

Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment for: LAM6: Land west of Ramsbury Road, Membury Industrial Estate

Methodology

Basis of methodology

- 1.1 The methodology and assessment criteria used for this assessment are detailed below. The key texts on which methodology is based are the Scottish Natural Heritage and Natural England's *An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment* (2017) and subsequent *Topic Paper 6 Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity* (2006) as well as the Landscape Institute / IEMA *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment* (2013) (GLVIA).
- 1.2 As in current best practice, sensitivity should be assessed against a specific change, and for this study, a development scenario based on employment use as offices and/or B2 and/or B8, has been assumed for each site as a guide against which sensitivity has been assessed.
- 1.3 Best practice guidance also recognises that a landscape with a high sensitivity does not automatically mean that landscape has a low capacity for change, but that 'capacity is all a question of the interaction between the sensitivity of the landscape, the type and amount of change and the way that the landscape is valued' (*Topic Paper 6, 2006, p12*). The sites have been assessed with the development scenario above in mind. Recommendations and comments have been added regarding the appropriate development of particular sites and to ensure raised awareness of potential unacceptable adverse effects on landscape character.
- 1.4 Proposals for any development would need to include appropriate, detailed and specialist input into siting, layout and design, and a full landscape and visual impact assessment should accompany a specific planning application relating to any site. Other studies including ecology, archaeology, arboriculture, traffic, soils may also be required to accompany specific proposals.
- 1.5 Details of the landscape and visual attributes for each site and an assessment of landscape and visual sensitivity (based on desk top studies and field surveys) are to be found on the Record Sheets

Assessment process

- 1.6 The assessment methodology is a staged process. Landscape attributes (Table 3), and visual attributes (Table 4), are considered separately in accordance with the guidance in GLVIA. These attributes are used to identify the **intrinsic landscape and visual sensitivity** (Stages 1 and 2) of the site, or its sub-areas, on a scale of 5 levels from low to high as set out under the Matrix 1 and 2 below. Then the landscape and visual sensitivity of the site, or its sub-area, are merged to identify the **landscape character sensitivity** (Stage 3) as set out under Matrix 3 below.
- 1.7 The Study goes on to classify the **sensitivity of the site in its wider context** (Stage 4) into five categories. Then in Stage 5 the landscape character sensitivity is combined with the wider sensitivity as set out in Matrix 4 to identify the **overall landscape sensitivity** (Stage 5).
- 1.8 The **landscape value** (Stage 6) of each site, or sub-area, is assessed separately on a scale of 5 levels as set out under Table 5 below. Finally, the overall landscape character sensitivity is merged with the landscape value on a scale of 5 levels to give an assessment of **landscape capacity**

(Stage 7) on a scale of 5 levels as set out under Matrix 5 below. This 'bottom up' process is tested against the five criteria for landscape capacity (Stage 7) based on professional judgement and an overall full understanding of the sites.

Assessment abbreviations and colour code:



– Low Capacity



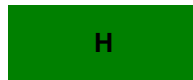
– Medium / Low Capacity



– Medium Capacity



– Medium / High Capacity



– High Capacity

Stage 1: Determination of Visual Sensitivity

- 1.9 This assessment is set out in the Record Sheets and Reports for each site, or sub-division.
- 1.10 The assessment considers the types of **views**, the nature of the **viewers** and the **potential to mitigate** visual impact on the identified viewpoints. The more viewpoints, the more exposed the site, the greater the sensitivity of the viewers (based on GLVIA) and the greater difficulties in screen planting to mitigate the impact without harm to the landscape and visual attributes of the site, the higher the sensitivity. As a final test all the sites were reviewed to assess the relative visual sensitivity of the sites and ensure that professional judgements have been consistent along the way. At this stage each level has been given a score from low = 1 to high = 5 and the scores are added up. Total scores for the site, or sub areas, are grouped as shown.

Matrix 1: Visual sensitivity

General visibility	L (1)	L/M (2)	M (3)	M/H (4)	H (5)
Population	L (1)	L/M (2)	M (3)	M/H (4)	H (5)
Mitigation	L (1)	M/L (2)	M (3)	M/H (4)	H (5)
OVERALL VISUAL SENSITIVITY	3-4 = low; 5- 7 = Med/low; 8-10 = Med; 11-13 = Med/high; 14-15 = High				

Table 3: Notes on Visual Sensitivity Assessment

Factor	Higher sensitivity	Lower sensitivity
General Visibility	Sequenced and exposed views toward site	Fleeting and limited views
	Most of site area visible	Little of site area visible
	Site is a key focus in available wider views	Site is an incidental part of wider views
	Site includes prominent and key landmarks	No landmarks present
	Important vistas or panoramas in/out of area	Unimportant or no vistas
	Prominent skyline	Not part of skyline
Population	Large extent or range of key sensitive receptors	Lack of sensitive receptors
	Large number of people see site	Few can see site
	Key view from a sensitive receptor	Views of site are unimportant
	Site is part of valued view	Site does not form a part of a valued view
	Site in key views to/across/out of town	Not part of setting of settlement view
Mitigation	Mitigation not very feasible	Mitigation possible
	Mitigation would interrupt key views	Would not obscure key views
	Mitigation would damage local character	Mitigation would not harm local character

Stage 2: Determination of Landscape Sensitivity

- 1.11 This assessment is set out in the Record Sheets and Reports for each site or sub-division.
- 1.12 The assessment considers the **natural** physical factors which make up the landscape character of the site, the **cultural** and built form aspects and the **perceptual** features. The greater the incidence of landscape interest and diversity, historically important features and cultural associations, and the greater the levels of access and perceptions of tranquillity and strong landscape pattern, the greater the sensitivity. As a final test all the sites were reviewed to assess the relative landscape sensitivity of the sites and ensure that professional judgements have been consistent along the way. At this stage each level has been given a score from low = 1 to high = 5 and the scores are added up. Total scores for the site, or sub areas, are grouped as shown.

