

WEST BERKSHIRE COUNCIL

**LANDSCAPE CAPACITY ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL HOUSING SITES WITHIN AND
ADJACENT TO THE NORTH WESSEX DOWNS AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY IN
WEST BERKSHIRE**

**FINAL PHASE 2 REPORT: EASTERN URBAN AREA PART I
EUA 003 TO EUA013**

EASTERN URBAN AREA

Settlement	Tilehurst and Calcot
North Wessex Downs AONB Character areas:	
LCA 8A Hermitage Wooded Commons	
Date of site survey	12 June 2014
Surveyor	BK

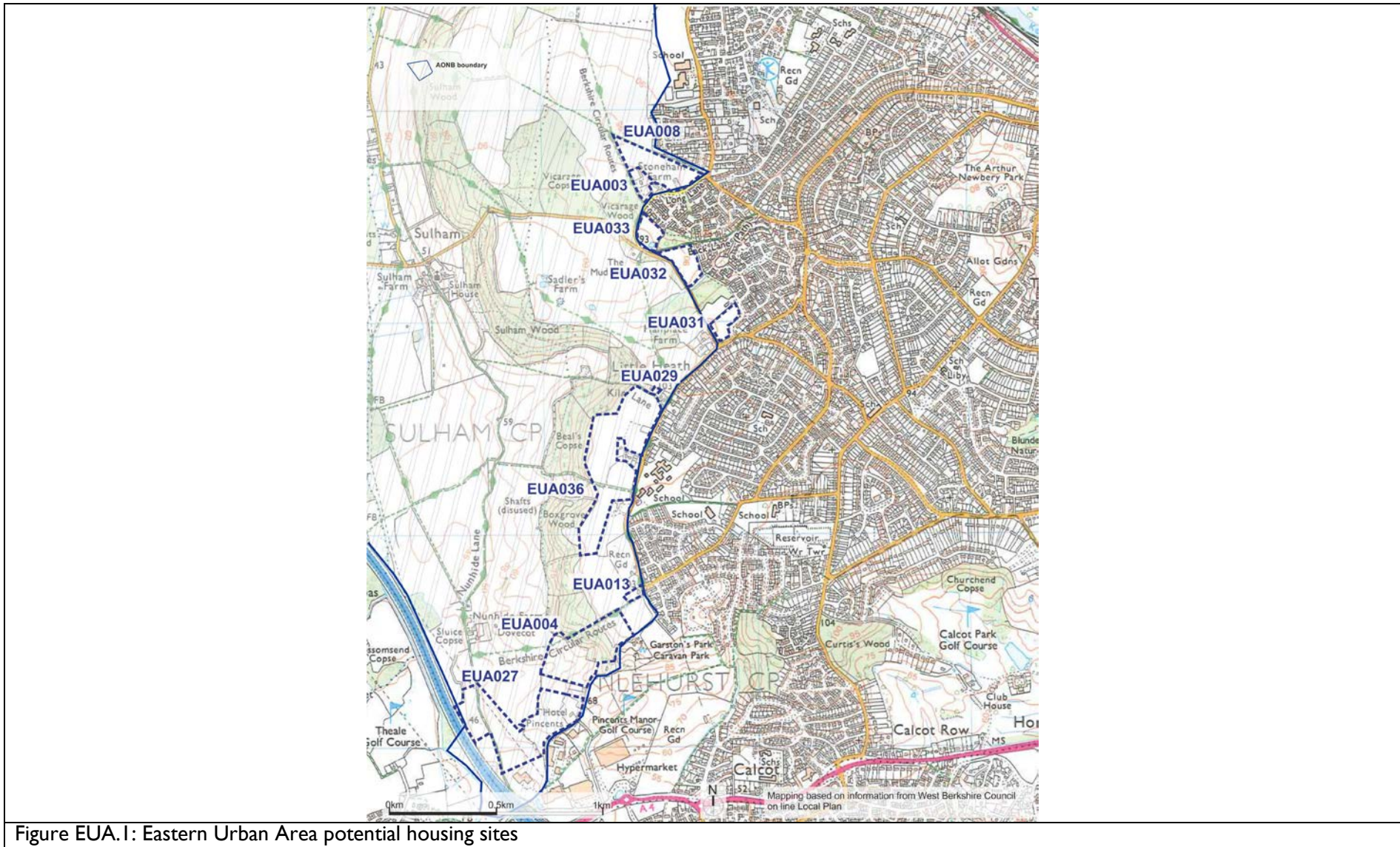


Figure EUA.1: Eastern Urban Area potential housing sites

Key landscape characteristics of LCA8A

- lowland area at the base of the chalk dip slope, underlain by clays, silts, sands and gravels of the Reading and Bagshot Beds and London Clay, giving rise to nutrient poor, often acidic, soils
- a broad undulating plateau falling towards the Kennet Valley to the south east and dissected by River Pang
- variable land cover forming an intricate mosaic of woodland, pasture and small areas of remnant heathland. Some more open areas of arable land can be found on the slopes that drop to the Pang Valley and to the south east near Beenham
- large, interconnected woodland blocks and strong hedgerow pattern with mature trees restrict views and create an enclosed and intimate character. Low wooded horizons are a feature
- numerous semi-natural woodlands of ancient origin, with some large commercial plantations. Wooded commons and small areas of remnant heath are a distinctive element
- many features of biodiversity interest including heathland, dry and wet woodland, bog and areas of wet meadow
- dominated by small irregular fields of informal and piecemeal enclosures, of medieval and post-medieval date with some larger, more regular and straight edged, formal Parliamentary enclosure on flatter terrain in the south-east and west
- intricate network of rural lanes, many sunken and overhung by woodland plus more intrusive road infrastructure
- ridge top straight roads (NDLCA LCT13)
- historic parkland based on medieval deer parks and manor houses with associated ornamental parklands with gardens, rides and plantings are a particular feature
- Intimate scale on flat to undulating plateau (NDLCA LCT13)

Key visual characteristics of LCA8A

- EUA 008 lies in open to semi-enclosed landscape (NDLCA LCT2)
- Mainly enclosed landscape with views restricted by woodland (NDLCA LCT13).

Key settlement characteristics of LCA8A

- dispersed pattern of settlement characteristic of encroachment into areas of common and woodland
- includes large nucleated villages, lines of estate cottages, loose roadside settlements as well as many dispersed farmsteads and residential country houses
- well settled area with rising population due to proximity to accessibility to Reading
- Tilehurst/Purley/Calcot characterised by late 20th century private housing development and small areas of semi-rural very low density housing along the urban edge (Quality Design SPD- Part 3)

Summary of the key characteristics of the settlement and landscape constraints on the extent and location of development

The potential housing sites in this part of the Eastern Urban Area all lie within the North Wessex Downs AONB where it meets the western urban edge of Tilehurst and Calcot. A detailed strategic assessment of the landscape sensitivity around the Eastern Urban Area has already been undertaken in a previous landscape sensitivity study, 'An Integrated Landscape Sensitivity Approach to Settlement Expansion within West Berkshire' (LSS) (2009) (<http://info.westberks.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=36263&p=0>). This report builds upon the work in that assessment by examining the Eastern Urban Area and its landscape setting in greater detail, specifically concentrating on the special qualities and key characteristics which contribute to the natural beauty of the AONB. The sensitivity classification and key landscape and visual aspects of each LLCA are considered within each potential housing site report.

