat by the Second Severn Crossing and the intrusive line of pylons. In contrast the irregular*

*piecemeal enclosures of the land immediately south of Undy through to Magor Pill have a mixture of mature overgrown treelines and low intensively trimmed hedges, creating a wilder more unkempt appearance”.*

The assessment evaluates this area as ‘High’, stating:

*“The area has long views framed by attractive pollarded willows lining the reens with a coastal edge character. The reens, hedgerows and tree lines including pollarded willows are mostly intact although the area is spoilt to an extent by the powerlines. A unique landscape defined by its flat levels, historical character and fragile grasslands/reen system, the area is part to the Gwent Levels which is the largest levels system in the UK and a rare landscape.”*

Figure 6 - Local Landscape Character Areas



Legend

- Application Boundary
- LLCA 1 - The Elms
- LLCA 2 - Rockfield Farm
- LLCA 3 - Breezy Bank to Rockfield Farm SINC
- LLCA 4 - Rolling Farmland - The Elms to Vinegar Hill
- LLCA 5: Rolling Farmland to the east of Undy
- LLCA 6: East Undy
- LLCA 7: Rolling Farmland North of the M4





LLCA1: The Elms



LLCA1: The Elms



LLCA1: The Elms



LLCA2: Rockfield Farm



LLCA2: Rockfield Farm

4.12 In accordance with good practice, the broad characteristics of the above aspect areas have been further refined in this study to consider the landscape character of the area immediately surrounding the Site. The following section describes the local landscape character of the Site and its surroundings.

#### Local Landscape Character Areas

4.13 The local landscape character areas identified around the Site are as follows (with reference to Figure 6):

##### LLCA 1: The Elms

4.14 The Elms is a narrow, country lane typical of those in the wider area. This short stretch of some 350m runs from the northern edge of Undy to the M4 underpass and is bounded by the Site on either side. The character of the lane changes abruptly as it leaves the urban edge and takes on an intrinsic 'countryside' character. The lane is lined on either side with mature, well managed farm hedgerows punctuated by field gates and styles. Views along the lane are largely channelled, with glimpses to the west. Due to the more 'gappy' nature of the hedge along the eastern boundary, there are clearer views to the east. On the occasions the Site was visited, there was little vehicular traffic on the road, but it appeared well used by local dog walkers. The noise associated with the passing traffic on the M4 is a notable detractor to the character of this area.

4.15 While the landscape is not designated, the hedgerows are generally in good condition and contribute to the sense of place and as such the value of this LLCA is considered to be 'medium'. Given the proposal to introduce new vehicular access points along the lane, its susceptibility is considered to be 'high'. On balance LLCA1 is considered to be 'medium' sensitivity.

##### LLCA2: Rockfield Farm

4.16 This small LLCA comprises Rockfield Farm and its associated barns and outbuildings. Located on the site of an old quarry, all of the buildings within the farm are Twentieth Century and do not reflect any local vernacular, the barns have a slightly unkempt air about them. Located on a shallow promontory the farm buildings are visible from the surrounding landscape and are set within an area of scrubby vegetation, which reads as an extension of the woodland to the west. The noise and movement of the M4 are notable detractors.

4.17 The value of this LLCA is considered to be 'Low'. Given the existing buildings are not of any particular merit, it is considered that the susceptibility of this LLCA is also 'low', resulting in an overall 'low' sensitivity.





LLCA3: Breezy Bank to Rockfield Farm SINC



LLCA 4: Rolling Farmland - The Elms to Vinegar Hill

### LLCA 3: Breezy Bank to Rockfield Farm SINC

- 4.18 This narrow belt of woodland runs from the urban edge eastwards towards Rockfield Farm and is located within the site boundary. It is located on a steep sided, north facing bank and is densely planted with a mix of native species including holly, hawthorn hazel, field maple, ash and oak. Much of the hazel has previously been coppiced. The arboricultural assessment has categorised this woodland as A2. The woodland forms both a physical and visual barrier between the town and the M4.
- 4.19 The ecological importance of this woodland is recognised by its designation as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). The area is skirted by a well-used PROW along its western extents

with a number of unofficial pathways having been carved through the body of the woodland by locals.

- 4.20 This belt of woodland forms a strong visual and physical break between the north of the town and the M4, it is also locally designated, albeit for ecological rather than landscape and visual reasons and, as such, it is considered of 'Medium' value. While this LLCA is located within the site, it is proposed to retain this area in its entirety, and as such its susceptibility is considered 'Low'. On balance this LLCA is considered to be of **'medium'** sensitivity.

### LLCA 4: Rolling Farmland – The Elms to Vinegar Hill

- 4.21 This LLCA occupies the land between the M4 and the Breezy Bank to Rockfield Farm SINC. It comprises a number of irregular fields, defined by well-manged hedgerows, some of which also support mature trees. On the occasions the Site was visited these fields were grazed. It is physically and visually separate from the urban edge, and in itself has an inward looking, intrinsically rural character, with limited inter-visibility with the wider area. However, despite the heavily vegetated embankment, the presence of the traffic on the M4 is a dominating feature and a strong detractor to the overall character of the area.
- 4.22 This LLCA is not designated, but is in good condition and makes a positive contribution to the sense of place. However, its character is degraded by the overbearing presence of the M4; its value is considered to be 'medium'. The site occupies approximately half of this LLCA and as such its susceptibility is considered to be 'very high'. On balance it is considered that LLCA 4 is of **'high'** sensitivity.

### LLCA 5: Rolling Farmland to the east of Undy

- 4.23 This LLCA occupies the land to the east of Undy between the M4 and the railway embankment and forms the setting to the town from the eastern approach. The land slopes down from the edge of the town, flattening out at it meets the B4245. It comprises large, irregular fields farmed as a mix of arable and pastoral. The fields are defined by well-managed native hedgerows, the shapes of the northernmost fields being the remnants of larger ones severed by the M4. With the exception of those lining the B4245, there are few trees within this LLCA, the ones of note being those within Field No 1 to the west of The Elms.
- 4.24 A well-tended plot of allotments is located to the north of the B4245 just beyond the urban edge, along with a single dwelling located opposite, both form slight anomalies within the otherwise agricultural landscape.
- 4.25 As previously noted this LLCA forms the setting of the town, however, the urban edge is somewhat abrupt and the housing has not been orientated to take advantage of any of the wider views.
- 4.26 The allotments and the land to the east of them are designated as Green Wedge, in order to prevent the coalescence of Undy with Rogiet to the east; however this is not a landscape designation in itself. The landscape is in good condition and makes a positive contribution to the character of the area, however, as with the other LLCAs the M4 is a notable detractor to the character of this area. The value of this area is considered to be 'Medium'. The site





LLCA5: Rolling Farmland to the east of Undy



LLCA6: East Undy



LLCA5: Rolling Farmland north of M4

occupies the three easternmost fields of this LLCA and is located on the higher, more visible, ground. As such this LLCA is considered to have a 'medium' susceptibility to the proposed development, giving rise to a 'medium' sensitivity.

#### LLCA 6: East Undy

4.27 This LLCA comprises the modern houses which form the eastern extents of the village of Undy. As noted in the cultural aspect area this is a 'modern dormitory community of no great distinctiveness' and within the Historical aspect area as having a landscape pattern of 'later 20<sup>th</sup> century residential and industrial development linked to the modern road network with few elements surviving from earlier periods'. The housing comprises of predominantly two storey detached properties, set back from the road behind well maintained hedges and located on small cul-de-sacs. The predominant material is red/brown brick, with red or grey roof tiles. The junction of this LLCA with the adjacent countryside is somewhat abrupt, being formed by the fences of the back gardens, with none of the properties being orientated towards the landscape to the north.

4.28 As such the value of this area is considered to be 'low'. While it abuts the site, it abuts the site it does not face it and any future housing would be of a similar nature and as such its susceptibility is also considered to be 'low', giving rise to a 'low' sensitivity.

#### LLCA 7: Rolling Farmland – North of the M4

4.29 This LLCA encompasses the land to the north of the M4. This is an attractive rolling, rural landscape divided by hedge lined single track lanes and irregular shaped fields. The high hedges precluding long views in many instances, albeit from elevated points there are long views towards Undy and the Severn Estuary beyond. The land is managed as a mixture of arable and pastoral, with wooded areas on the higher ground. The noise and movement of the M4 is a notable detracting element along its southern boundary, which lessens with distance.

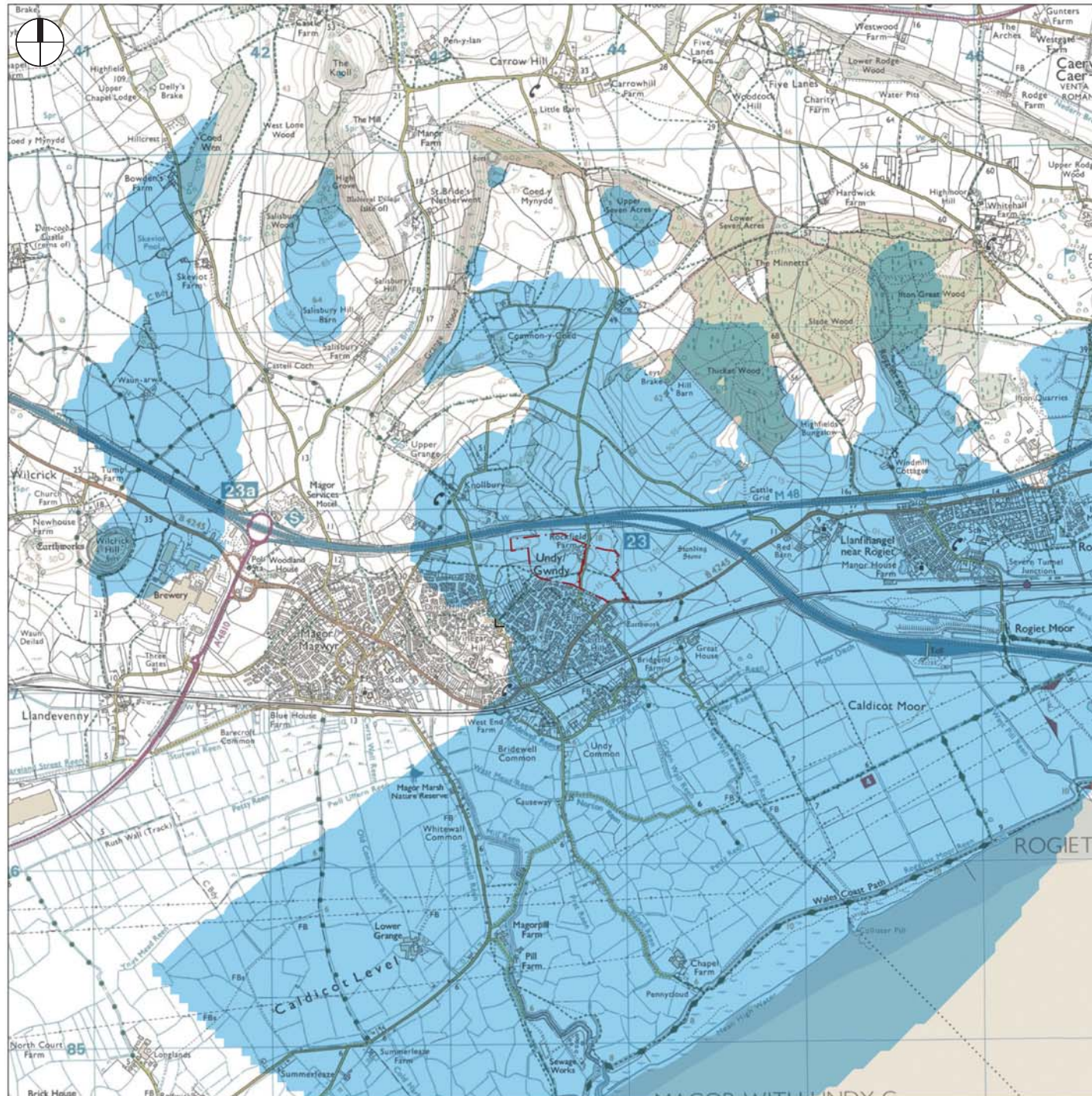
4.30 While not designated, this landscape is in good condition and positively contributes to the character of the area and as such its value is considered to be 'high'. However, given its existing inter-visibility and the abrupt separation of this area and the land to the south caused by the M4, it is considered to have a 'low' susceptibility to the proposed development and on balance its sensitivity is considered to be 'medium'.

#### Landscape Character Summary

4.31 The Site is located within farmland, albeit immediately adjacent to the urban edge, and has a visual inter-relationship with the landscape to the north, south and east. The M4, immediately to the north, is a notable detractor to the character of the area, both visually and aurally.



Figure 7 - Zone of Theoretical Visibility



Legend



Application Site



Areas from which development on the site would theoretically be visible, without taking into account intervening built form and/or vegetation, assuming development (to ridge height) would be:  
 Employment units = 7.5 - 11m  
 2 Storey residential = up to 8m  
 2.5-3 Storey residential = up to 10.5m

ZTV based upon 26No. Points from which development on the site would theoretically be visible.

Note: Building heights based on WYG Indicative Layout Option 1 and information provided in the WYG Masterplan Report and Design and Access Statement, Version 1, July 2016