Matrix 2: Landscape sensitivity

Natural factors	L (1)	L/M (2)	M (3)	M/H (4)	H (5)
Cultural factors	L (1)	L/M (2)	M (3)	M/H (4)	H (5)
Perceptual features	L (1)	M/L (2)	M (3)	M/H (4)	H (5)
OVERALL LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY	3-4 = low; 5- 7 = Med/low; 8-10 = Med; 11-13 = Med/high; 14-15 = High				

Table 4: Notes on Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Factor	Higher sensitivity	Lower sensitivity
Natural	Native woodland	Plantation
	Significant tree/groups	Insignificant/young trees
	Strong hedgerow structure with hedgerow trees	Weak structure and no trees
	Species rich grassland	Arable field
	Significant water feature(s)	No water feature(s)
	Varied landform and distinctive feature of the area	Uniform landform and lack of topographical features
	Pronounced Geology	Lack of geological features
	Soils significantly contribute to landscape features	Soils are not an important feature
	Complex and vulnerable landcover	Simple robust landcover
	Presence of other significant vegetation cover	Absence of other significant vegetation
	Presence of valued wildlife habitats	Absence of valued wildlife habitats
	Significant wetland habitats and meadows	Poor water-logged areas
	Presence of common land	No common land
	Presence of good heathland	Lost heathland
Cultural	Distinctive good quality boundary features	Generic or poor boundary features
	Evidence of surviving part of an historic landscape	No evidence
	Complex historic landscape pattern with good time depth	Simple modern landscape
	Evidence of historic park	No evidence
	Important to setting or in a Conservation Area	No relationship
	Includes a Scheduled Ancient Monument or Important to setting	No relationship
	Locally distinctive built form and pattern	Generic built form
	Important to setting of a Listed building	No relationship
	Distinctive strong settlement pattern	Generic or eroded pattern
	Locally significant private gardens	Poorly maintained gardens erode the character
	Evidence of visible social cultural associations	Lack of social cultural associations
Perceptual	Quiet area	Noisy area
	Absence of intrusive elements	Intrusive elements present
	Dark skies	High levels of light pollution
	Open exposed landscape	Enclosed visually contained landscape
	Unified landscape with strong landscape pattern	Fragmented/'bitty' or featureless landscape
	Well used area or appreciated by the public	Inaccessible by public
	Important rights of way	None present
	Well used and valued open air recreational facilities	None present
	Open access land	None present

Stage 3: Determination of Landscape Character Sensitivity

1.13 The landscape sensitivity and visual sensitivity are combined, as shown in Matrix 3, to give the **landscape character sensitivity**. The results of the assessment are set out in the Reports for each site or sub-division.

Matrix 3: Landscape character sensitivity

VISUAL SENSITIVITY	High	M	M/H	M/H	H	H
	Med/High	M/L	M	M/H	M/H	H
	Medium	M/L	M/L	M	M/H	M/H
	Med/Low	L	M/L	M/L	M	M/H
	Low	L	L	M/L	M/L	M
	Low	Med/Low	Medium	Med/High	High	
LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY						

Stage 4: Determination of Wider Sensitivity – The Contribution of the Site to the Wider Landscape and adjacent Employment Uses and Settlement Edge Pattern

1.14 Stages 1 to 3 have led to a comprehensive assessment of the intrinsic landscape sensitivity of the individual sites. However, the sensitivity of each site to development is also affected by its importance, and contribution, to the adjacent wider rural landscape, its contribution to the setting and form of existing settlement - and the influence of, and pattern of uses adjacent. The relative wider sensitivity of each site is assessed as follows:

Low wider sensitivity – The site is heavily influenced by the built form of adjacent employment uses and existing settlement and is not an important part of the adjacent wider landscape

Medium/Low wider sensitivity – The site is heavily influenced by the existing settlement and has views of some parts of the adjacent employment sites but shares some of the characteristics of the adjacent wider landscape

Medium wider sensitivity – The site is partly influenced by the existing settlement and adjacent employment uses but shares many of the characteristics of the wider landscape, with good physical and visual links to the wider landscape

Medium/High wider sensitivity – The site has strong physical and visual links to the wider landscape and these outweigh any minor impacts from the existing settlement and adjacent employment uses

High wider sensitivity – The site is an important part of the wider landscape with which it has strong visual and landscape links. Nearby settlement and employment uses have little impact on the site.

1.15 The results of the assessment are set out in the reports for each site or sub-division.

Stage 5: Determination of Overall Landscape Sensitivity

1.16 The **overall landscape sensitivity** is determined by combining the landscape character sensitivity with the wider sensitivity as shown in Matrix 4. The results of the assessment are set out in the Report Sheets for each site or sub-division.