The landscape pattern, the exposure and character of the adjacent built form and the visual qualities all vary along this edge of the AONB and there is some subsequent variation in the landscape sensitivity of the open land on the urban edge within the AONB. This is reflected in the findings of the LSS. The ten potential housing sites in this area fall within LLCAs in that study which vary from *medium to high* sensitivity (LLCA2J) to *medium* and *medium to low* (LLCA13E).

The lower levels of landscape sensitivity reflect the urbanising influence of Calcot and Tilehurst. However all of this area falls within the AONB LLC8A which forms a part of the Lowland Mosaic landscape type which is found around the eastern edge of the AONB and most closely relates to the urban areas of Reading, Thatcham and Newbury. The main part of Tilehurst sits on the plateau, at 100m AOD and higher, above the Pang Valley and the Kennet Valley. The built form has however split down the upper slopes towards Calcot in the south and Purley in the north so that Tilehurst now merges with these two smaller settlement areas. Despite this the western boundary of Tilehurst is well defined with most built form east of Pincents Lane, Little Heath Road and Long Lane, although scattered groups of houses, the Ikea site, and two small estates at Purley are located west of these roads. The undeveloped plateau extends westwards up to the wooded escarpment (Sulham Wood etc). The land then falls steeply down the escarpment which is either wooded as at Sulham Wood to the west or open as above Pincents Manor to the south.

To the north close to Tilehurst/Purley the slopes are much gentler with the steep escarpment some distance west of the urban edge. This latter landform is open with blocks of woodland giving rise to high intervisibility between the Chilterns AONB in the north and the North Wessex Downs AONB in the south across the River Thames Valley. In the south the settlement edge east of Pincents Lane is fragmented with large scale commercial areas, and a supermarket. These extend down to the A4 beyond which lies the settlement at Calcot and the open land flanking the M4 and River Kennet.

Although the Eastern Urban Area has expanded west and south of the Tilehurst plateau to Calcot and to merge with Purley next to the River Thames, further major expansion would detract from the special qualities of the AONB. Where some smaller scale development may be recommended, great care will still be needed to minimise the impact on the landscape character of the surrounding AONB, through limitations on development and generous provision of Green Infrastructure. In some cases, in order to mitigate the existing harm to the AONB landscape from existing built form such as modern housing on the edge of the town, some new development may be advantageous. Particular care will be needed to avoid intrusion from the built form on the wider AONB landscape, especially where the open panoramic views are a notable valued feature and a key constraint on development.

Sources:

North Wessex Downs AONB Integrated Landscape Character Assessment 2002; and An Integrated Landscape Sensitivity Approach to Settlement Expansion within West Berkshire (LSS) 2009: West Reading

Additional information from:

- Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment 2003 (BLCA)
- Newbury District Landscape Character Assessment 1993 (NDLCA)
- Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC)
- Quality Design SPD- Part 3

A. Assessment of Potential Housing Site: EUA003: Stonehams Farm, Long Lane, Tilehurst

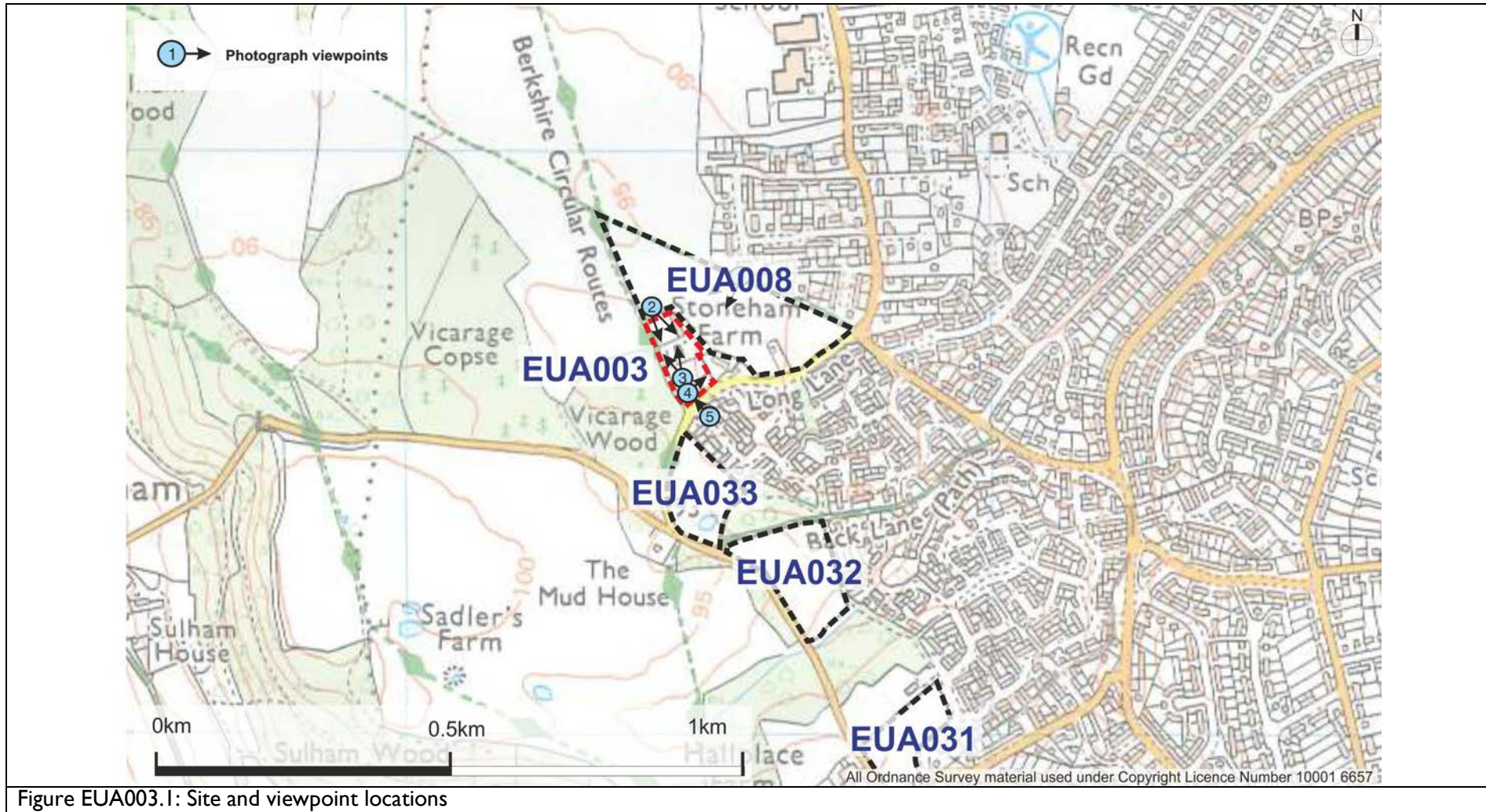


Figure EUA003.1: Site and viewpoint locations

An Integrated Landscape Sensitivity Approach to Settlement Expansion within West Berkshire (LSS) 2009: LLCA2I: Upper Sulham Slopes.