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### Visual Assessment

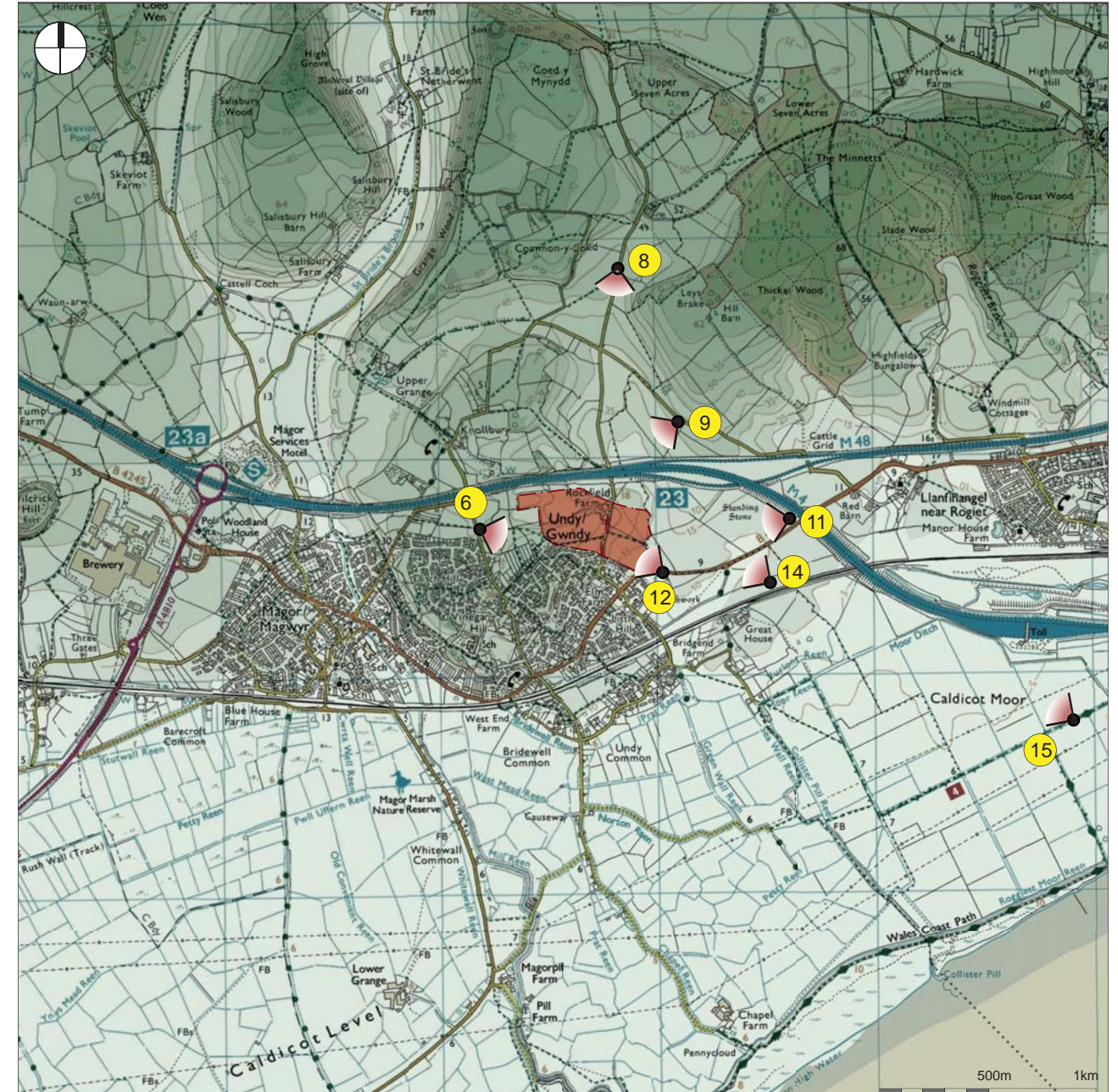
- 4.32 The photographs within this report were taken in March 2016 when the trees were all out of leaf. They have been agreed with Monmouthshire's landscape architect as being representative of the views of the Site from the surrounding area.
- 4.33 The Site is located on a shallow ridge to the east of the urban edge of Undy. Due to the extent of the existing urban form, views to the west are largely screened resulting in the Site's primary visual relationship being with the landscape to the east. The M4 is a prominent, and in some cases, dominant feature in the view, with the continual movement of the traffic accentuating its presence in the landscape.
- 4.34 A Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) Study was undertaken to help inform the visual assessment. This desk based study was used as a starting point from which roads, footpaths and publicly accessible places around the Site were visited to establish from where the Site is either partially or wholly visible. From this, a selection of representative viewpoints, both close up and distant, were selected for inclusion within this assessment in order to demonstrate the visual role the Site plays within its immediate surroundings and the wider landscape. They range in distance from within the Site to 2 km away from the site.
- 4.35 Figure 7 shows an updated ZTV map for the proposed development. The computer generated model, however, does not take into account intervening vegetation or built form. In this instance, the intervening vegetation and built form greatly limits the number of publicly available viewpoints.
- 4.36 The visual prominence or visual inter-relationship of an area or parcel of land is a principal consideration in establishing the potential impact on its character or the experience of the area.
- 4.37 Visual impact relates to the changes that the development would have upon views as experienced by the public. The people within the study area who may be affected by a change in view or in visual amenity are referred to as 'visual receptors'. Where possible the relative number of people who experience a view or series of views are noted in the text. It is not practical to assess every viewpoint and therefore those selected for inclusion as part of this assessment are representative of those available to the public looking towards the Site from the surrounding area. They range in distance from 2km to immediately adjacent to and within the Site, albeit in some of the more distant views it is extremely difficult to 'pick out' the site with the naked eye.



Figure 8 - Viewpoint Locations



Near Views



Distant Views



**Views from footpaths 372/23/1 and 372/24/1 (Group A – Viewpoints 1 and 2)**

4.38 The Site is crossed by two public rights of way; Footpath 372/23/1 linking the playground at Rockfield View to The Elms and Footpath 372/24/1 running from The Elms to the B4245 adjacent to the allotments. These footpaths appear to be relatively well used by locals. Viewpoints 1 and 2 show the views available to walkers travelling eastwards along these paths.

**Viewpoint 1 – View looking east from Footpath 372/23/1 (within the site)**

Receptors: Walkers and Residents

4.39 This is the view available to walkers as they leave Rockfield View and enter the Site, similar views will be available to residents, whose properties back onto the Site. From this location there are panoramic views over the southern part of the Site towards the landscape to the east. Rockfield Farm itself is visible in the middle distance with the Rockfield Farm Woodland to the left of view; this woodland effectively screens the parts of the Site that lie to its north.

4.40 The view is largely rural with gently rolling, wooded hillsides to the north running down to the Gwent Levels and Severn Estuary in the south. However, there are a number of detractors, the most notable of which is the M4, which runs to the north of the Site and over the Second Severn Crossing which is visible in the distance, the movement of the traffic is an eye-catching feature within the wider view. Lines of pylons running alongside the estuary on the Levels are also visible in the distance. The houses on Rockfield Way are visible to the right of view and form an abrupt and somewhat unsympathetic urban edge.

**Viewpoint 2 – View looking west from Footpath 372/22/1 (within the site)**

Receptors: Walkers

4.41 This is the view available to walkers after they have crossed The Elms and entered Field No 5, to the east; the Site occupies the foreground of this view. Long panoramic views are still available from this lower elevation, with the wooded hills to the north forming the skyline and the Second Severn Crossing and Severn Estuary visible in the distance. As with the previous view, this is largely rural, albeit with a number of detractors, including the pylons which break the skyline from this viewpoint. The allotments, visible in the middle distance appear as an anomaly within the pastoral landscape and the houses on Celli-Maes-Y-Graig continue to form an abrupt and unsympathetic edge to the countryside.

**Summary of views from Footpaths 372/23/1 and 372/22/1 (within the site)**

4.42 The views from these relatively well used paths are of panoramic views over the landscape to the east of the town towards the Gwent Levels and Severn Estuary. While largely rural in composition, there are a number of manmade detractors within the view, given that it is not of a designated landscape the value of the view is considered to be 'medium'. Walkers of these local footpaths are considered to have a 'medium' susceptibility to future changes, as are the residents for whom views are generally only available from rooms not normally occupied during waking hours. On balance both **walkers and residents** are considered to be of 'medium' sensitivity.



Viewpoint 1: View looking east from Footpath 372/23/1

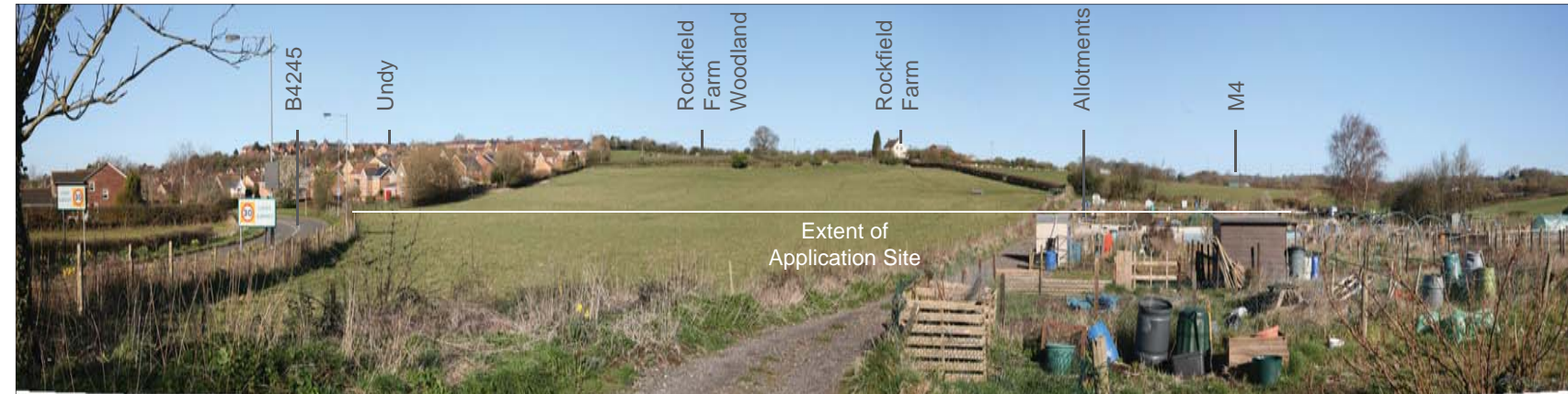


Viewpoint 2: View looking east from Footpath 372/22/1

### View from footpath 378/23/1 within Allotments (Viewpoint 3)

Receptors: Walkers and Allotment Holders

- 4.43 This view is available to those using the footpath adjacent to the allotments immediately to the north of the B4245 and the allotment holders themselves. From this location, looking north-west, the Site fields (Nos. 1 and 5) occupy the foreground running up to the Rockfield Farm Woodland which forms the skyline in the distance. From this elevation both Rockfield Farm itself and the TPO oak in field No. 1 break the skyline, the oak being a particularly prominent feature.
- 4.44 To the left of view, the existing town rises up the hillside to form the skyline; the houses modern and predominantly red brick and do not reflect any local vernacular. To the right of view it is possible to discern the M4 lighting columns breaking the skyline in the distance along with the movement of the larger vehicles using the motorway. The allotments in the foreground appear well used and maintained, but are nonetheless a visual detractor within the largely pastoral landscape.
- 4.45 The view is not designated and has a number of visual detractors, but nonetheless is largely rural and as considered to be of 'medium' value. As previously described, those using the local footpath are considered to have a medium susceptibility to change. It is considered that those working in the allotments, while they may appreciate the view, would not find it fundamental to the satisfaction of the viewer's activity and as such are considered to have a 'medium' susceptibility to change.
- 4.46 As such the both **walkers and allotments holders** are considered to be of 'medium' sensitivity.



Viewpoint 3: View looking north west from Footpath 378/23/1



**Views from The Elms (Group B – Viewpoints 4 and 5)**

4.47 The site is bisected by a single track road, The Elms which runs northwards from the edge of the town, beneath the M4 and connects to the wider network of country lanes to the north. On the occasions on which the site was visited there was little vehicular traffic using the road, but it appeared to be well used by local dog walkers.

**Viewpoint 4 – View looking north along The Elms (adjacent to the Site)**

Receptors: Walkers and Motorists

4.48 This is the view available to walkers and motorists as they leave the edge of the town. At this point there is an abrupt change from the modern, urban streetscape to one of a traditional country lane. The fields located on either side of the lane are within the Site. At this point views along the lane are largely channelled by the well maintained roadside hedge, however as one travels further northwards there are views through gateways and over fences towards the wider landscape to the east. Views to the higher ground to the west remain more restricted by the thick hedgerows. From this location, Rockfield Farm is clearly visible on the skyline and to the right of view it is just possible to discern the lighting columns along the M4.

**Viewpoint 5 – View looking south along The Elms (approximately 80m from the Site)**

Receptors: Walkers and Motorists

4.49 This is the view available to walkers and motorists as they exit the underpass beneath the M4. The fields in the immediate foreground are not within the site, but those immediately beyond the fence are. During the winter months it is possible to discern the agricultural sheds on Rockfield Farm, however during the summer when the trees are in leaf these would become concealed. The Elms rises gently up to form the skyline where the site fields are located on either side. Despite the detractor in the form of the underpass itself, the view is largely rural and not unattractive.

**Summary of Views from The Elms**

4.50 The views from this lane are largely channelled, but as it nears the summit of the shallow ridge adjacent to Rockfield Farm there are opportunities to experience the views of the Gwent Levels and Severn Estuary to the east. Given the restricted nature of the views from the lane, for much of its length and the number of man-made detractors, the value of these views are considered to be 'medium'. Both walkers and motorists using the lane are considered to have a 'medium' susceptibility to change. As such **walkers and motorists** are considered to be of **'medium'** sensitivity.



Viewpoint 4: View looking north along The Elms



Viewpoint 5: View looking south along The Elms



**Views from Footpath 372/16/1 to the west of the Site (Group C – Viewpoints 6 and 7)**

4.51 This footpath connects Vinegar Hill to the houses on Rockfield View, via the southern edge of the Rockfield Farm woodland and appears to be well used by locals.

**Viewpoint 6 – View looking east from Footpath No. 272/16/1 (Approximately 200 m from the Site)**

Receptors: Walkers

4.52 This is the view available to walkers approaching the Site from the west. The view is broadly rural, and comprises gently rolling pastoral fields, defined by well managed hedgerows and mature trees. To the right of view the northern edge of the town is beginning to come into view, albeit views of the houses are broken and filtered by the

**Viewpoint 7 – View looking north from Footpath No.272/16/1 (Approximately 70 m from the Site)**

Receptors: Walkers

4.54 This is the view available to walkers as the footpath is about to enter the woodland before connecting to Rockfield View. From this location it is possible to see the small shoulder of land at the westernmost edge of Field No. 2 along with parts of Field No 3. the remaining areas of the Site further to the south remaining screened from view.

4.55 The view from this location is of an attractive rural landscape this mature trees forming the skyline. The only detractor to the view is the short section of the M4, with its associated movement, lighting and gantries that are visible for short stretch to the right of view.

**Summary of views from Footpath No. 272/16/1**

4.56 This is an attractive stretch of footpath, which is largely visually separate from the existing town. The views are of an open pastoral landscape, with managed hedgerows and mature trees, the only detractor of any significance being the small section of the M4 visible in the middle distance. As such the value of this view is considered to be 'Medium'. Walkers using this local footpath are considered to be of 'Medium' susceptibility. On balance these walkers are considered to be of 'Medium' sensitivity.



Viewpoint 6: View looking east from Footpath No 272/16/1

mature trees located within private gardens, these would be further screened during the summer months. A single communications mast forms a prominent visual detractor in the centre of the view.

4.53 From this location the Rockfield Farm woodland is visible in the centre of the view, partially forming the skyline. This stretch of woodland screens the southern part of the Site (field Nos. 1 and 5 and the greater part of field No. 4); to the north of the woodland field No. 2 is partially visible in the foreground of the M4. The fields in the foreground form part of the Vinegar Hill housing allocation site. Only a short section of the M4 itself is visible from this location, however the movement of the vehicles is eye-catching and the prominent gantries add to its detracting influence. Overall this is an attractive rural view, with the M4 and the mast forming the only detractors of note.



Viewpoint 7: View looking north from Footpath No 272/16/1



**Views from the lanes to the north of the M4 (Group D – Viewpoints 8 and 9)**

4.57 There is a network of narrow lanes and several footpaths in the landscape to the north of the M4, on the occasions that the Site was visited these lanes did not appear to be well-used. For the greater part these are lined by well-maintained farm hedgerows, which preclude views out to a large degree. At the time of our site visit, the hedgerows had been cut back, however during the summer months views would be further restricted. The photographs selected show the best available views from this area.

**Viewpoint 8 – View looking south from The Elms to the north of Benecroft Lane (Approximately 1km from the Site)**

Receptors: Motorists and Walkers

4.58 From this short stretch of lane views are channelled southwards and it is just possible to discern the Site on the intermediate skyline. The buildings associated with Rockfield Farm are visible with the TPO oak tree sitting prominently behind them, however the land to the south of the Rockfield Farm woodland is screened from view by the woodland and the land to the north is screened by intervening vegetation and the embankment associated with the M4. Field No 4 to the east of The Elms is just visible in the foreground of the existing housing. It is also possible to discern the rooftops of the existing town on the ridgeline to the west of the Site. During the summer months these views would be further filtered/screened. Nonetheless the view is undeniably rural in character, with the urban edge only forming a small element.