Matrix 4: Overall landscape sensitivity

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER SENSITIVITY	High	H	H	M/H	M/H	M
	Med/High	H	M/H	M/H	M	M/L
	Medium	M/H	M/H	M	M/L	M/L
	Med/Low	M/H	M	M	M/L	M/L
	Low	M	M	M/L	M/L	L
		High	Med/High	Medium	Med/Low	Low
WIDER SENSITIVITY						

Stage 6: Determination of Landscape Value

1.17 The model for this work follows GLVIA 2013.

Table 5 - LANDSCAPE VALUE CRITERIA

Value	Typical criteria	Typical scale	Typical examples
High	Very High importance (or quality) and rarity. No or limited potential for substitution	International	World Heritage Site SAC
Medium/high	High importance (or quality) and rarity. Limited potential for substitution	National	National Park/ AONB SSSI EH Register of Parks and Gardens Grade I and II* listed buildings and their settings National recreational route or area e.g. Chiltern Way
Medium	Medium importance (or quality) and rarity. Limited potential for substitution	Regional	Setting of AONB / National Park Regional Park (i.e. Colne Valley) Local landscape designation Landscape value identified in the Local Plan SINC/Conservation Areas and their setting Grade II listed buildings and their setting Local Wildlife sites Regional recreational route/area e.g. South Bucks Way
Medium/low	Local importance (or quality) and rarity. Limited potential for substitution	Local	Undesignated but value expressed through publications such as Village Design Statements Local buildings of historic interest and their settings Local recreational facilities of landscape value
Low	Low importance (or quality) or rarity		Area of little value and identified for improvement

Designations: The location of the site within a designated area, or the presence of a designated area within the site, is an important measure of the value society gives to the landscape of the site. These include landscape, historic and ecological designations and recreational routes at a national/international level, regional or district level, or at the local level.

Local Associations: These are included as far as possible using available data. In addition to the more formal designations above, sites may sometimes have special scenic value, associations or meanings to the local community and therefore make a contribution to the value of the local landscape. This has

been assessed through a review of readily available evidence of community value. Further research may be required as part of any detailed landscape and visual impact assessment.

Stage 7: Determination of Landscape Capacity

1.17 Landscape capacity is the ability, or otherwise, of the sites to accommodate a certain amount of development. The landscape capacity is determined by combining the overall landscape sensitivity with the landscape value as shown in Matrix 5. The results of the assessment are set out in the Report Sheets for each site or sub-division.

Matrix 5 LANDSCAPE CAPACITY

OVERALL LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY	High	M	M/L	L	L	L
	Med/High	M/H	M	M/L	L	L
	Medium	H	M/H	M	M/L	L
	Med/Low	H	H	M/H	M	M/L
	Low	H	H	H	M/H	M
	Low	Med/Low	Medium	Med/High	High	
	LANDSCAPE VALUE					

1.18 The results from the matrix are subsequently tested against the following classifications for each level of landscape capacity, building on classifications used by the authors of this Report for other capacity studies.

Low capacity – The landscape could not accommodate areas for employment uses without a significant and adverse impact on the landscape character and visual amenity. Occasional, very small-scale employment uses may be possible, providing it has regard to the setting and form of existing settlement and the character and the sensitivity of adjacent landscape character areas.

Medium / Low capacity – A low amount of development for employment uses can be accommodated only in limited situations, providing it has regard to the setting and form of existing settlement and the character and the sensitivity of adjacent landscape character areas.

Medium capacity - The landscape could be able to accommodate areas of new development for employment uses in some parts, providing it has regard to the setting and form of existing settlement and the character and sensitivity of adjacent landscape character areas. There are landscape and visual constraints and therefore the key landscape and visual characteristics must be retained and enhanced.

Medium/ High capacity – The area is able to accommodate larger amounts of development for employment uses, providing it has regard to the setting and form of existing settlement and the character and the sensitivity of adjacent landscape character areas. Certain landscape and visual features in the area may require protection.

High capacity – Much of the area is able to accommodate significant areas of development for employment uses, providing it has regard to the setting and form of existing settlement and the character and the sensitivity of adjacent landscape character areas.

Stage 8: Determination of Landscape Capacity within the Site

- 1.19 Each site report contains an overall plan showing the landscape capacity classification of the site at the beginning of the site report; and an overall plan showing the extent of the site recommended for further consideration as a site and the recommended location
- 1.20 Each site is examined in detail to determine the potential area for development for employment uses in the light of the landscape capacity and landscape and visual constraints on the site. In some cases, the whole site will be ruled out for development. In others the whole site will be included as a potential site, subject to the provision of Green Infrastructure. However, in many cases we recommend a 'reduced area' which identifies a part of the site that could be considered further as a potential site subject to the provision of Green Infrastructure. The 'reduced area' is that part of the site that could be developed whilst conserving (and potentially in some cases indirectly enhancing) the key landscape and visual characteristics of the site and its landscape setting; and whilst conserving and reinforcing the influence of the underlying landscape on the settlement pattern of the adjacent town or village. The policy constraints affecting sites within the AONB have also been taken into account.
- 1.21 Study Constraints
1. The sites have largely been assessed from publicly accessible viewpoints including the local road network, public rights of way, public open space and other publicly owned land. There was no access to the sites.
 2. Site photographs included in this study are representative of key views of the site.
 3. Views from the surrounding countryside or urban areas have been assessed by noting intervisibility from within or adjacent to the site, but the Study does not include an assessment of the potential zone of visual influence of any development on each site.
 4. The majority of study fieldwork was undertaken in July 2021 with summer vegetation.
 5. A development scenario of employment uses - offices and/or B2 and/or B8 has been assumed,
 6. Time limitations have meant that no public consultation has taken place during the Study.