LLCA2I: Upper Sulham Slopes have an overall sensitivity of *medium*.

LLCA2I: Upper Sulham Slopes is characterised by large open fields, enclosed by the woodlands to the north and west and the tree belt along the edge of Purley. As it sits on an elevated plateau, there are long views, over the woodlands to both the Chilterns and North Wessex Downs AONBs. A strong sense of tranquillity is a key feature. The key elements of landscape sensitivity are:

- Located on an elevated plateau
- Long views to, and potentially from, the surrounding landscape
- Good sense of tranquillity despite proximity of Purley
- Good quality agricultural land
- Little built form
- Very open landscape
- Strong sense of enclosure within woodlands

Other landscape sensitivity interests are:

- Few landscape boundary or other features
- Little historic interest
- Some public access across the area

Wider landscape: LLCA2I Upper Sulham Dipslopes share similar characteristics with the open farmed landscape to the south around Sadler's Farm, giving a strong sense of continuity. LLCA 2I has strong visual links with the North Wessex Downs to the west, beyond Pangbourne and the Chilterns AONB to the north.

Setting to the urban form: LLCA2I: Upper Sulham Dipslopes abut Purley but is visually separated by a robust belt of trees along the urban edge. This screens the built form and creates a much stronger sense of local rural tranquillity than you would expect so close to Purley.

PHOTOGRAPHS



Viewpoint 1: View south to the site from the footpath to the north on the edge of housing south of Conifer Drive. Vicarage Wood behind the site.



Viewpoint 2: View of the north end of the site from adjacent field



Viewpoint 3: View over southern part of the site from driveway to site



Viewpoint 4: View from driveway to historic settlement (HLC) at Stoneham Farm



Viewpoint 5: View from Long Lane up driveway to site

Site description

Site EUA003 comprises a number of former farm buildings and small paddocks to the west of Stoneham's Farm farmhouse. The western boundary is bounded by a well used footpath below a bank along the Berkshire Circular Route. To the west of this lies Vicarage Wood. To the south lies a mature hedgerow along Long Lane with the urban area of Tilehurst beyond. Open fields extend to the north and east beyond open boundaries, separating the site from the urban extension of Tilehurst around Coopers Drive, and extending into the wider open landscape.

Relationship with adjacent settlement

- Separated from Tilehurst by Long Lane and a mature hedgerow
- Extensions to the west of Long Lane are not uncommon north of the site but tend to be broken up by open land
- Sits on higher ground of the plateau at 90m AOD
- Appears to be used for non agricultural uses
- Built form on site
- Intervisibility with urban edge

Relationship with adjacent wider countryside

- Rural setting created by Vicarage Wood and open fields
- Part of the open plateau landscape along the eastern edge of the AONB
- Contrasts with open landscape of the AONB

Impact on key landscape characteristics

- Loss of semi-open landscape setting to Vicarage Wood
- Loss of semi-rural setting to Stoneham Farm

Impact on key visual characteristics

- Potential visual impact on users of Berkshire Circular Route and footpath network to the north-east
- Largely screened from Long Lane and footpath as passes the site

Impact on key settlement characteristics

- Loss of remains of historic settlement (HLC)

Summary of compliance with NPPF

Development on the site, subject to the recommendations below, could be accommodated subject to important measures to conserve and enhance the natural beauty and special qualities of the AONB.

Recommendations

This site is recommended for further consideration as a potential housing site on landscape grounds. Development on this site should be contained to the area shown in Figure EUA003.2 and be subject to the following measures to conserve and enhance the AONB:

- Creation of woodland on the northern most portion of the site linking to Vicarage Wood
- Retention of boundary hedgerows and trees along Long Lane and Berkshire Circular Route
- New tree belt and hedgerow along the northern exposed boundary
- Preferred access in landscape terms off Long Lane as shown in Figure EUA003.2
- A full detailed landscape and visual impact assessment will be required to inform the final capacity of the site.

Cumulative effect with some potential development at EUA008

There is also the potential for some development at EUA008 as shown in Figure EUA008.2. When considered cumulatively with the recommended area for EUA008, this would have the effect of enclosing Stoneham Farm within new development and creating a continuous expansion between Vicarage Farm and the existing urban form west of Long Lane. However, the EUA003 does not make a significant contribution to the special qualities of the AONB and does not extend above the 90m AOD contour. It is also separated from Vicarage Wood by a change in level and the track along the Berkshire Circular Route. Significant Green Infrastructure in the form of woodland planting would be needed to both sites to mitigate both new and existing development on the edge of Tilehurst which could link with Vicarage Wood and a small copse on the northern boundary of EUA008. Should part of EUA008 go forward as a potential housing site, there seems little objection to also developing part of EUA003 on landscape and visual grounds.