**Viewpoint 9 – View looking south from Benecroft Lane to the east of The Elms (Approximately 450 m from the site)**

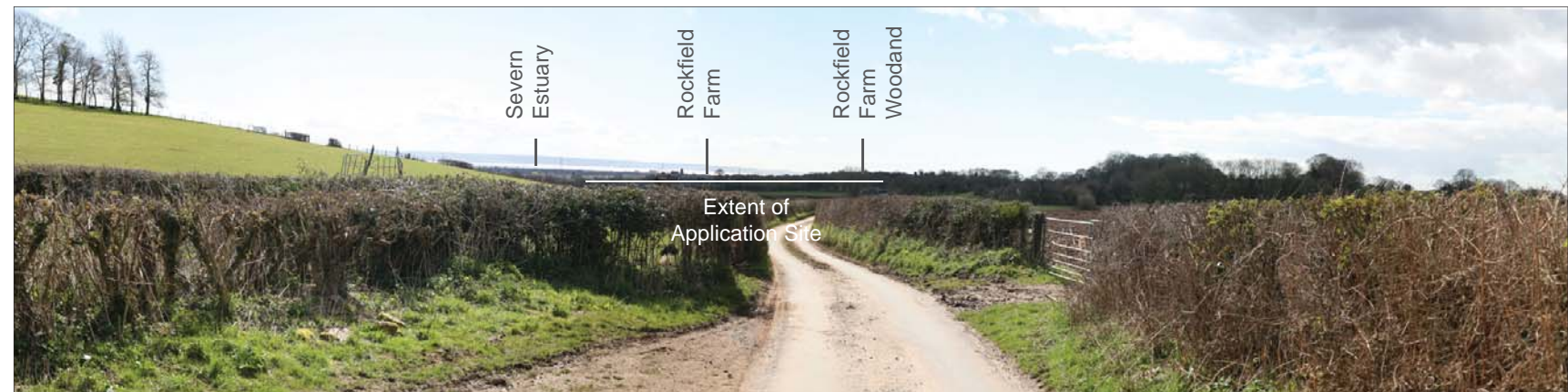
Receptors: Motorists and Walkers

4.59 From viewpoint, in a gateway along the lane, was the best available along this lane, views from the greater extent of the lane being screened from view by the roadside hedgerows. However, from this location, it is possible to see the greater part of the Site, with only Field No 5, adjacent to the B4245 being screened from view. With the exception of the existing woodland, no part of the Site forms the skyline and it is viewed with the existing town in the background.

4.60 The M4 and it associated gantries and lighting are prominent in the foreground of the Site and form a notable detractor in the wider, agricultural, view. During the summer months, views will become more filtered but the town and the motorway will remain visible from this location.

**Summary of views from the lanes to the north of the M4**

- 4.61 Views from the lanes to the north are greatly restricted by the roadside hedgerows and the two selected were considered to be the best available. While the farmland to the north of the M4 is undeniably attractive, it is not a designated landscape and when viewed in proximity to the M4, the motorway forms a significant detractor, as such the value of these views looking south is considered to be 'medium'. Walkers using these lanes are considered to be of 'high' susceptibility, while motorists, whose focus, would be on the lanes are considered to be of 'medium' susceptibility to change.
- 4.62 Therefore, on balance, and given the limited number of people using these routes both **motorists and walkers** are considered to be of **'Medium'** sensitivity.



Viewpoint 8: View looking south from The Elms to the north of Benecroft Lane



Viewpoint 9: View looking south from Benecroft Lane to the east of The Elms

**Views from the B4245 (Group E– Viewpoints 10, 11 and 12)**

4.63 The B4245 is the main route entering Undy from the east. It is a busy road and carries a large volume of traffic on a daily basis, affording a large number of people views of the site.

**Viewpoint 10 – View looking north east along the B4245 as it leaves Undy (approximately 75m from the Site)**

Receptors: Motorists

4.64 For motorists leaving Undy on the B4245, this is the first available view of the Site. From this location it becomes evident that the road is reaching the urban edge and as the wider landscape comes into view. The traffic on the M4 also comes into view from this point. For a short stretch of approximately 100m Field No. 5 runs alongside the road, however the greater part of the Site is shielded from view and motorists travelling in this direction would not have an awareness of it as they leave the town.

**Viewpoint 11 – View looking west along the B4245 as it leaves the M4 underpass (approximately 655m from the Site)**

Receptors: Motorists (on the B4245 and also representative of the M4)

4.65 For motorists travelling towards Undy on the B4245, the first available view of the Site is when they exit the underpass beneath the M4. From this location, there are, briefly, clear views towards Undy with the greater part of the Site visible in the foreground. From this location, the existing housing rises up the hill to form the skyline. Rockfield Farm is clearly visible on the shallow ridge at the centre of the Site with the ground rising up behind it culminating in a treed skyline formed by the Rockfield Farm woodland. Field Nos. 2 and 3 are screened from view by intervening topography. The Site and the fields in the foreground are pastoral. As the road continues towards the town views become broken and filtered by roadside vegetation, views which would be further reduced in the summer months when the trees are in leaf.

**Viewpoint 12 – View looking west along the B4245 as it approaches Undy (adjacent to the Site)**

Receptors: Motorists and Residents

4.66 This viewpoint shows the view available to motorists as the draw level with the Site as the approach the town. The same view would be available to the residents of the single detached residential property to the south of the allotments. From this location, the Site is clearly in view with Field No. 5 in the foreground, with Field No. 1 to the west of The Elms rising to meet the woodland forming the skyline. Rockfield Farm and its associated buildings sit on the skyline

as does the TPO oak which forms a prominent feature. Field Nos. 2 and 3 to the north of the Rockfield Farm woodland are screened from view by intervening topography. The allotments to the right of view are slightly anomalous within the agricultural landscape, and the existing housing forms an abrupt and somewhat unsympathetic urban edge. It is possible to discern the M4 beyond the allotments, albeit this would be further screened in the summer months.

**Summary of views from the B4245**

4.67 These views are available to a large number of peoples on a daily basis and form the introduction and exit to the town.

4.68 The landscape is not designated and, given the presence of the M4 and the dominance of the existing, modern, housing in the view, it is considered to be of 'low' scenic value. It is considered that the motorists using the B4245 would have a 'limited interest' in their surroundings and as such a 'Low' susceptibility to change. The property to the south of the road is not orientated towards the Site and as such these residents are considered to be of 'medium' susceptibility. As such the **motorists** are considered to be of '**low**' sensitivity and the **residents** of '**medium**' sensitivity.



Viewpoint 10: View looking north east along the B4245 as it leaves Undy



**Views from the M4 (Group F– Viewpoints 11 and 13)**

4.69 The M4 runs immediately to the north of the Site and it is from this road that the majority of people have an opportunity to view the Site, albeit briefly. For those travelling east, views are generally obscured by cutting or dense roadside vegetation. However the Site is visible in places for those travelling westwards.

**Viewpoint 11 – View looking west along the B4245 as it leaves the M4 underpass (approximately 655 m from the Site)**

Receptors: Motorists (on the B4245 and also representative of the M4)

4.70 This view, as described above, is also considered to be representative of views from the M4, given that it was not possible to safely access the motorway verge to take a separate photograph. It is estimated that the elevated motorway is some 4m+ higher than this viewpoint, and that views from the motorway would be more filtered due to the existing roadside vegetation.

**Viewpoint 13 – View looking south-west alongside the M4 (approximately 60m from the Site)**

Receptors: Motorists

4.71 This viewpoint is located adjacent to the M4 as it crosses The Elms and briefly affords motorists views of the Site, from this location Fields Nos. 1 and 5 to the south of the Rockfield Farm Woodland are screened from view, but Field No. 3 is visible in the foreground. For those driving along it, the motorway itself is the dominant feature in the view, with many views restricted by the roadside vegetation, however there are also views of the towns and countryside through which it travels.

**Summary of views from the M4**

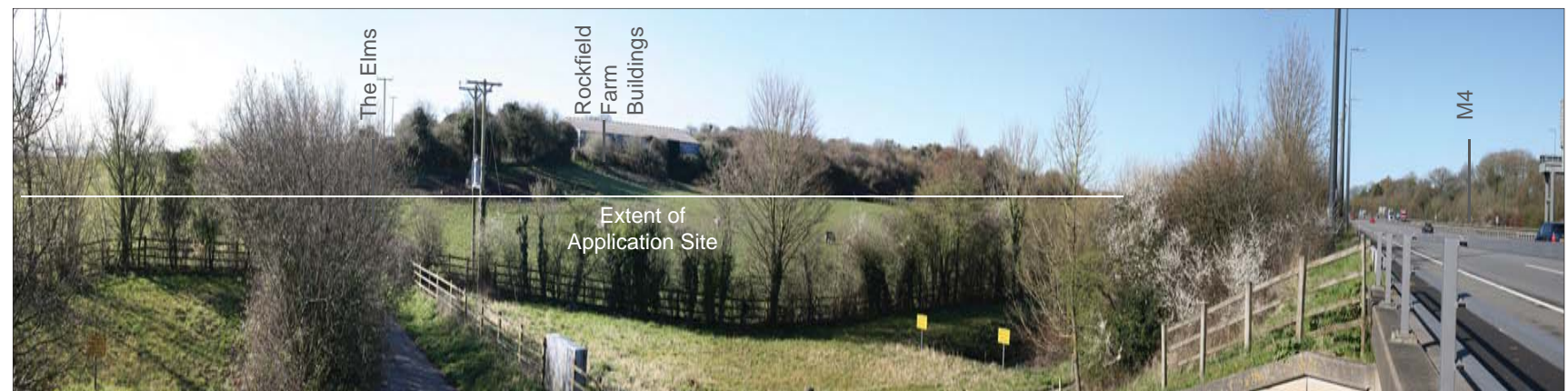
4.72 The M4 is an extremely busy road, with a continual stream of traffic travelling along it. Those travelling eastwards have little opportunity to the view the Site; however for those travelling west, there are views towards Undy and the Site. Given the roadside vegetation and the speed at which vehicles are travelling, these views are not prolonged but a series of brief glimpses. As such the value of the view is considered to be 'low'. The motorists using the road would only have a 'minimal interest' in their surroundings' and as such are considered to be of 'low' susceptibility. The sensitivity of the **motorists** are considered to be '**low**'.



Viewpoint 11: View looking west along the B4245 as it leaves the M4 underpass



Viewpoint 12: View looking west along the B4245 as it approaches Undy



Viewpoint 13: View looking south-west along the M4

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**Viewpoint 14 – View looking north adjacent to the railway line (approximately 430m from the Site)**

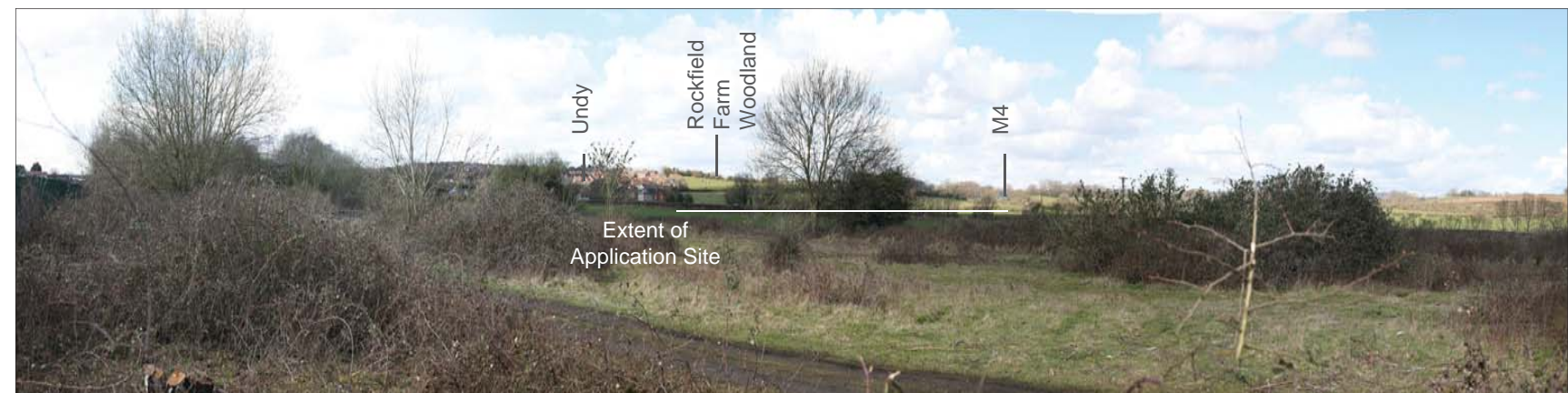
Receptors: Rail Passengers

- 4.73 This viewpoint is located adjacent to the railway line that runs between Severn Tunnel and Newport and is included as being representative of that which is seen by rail passengers using this stretch of line. From this location the Site and the edge of the town are partially visible, however much of the view is screened by the intervening scrub that has colonised the old railway sidings, as such this view would be further reduced in the summer months. From this location Field Nos. 1 and 5 are briefly visible, with Field Nos. 2, 3 and 4 being screened from view by intervening vegetation and topography. Given the speed at which the trains are travelling this view is only transient.
- 4.74 Given the scrub in the foreground and the limited period of time for which this view is visible before the railway either moves into the urban area to the west or beyond the M4 embankment to the east, its value is considered to be 'low'. Railway passengers, who may be well be occupied by other activities such as reading, are considered to have a 'minimal awareness' of their surroundings, as such, a 'very low' susceptibility to change. On balance **people travelling on the train** are considered to be of '**very low**' sensitivity.

**Viewpoint 15 – View looking west from the Wales Coast Path (approximately 2km from the Site)**

Receptors: Walkers and Cyclists

- 4.75 This viewpoint is located on the Wales Coast Path National Trail on the Gwent Levels and on the occasion it was visited it appeared to be well used by both walkers and cyclists. The view is of an expansive, flat landscape with gently rising up to the hills further north. Both Undy and the Site are visible in the distance, both sitting on the intermediate skyline, albeit they are small parts of a much larger panorama.
- 4.76 While the view is predominantly rural, there are a number of prominent visual detractors, including the lines of pylons crossing the levels and the M4 and its associated toll booths which are visible to the right of the view. As such the value of the view is considered to be 'medium', while the susceptibility of the walkers and cyclists is considered to be 'high'. On balance, the sensitivity of both **cyclists and walkers** is considered to be '**high**'.



Viewpoint 14: View looking north adjacent to the railway line



Viewpoint 15: View looking west from the Wales Coast Path.