WEST BERKSHIRE COUNCIL CAPACITY STUDY 2021 RECORD SHEET

Site:	LAM6: Land west of Ramsbury Road, Membury Industrial Estate
Date of survey	17.07.2021
Surveyors	LA
Weather/visibility	Sunny/clear
<p>LCA</p> <p>West Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment 2019 <i>WD1: Sheffield Wooded Downland</i></p> <p>Key Characteristics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong rolling landform with scarp and dipslopes, underlain by a chalk plateau • Mixed farmland, divided into large-scale fields bound by mature hedgerows and broken up by blocks of woodland • Ridgetop woodlands and calcareous grasslands form important semi-natural habitats • Visible archaeological remains from various eras of history • Sparse settlement, comprising hamlets and scattered farms, cottages and stud farms • Access via a variety of routes, including motorway and major roads contrasting with a network of rural lanes, byways, tracks and footpaths • Sheltered, wooded character restricts views and creates an enclosed landscape which contrasts with panoramic views experienced from vantage points • A traditional rural landscape with few modern intrusions <p>Valued Features and Qualities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nationally valued landscape which forms part of the North Wessex Downs AONB • Well-wooded character, including areas of ancient semi-natural woodland • Nationally and locally designated semi-natural habitats • Strong rural character due to sparse settlement and limited modern influences • Frequent archaeological features which create a strong sense of time-depth • Expansive open views from higher ground • Sense of enclosure and high levels of tranquillity <p>Detractors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over intensification of arable farming practices • Lack of appropriate woodland management in some areas • Noise and visual pollution created by the M4 	

- Ongoing pressure for development
- Increased traffic near Membury motorway service area as well as on the rural lane road network
- Localised modern intrusions on the landscape

Landscape Strategy

- Conserve and enhance the special qualities of the nationally designated landscape of the North Wessex Downs AONB
- Conserve woodland, trees and hedgerows within the landscape
- Protect and enhance semi-natural habitats including lowland calcareous grassland
- Conserve historic features within the landscape
- Conserve the sparsely settled and rural character of the landscape
- Conserve characteristic winding lanes and extensive public rights of way

North Wessex Downs AONB LCA 2002 – The site is located within *LCA2C: Lambourn Wooded Downs*

Key Characteristics

- Strongly rolling chalk plateau landform incised by dry valleys with Clay-with-flint deposits capping higher sections of the plateau and softening landform
- A mosaic of woodland/mixed arable and pasture farmland. Large scale fields bounded by hedgerows, thick shelterbelts and distinctive ridge top woodlands. Unimproved chalk grassland retained on steep slopes
- Field patterns reflecting both formal and informal post medieval enclosure, plus many valley side woodlands which show signs of informal intakes by assarting
- High proportion of ancient semi-natural woodlands including ash-hazel coppice, with a rich ground flora
- A distinct landscape pattern around woodland St Mary and Lambourn Woodlands with a regular patterning of rectilinear fields, broad shelterbelts and ridge woodlands
- Isolated individual Bronze Age round barrows on ridgelines and a large prominent Iron Age Hillfort at Membury
- Settlement pattern typical of a wood pasture landscape, characterised by a high density of regularly spaced farmsteads, hamlets and loose collections of buildings along Roman Road, with few villages. Built form includes red brick, flint and render, weatherboard, tile and thatch
- A large number of equestrian centres, stud farms and increasing number of pony paddocks

Key Management requirements

The overall management objective is to conserve and enhance the quiet rural character of the Lambourn Wooded Downs. Key features to be conserved and enhanced are the open downland summits and views contrasting with the strong wooded horizons, historic features including archaeological sites, the historic field pattern and road and lane network. The wooded pattern and character of the landscape is a key characteristic and there are opportunities for

reintroduction of management (coppicing) to the ancient and semi-natural woodlands, sympathetic management of commercial forestry plantations and restoration of hedgerows. Remnant chalk grassland is a feature along steep slopes and should be conserved with opportunities for habitat restoration to link existing isolated sites. The distinctive pattern of settlements with dispersed farmsteads, hamlets and loose collections of buildings should be maintained.	
Landscape designations:	North Wessex Downs AONB

VISUAL SENSITIVITY

<i>General visibility</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Mitigation potential</i>
<p>Views into the site from: Ramsbury Road – adjacent eastern boundary of site Potentially from the eastern edge of the Scheduled Monument (located to the west of the site), although not from the Public Right of Way which straddles the hillfort</p>	<p>Types of viewers: Vehicle travellers Visitors to the NWD AONB Vehicle travellers and cyclists Visitors/walkers to the hillfort (SM) Residents Workers at Membury Industrial Estate</p>	<p>Opportunities for mitigation and landscape compatibility of mitigation: Proposed tree and woodland planting could link, relate and strengthen the surrounding wooded vegetation pattern</p>
<p>Views out of the site to: East – dependent on management of the eastern site boundary hedgerow. When the hedgerow is cut, views extend out to the east and across arable farmland, framed by woodland From the eastern area, there are views out to the Silo towers and the small engineering works (Jacquet Weston Engineering) to the north and the two agricultural barns to the south West – out towards the Iron Age hillfort at Membury Northern end – out towards Membury Services</p>	<p>Magnitude of viewers (level of use and popularity): Visitors to NWD AONB (high) Residents (low) Workers at Membury Industrial Estate (low)</p>	<p>Impacts of mitigation: This is a large elongated site, where mitigation could be possible, however any tree/woodland planting would take time to mature and be effective as a screen</p>
<p>Does the site form part of a skyline? No</p>	<p>Visual perceptions (activity and expectations of local visual receptors): Natural Beauty, High expectations</p>	
<p>Panoramic views: No</p>		
<p>Landmark features: None</p>		
<p>Landmark features: None</p>		

Sensitivity score: Medium	Sensitivity score: Medium	Sensitivity score: Medium/low
Visual sensitivity score: Medium		
Additional comments: The western site boundary hedgerow adjacent Ramsbury Road hasn't been cut for a few years, leaving it to grow and semi-screen views of the eastern part of the site (within the summer months). Overall, the wooded structure/pattern of the surrounding landscape with the young woodland belts provides screening of the eastern part of the site from the western area where the old runway is located. Potential visual impact on the setting of the Iron Age hillfort Scheduled Monument located to the west, as no intervening woodland/barriers are evident. Overall, the areas of woodland/tree belts within the site are part of the landscape character of the AONB and provide screening/integration of the fragmented existing Protected Employment Areas (PEA's) into the landscape reducing its overall visual prominence		

LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY

<i>Natural factors</i>	<i>Cultural factors</i>	<i>Perceptual features</i>
Topography and landform: Flat and slightly rising to the west from 200m AOD across to 205m AOD northern corner	Boundary features other than vegetation: To the south railings adjacent Walkers Logistics Grey galvanised palisade fencing on boundary with Ady Godwin Car Body Repairs	Tranquillity – Noise levels: Slight traffic noise from M4
Geological features: None	Historic landscapes: Redundant WW1 airfield opened in 1942, it was used by both the Royal Air Force (RAF) and United States Army Air Forces (USAAF). After the war, it was a private airport until the construction of the M4 motorway in the 1960s when it was closed	Tranquillity – Visual intrusion / detractors: M4 well screened by intervening trees and woodlands Silo towers within adjacent PEA, partly visible above tree line. Ady Godwin Car Body Repairs is compact and screened by adjacent tall evergreen hedgerows Walkers Logistics already contains two large industrial sheds and an area for car parking
Soil quality: Natural England: <i>Grade 3 Good to moderate</i>	Parkland features: None	Tranquillity – Light pollution/dark skies: As per CPRE England's Light Pollution and Dark Skies map, the site is located between the (8-16 Nanowatts cm ² /sr) and the slightly darker (2-4). Light pollution is in this area is centred on the M4 Membury Services

<p>Water features: None</p>		
<p>Landcover and land use: Pasture used for grazing (sheep) Woodland belts and mixed planting of various ages, maturity and height Concrete ex-runway as part of the redundant airfield Existing Walkers Logistics shed barns and adjacent hard standing for parking and access Two agricultural barns</p>	<p>Conservation Area: None</p>	
<p>Tree belts, individual trees and riverside trees: A tree belt (45m wide) aligns the runway then links to a further tree belt (26m wide) at the northern end of the site. Another tree belt (23m) forms part of the site at the southern end, which then continues to a larger woodland area to the west No individual trees noted on site</p>	<p>Landscape features of LCA: Wooded character, restricts views across landscape Medium scale pasture field forms part of an area of mixed farmland continuing further to the east Proximity of large Iron Age hillfort to the west (320m) Quiet rural character adjacent Ramsbury Road when not adjacent PEA</p>	
<p>Hedgerows and hedgerow trees: A deciduous native hedgerow aligns the eastern and part northern boundary of the site (eastern area) which has been planted in the last 10 years.</p>	<p>Built form: A concrete runway aligns the western boundary of the site Southern end of the site includes the existing industrial sheds which forms part of Walkers Logistics. Two agricultural barns located west of Ady Godwin Car Body Repairs</p>	<p>Accessibility by public footpath: None</p>
<p>Woodland and copses: As described as part of tree belts</p>	<p>Setting of listed buildings: None</p>	<p>Open access areas: None</p>
<p>Wetland and meadow: Field to the east presently grazed grassland</p>	<p>Scheduled Monuments: None on the site, however an Iron Age hillfort (SM) is located 300m to the west of the site</p>	<p>Recreational areas: None on site. However as set within North Wessex Downs AONB, the adjacent Ramsbury Road would be used by cyclists and vehicle travellers enjoying the AONB and the Iron Age</p>

		hillfort would be visited (outside the site) located 300m to the west
Common land: None	Pattern of Protected Employment Area Small part of site set within PEA (southern end), with main part of the site set outside, with short sections of site boundary set adjacent Protected Employment Area	Aesthetic sensitivity - Elements of openness/enclosure: The wooded character of the area creates areas of openness and enclosure, also providing framed views across the site
Heathland: None	Contribution of private gardens to landscape character: None	Aesthetic sensitivity – landscape pattern: The eastern part of the site forms part of the semi-wooded landscape as described for this area of the AONB. The airfield would have originally been in conflict with this landscape pattern, however the tree belts planted over the last 30 years have integrated the area into the wider partly wooded landscape
Other significant vegetation cover: None noted	Cultural associations: Part of WW2 airfield	
BAP/Phase 1 records: None known	Features of cultural importance: Ex runways from WW2 airfield Within setting of Scheduled Monument	
Presence of SSSI/SINC/local wildlife designation/Semi-Natural Ancient Woodland: None		
Sensitivity score: Medium	Sensitivity score: Medium	Sensitivity score: Medium
Landscape sensitivity score: Medium		
Additional comments: Large scale planting has been undertaken on the redundant airfield breaking up the once open character. These wide belts of tree planting reflect the original pattern of the landing strips on the airfield		

Relationship with the wider landscape/Protected Employment Area

Adjacent Protected Employment Area (PEA)

The main area of the existing PEA is to the north and north east of the site, with one short section of the PEA aligning the site boundary. Beyond the main PEA there are three other fragmented parts of the PEA. The first is small, shown as an indentation into the southern part of the site, which solely contains Ady Godwin Car Body Repairs. Walkers Logistics is another isolated section further to the south, which is also partly included within the site boundary. The third area is located towards the north west of the main PEA

Character of the Protected Employment Area

This main PEA is compact, contains tall structures/buildings with the tallest structures being the silo towers at a height of 17m. Between the silo towers and the site there is a small maturing woodland copse which provides lower-level screening and also links across Ramsbury Road to the established woodland to the west. These two areas of woodland provide containment of the main southern area of the PEA and a wooded buffer to the wider open landscape beyond