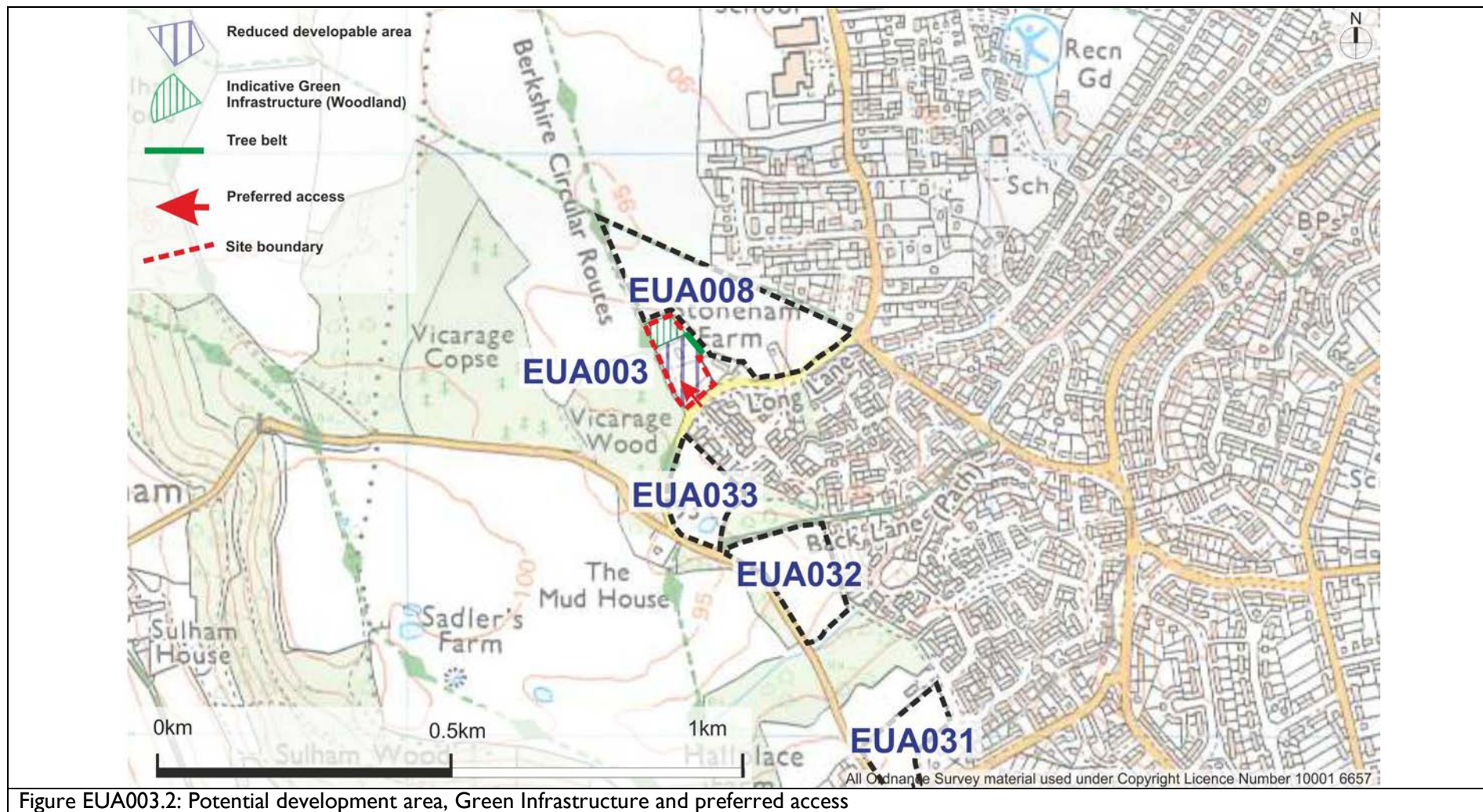


Figure EUA003.2: Potential development area, Green Infrastructure and preferred access

B. Assessment of Potential Housing Site: EUA004: Land at Pincents Lane, Calcot

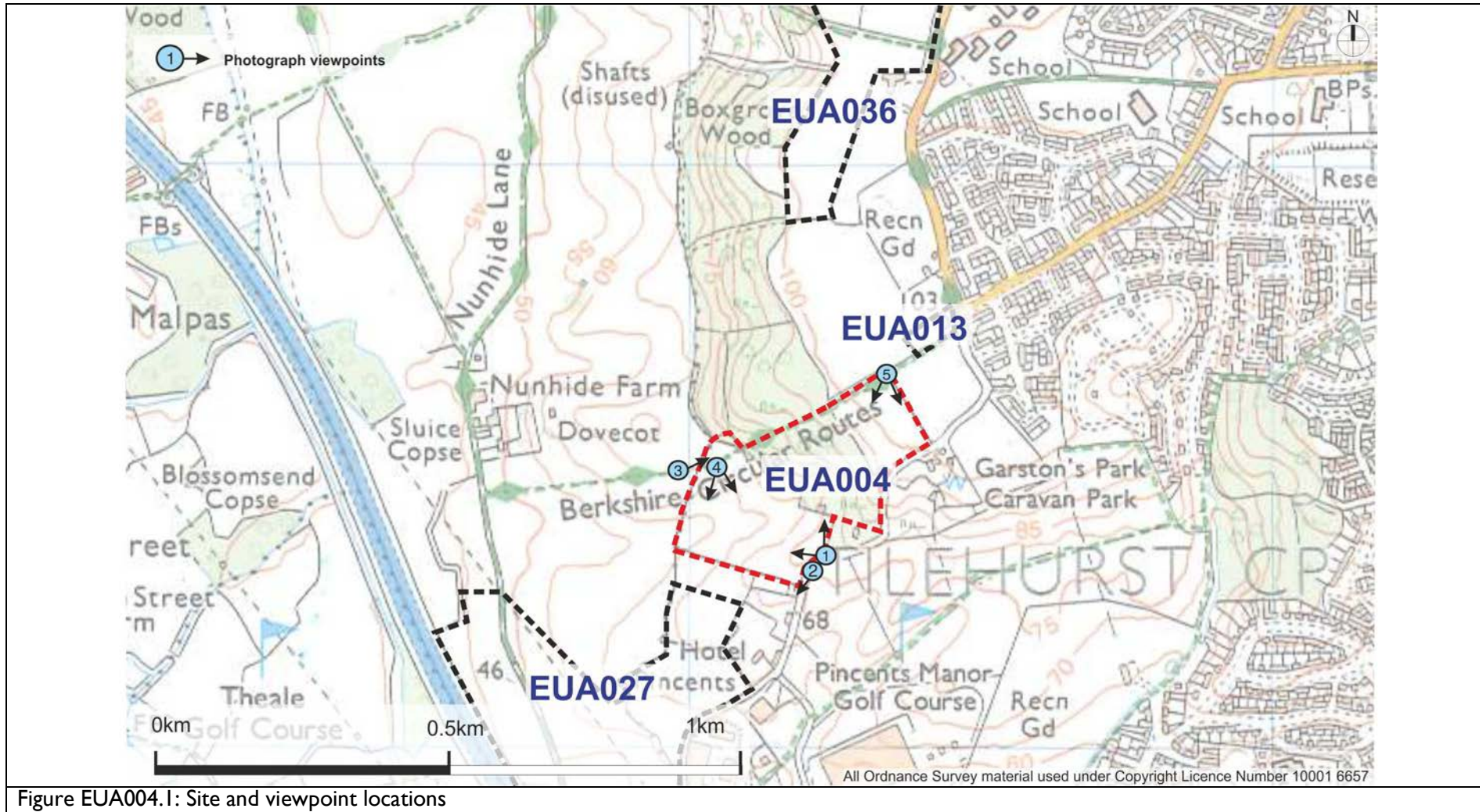


Figure EUA004.I: Site and viewpoint locations

An Integrated Landscape Sensitivity Approach to Settlement Expansion within West Berkshire (LSS) 2009: LLCA2J: Lower Sulham Slopes, with a small part (Harefield Copse) within LLCA14J: Tilehurst Plateau Edge

LLCA2J: Lower Sulham Slopes have an overall sensitivity of *medium to high*.