1.5 miles  
W 19

W 19  
FIELD GROVE



# Section 5

**The Development Proposals**

Figure 9 - Indicative Layout (WYG- July 2016)





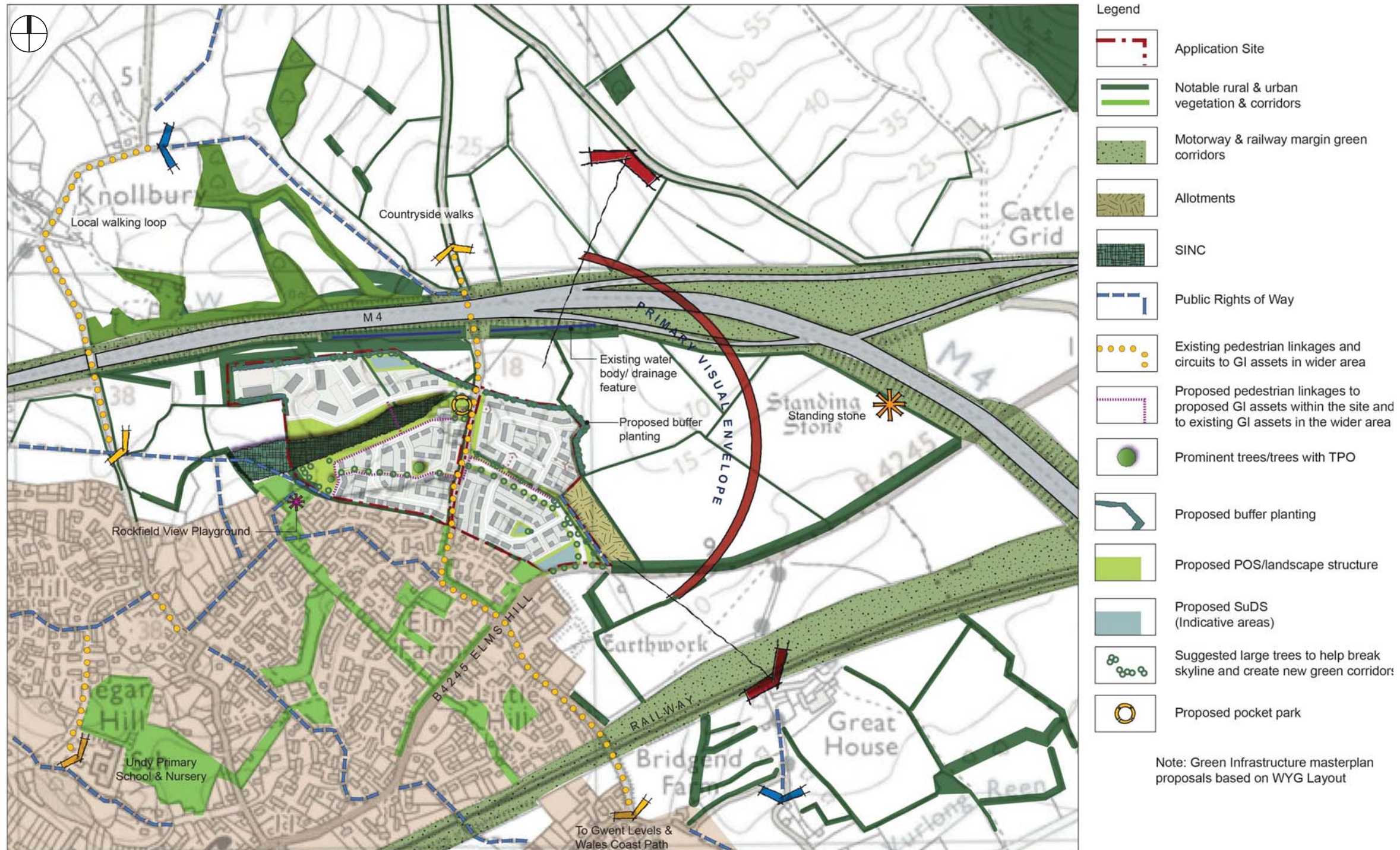
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## 6.0 The Development Proposals

- 5.1 The proposals comprise a mixed use development for 266 new dwellings and a 1.99ha employment zone, accessed via a new junction off the B4245 and incorporating the existing lane that runs through the site, The Elms.
- 5.2 The layout of the development has been configured to respond to the findings of the landscape and visual assessment as well as the findings of other technical reports.
- 5.3 The housing layout has been configured to locate the proposed housing adjacent to the existing urban edge, with the employment zone being located in the northern part of the Site, closer to the M4. The woodland that runs through the Site would be retained in its entirety with a buffer of landscape on either side, including an area of open space at the site's highest point adjacent to Rockfield View.
- 5.4 The housing has been orientated to present an 'active frontage' onto the B4245 with houses set back some 45 m from the road to reflect those adjacent. The area to the front of these houses would form part of the site's wider SuDS system with a shallow basin which would be dry for the greater part of the year, but have the capacity to retain water during periods of heavy rainfall.
- 5.5 The ridge heights of the proposed buildings would vary between 6.5m and 11m. With regard to materials the DAS states:

*"The selection of material will make reference to those already found in the area and will seek to create the appearance of a unified whole both within the development site and also with other development on its boundary, complementing, rather than detracting from the qualities of the area. The aim will be to use a limited palette of materials, to create an area with an identifiable character".*

Figure 10 -Green Infrastructure Masterplan





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5.6 The protection of Green Infrastructure (GI) assets and their incorporation into the proposed scheme has been considered from the outset. This has included the following:

- The Rockfield Farm woodland would be retained within a landscape buffer with a new footpath link provided through it.
- The open spaces within the Site have been designed to be linked by paths within green corridors and/or vegetation.
- Existing hedgerows would be retained wherever possible, with the only hedgerows being removed, being those required to facilitate access or road widening.
- The TPO oak would be retained as part of a larger green link between Rockfield View and The Elms.
- Pedestrian links would be provided linking both the existing and proposed development with the footpath network in the wider landscape to the north.
- New native buffer planting would be incorporated along the site's northern and eastern boundaries as well as adjacent to the Vinegar Hill site.
- Street tree planting would be incorporated throughout the proposed development.
- The SuDS attenuation areas would be designed to double up as usable open space when not holding water.
- The plant species selected would be predominantly native to help assimilate the scheme into its wider surroundings and enhance its character.

5.7 It is assumed that future residents would plant trees within their gardens which would further 'green' the development over time.

5.8 As previously mentioned, the only light sources currently within the Site are the lights associated with Rockfield Farm, albeit the Site is seen in the context of the existing village. The development would inevitably introduce lighting to the night-time environment that is typical of a mixed use development of this type.





# Section 6

**Landscape and Visual Assessment of the Proposals**

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## 6.0 Landscape and Visual Assessment of the Proposals

6.1 The purpose of mitigation is to avoid, reduce and where possible, remedy or offset any adverse impact on the environment arising from the proposed development. In terms of landscape and visual impact, mitigation may either be 'in-built' and as such effective from Year 1 or, as in the case of planting, it may become more effective over time, hence the predicted landscape and visual effects are assessed at Year 1 and Year 15, the photomontages have been generated accordingly.

### Assessment of Landscape Effects

#### LLCA 1: The Elms – Medium Sensitivity

6.2 The Elms would be incorporated into the road network of the new development. This would necessitate it being widened to 12m (6m road with 3m footways on either side), which would, in turn, necessitate the removal of the hedgerow along its eastern flank. Gaps would also be required in the hedgerow along its western flank to necessitate access to the proposed development. Housing would line the lane, extending some 250m north from the existing urban edge which would result in the loss of views towards the Gwent Levels and Severn Estuary to the east.

6.3 The character of this stretch of lane would change from one which is currently intrinsically rural to one which is urban in nature, extending build from northwards towards the M4. This is considered to constitute a 'very high' magnitude of effect, which would result in a '**substantial**' adverse effect on the character of the road between the existing urban edge to the M4, it is considered that this effect would endure into the long term. This is considered to be significant for this short stretch, but would not extend to the wider area.

#### LLCA2: Rockfield Farm – Low Sensitivity

6.4 Rockfield Farm and the outbuildings associated with it would be removed as part of the proposed development. This prominent area would be incorporated into the GI Strategy as it would largely become open space with the opportunity for new planting along with the retention of some of the existing vegetation around the farm. Access to the employment zone to the north of the woodland would run to the north of the existing farm buildings, necessitating the removal of some vegetation.

6.5 The removal of the farm buildings and the area's inclusion into the wider open space network would bring forward some benefit, albeit some vegetation would be need to be removed.

6.6 On balance this is considered to give rise to a 'low' magnitude of effect, resulting in a '**negligible**' effect, which is not considered significant.

#### LLCA 3: Breezy Bank to Rockfield Farm SINC - Medium

6.7 This belt of woodland would be retained in its entirety and a landscape buffer provided on either side. Some management may be required (which would be undertaken in accordance with arboricultural and ecological advice), and it is proposed to incorporate an informal pedestrian link connecting the northern and southern parts of the site.

6.8 The setting of the woodland would change in that it would have new urban form on either side of it, albeit a landscape buffer has been incorporated in order to reduce adverse impacts. It is considered that the introduction of the proposed development would constitute a 'low' magnitude of effect, resulting in a '**minor**' adverse effect, which is not considered significant.

#### LLCA 4: Rolling Farmland – The Elms to Vinegar Hill – High Sensitivity

6.9 The proposed development would occupy parts of the two easternmost fields of this LLCA. The majority of the trees and hedgerows would be retained, albeit, sections would need to be removed to facilitate access. A degree of ground modelling would be required, especially in the western field (Field No. 2) to accommodate the road gradients and form level platforms for the employment buildings. It is proposed to reinforce both the existing hedgerow boundaries and the northern extents of the development with belts of native planting, which would help to filter views into the Site as well as contributing to the wider GI network. A SuDS attenuation area would be located at the site's lowest point in the northern part of Field No 3. It is anticipated that this would be dry for the larger part of the year and would form part of the wider open space associated with the development. Depending on the result of negotiations with the highways department, a 4m high acoustic barrier may be installed adjacent to the M4, which would help reduce noise and also screen the traffic travelling along the road.

6.10 Nonetheless, a large part of this LLCA, would change from agricultural fields to urban form and as such the magnitude of effect is considered to be 'high', resulting in a '**substantial**' adverse effect, which is considered significant for this LLCA, but would not extend to the wider area given that it is physically and visually separated from it by the M4 and the Rockfield Woodland. It is considered that this effect would endure into the long term.

#### LLCA 5: Rolling Farmland to the east of Undy – Medium Sensitivity

6.11 The proposed development would either wholly or partly occupy the three westernmost fields within this LLCA (Field Nos. 1, 4 and 5). The layout has been configured to retain as much of the hedgerow network as possible, albeit, as previously noted the hedge along the eastern flank of The Elms would be removed as would small sections within the Site to facilitate access. The single TPO oak in the centre of Field No. 1 would be incorporated into the layout as part of an open green space connecting to the wider network. The highest point, at the westernmost end of this LLCA, would be retained as open space which would help to ensure that in distant views the treed skyline is retained.

6.12 At the southernmost part of the Site, the housing would be orientated towards the B4245 to present an active frontage, set back from the road to reflect the existing housing. A SuDS attenuation area would be located in this area.

6.13 Given the existing gradient on the Site, a degree of ground modelling would be necessary in order to accommodate road gradients and provide level platforms for the houses.

6.14 Three fields within this LLCA would change from agricultural use to urban form. This area is adjacent to the existing urban edge and the proposed development would read as an extension of the existing town. This is considered to constitute a 'medium' magnitude of effect, resulting in a '**moderate**' adverse effect. While planting, would in time, help to 'soften' and assimilate the proposed development into its surroundings it is considered that this effect would endure into the long term. Given the existing urban context in which the development would sit, this effect is not considered to be significant.

#### LLCA 6: East Undy – Low Sensitivity

6.15 The proposed development to abut the north-eastern extents of the town and would extend northwards towards the M4. The proposed housing would be of a similar mass and scale to those existing and connections would be provided between the existing and proposed developments. The setting of this edge of the town would be altered; however, the existing junction between town and countryside is somewhat abrupt and unsympathetic. As such it is considered that the proposed development would constitute a 'very low' magnitude of effect resulting in a '**negligible**' effect, which is not considered significant.

**LLCA 7: Rolling Farmland – North of the M4 – Medium Sensitivity**

6.16 This LLCA is physically separate from the proposed development, albeit there is a degree of inter-visibility between the two. However, the M4 forms a very distinct separation between the Site and the urban form to the south and this LLCA and as such it is considered that the introduction of the proposed development would constitute a 'very low' magnitude of effect on the character of this LLCA, resulting in a **'negligible' effect**, which is not considered significant.

**Assessment of Visual Effects**

**Views from footpaths 372/23/1 and 372/22/1 (Group A – Viewpoints 1 and 2)**

**Viewpoint 1 – View looking east from Footpath 372/23/1 (within the Site)**

Receptors: Walkers and Residents – Medium Sensitivity

6.17 This is the view available to walkers as they leave Rockfield View and enter the Site, similar views will be available to residents, whose properties back onto the site. The line of the footpath itself would be realigned as part of a future detailed application to weave through the new housing and meet The Elms some 250m to the east.

6.18 The area in the immediate foreground, including the prominent oak tree would be retained as open space. Beyond this the new housing would be introduced, with the first row of housing facing westwards and presenting an active frontage onto the open space. This new housing would replace the long views towards the Gwent Levels and the Severn Estuary and would form the skyline when viewed from this location.

**Viewpoint 2 – View looking east from Footpath 372/22/1 (within the site)**

Receptors: Walkers – Medium Sensitivity

6.19 The field in the foreground of this view (Field No. 5) lies wholly within the site and would change from its current agricultural use to residential. The alignment of the footpath would be slightly amended to run alongside the proposed new road linking The Elms to the B4245. This road would have avenue planting to the south and the existing hedgerow retained to the north; there would be residential development on either side.

6.20 As with Viewpoint 1, from this location the view would change considerably; the long views over a predominantly rural landscape towards the Severn Estuary would be replaced by urban form with the roofs of the new houses forming the skyline.

**Summary of views from Footpaths 372/23/1 and 372/22/1 (within the Site)**

6.21 While the housing would be in keeping with the existing urban form to the south and planting within the development would help to 'soften' the urban form over time, it would fundamentally change the views available to walkers using these stretches of path and as such it is considered to constitute a 'very high' magnitude of effect and would result in a **'substantial' adverse effect** in both the short and the long term. This effect is considered to be significant for these short stretches of path.

**View from footpath 378/23/1 within Allotments (Viewpoint 3)**

Receptors: Walkers and Allotment Holders – Medium Sensitivity

6.22 The field (Field No. 5) in the foreground of this view would change from agricultural use to residential. The housing would be set back to reflect the existing properties facing onto the B4245 and the SuDS attenuation area would be visible to the left of view. The new road linking the B4245 to The Elms would run parallel to the allotments and would be set back approximately 10m from the allotment boundary, the housing facing onto the road would be approximately 45m from the boundary; a new hedgerow with tree planting would be introduced along the boundary between the Site and the allotments.

6.23 This view would change from one that has a large rural element to one which is predominantly urban, as the urban edge would move some 150m to the east, with the new houses forming the skyline. In the long term the boundary hedge and the proposed trees would grow to soften and filter these views, along with trees planting within the development, which would begin to grow above the roofline.

6.24 Nonetheless, the view would be markedly changed and this is considered to give rise to a 'high' magnitude of change, which would result in a **'substantial' adverse effect**, in both the short and the long term, which is considered locally significant.

**Views from The Elms (Group B – Viewpoints 4 and 5)**

Receptors: Walkers and Motorists – Medium Sensitivity

**Viewpoint 4 – View looking north along The Elms (adjacent to the Site)**

6.25 Currently walkers and motorists travelling north along The Elms experience an abrupt change in character as the lane leaves the existing urban area and enters the countryside. The introduction of the proposed development would effectively extend the edge of the town some 250m northwards. The view from this location would change as the road widens and the hedgerow to the right of the view is removed to accommodate this. Rockfield Farm, currently in the centre of the view would be demolished and new housing would be located on either side of the road. This housing would preclude views out to the wider countryside and would form the new skyline.



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**Viewpoint 5 – View looking south along The Elms  
(approximately 80m from the Site)**

- 6.26 From this location, it may be possible to see the roof tops of some of the new properties in Field No. 4 along with the housing in Field No 3, albeit in the summer months these views would be greatly reduced by the existing vegetation. A short section of the hedge visible on the brow of the hill would be removed in order to facilitate the road widening, but the section of the road in the foreground would remain as is. By Year 15, once the proposed boundary planting has had an opportunity to mature, it is anticipated that these views would be screened or heavily filtered.

**Summary of views from The Elms**

- 6.27 While a short stretch of The Elms would change markedly in character from a rural lane to one that runs through a residential area, with views to the wider area being precluded by the proposed development. However, to the receptors travelling along it, this would read as an extension of the existing urban area and would not extend beyond the M4. On balance, and give the duration of the changed view, it is considered the visual receptors of these views would experience a 'Medium' magnitude of effect, resulting in a **'moderate' adverse effect**, while the impact would have reduced by Year 15, it is considered that the predicted effect would endure in the long term. This effect is not considered significant.



Viewpoint 7: Existing View



Viewpoint 7: Year 1 View



Viewpoint 7: Year 15 View

**Views from Footpath 372/16/1 to the west of the site (Group C – Viewpoints 6 and 7)**

Receptors: Walkers – Medium Sensitivity

**Viewpoint 6 – View looking east from Footpath No. 272/16/1 (approximately 200 m from the Site)**

6.28 From this location the residential element of the proposed development would be largely screened from view by the Rockfield Farm woodland and intervening topography. However, the employment area would be visible. The proposed employment units would be located in the middle distance and in the foreground of the M4. The units at the western end of Field No. 2 would be restricted in height to 6.5m on the rising ground in order to minimise their impact. A belt of native structure planting would be introduced alongside the existing hedgerow in order to filter views of the development in the longer term. It is not anticipated that the units would break the skyline when viewed from this location.