The main part of the PEA is located at a slightly lower level than the site. Approaching the site along Ramsbury Road from the main PEA, a slight bend in the road provides a sense of leaving the PEA, as the dominance of the well wooded highway hedgerow and the two cottages contribute to a more rural and less industrial estate character, more typical of the North Wessex Downs AONB

Presence in a floodplain:

No

Relationship with adjacent wider countryside:

The grassland character of the eastern part of the site connects with the wider agricultural landscape further to the east beyond Ramsbury Road. The western part of the site (runway) is open to the wider countryside to the west and the Iron Age hillfort further to the west
Walkers Logistics is well contained with a vegetation structure of woodland and extensive areas of new woodland planting. However, views from the Ramsbury Road although for a limited length, are direct to the large-scale industrial sheds, with car parking located in front of the buildings visible

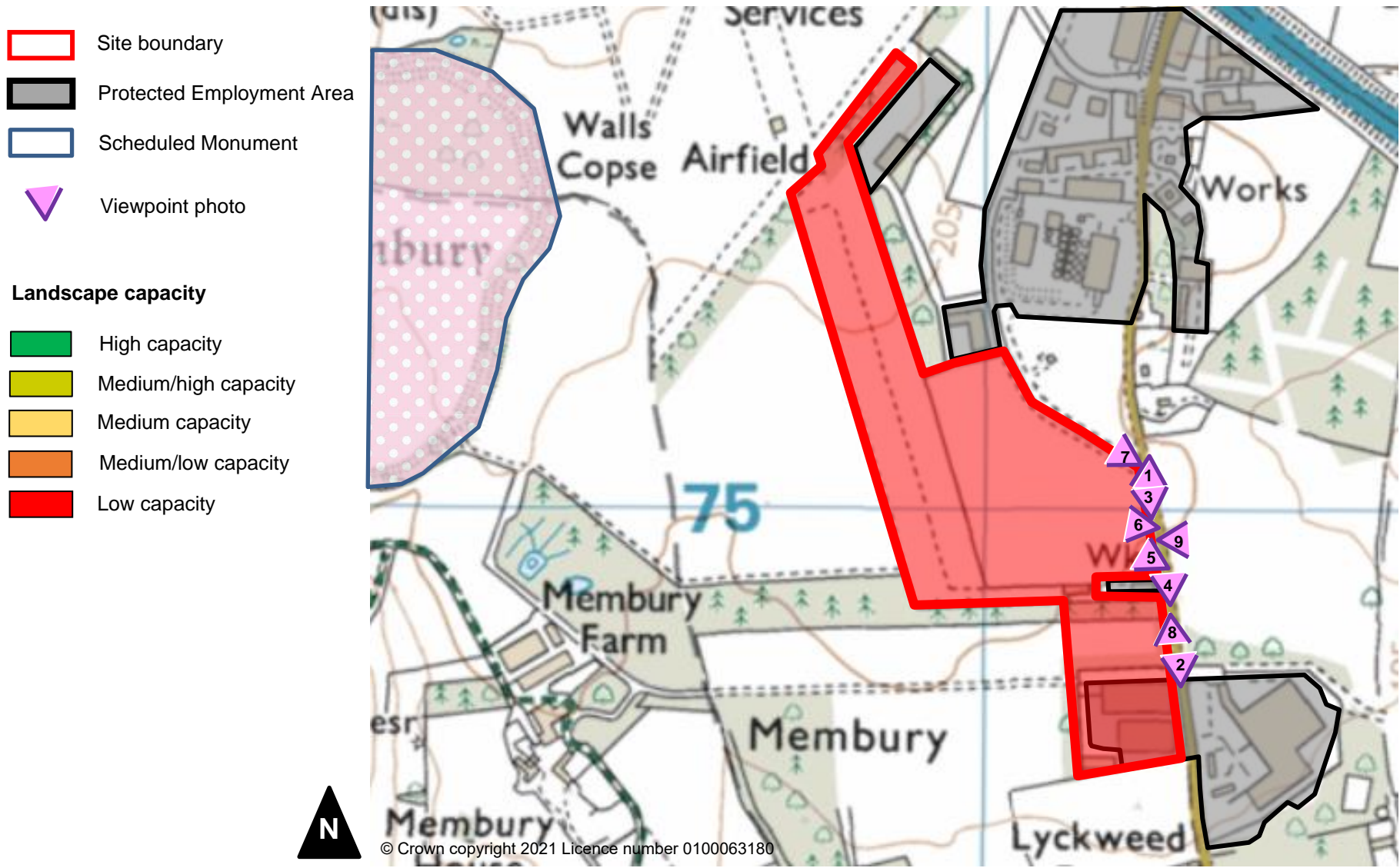
Character of adjacent village(s)/towns:

Lambourn is located over 2km to the north

N/A

<p>Historic links with the wider area if known: Part of RAF Membury WWII airfield, now redundant</p>
<p>Ecological links with the wider area if known: None known</p>
<p>Recreational links with the wider area: Ramsbury Road provides access into the wider AONB to the south</p>
<p>VDS/Parish Plan – relevant extracts: None</p>

Figure 1: Site: LAM6: Land west of Ramsbury Road, Membury Industrial Estate



West Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment 2019

The site lies within the following *LCA WD1: Shefford Wooded Downland* for which the key requirements are set out below:

Landscape Strategy:

- Conserve and enhance the special qualities of the nationally designated landscape of the North Wessex Downs AONB
- Conserve woodland, trees and hedgerows within the landscape
- Protect and enhance semi-natural habitats including lowland calcareous grassland
- Conserve historic features within the landscape
- Conserve the sparsely settled and rural character of the landscape
- Conserve characteristic winding lanes and extensive public rights of way

North Wessex Downs AONB LCA 2002

The site lies within the North Wessex Downs AONB LAC 2C Lambourn Wooded Downs

Key management requirements:

The overall management objective is to conserve and enhance the quiet rural character of the Lambourn Wooded Downs. Key features to be conserved and enhanced are the open downland summits and views contrasting with the strong wooded horizons, historic features including archaeological sites, the historic field pattern and road and lane network. The wooded pattern and character of the landscape is a key characteristic and there are opportunities for reintroduction of management (coppicing) to the ancient and semi-natural woodlands, sympathetic management of commercial forestry plantations and restoration of hedgerows. Remnant chalk grassland is a feature along steep slopes and should be conserved with opportunities for habitat restoration to link existing isolated sites. The distinctive pattern of settlements with dispersed farmsteads, hamlets and loose collections of buildings should be maintained.