LLCA2J is characterised by its strong sense of seclusion and tranquillity, despite the proximity of Reading in the south, and by the extensive views to the wider AONB landscape across rolling fields and the Pang Valley. Its built form is sparse but is of an intimate scale and of historic interest. The LLCA lacks boundary features and contrasts with the intricate landscape pattern of the Pang Valley. The key elements of landscape sensitivity are:

- Good quality agricultural land
- Open landscape but good sense of seclusion
- Predominantly tranquil with some intrusion in the south from the M4 and Calcot
- Sparse settlement with narrow winding roads
- A number of small but distinctive local landmark features
- Extensive areas of medium to high historically sensitive landscapes
- Designed landscape at Sulham and medieval farm buildings
- Good public rights of way provision

Other landscape sensitivity interests are:

- Topographical transition from the escarpment edge to the Pang valley floor
- Lack of field boundaries
- Woodland copses
- Part of Sulham gap WWII defences
- Small amount of BAP and SSSI wet woodland
- Some localised cultural interest

Wider landscape: LLCA2J Lower Sulham Dipslopes has a close affinity with the other LLCAs which make up the landscape of the escarpment – 18F, 2I, 13E, 14I and 14J. It also forms the setting to the Pang valley landscape to the west and the village of Sulham. It is visually contained, with views to the edge of the adjoining landscapes except for in the south where long views extend north and west as far as the Chilterns and the Englefield escarpment.

Setting to the urban form: LLCA2J: Lower Sulham Dipslopes is separated from the edge of Reading by the escarpment itself and its wooded landscapes. A small section abuts Pincents Lane in the south but some separation is created through the local topography and a belt of hedgerow and trees. The landscape quality of this short section is vulnerable to erosion through inappropriate development in the Pincents Lane area.

LLCA14J: Tilehurst Plateau Edge has an overall *medium sensitivity*.

Tilehurst Plateau Edge is characterised by its sloping topography and pattern of woodland and open fields with little settlement except for a farmhouse. Panoramic views from the open slopes. The *Key elements of landscape sensitivity* are:

- Escarpment topography
- Extensive scarp woodlands connecting into adjacent woodland cover
- Extensive areas of open grassland with public access
- Scattered mature trees on open slopes
- Panoramic views from open slopes
- Areas of medium to high historic landscape sensitivity in the south
- Good public access and recreational provision
- Medium biodiversity with significant area of Woodland BAP habitats

Wider landscape: *LLCA14J Tilehurst Plateau Edge* is an important part of the escarpment landscape to the west of Reading, above the Pang Valley. Where it wraps around to the south above Calcot, there are visual and physical links with both the open areas of LLCA20E and open fields of 2J.

Setting to the urban form: *LLCA14J Tilehurst Plateau Edge* is separated from Tilehurst by LLCA13E but in the south it abuts Calcot. The rising slopes form an important setting to Calcot where the urban edge is particularly exposed. Strong contrast with the adjacent urban form.

PHOTOGRAPHS



Viewpoint 1: View from Pincent's Lane looking west into southern part of the site with Harefield Copse to the right



Viewpoint 2: View down Pincent's Lane to entrance of two houses on the site



Viewpoint 3: View over site to Harefield Copse in central part of the site



Viewpoint 4: View over southern part of site from Berkshire Circular Route looking south-east with Harefield Copse to the left



Viewpoint 5: View from Berkshire Circular Route north-east of Harefield Copse looking south-west over northern part of site

Site description

Site EUA004 sub-divides into three parts. The northern part lies on the plateau and comprises a number of small paddocks and rough grazing land. It is bounded to the north by another group of paddocks, to the east by the tree lined Pincents Lane and to the west by a tree lined hedgerow beyond which lie playing fields. The central portion is on a steep escarpment and forms part of Harefield Copse which continues to the west along the escarpment and links into woodland to the east towards Garston's Park Caravan Park. The southern part is on undulating sloping ground and is also divided up into paddocks. The eastern boundary includes two residential properties next to the tree lined Pincents Lane. The southern boundary is open with EUA027 to the south beyond one field. The western boundary is a mature hedgerow beyond which lie the open Sulham slopes and the Dovecot, a prominent local feature.

Relationship with adjacent settlement

- Site is separated from Tilehurst/Calcot by open fields and the wooded and tree lined sunken route along Pincents Lane
- Two houses sit on the eastern edge. These are individual properties set in large gardens and typical of the AONB dispersed housing stock
- Site sits below the Tilehurst plateau and on slopes falling away to the south-west from the settlement
- Very little intervisibility with the urban edge (solely views to houses on Farm Drive)
- Close to well settled area of Tilehurst/Calcot

Relationship with adjacent wider countryside

- Strong relationship with the chalkland dip slope wider AONB landscape
- Harefield Copse is part of the sequence of large interconnected ancient semi-natural woodland along the Sulham escarpment which links into the woodland east of Pincents Lane
- Open fields are part of the sweep of irregular piecemeal enclosures of grassland and arable land west of Pincents Lane leading NW up the Pang Valley and Sulham slopes
- Part of the woodland/pasture mosaic
- Bordered by a typical sunken lane along Pincents Lane
- Part enclosed – part open landscape
- Part of the tranquil landscape west of Pincents Lane
- Good public right of way link with wider landscape

Impact on key landscape characteristics

- Loss of significant woodland at Harefield Copse
- Loss of matrix of woodland and pasture which has strong links with the wider landscape
- Topography would require major modification to enable housing development
- Urbanisation of sunken route along Pincents Lane and public right of way through the AONB
- Loss of visual tranquillity

Impact on key visual characteristics

- The site is well screened from Pincent's Lane
- Significant visual impact on users of the Berkshire Circular Route and visitors to the Dovecot
- Potential visual impact on a wide area south and west of the site including the AONB, Sulhampstead escarpment, and Englefield Park
- Loss of prominent landscape feature: Harefield Copse
- Impact on the skyline in views from the west

Impact on key settlement characteristics

- Development on the site would extend the settlement out onto the south-western slopes of the AONB away from the plateau and the southern slopes dipping down to Calcot
- Poor landscape and visual connections with the existing built form
- Erosion of the settlement pattern on the edge of the AONB in this location

Summary of compliance with NPPF

Development on this site would result in significant harm to the natural beauty and special qualities of the AONB.

Recommendations

The site should not be pursued further as a potential housing site on landscape grounds.