6.29 In the winter months there would be filtered views through the existing trees towards the site, but these would be greatly reduced in summer. Over time the proposed planting would mature to form an effective visual and physical buffer to the edge of the proposed development.

**Viewpoint 7 – View looking north from Footpath No.272/16/1 (approximately 70m from the Site)**

6.30 As is illustrated in the photomontage, at Year 1 the proposed employment units would be visible beyond the hedgeline in this view and would form an incongruous element in what is predominantly a rural outlook, albeit the unit would not break the skyline. However, by Year 15, once the boundary planting has had an opportunity to mature, while they would remain partially visible, their prominence would be reduced, with the units being partially screened from view. The unit to the left of view would remain visible as a zone would be left open for a potential vehicular connection into the Vinegar Hill site.

**Summary of views from Footpath No. 272/16/1**

6.31 At Year 1, the proposed development would be partially screened from view from the west by existing vegetation, but would become more apparent the further walkers travelled eastwards along this path. However, by Year 15, while the development would remain visible it would be partially screened, with the proposed boundary planting forming part of the skyline. As such it is considered that at Year 1 the proposed development would give rise to a 'high' magnitude of effect, resulting in a 'substantial' adverse effect. It is considered that this would reduce to 'moderate' adverse by Year 15, which is not considered significant.





Viewpoint 9: Existing View



Viewpoint 9: Year 1 View



Viewpoint 9: Year 15 View

**Views from the lanes to the north of the M4 (Group D – Viewpoints 8 and 9)**

**Viewpoint 8 – View looking south from The Elms to the north of Bencroft Lane (approximately 1km from the site)**

Receptors: Motorists and Walkers – Medium Sensitivity

- 6.32 Many of the views southwards from the network of lanes to the north of the M4 are greatly restricted as a result of the hedgerow network. This viewpoint was one of the best available. From this location it is possible to discern Undy and parts of the site on the intermediate skyline. The greater part of the site is screened from view by intervening topography and vegetation, with the exception of a part of Field No. 4 and Rockfield Farm itself.
- 6.33 As such it would be possible to see a proportion of the housing on Field No 4. It may also be possible to discern the rooftops of properties beyond the Rockfield Woodland in Field No 1. It is considered that the buildings in Field Nos. 2, 3 and 5 would be hidden by intervening vegetation and topography; these views would be further reduced in the summer months when the trees are in leaf. A belt of structure planting within Field No 4 along the northern boundary of the housing would, in time, contribute to the screening of the new houses.
- 6.34 From this location, the proposed development would form a small part of a larger panorama and would be seen in the context of the existing town.

**Viewpoint 9 – View looking south from Bencroft Lane to the east of The Elms (approximately 450 m from the site)**

- 6.35 As illustrated in the photomontage, while development in Field Nos. 1, 2, 3 and 4 would be visible from this location, it would be in the context of existing built form and would not break the skyline and would appear as an extension of the existing town. By Year 15 the proposed boundary planting would have matured to form an effective screen to the northern edge of the development and views of the housing and employment units would be greatly reduced.

**Summary of views from the lanes to the north of the M4**

- 6.36 It is considered that, given the scarcity of views from the north and the existing urban context that the magnitude of effect at Year 1 would be 'low' resulting in a 'minor' adverse effect. Once the boundary planting has had an opportunity to mature the proposed development would be largely screened from view and it is considered that this effect would reduce to 'negligible'. These effects are not considered significant.





Viewpoint 11: Existing View



Viewpoint 11: Year 1 View



Viewpoint 11: Year 15 View

**Views from the B4245 (Group E– Viewpoints 10, 11 and 12)**

Receptors: Motorists – Low Sensitivity, Residents – Medium Sensitivity

**Viewpoint 10 – View looking north east along the B4245 as it leaves Undy (approximately 75 m from the Site)**

6.37 From the location of this viewpoint, the proposed development would begin to come into view from those leaving Undy along the B4245. From here it would be possible to see the southernmost row of houses facing towards the road. These would be set back to reflect the existing houses visible to the left of view and would have a generous area of landscape, including a SuDS attenuation area. The proposed housing would restrict part of the view to the wider landscape, albeit a more channelled view out would still remain.

**Viewpoint 11 – View looking west along the B4245 as it leaves the M4 underpass (approximately 655m from the Site)**

Receptors: Motorists (on the B4245 and also representative of the M4) Low Sensitivity

6.38 As illustrated in the photomontage, from this location it would be possible to discern the proposed housing in Field Nos. 1, 4 and 5 as it rises up the hillside. This would be viewed in the context of the existing town and would appear as an extension of it. The development would not break the skyline. By Year 15, the northern and eastern boundary planting, along with the tree planting within the Site, would have had an opportunity to mature helping to ‘soften’ and assimilate the development into its surroundings. While it would be remain partially visible, its impact would be reduced.

**Viewpoint 12 – View looking west along the B4245 as it approaches Undy (adjacent to the Site)**

6.39 The field in the centre of this viewpoint is Field No. 5 which would change from its existing agricultural use to residential development. The new junction with the B4245 would be located in the immediate foreground, and would run northwards, broadly parallel to the existing allotments, with the new housing located on its western flank, presenting an active frontage west of the new road, while the housing adjacent to it would present an active frontage onto the B4245. Beyond the allotments it would be possible to discern the development in Field No. 4. This new housing would form the skyline from this location and would screen views of the development beyond.

**Summary of views from the B4245**

6.40 For motorists travelling along this stretch of road, their experience would be little changed, other than the urban edge being extended eastwards towards the allotments. Overtime as the planting matures the new development would gradually assimilate and read as an extension of the existing town. This is considered to constitute a ‘medium’ magnitude of effect at Year 1, giving rise to a ‘moderate’ adverse effect, which would reduce to ‘minor’ by Year 15.



6.41 For residents of the property opposite the allotments (Viewpoint 12), whose views are static, their view would change from one overlooking fields to one partially overlooking a residential area. This is considered a 'high' magnitude of effect, which would give rise to a **'substantial' adverse effect** which is considered to be significant for the residents of this property.

**Views from the M4 (Group F – Viewpoints 11 and 13)**

Receptors: Motorists – Low Sensitivity

6.42 The M4 runs immediately to the north of the site and it is from this road that the majority of people have an opportunity to view the site, albeit briefly. For those travelling east, views are generally obscured by cutting or dense roadside vegetation. However the site is visible in places for those travelling westwards.

**Viewpoint 11 – View looking west along the B4245 as it leaves the M4 underpass (approximately 655 m from the Site)**

6.43 Motorists on the M4 would have a similar, albeit elevated view, towards Undy as that illustrated in the photomontage. Views from the motorway would also be further restricted by existing roadside vegetation. However, from this location it would be possible to discern the proposed housing in Field Nos. 1, 4 and 5 as it rises up the hillside. This would be viewed in the context of the existing town and would appear as an extension of it. The development would not break the skyline. By Year 15, the northern and eastern boundary planting, along with the tree planting within the Site, would have had an opportunity to mature helping to 'soften' and assimilate the development into its surroundings. While it would remain partially visible, its impact would be reduced.

**Viewpoint 13 – View looking south-west alongside the M4 (approximately 60m from the Site)**

Receptors: Motorists – Low Sensitivity

6.44 From this location the proposed development in Field No. 3, along with the road connecting to Vinegar Hill would briefly be visible, albeit view would be further restricted during the summer months when the trees are in leaf. The buffer planting to the north of this small residential area would, over time serve to further filter and screen these views. To west of this location the motorway is flanked by dense vegetation which acts as a visual screen and it is not anticipated that the employment units would be visible in the summer months, although filtered views may be available during winter.

**Summary of views from the M4**

6.45 For motorists travelling along the M4 it would be possible to glimpse the new development in between the existing roadside vegetation. This would be seen in the context of existing built form, and over time, as the planting matures, the development would become 'softened' and partially screened albeit still visible from this elevated location. Given the brevity of these views and the extent of the existing and proposed planting, it is considered that the proposed development would give rise to a 'low' magnitude of effect at Year 1 and that this would result in a **'minor' adverse effect**, reducing to **'negligible'** at Year 15, which is not considered significant.

**Viewpoint 14 – View looking north adjacent to the railway line (approximately 430 m from the Site)**

Receptors: Rail Passengers – Very Low sensitivity

6.46 For the brief stretch of track between where the railway passes under the M4 and runs to the south of a block of woodland to the south of the town, a distance of approximately 600m, filtered views of the site are available. It would be possible to discern the proposed development within Field Nos. 1, 4 and 5 from the moving train. The development would be visible within the context of the existing settlement and heavily filtered views only briefly available. As such it is considered that these receptors would experience a 'low' magnitude of effect, resulting in a **'negligible' effect** in the short and the long term, which is not considered significant.

**Viewpoint 15 – View looking west from the Wales Coast Path (approximately 2km from the Site)**

Receptors: Walkers and Cyclists – High Sensitivity

6.47 From this location on the Wales Coast Path it is possible to discern the settlement of Undy rising up the hillside some 2km to the north-west. The proposed development in Field Nos. 1, 4 and 5 would be visible from this location and would read as an extension of the existing town.

6.48 Given the distance and that the site forms a small part of a wide panorama, it is considered that the proposed development would constitute a 'low' magnitude of effect, which would result in a **'minor' adverse effect** at Year 1 and in the long term, which is not considered significant.

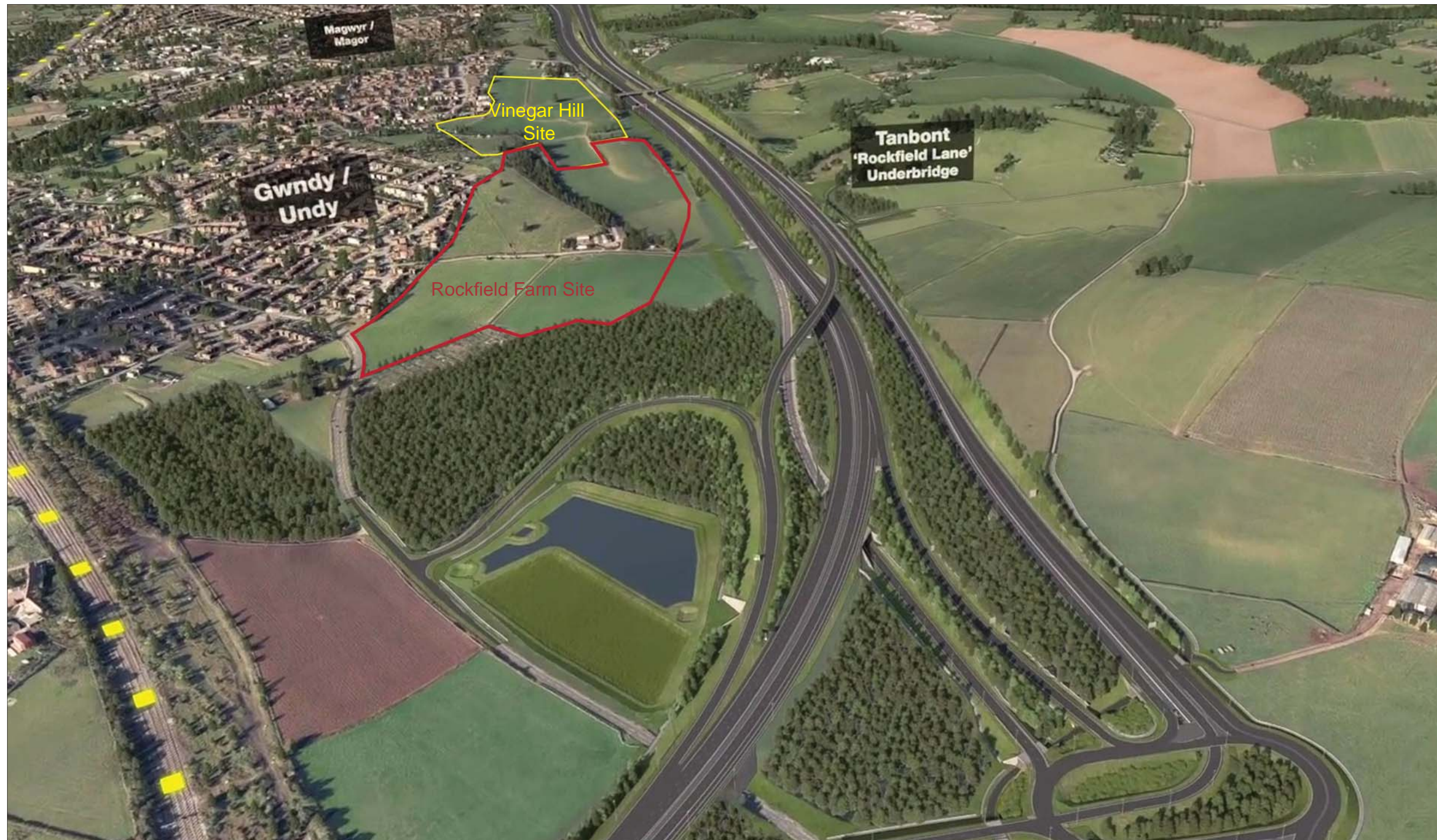




# Section 7

**Cumulative Assessment of the Proposals**

Figure 11 -Extract from M4 Corridor around Newport 'Fly-Through' (produced for the Welsh Government), marked up to show Rockfield Farm and Vinegar Hill Sites.



Link: <http://gov.wales/topics/transport/roads/schemes/m4/corridor-around-newport/?lang=en>



## 7.0 Cumulative Assessment of the Proposals

- 7.1 The potential cumulative effects arising from the proposed development in conjunction with the allocated site to the west, Vinegar Hill and the proposed M4 Corridor around Newport road are considered below.
- 7.2 The Vinegar Hill development would occupy the land immediately to the west of the Rockfield Farm Site, straddling Vinegar Hill road and occupying the two fields to the west. It is allocated for housing within the Local Plan and forms part of the larger urban extension along with Rockfield Farm, it is anticipated that the two developments would be linked via a new road. As yet no planning application has been submitted for the land at Vinegar Hill, as such the likely cumulative developments are assessed based on a conceptual masterplan developed for the site in 2015 (See Figure 12).
- 7.3 Consultation is currently being undertaken regarding the M4 Corridor around Newport. In the vicinity of the Rockfield Farm site this would involve the introduction of a new roundabout on the M48 to the west of Rogiet which would connect to a new, elevated road running parallel and to the north of the M4 immediately to the north of the site. A new junction would also be formed on the B4245 some 320m to the west of the allotments along with an interchange bridge connecting the existing M4 to the new road to the north (See Figures 13 & 14). The proposals would come forward with substantial areas of attendant planting.
- 7.4 Both of these developments have been marked in on the photomontages. The line of the road has been marked indicatively as, without access to a computer model, it has not been possible to create a detailed verifiable photomontage.
- 7.5 In order to assess the cumulative effects of the Rockfield Farm Site with the Vinegar Hill Site and the M4 Corridor around Newport, the same landscape and visual receptors have been considered. The visual receptors are all considered to have the same baseline sensitivity in relation to both the Rockfield Farm development and Vinegar Hill and the M4. However, the susceptibility of the receiving landscape receptors may vary in relation to the Vinegar Hill and the M4 Corridor and thus their corresponding sensitivity may also vary. Where this is the case it has been clearly noted in the text below.
- 7.6 The cumulative effects assessment focuses on the additional effects the Rockfield Farm development would give rise to in conjunction with the Vinegar Hill Development and the M4 Corridor around Newport.