Site description:

The site consists of an elongated area connecting a number of separate parts of the Protected Employment Areas (PEA) at Membury. The site area includes areas of pasture used for sheep grazing, wide tree belts which align the now redundant landing strips and a redundant concrete landing strip. To the south, the site includes two agricultural sheds and part of the existing Walkers Logistics site which also contains two large shed buildings and a smaller shed.

Key landscape planning factors:

The site is located as follows:

- Set within the North Wessex Downs AONB
- The site is partly set adjacent the main and fragmented smaller parts of the Protected Employment Area (PEA) at Membury

Viewpoints:



Photo 1: View from Ramsbury Road looking south, with the site boundary hedgerow to right. The adjacent Ady Godwin Car Body Repairs (part of PEA) is screened by an intervening tall evergreen hedgerow (July 2021)



Photo 2: View from Ramsbury Road looking north, with site to the left. This part of the site was planted with a mix of trees and shrubs about 10 years ago (July 2021)



Photo 3: Looking north with site beyond field hedgerow to left. The tops of the silo towers are visible (within PEA) above intervening maturing woodland (July 2021)



Photo 4: From Ramsbury Road looking north, the pasture area of the eastern part of the site is screened by an intervening evergreen hedgerow (July 2021)



Photo 5: From Ramsbury Road looking into the site through a gap within the site boundary hedgerow (July 2021)



Photo 6: From Ramsbury Road, the site boundary native hedgerow due to its height mainly screens summer views of the eastern part of the site (July 2021)



Photo 7: From Ramsbury Road, the private access into the PEA leads along the northern edge of the site demarcated by a hedgerow shown to the left (July 2021)



Photo 8: From Ramsbury Road looking south, with signs for Walkers Logistics the southern PEA (July 2021)



Photo 9: From Ramsbury Road looking east away from the site, with open views across agricultural land (July 2021) within the AONB

Please refer to section 3 methodology of the assessment process

1. Visual Sensitivity: Medium

- The western part of the site is screened from public viewpoints in the east by the wide tree belt which aligns the disused concrete landing strip
- The eastern part of the site is visible from the adjacent Ramsbury Road, however the site boundary hedgerow limits views, although within the winter leafless months this will enable filtered views of the site
- The southern area of the site (Walkers Logistics) is visible from immediate adjacent areas on Ramsbury Road. The southern area is also not seen in context to the areas within the site further to the north due to the intervening tree belts
- Part of the western part of the site would be visible from the Scheduled Monument (Iron Age hillfort) located further to the west

2. Landscape Sensitivity: Medium

- Located within the North Wessex Downs AONB
- Woodland is a feature of the area and creates a sense of enclosure and remoteness with numerous framed views across the landscape
- The tree belts within the site have been planted within the last 30 years, with the main one separating the eastern and western areas of the site from each other
- Opportunities to propose substantial areas of tree and woodland planting as part of mitigation measures would not be out of character. These areas of woodland would in time help to integrate and screen any proposed development as well enhancing the area

3. Landscape Character Sensitivity: Medium (combines 1 and 2)

4. Wider Landscape Sensitivity: Medium/high

- The site has strong physical and visual links to the wider landscape to the east and west and these outweigh any minor visual impacts from the adjacent Protected Employment Area

5. Overall Landscape Sensitivity: Medium/high (combines 3 and 4)

6. Landscape Value: High

- Set within the North Wessex Downs AONB

7. Landscape Capacity: Low (combines 5 and 6)

Relationship of site to Membury Protected Employment Area

- Membury Protected Employment Area is made up of a central area and a number of fragmented smaller outlying areas. The site loosely connects these areas

Relationship with adjacent wider countryside

- The eastern part of the site has an established visual and landscape connection with the open arable landscape area further to the east of Ramsbury Road
- Western part of the site (runway area) connects to the adjacent area of open grassland which leads across to the Iron Age hillfort and the wider countryside

Potential impact on key landscape characteristics

- Loss of open character and area of pasture
- Loss of woodland which contributes to the wooded character of the area
- Loss of open setting of Iron Age hillfort (Scheduled Monument)
- Introduction of more modern inclusions eroding the traditional and quiet rural landscape character

Potential impact on key visual characteristics

- Potential adverse visual impact on views from Ramsbury Road
- Potential adverse visual impact on views from the Iron Age hillfort (SM)
- Visual impact on rural character of Ramsbury Road

Potential Impact on Existing Protected Employment Area

- The fragmented character of the PEA allows the undeveloped areas in-between to retain characteristic landscape features of the AONB, therefore mitigating and reducing the overall effect of the PEA on the AONB. The proposed site connects four of these areas together, which would result in one large area and the potential loss of these mitigating landscape features
- The site area would extend the PEA to the west of the runways, presently the western edge of the PEA is contained by tree belts
- The site could make the area north of the site and south of the silo's vulnerable to development, further expanding the PEA