C. Assessment of Potential Housing Site: EUA008: Stonehams Farm, Long Lane, Tilehurst

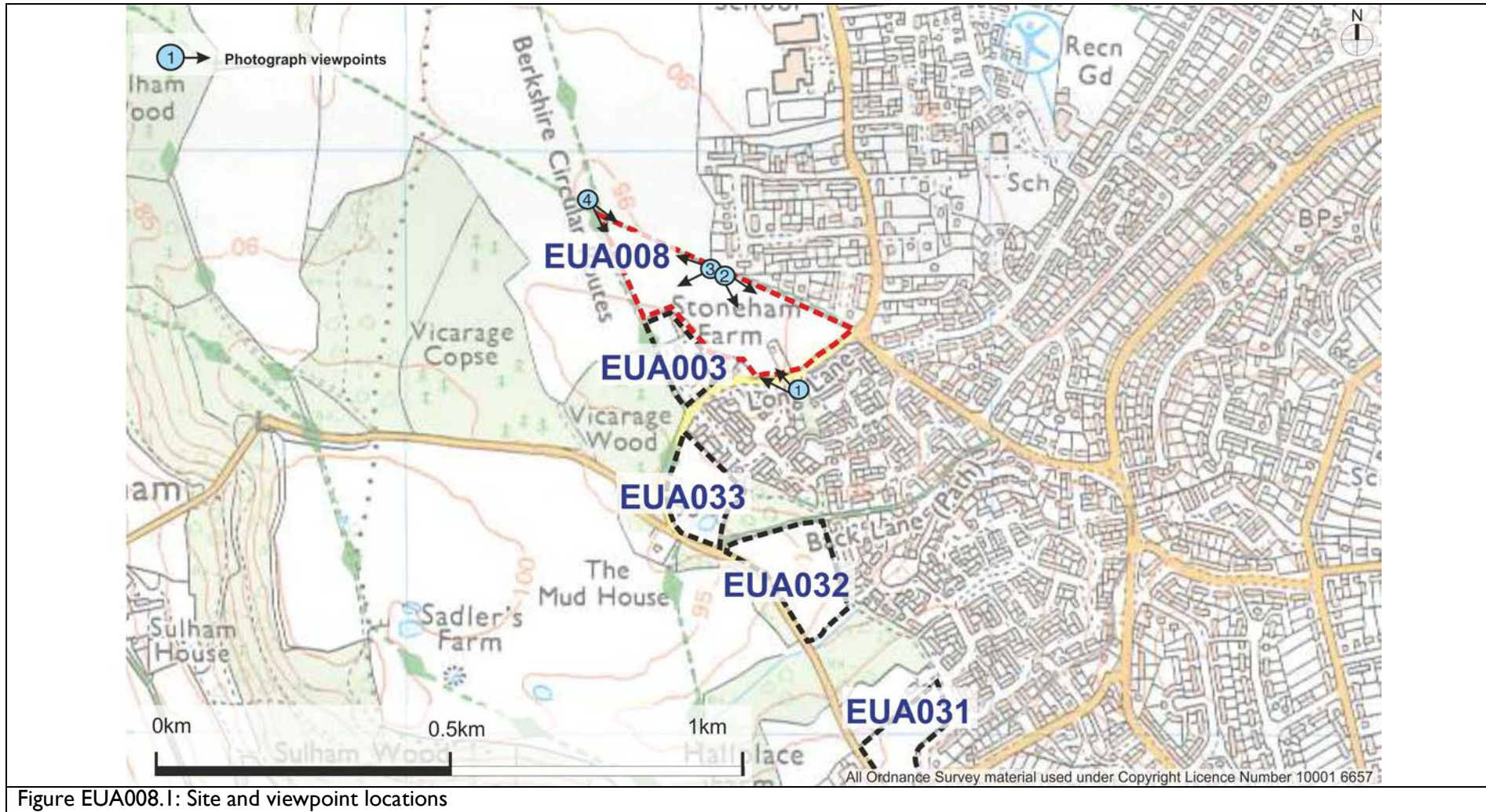


Figure EUA008.1: Site and viewpoint locations

An Integrated Landscape Sensitivity Approach to Settlement Expansion within West Berkshire (LSS) 2009: LLCA2I: Upper Sulham Slopes.

LLCA2I: Upper Sulham Slopes have an overall sensitivity of *medium*.

LLCA2I: Upper Sulham Slopes is characterised by large open fields, enclosed by the woodlands to the north and west and the tree belt along the edge of Purley. As it sits on an elevated plateau, there are long views, over the woodlands to both the Chilterns and North Wessex Downs AONBs. A strong sense of tranquillity is a key feature. The key elements of landscape sensitivity are:

- Located on an elevated plateau
- Long views to, and potentially from, the surrounding landscape
- Good sense of tranquillity despite proximity of Purley
- Good quality agricultural land
- Little built form
- Very open landscape
- Strong sense of enclosure within woodlands

Other landscape sensitivity interests are:

- Few landscape boundary or other features
- Little historic interest
- Some public access across the area

Wider landscape: LLCA2I Upper Sulham Dipslopes share similar characteristics with the open farmed landscape to the south around Sadler's Farm, giving a strong sense of continuity. LLCA 2I has strong visual links with the North Wessex Downs to the west, beyond Pangbourne and the Chilterns AONB to the north.

Setting to the urban form: LLCA2I: Upper Sulham Dipslopes abut Purley but is visually separated by a robust belt of trees along the urban edge. This screens the built form and creates a much stronger sense of local rural tranquillity than you would expect so close to Purley.

PHOTOGRAPHS



Viewpoint 1: View of site from Long Lane through gap to north of Stoneham Farm



Viewpoint 2: View south-east across site to Long Lane from footpath along northern edge of site



Viewpoint 3: View north-west across site to edge of Vicarage Copse and wider AONB landscape



Viewpoint 4: View from Berkshire Circular Route south across the site

Site description

Site EUA008 is a large arable field to the west of Long Lane. The north-west boundary is semi-open with a line of mature trees along the Berkshire Circular Route. It then continues southwards to follow the eastern boundary of EUA003 at Stoneham Farm. The north-east boundary is open and only marked by the footpath beyond which continue the open fields of the AONB. The eastern and southern boundaries abut the urban area of Tilehurst, separated by mature hedgerows and a lane and Long Lane.

<p>Relationship with adjacent settlement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contained by existing development to the north • Separated from Tilehurst to the east by Long Lane • On plateau on slopes falling towards Tilehurst
<p>Relationship with adjacent wider countryside</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upper slopes above 90m AOD have strong links with wider landscape • Shares field pattern with the wider landscape • Important part of the open plateau of eastern edge of AONB • Very open and exposed site
<p>Impact on key landscape characteristics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of open field • Potential intrusion onto higher ground outside of the settlement • Loss of open landscape setting to Stonehams Farm historic settlement (HLC)
<p>Impact on key visual characteristics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High risk of being visually prominent in views from the AONB and the open countryside
<p>Impact on key settlement characteristics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidates expansion of Tilehurst west of Long Lane • Site is already influenced in part by the adjacent exposed modern housing

Summary of compliance with NPPF

Development on the site, subject to the recommendations below, could be accommodated subject to important measures to conserve and enhance the natural beauty and special qualities of the AONB.