Figure 12 -High Level Masterplan for Vinegar Hill. IDP for Bovis Homes





Figure 13 -General Arrangement for M4 Corridor Around Newport (Produced for Welsh Government)

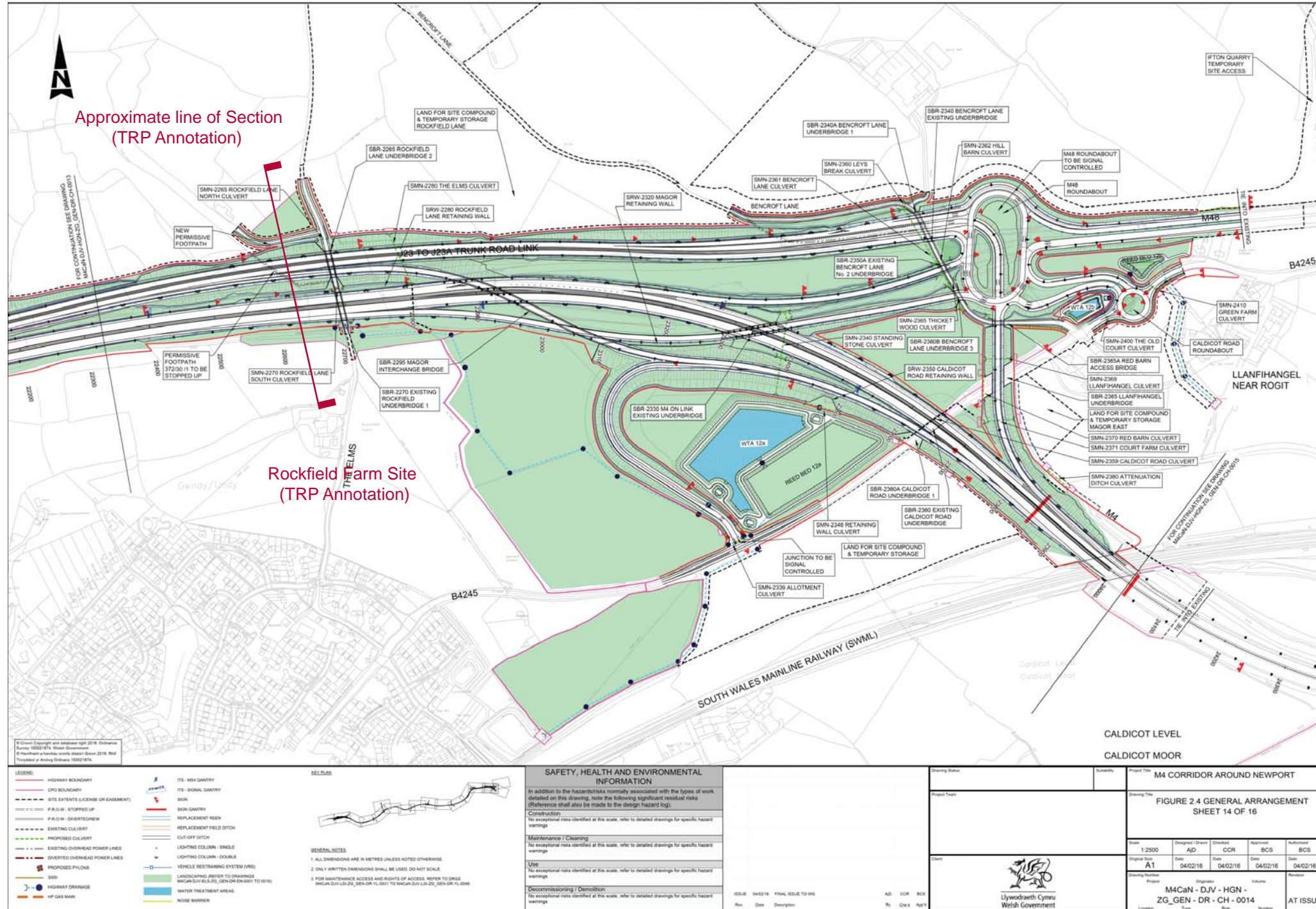
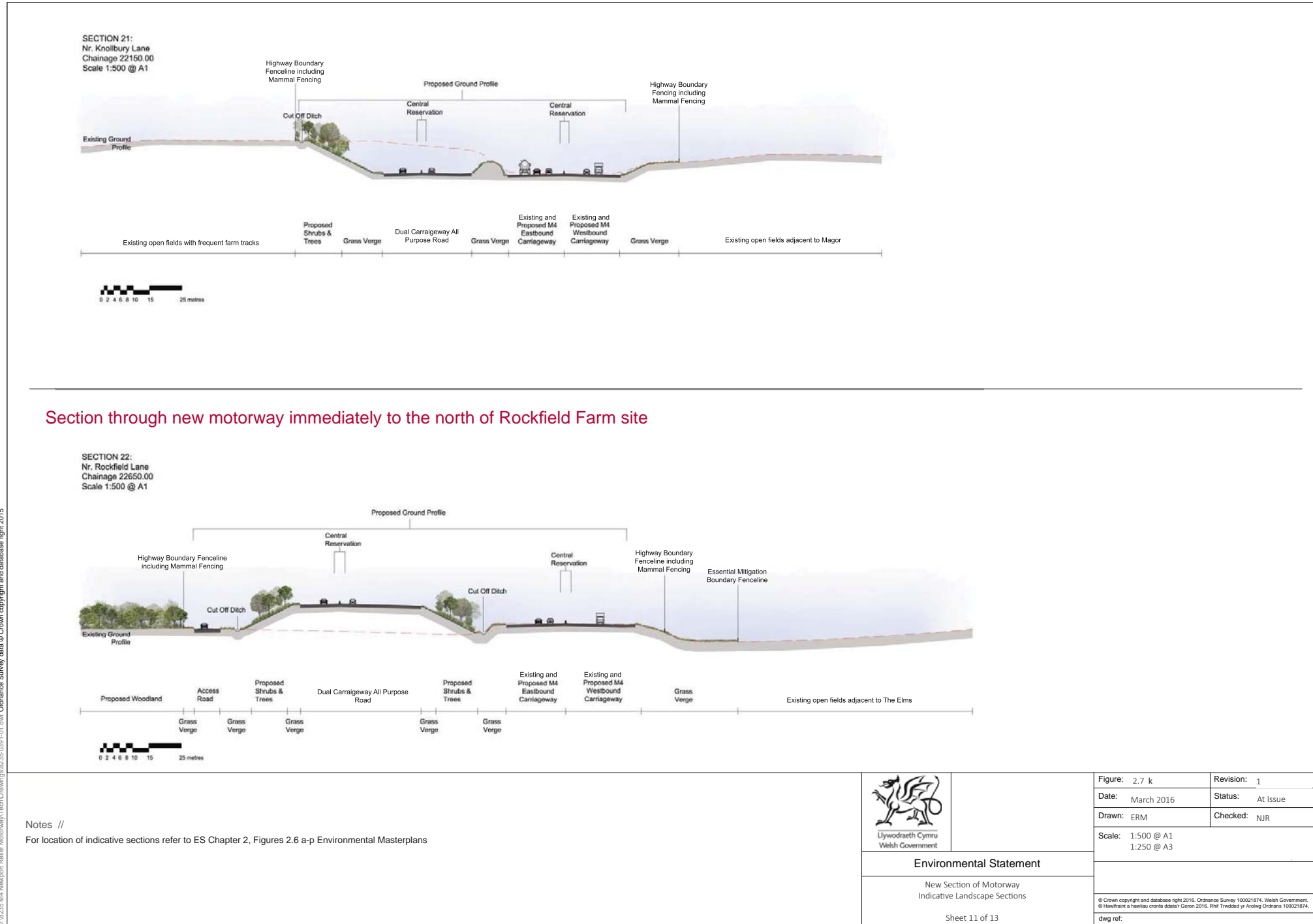




Figure 14 - New Section of Motorway - Indicative Landscape Sections (Produced for Welsh Government)



## Assessment of Cumulative Landscape Effects

### LLCA 1: The Elms – Medium Sensitivity

- 7.7 The initial assessment found that the Rockfield Farm development would result in a **'substantial' adverse effect** on the landscape character of this area.
- 7.8 Once the Rockfield Farm development was constructed there would be no physical or visual relationship with the Vinegar Hill development and as such it would not contribute to any cumulative effects.
- 7.9 The existing M4 is a notable detractor to the character of this area, and due to its elevated nature, there would also be inter-visibility with the new road from the northern part of this character area.
- 7.10 Taken cumulatively it is considered that the magnitude of effect is considered to be 'very high' resulting in a **'substantial' adverse effect**, which is considered to be locally significant. However, the Rockfield Farm Site itself is considered to be the primary contributor to this effect.

### LLCA2: Rockfield Farm – Low Sensitivity

- 7.11 The initial assessment found that the Rockfield Farm development would result in a **'negligible' effect** on the landscape character of this area.
- 7.12 There is no physical or visual relationship between this LLCA and the Vinegar Hill site and as such, the Vinegar Hill development would not give rise to any cumulative effects.
- 7.13 The existing M4 is a notable detractor to the character of this area, and due to its elevated nature, there would also be inter-visibility with the new road further to the north. In the short term, before the road side planting has had an opportunity to mature it is considered that the cumulative magnitude of effect would be 'medium', resulting in a **'minor' adverse effect**. In the long term, once the roadside planting has had an opportunity to mature this would reduce to **'negligible'**, which is not considered significant.
- 7.14 The M4 Corridor around Newport is considered to be the primary contributor to the adverse effect described above.

### LLCA 3: Breezy Bank to Rockfield Farm SINC – Medium Sensitivity

- 7.15 The initial assessment found that the Rockfield Farm development would result in a **'minor' adverse effect** on the landscape character of this area.
- 7.16 The Vinegar Hill development would abut this LLCA at its north western extents, albeit it is anticipated that the landscape buffer on the Rockfield Farm site would extend into the Vinegar Hill site. There would also be a degree of inter-visibility with the new M4 Corridor around Newport.
- 7.17 Taken cumulatively, it is considered that the developments would constitute a 'low' magnitude of effect, resulting in a **'minor' adverse effect**, which is not considered significant.
- 7.18 The Rockfield Farm development would be the primary contributor to this effect.

### LLCA 4: Rolling Farmland – The Elms to Vinegar Hill – High Sensitivity

- 7.19 The initial assessment found that the Rockfield Farm development would result in a **'substantial' adverse effect** on the landscape character of this area.
- 7.20 The Rockfield Farm development would occupy the eastern extents of this LLCA, while the Vinegar Hill development would occupy the western extents, resulting in the whole of the LLCA, with the exception of the small parcel of land adjacent to The Elms underpass, changing from agricultural fields to urban form. There would also be an inter-visibility with the new M4 corridor around Newport. The magnitude of effect is considered to be 'very high', resulting in a **'substantial' adverse effect**, which is considered significant for this LLCA, but would not extend to the wider area, given that it is physically and visually separated from it by the M4 to the north and the Rockfield Woodland and the northern extents of Undy to the south.
- 7.21 It is considered that the Rockfield Farm development and the Vinegar Hill development would make a broadly equal contribution to the resulting cumulative effect.

### LLCA 5: Rolling Farmland to the east of Undy – Medium Sensitivity

- 7.22 The initial assessment found that the Rockfield Farm development would result in a **'moderate' adverse effect** on the landscape character of this area.
- 7.23 This LLCA is considered to be of 'medium' value. It has no physical or visual relationship with the Vinegar Hill site, however the new M4 Corridor around Newport would occupy a large part of its eastern extents, as such its susceptibility to the schemes being considered cumulatively would be 'high'. On balance, given the context of the existing town and M4, it is considered that the sensitivity of this LLCA to the cumulative developments would remain 'medium'.
- 7.24 In addition to the Rockfield Farm development, the new M4 Corridor around Newport would see the introduction of a new junction off the B4245, within the LLCA along with a flyover linking to the new road to the north. This would come forward with attendant ground modelling, water attenuation and large areas of woodland planting.
- 7.25 Overall the character of this area would change from one of agricultural fields, albeit with notable urbanising influences, to one that is urban form and with a new junction to the motorway with attendant works. Taken cumulatively this is considered to be a 'very high' magnitude of effect, which would result in a **'substantial' adverse effect**. In the long term the woodland would mature and help to screen and separate the M4 from the town, however the character of this LLCA would remain substantially changed and as such the effect would remain. This effect is considered to be locally significant and would not extend to the wider area.
- 7.26 While the Rockfield Farm would contribute to this significant effect, it would largely be the result of the M4 Corridor around Newport.



#### LLCA 6: East Undy – Low Sensitivity

- 7.27 The initial assessment found that the Rockfield Farm development would result in a **'negligible' effect** on the landscape character of this area.
- 7.28 The Vinegar Hill development would be physically and visually separate from this LLCA and as such would not contribute to any cumulative effects. The LLCA to the south of the B4245 would have some inter-visibility with the M4. It is considered the sensitivity of this LLCA to potential cumulative effects would remain 'low'.
- 7.29 The proposed M4 Corridor around Newport would be largely separated from this LLCA by the proposed Rockfield Farm development. There may be some inter-visibility with the road from the houses to the south of the B4245, however over time, once the woodland planting has had an opportunity to mature this would be largely screened. As such it is considered that the cumulative magnitude of effect would be 'low' resulting in **'minor' adverse effect** in the short term, reducing to **'negligible'** in the long term, which is not considered significant.
- 7.30 The Rockfield Farm development would be the primary contributor to this effect.

#### LLCA 7: Rolling Farmland – North of the M4 – Medium Sensitivity

- 7.31 The initial assessment found that the Rockfield Farm development would result in a **'negligible' effect** on the landscape character of this area.
- 7.32 This LLCA is considered to have a 'high' value, and in relation to the M4 Corridor around Newport, which would run through its southernmost extents, a 'high' susceptibility. As such its sensitivity to the developments cumulatively is considered to be 'high'.
- 7.33 The new M4 Corridor around Newport run along the southern extents of this LLCA and would entail the loss of existing vegetation, ground modelling and associated planting. The new road would sit at a higher elevation than the exiting M4 as illustrated in the section shown in Figure 15. This elevated section of road would restrict inter-visibility with the Rockfield Farm site to the south. It would also introduce a prominent new feature into the landscape.
- 7.34 It is considered that this would give rise to a 'high' magnitude of effect, resulting in a **'substantial' adverse effect** in both the short and the long term, which is considered significant. It is not considered that the Rockfield Farm development would contribute to this effect.

#### Assessment of Cumulative Visual Effects

- 7.35 Figure 15 shows the predicted ZTV for the Vinegar Hill site and the Rockfield Farm site together. As with the previous ZTV, this has been generated using a 'bare earth' model and does not account for the screening effects of intervening vegetation and topography. It has not been possible to generate a ZTV for the proposed M4 Corridor due to a lack of detailed levels information. Figures 16 a & b are from the package of drawings produced for the Welsh Government outlining their proposals and demonstrate the ZTV for this road.

#### Views from footpaths 372/23/1 and 372/22/1 (Group A – Viewpoints 1 and 2)

Receptors: Walkers and Residents – Medium Sensitivity

- 7.36 The initial assessment found that the proposed development would result in a **'substantial' adverse effect** on these visual receptors.

#### Viewpoint 1 – View looking east from Footpath 372/23/1 (within the Site)

- 7.37 The proposed development would be located in the foreground of this view and as such would obscure views of the new M4 Corridor around Newport. There is no view of the Vinegar Hill site from this location.

#### Viewpoint 2 – View looking east from Footpath 372/22/1 (within the Site)

- 7.38 The proposed development would be located in the foreground of this view and as such would obscure views of the new M4 Corridor around Newport. There is no view of the Vinegar Hill site from this location.

#### Summary of views from Footpaths 372/22/1 and 372/24/1 (within the Site)

- 7.39 Development on the Vinegar Hill site and the new M4 Corridor around Newport would not be visible from these footpaths, as they would be obscured by the new Rockfield Farm development and as such these receptors would not experience any cumulative effects.