Potential impact on the North Wessex Downs AONB

- Loss of open land including grassland and woodland within the North Wessex Downs AONB
- Loss of open views within the North Wessex Downs AONB
- Loss of quiet rural character and rural character of Ramsbury Road
- Loss of part of the fragmented character of the PEA which allows the undeveloped areas in-between to retain characteristic landscape features of the AONB
- Long term opportunity to introduce tree planting to enhance the woodland character of the area

Landscape mitigation and contribution to green infrastructure

- Potential to enhance woodland character of the area and also improve views west of Ramsbury Road, in particular of existing adjacent structures/buildings of PEA further to the north. New mitigation measures therefore could bring enhancements to this area of the AONB

Conclusion and recommendations

Development across the eastern part of the site, within two areas as shown within Figure 2 below, could be considered as follows:

Area A – west of Ramsbury Road

- Retain a landscape buffer which should be planted as native woodland between the proposed developable area and Ramsbury Road
- Limit height of buildings so they do not intrude above the treeline of the tree belt to the west, as would be visible from Ramsbury Road
- Select a suitable façade treatment for the buildings as seen from the Ramsbury Road to reduce their visual prominence by the use of colour or green walls
- Design woodland areas with native trees and shrubs. Some fast-growing tree species could be used as part of early planting, which can then be removed later
- Access into the developable area should be low key, have a rural character and avoid large signage which would detract from the existing rural character of this area

Area B – part of Walkers Logistics

- Any new development or re-development on the existing Walkers Logistics site should also provide enhancements to this area of the AONB
- Any new development should reduce the visual effect of the buildings on Ramsbury Road by including an intervening wooded buffer
- All buildings should be exemplary in their design and be suitable for their rural location in the AONB

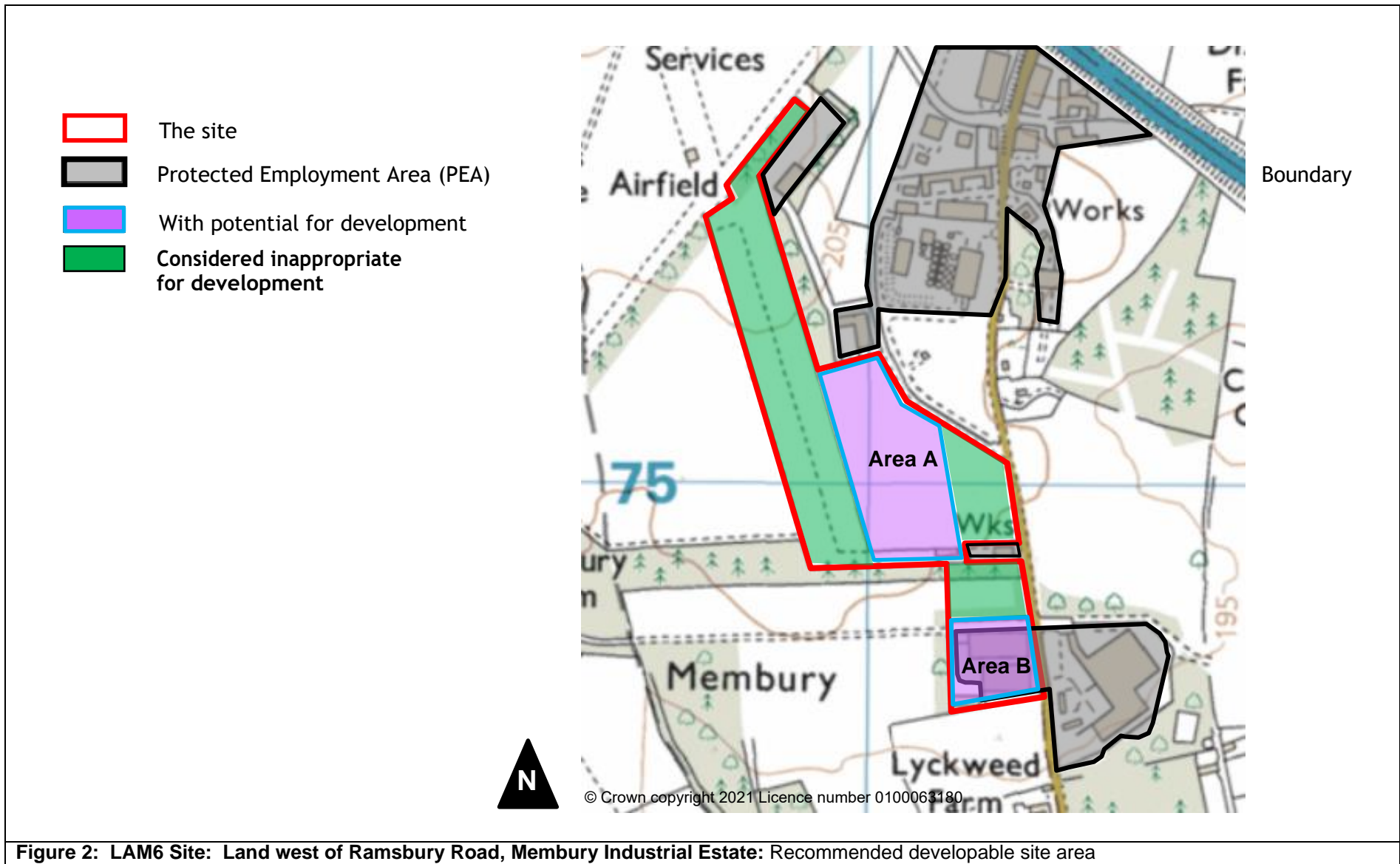


Figure 2: LAM6 Site: Land west of Ramsbury Road, Membury Industrial Estate: Recommended developable site area