Recommendations

This site is recommended for further consideration as a potential housing site although development on this site should be contained to an area no greater than that shown in Figure EUA008.2 and be subject to the following measures to conserve and enhance the AONB:

- Careful visual assessment of limit of development on western side to ensure that there is no greater visual intrusion of the undeveloped AONB than at present
- Built form and edge to reflect topography and contours to fit into the landscape
- Creation of woodland on the northern most portion of the site linking to copse on northern boundary
- Ensure open buffer to Stoneham Farm
- Tree planting along Long Lane and edge of Stoneham Farm
- Retention of trees, boundary hedgerows and trees along Long Lane and Berkshire Circular Route
- New tree belt and hedgerow along the northern exposed boundary
- Preferred access in landscape terms off Long Lane as shown in Figure EUA008.2
- A full detailed landscape and visual impact assessment will be required to inform the final capacity of the site.

Cumulative effect with some potential development at EUA003

There is also the potential for some development at EUA003 as shown in Figure EUA003.2. When considered cumulatively with the recommended area for EUA003, this would have the effect of enclosing Stoneham Farm within new development and creating a continuous expansion between Vicarage Farm and the existing urban form west of Long Lane. However, the eastern part of the site EUA008 is already affected by existing urban form to the extent that it no longer retains the special qualities of the AONB to an over-riding extent. The greatest risk would be from allowing development to encroach too far above the 90m AOD contour and an increase in the visual prominence of Tilehurst as a result of development on these two sites. Therefore significant Green Infrastructure in the form of woodland planting would be needed to both sites to mitigate both new and existing development on the edge of Tilehurst which could link with Vicarage Wood and a small copse on the northern boundary of EUA008.

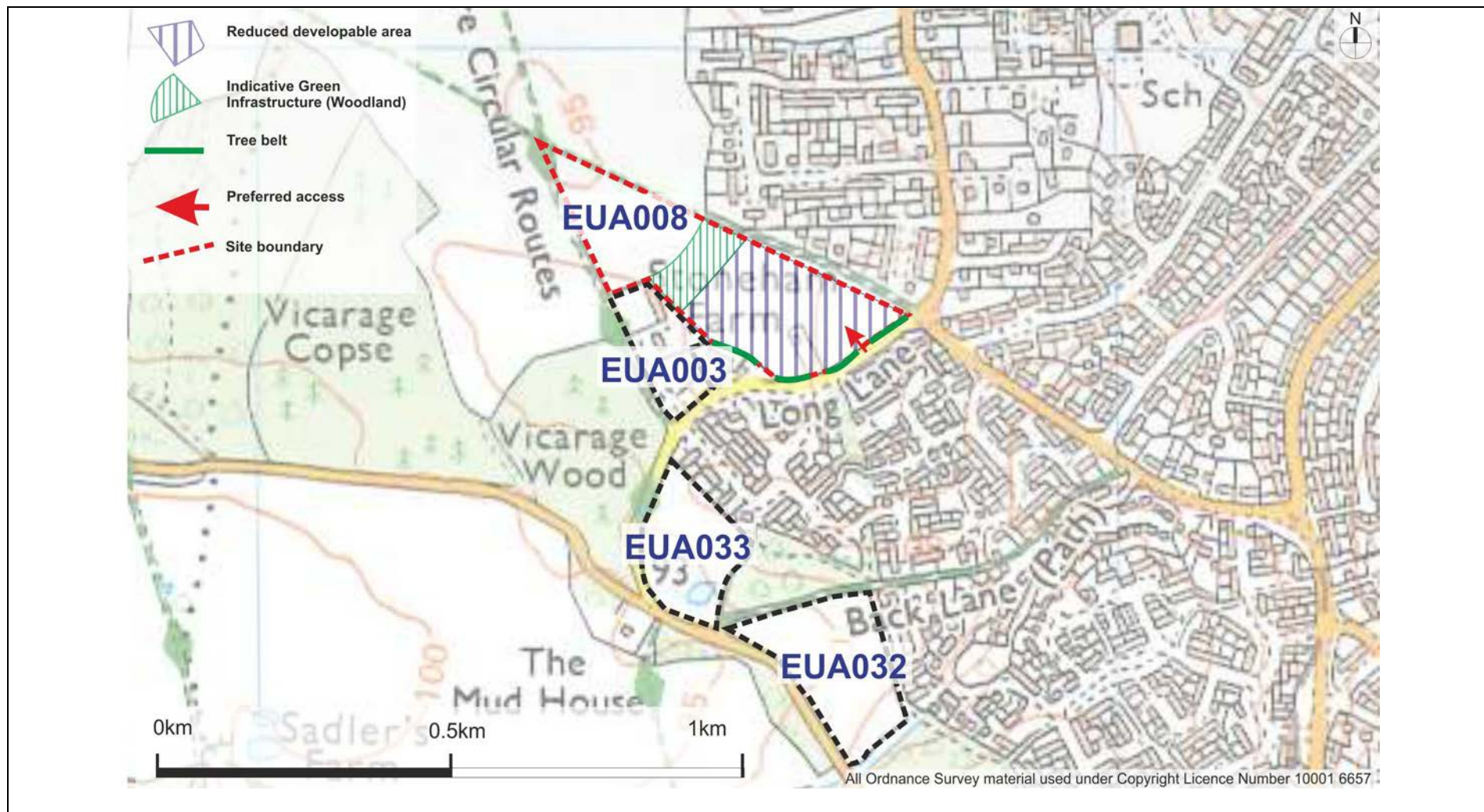


Figure EUA008.2: Potential development area, Green Infrastructure and preferred access