#### Viewpoint 3 - View from footpath 378/23/1 within Allotments

Receptors: Walkers and Allotment Holders – Medium Sensitivity

- 7.40 The initial assessment found that the proposed development would result in a **'substantial' adverse effect** on these visual receptors.
- 7.41 The proposed development would be located in the foreground of this view. There is no view of the Vinegar Hill site from this location. However, it would be possible to see the new M4 Corridor around Newport to the north, particularly the proposed flyover.

- 7.42 As such the receptors of this view would continue to experience a **'substantial' adverse effect**, which is considered significant.

#### Views from The Elms (Group B – Viewpoints 4 and 5)

Receptors: Walkers and Motorists – Medium Sensitivity

- 7.43 The initial assessment found that the proposed development would result in a **'moderate' adverse effect** on these visual receptors.

#### Viewpoint 4 – View looking north along The Elms (adjacent to the Site)

- 7.44 The proposed development would be located in the foreground of this view and as such would obscure views of the new M4 Corridor around Newport. However, as motorists and walkers travel further north the new road would come into view beyond the existing M4. There is no view of the Vinegar Hill site from this location.

#### Viewpoint 5 – View looking south along The Elms (approximately 80m from the Site)

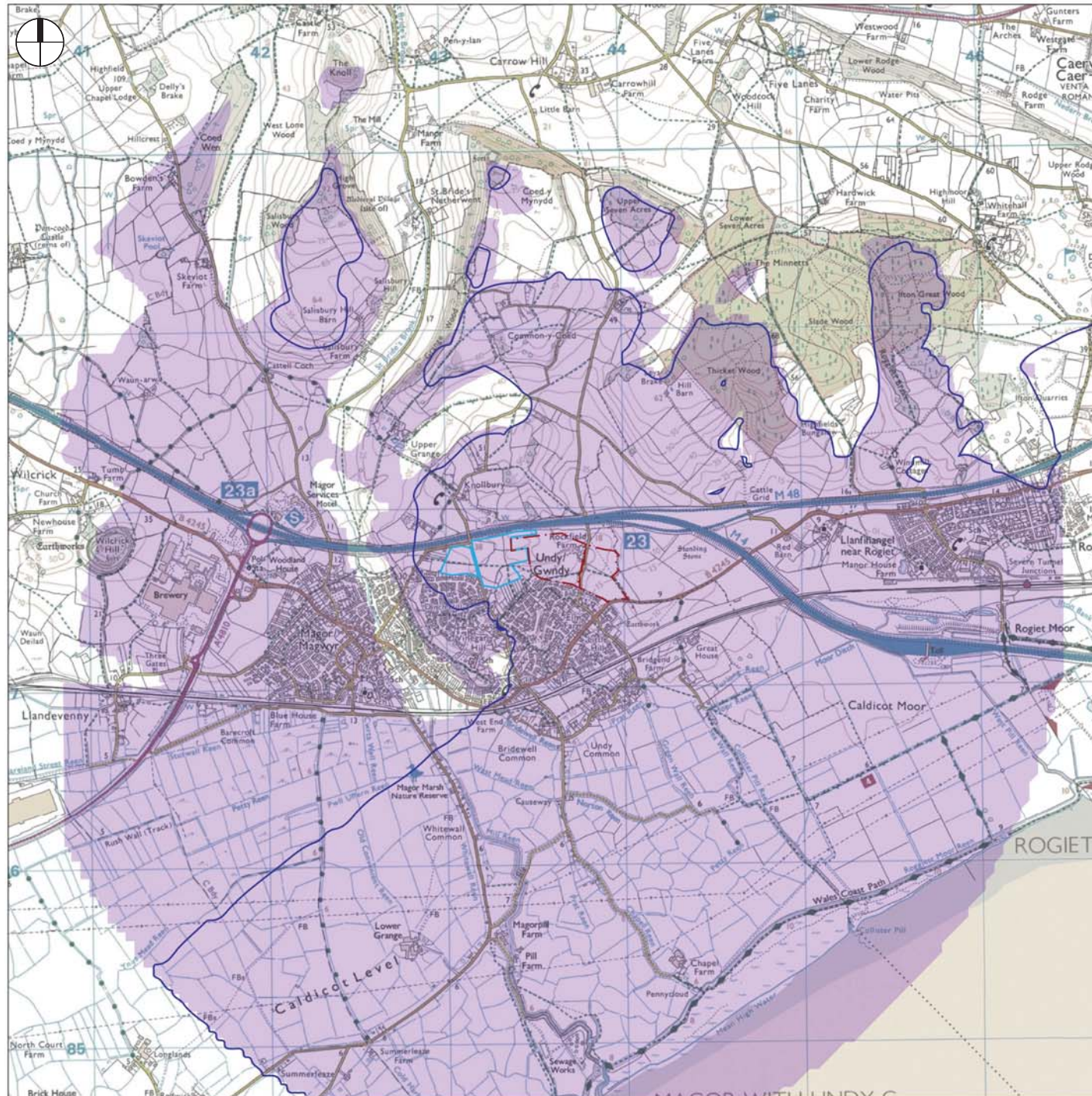
- 7.45 The proposed development would be located in the foreground of this view, with the new road located to the north of the underpass through which motorists and walkers would need to travel to reach this point. However, views from the north of the M4 are considered within Group D and as such any cumulative effects are not considered here. There is no view of the Vinegar Hill site from this location.

#### Summary of views from The Elms

- 7.46 The Vinegar Hill development would not be visible to these receptors and as such would not contribute to any cumulative effect. The M4 corridor around Newport would come into view beyond the existing motorway for a short stretch. It is considered that the cumulative effect experienced by these receptors would remain **'moderate' adverse**, which is not considered significant, and that the Rockfield Farm development would be the primary contributor to these effects.



Figure 15- Cumulative ZTV for Rockfield Farm and Vinegar Hill Developments



Legend



Application Site



Vinegar Hill Site



Cumulative area from which development on the site and the adjoining Vinegar Hill site would theoretically be visible, without taking into account intervening built form and/or vegetation, assuming development (to ridge height) would be:

- Application Site = 7.5 - 11m
- Employment units = up to 8m
- 2 Storey residential = up to 8m
- 2.5-3 Storey residential = up to 10.5m

Vinegar Hill site: = 8m

ZTV based upon 42No. Points from which development on the site and the adjoining Vinegar Hill site would theoretically be visible.

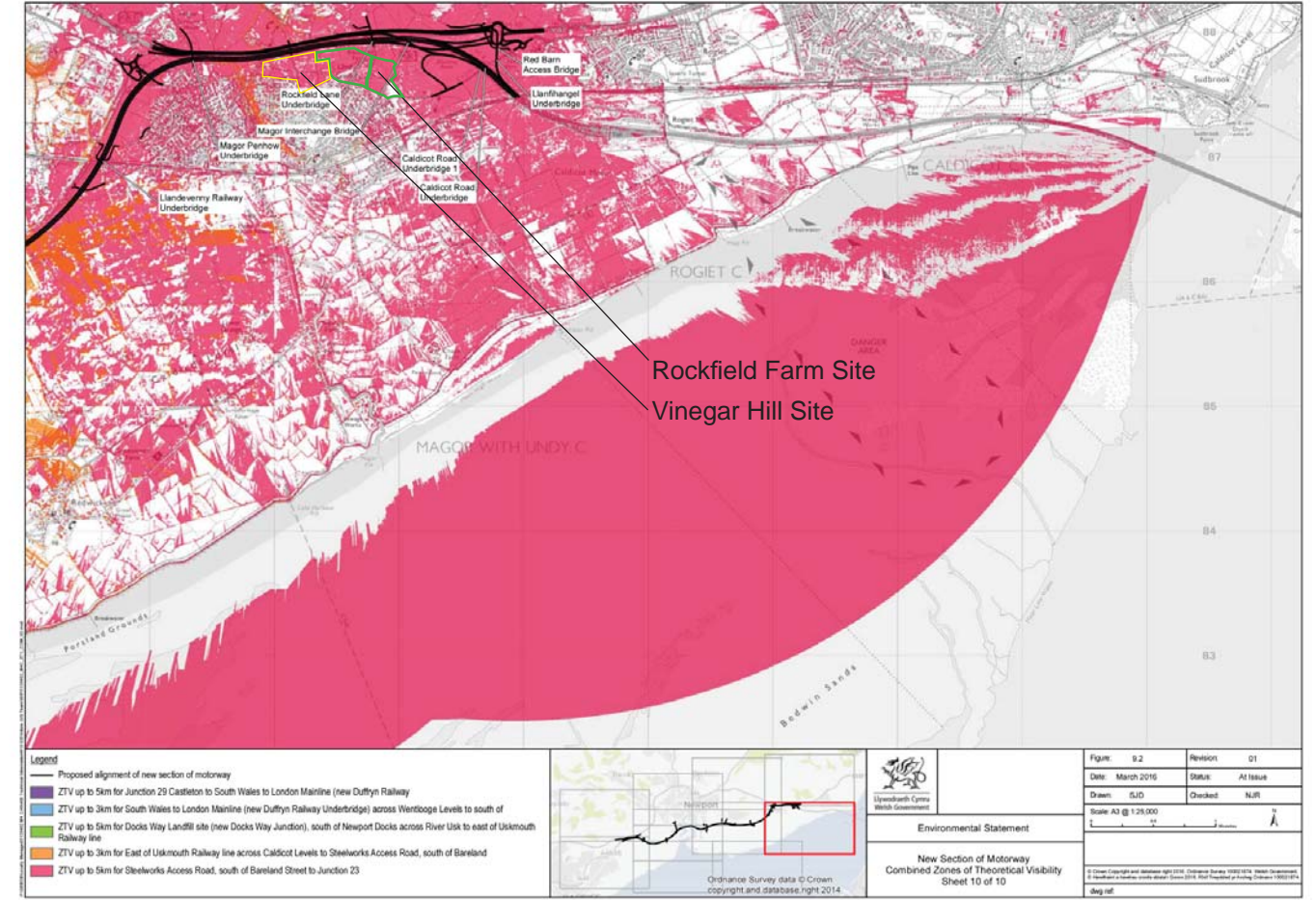
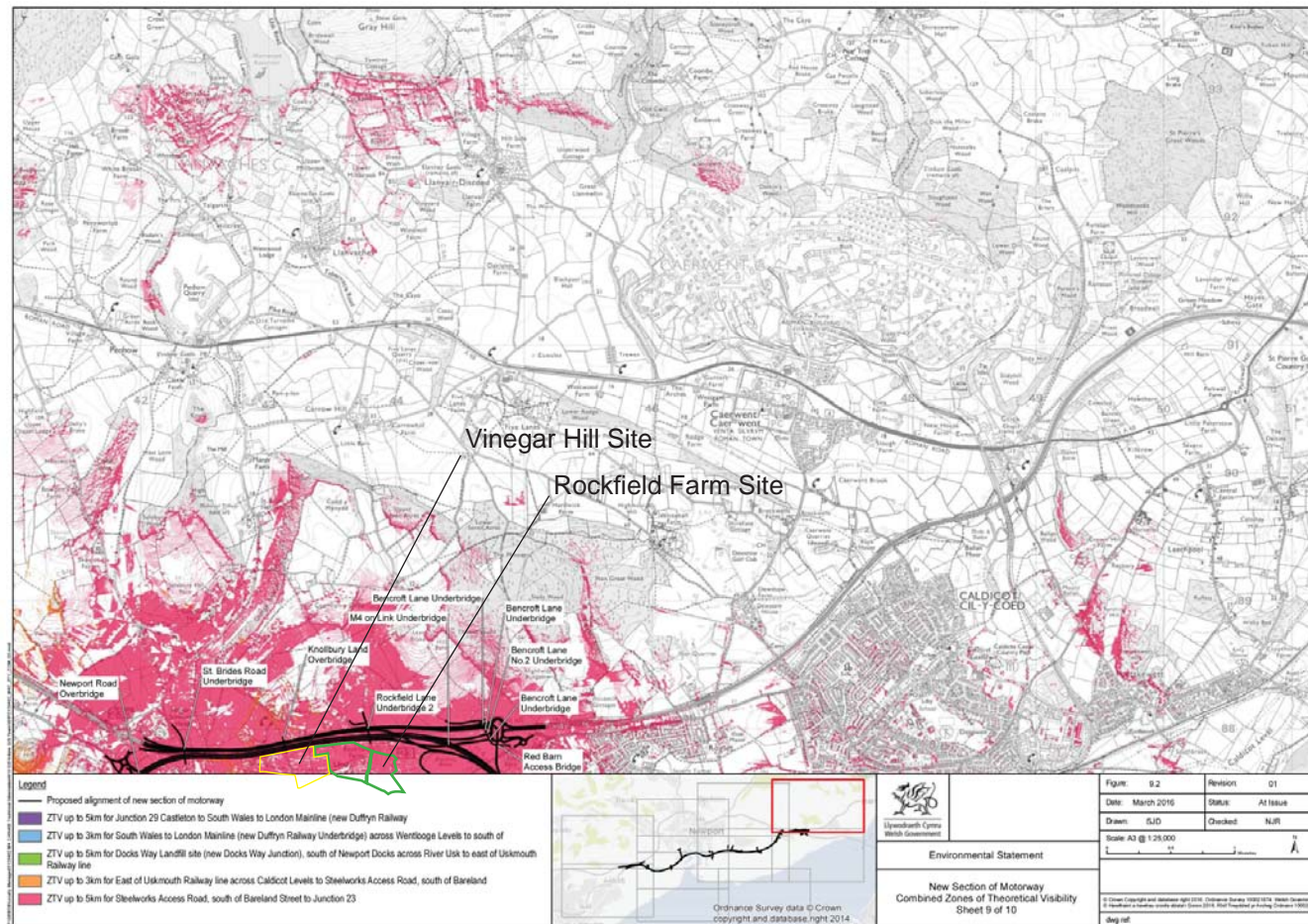


Area from which development on the site only would theoretically be visible, without taking into account intervening built form and/or vegetation, assuming development would be as per ridge heights sited above.

Note: Building heights based on WYG Indicative Layout Option 1 and information provided in the WYG Masterplan Report and Design and Access Statement, Version 1, July 2016



Figure 16 a and b - ZTV for M4 Corridor Around Newport (Produced for Welsh Government)







Viewpoint 7: Existing View



Viewpoint 7: Year 1 Cumulative View



Viewpoint 7: Year 15 Cumulative View

**Views from Footpath 372/16/1 to the west of the site (Group C – Viewpoints 6 and 7)**

Receptors: Walkers – Medium Sensitivity

7.47 The initial assessment found that the proposed development would result in a **'substantial' adverse effect** in the short term, reducing to **'moderate' adverse** in the long term.

**Viewpoint 6 – View looking east from Footpath No. 272/16/1 (approximately 200 m from the Site)**

7.48 The fields in the foreground of this view would form part of the Vinegar Hill development and as such, this new built form, would obscure views of the Rockfield Farm development and the M4 Corridor around Newport.

**Viewpoint 7 – View looking north from Footpath No.272/16/1 (approximately 70m from to the Site)**

7.49 This viewpoint is located within the Vinegar Hill site, and as such new built form would obscure views of the Rockfield Farm site and the M4 Corridor around Newport. There may be the opportunity for brief glimpses of them along the edge of the Rockfield Farm woodland, but this would be dependent on the final layout of the development.

**Summary of views from Footpath 272/16/1**

7.50 The fields through which this footpath travels would change from open ground to built form. It is considered that this would give rise to a **'very high' magnitude of effect** which would result in a **'substantial' adverse cumulative effect** which would endure into the long term and is considered to be significant.

7.51 This effect would be as a result on the Vinegar Hill development and not the Rockfield Farm development.





Viewpoint 9: Existing View



Viewpoint 9: Year 1 Cumulative View



Viewpoint 9: Year 15 Cumulative View

**Views from the lanes to the north of the M4 (Group D – Viewpoints 8 and 9)**

Receptors: Motorists and Walkers – Medium Sensitivity

7.52 The initial assessment found that the proposed development would result in a **'negligible'** effect on these visual receptors.

**Viewpoint 8 – View looking south from The Elms to the north of Bencroft Lane (approximately 1km from the Site)**

7.53 From this location it would be possible to see the new M4 Corridor around Newport in the middle distance. As it would sit at a higher elevation than the existing M4, this would be screened from view, it is also anticipated that it would partially screen elements of the proposed development, however it is anticipated that it would still be possible to discern some of the housing beyond the Rockfield Farm woodland. It is anticipated that the Vinegar Hill development would be screened from view by a combination of existing and proposed topography and vegetation.

**Viewpoint 9 – View looking south from Bencroft Lane to the east of The Elms (approximately 450 m from the Site)**

7.54 As is illustrated in the photomontage, the elevation of the new M4 Corridor around Newport is such that it would effectively obscure the greater part of the Rockfield Farm development from this viewpoint. A small part of the development would be visible on the higher ground of Field No. 1, as would an element of the Vinegar Hill development in the distance. However the new M4 would be the dominant feature in this view.

**Summary of views from the lanes to the north of the M4**

7.55 The new M4 corridor would become the dominant feature in views from the north of the existing M4, with the proposed residential developments of Rockfield Farm and Vinegar Hill forming small elements of the view in the context of the existing town. Cumulatively it is considered that the developments would give rise to a **'high'** magnitude of effect resulting in a **'substantial'** adverse effect which is considered to be significant and which would endure into the long term. It is considered that this effect would be as a result of the new M4 Corridor around Newport and that the Rockfield Farm development would make a minimal contribution.

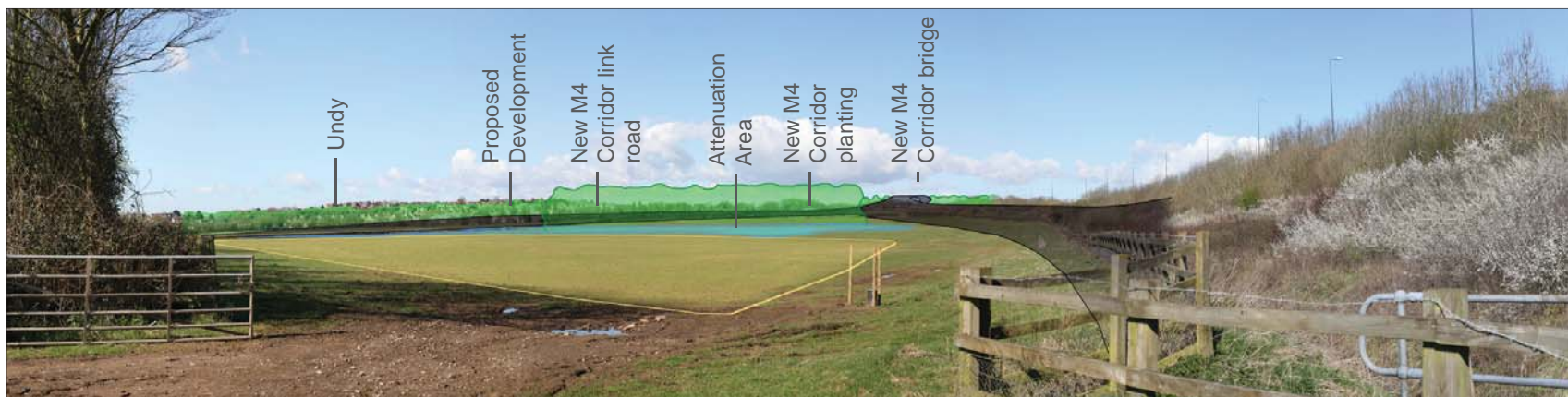




Viewpoint 11: Existing View



Viewpoint 11: Year 1 Cumulative View



Viewpoint 11: Year 15 Cumulative View

**Views from the B4245 (Group E– Viewpoints 10, 11 and 12)**

Receptors: Motorists – Low Sensitivity, Residents – Medium Sensitivity

7.56 The initial assessment found that the proposed development would result in a **'moderate' adverse effect**, reducing to **'minor' adverse**, as experienced by motorists and a **'substantial' adverse effect** as experienced by residents of the property opposite the allotments.

**Viewpoint 10 – View looking north east along the B4245 as it leaves Undy (approximately 75 m from the Site)**

7.57 The primary change to this view would be the introduction of the houses on the Rockfield Farm site, however, in the short term, it would be possible to discern the new road leading from the proposed junction on the B4245 some 500m to the west which would rise as it travels northwards. Over time the substantial woodland planting that would come forward with the road would largely screen this from view. The Vinegar Hill development would not be visible from this location.

**Viewpoint 11 – View looking west along the B4245 as it leaves the M4 underpass (approximately 655m from the Site)**

7.58 This view is located at the point where new embankment works would take place as part of the M4 Corridor around Newport. With this in mind the photomontage is faded out to the right of view and the existing embankment shown in the photograph would no longer be there. However, as the photomontage illustrates the new road and its attendant ground modelling and attenuation areas would become the dominant feature in the view from the outset, with only the upper parts of the Rockfield Farm development being visible in the distance. The Vinegar Hill development would not be visible from this location.

7.59 By Year 15, as illustrated the considerable planting associated with the road would have matured to all but totally screen the Rockfield Farm development, with only small sections of the rooftops remaining visible.

**Viewpoint 12 – View looking west along the B4245 as it approaches Undy (adjacent to the Site)**

7.60 The proposed Rockfield Farm development would occupy the field in the foreground, however beyond the allotments it would be possible to see the new flyover connecting the existing M4 to the relief road. While the planting to the east of the Site would reduce views of much of the new road network, it is anticipated that the flyover would remain visible in the long term. The Vinegar Hill development would not be visible from this location.



#### Summary of views from the B4245

- 7.61 The experience of those using this short section of the the B4245 would change considerably with the introduction of these developments, the urban edge would be extended eastwards and would be enveloped by the planting associated with the new M4 Corridor around Newport. In conjunction with this the new road network would include a new junction off the road, and a new flyover which would be visible from this stretch.
- 7.62 It is considered that cumulatively this would give rise to a 'high' magnitude of effect, resulting in a **'moderate' adverse effect** at Year 1 and Year 15 for both motorists and a 'substantial' adverse effect at Year 1 and 15 for residents, which is considered significant.
- 7.63 Both Rockfield Farm and the new M4 Corridor around Newport would contribute to these effects.

#### Views from the M4 (Group F– Viewpoints 11 and 13)

Receptors: Motorists - Low

- 7.64 The initial assessment found that the proposed development would result in a **'minor' adverse' effect**, reducing to **'negligible'** in the long term.

#### Viewpoint 11 – View looking west along the B4245 as it leaves the M4 underpass (approximately 655 m from the Site)

- 7.65 Motorists on the M4 would have a similar, albeit elevated view, towards Undy as that illustrated in the photomontage. Views from the motorway would also be further restricted by existing roadside and proposed vegetation. While it would be possible to discern the proposed housing in Field Nos. 1, 4 and 5 as it rises up the hillside, new junctions and the proposed flyover would also come into view for motorists using this stretch of road and it is considered that their views of and attention on the surrounding landscape would be further reduced. The Vinegar Hill development would not be visible from this location.

#### Viewpoint 13 – View looking south-west alongside the M4 (approximately 60m from the Site)

- 7.66 From this location the proposed development in Field No. 3, along with the road connecting to Vinegar Hill would briefly be visible, albeit the view would be further restricted during the summer months when the trees are in leaf. The buffer planting to the north of this small residential area would, over time serve to further filter and screen these views. To west of this location the motorway is flanked by dense vegetation which acts as a visual screen and it is not anticipated that the employment units would be visible in the summer months, although filtered views may be available during winter.

- 7.67 On the opposite side of the motorway the new, elevated section of the M4 Corridor around Newport would be visible.

#### Summary of views from the M4

- 7.68 For motorists travelling along the M4 it would be possible to glimpse the new development in between the existing roadside vegetation, including, for a short stretch the Vinegar Hill development. Junctions and flyovers formed as part of the ne M4 Corridor around Newport would be prominent along this stretch of motorway, but not out of character for those using the road. As such, it is considered that cumulatively the developments would give rise to a 'low' magnitude of effect at Year 1 and Year 15 and that this would result in a **'minor' adverse effect**, which is not considered significant. The Rockfield Farm development would make a small contribution to this effect.

#### Viewpoint 14 – View looking north adjacent to the railway line (approximately 430 m from the Site)

Receptors: Rail Passengers – Very Low sensitivity

- 7.69 The initial assessment found that the proposed development would result in a **'negligible' effect** in the short and long term.
- 7.70 For the brief stretch of track between where the railway passes under the M4 and runs to the south of a block of woodland to the south of the town, a distance of approximately 600m, filtered views of the site are available. It would be possible to discern the proposed development within Field Nos. 1, 4 and 5 from the moving train. The development would be visible within the context of the existing settlement and heavily filtered views only briefly available. The Vinegar Hill development would not be visible from this location. It would be possible to discern the new M4 Corridor around Newport, but these views would be brief and filtered. Given the above and that the railway already runs parallel to the motorway for a stretch it is considered that these receptors would experience a 'low' magnitude of effect, resulting in a **'negligible' effect** in the short and the long term, which is not considered significant.

#### Viewpoint 15 – View looking west from the Wales Coast Path (approximately 2km from the site)

Receptors: Walkers and Cyclists – High Sensitivity

- 7.71 The initial assessment found that the proposed development would result in a **'minor' adverse effect** in the short and long term.
- 7.72 It would not be possible to see the Vinegar Hill development from this location. However it would be possible to discern some of the works associated with the M4 around Newport. However given the distance and the presence of the existing M4, it is considered that the magnitude of effect would remain 'low', resulting in a **'minor' adverse effect** in the short and long term, which is not considered significant.





# Section 8

**Summary**

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## 8.0 Summary

- 8.1 The Rockfield Farm Site occupies approximately 13.8ha of gently sloping land that abuts the northern edge of the town of Undy in Monmouthshire.
- 8.2 The surrounding landscape is dissected by a number of transport routes including the M4/M48 motorway, the Bristol to Cardiff railway line and the B4245. The M4/M48 is an especially dominant feature in the landscape, both aurally and visually. The landscape surrounding the town is predominantly agricultural, with fields in both arable and pastoral use.
- 8.3 The Site comprises five irregular shaped fields, Rockfield Farm and its associated outbuildings and a long belt of dense woodland approximately 30m wide. The site is bisected by a narrow lane, The Elms, which connects Undy with the countryside to the north.
- 8.4 The M4 is located on a raised embankment immediately to the north of the Site.
- 8.5 The greater part of the southern boundary is formed by the existing urban edge. The houses along this boundary have not been orientated towards the Site and the boundary itself is generally formed by closeboard fencing which precludes views of the Site from the downstairs rooms. The B4245, the primary route into the town from the east abuts the Site's southern boundary for a distance of approximately 100m.
- 8.6 To the east the Site is abutted by a well-used allotment plot adjacent to the B4245 and agricultural fields, the boundary being formed by a well-managed hedgerow. To the west the Site is also abutted by further agricultural land, with the boundary being formed by hedgerows, the northernmost section of which is heavily tree lined.
- 8.7 Vehicular access into the Site is currently via a field gates on The Elms and two accesses into Rockfield Farm itself. The Site is crossed by two public rights of way.
- 8.8 The trees on site have been the subject of an Arboricultural Report. This graded the majority of the trees on site as B and C category, with the exception of the belt of woodland which was categorised as A.
- 8.9 One mature oak on the site is the subject of a Tree Preservation Order.
- 8.10 The land is allocated within the Monmouth County Council Adopted Local Development Plan as a Strategic Mixed Use Site.

- 8.11 This LVIA is submitted as part of a planning application for 266 houses and 1.99ha of employment at the Rockfield Farm Site.
- 8.12 This LVIA has reviewed the sensitivity of the landscape and visual receptors in the surrounding area and predicted the anticipated effects that would arise from the proposed development.
- 8.13 The Site and the land to the south fall within Natural Resources Wales National Landscape Character Area 34 – Gwent Levels. The land immediately to the north of the M4 falls within National Landscape Character Area 32 Wye Valley and Wentwood. This assessment covers the whole of Wales and was designed to identify landscape character in a way that 'gives a distinctive sense of place that enables us to recognise it as a single area', according to their "geological, habitats, historic, cultural and perceptual characteristics"
- 8.14 These areas have been subdivided according to five aspects by LANDMAP – the Welsh landscape baseline 'an all-Wales landscape resource where landscape characteristics, qualities and influences on the landscape are recorded and evaluated'. These five aspects are: cultural, geological, historic, habitat and visual & sensory. These aspects may be drawn upon when undertaking landscape character assessment.
- 8.15 Accordingly, the assessment identified seven Local Landscape Character Areas (LLCAs) in and around the site which have the potential to be affected by the proposed development.
- 8.16 Fifteen viewpoints were identified to go forward into the visual assessment. Where the viewpoints demonstrated a sequence of views these were assessed as a group, with the different visual receptors being clearly identified. Three viewpoints have been considered with the aid of photomontages showing the proposed development at Year 1 and Year 15 after completion
- 8.17 In consideration of the assessment, a range of measures were incorporated into the design proposals.
- 8.18 The LVIA considered the potential effects of the proposed development in the short term, (Year 1, when the development would be complete) and in the long term (Year 15 and beyond)

### Summary of Landscape Effects

- 8.19 The assessment has considered the predicted effects on the seven LLCAs defined for this assessment.
- 8.20 Of the LLCAs two (LLCA 1 – The Elms and LLCA 4 – Rolling Farmland The Elms to Vinegar Hill) would experience significant adverse effects. Both these LLCAs would experience a notable change to their character as a result of the proposed development. However, it is not considered that these significant effects would extend to the wider area.

### Summary of Visual Effects

- 8.21 The visual assessment found a small number of significant adverse effects, namely those views experienced by walkers using the footpaths that currently traverse the Site or are very close to it, allotment holders adjacent to the Site and the residents of the property opposite the allotments who would have a direct view onto the Site. It is not considered that these significant effects would extend beyond these static locations and the short stretch of path that crosses the Site and the land immediately to the west.

### Cumulative Effects

- 8.22 The potential cumulative effects arising from the proposed development in conjunction with the allocated site to the west, Vinegar Hill and the proposed M4 Corridor around Newport road were also considered below.
- 8.23 The cumulative effects assessment focused on the additional effects the Rockfield Farm development would give rise to in conjunction with the Vinegar Hill Development and the M4 Corridor around Newport.

### Summary of Cumulative Landscape Effects

- 8.24 Of the LLCAs defined for this assessment, four would experience significant adverse cumulative effects. One (LLCA 4 – Rolling Farmland – The Elms to Vinegar Hill) would be as the result of the Rockfield Farm and Vinegar Hill development combined, while a further two (LLCA5 – Rolling Farmland to the east of Undy and LLCA 7 Rolling Farmland North of the M4) would be largely as a result of the new M4 Corridor around Newport. The significant effects experienced by LLCA1 would be as a result of the Rockfield Farm site alone.

### Summary of Cumulative Visual Effects

- 8.25 The visual assessment found a small number of significant adverse cumulative visual effects. These include the effects that would be experienced by walkers using Footpath 272/16/1 which crosses the Vinegar Hill site and whose experience would change from one of walking through open fields to one of walking through a residential development. It would also include those using the footpaths and lanes to the north of the M4, for whom the new M4 Corridor around Newport would become a dominant feature in their view.
- 8.26 Overall it is considered that the Rockfield Farm Site could successfully accommodate development of the type proposed without giving rise to any significant effects on the landscape character of the wider area or the visual amenity of those using it.

The Richards Partnership  
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