D. Assessment of Potential Housing Site: EUA013: Turnhams House, Pincents Lane, Tilehurst

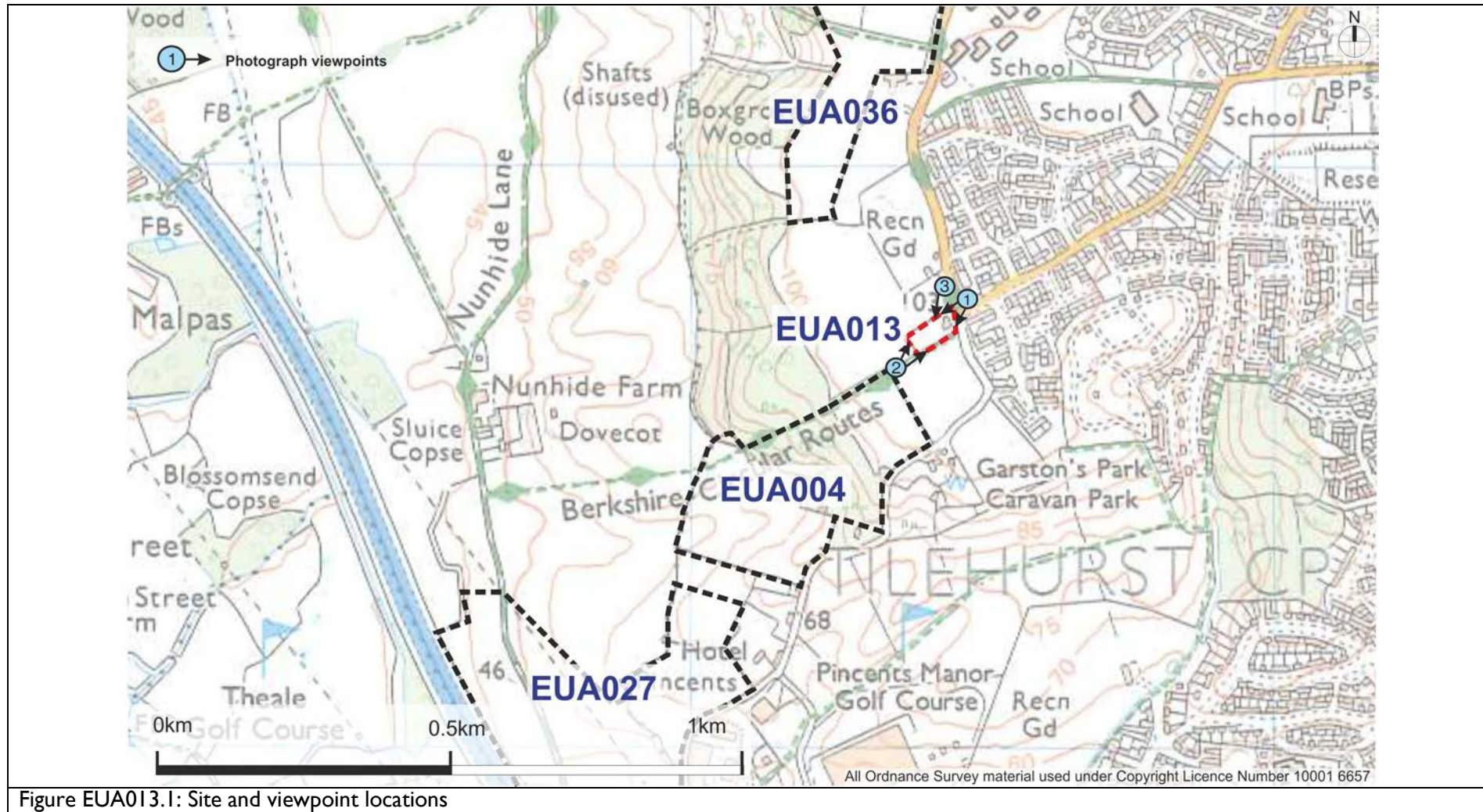


Figure EUA013.1: Site and viewpoint locations

An Integrated Landscape Sensitivity Approach to Settlement Expansion within West Berkshire (LSS) 2009: LLCA13E: Little Heath Gravel Plateau.

LLCA13E: Little Heath Gravel Plateau have an overall sensitivity of *medium to low*.

LLCA13E: Little Heath Gravel Plateau is characterised by its pattern of small pasture fields, copses and mixed types of development in the plateau top. The key elements of landscape sensitivity are:

- Pattern of small fields of pasture with copses
- Hedgerows and lines of trees
- Listed Late 16th century farmhouse at Hall Place, and 17th century Kiln Cottage
- Good public access
- Value of woodland habitat links with adjacent woodlands on the escarpment

Other landscape sensitivity interests are:

- Plateau top to escarpment
- Scattered mixed development broken up by small open areas
- Good level of visual enclosure
- Mostly low to medium historic landscape sensitivity
- Recreational provision
- Medium to low biodiversity

Wider landscape: LLCA21 Upper Sulham Dipslopes has a distinct landscape pattern which differs from the wider plateau and escarpment landscape of large fields and woodland blocks. Views are generally contained by the adjacent woodland.

Setting to the urban form: LLCA21: Upper Sulham Dipslopes influenced by its close proximity to Little Heath, resulting in fragmentation and domestic land uses. A thin belt of trees and hedgerows separates the settlement from the LLCA.

PHOTOGRAPHS



Viewpoint 1: View of existing houses on the site from junction of City Road with Little Heath Road



Viewpoint 2: View north-east across edge of recreation ground to south-west boundary of the site



Viewpoint 3: View from Little Heath Road across the recreational ground to the north-western boundary of the site

Site description

Site EUA013 is a small site with the former Turnhams Farm facing onto City Road and rear gardens abutting the Recreation Ground on Little Heath Road. The site is largely enclosed by trees and mature hedgerows with a close boarded fence. A group of mature trees lies within the centre of the site. To the east at the other side of Little Heath Road lies the urban edge of Tilehurst. To the south the open paddocks of the AONB lie beyond the Berkshire Circular Route which follows the southern boundary. The wooded escarpment lies to the west beyond the Recreation Ground which wraps around the west and north of the site. Further north lie the playing fields to the School.

<p>Relationship with adjacent settlement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The site lies to the west of Little Heath Road with the urban form of Tilehurst to the east of the road • Situated on the settlement plateau • Appears as part of the settlement rather than the wider landscape • Existing housing on the site • Intervisibility with Tilehurst
<p>Relationship with adjacent wider countryside</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Separated from the wider landscape by boundary features • Contrasts with the pasture and woodland of the adjacent open countryside • Very little intervisibility with open countryside • Influenced by managed appearance of Recreation Ground
<p>Impact on key landscape characteristics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential loss of prominent trees
<p>Impact on key visual characteristics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential impact on wider AONB landscape and Berkshire Circular Route
<p>Impact on key settlement characteristics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The expansion west of Little Heath Road would slightly consolidate development in this more open area but development on the site would not increase the perception of development significantly
<p>Summary of compliance with NPPF</p> <p>Development on the site, subject to the recommendations below, could be accommodated subject to important measures to conserve and enhance the natural beauty and special qualities of the AONB.</p>
<p>Recommendations</p> <p>This site is recommended for further consideration as a potential housing site although subject to the following requirements to conserve and enhance the AONB:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preferred access to avoid loss of any trees on the site • Containment of the development within existing and new tree planting • Soft boundary treatment to the Berkshire Circular Route • Retention of all trees and hedgerows on site • A full detailed landscape and visual impact assessment will be required to inform the final capacity of the site.

