

# LANDSCAPE & VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

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JULY 2022

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**Farington Cricket Facility**  
Farington

U R B A N  
G R E E N



# QUALITY MANAGEMENT

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Appendix 1 - Methodology



# 1.0 INTRODUCTION & SCOPE OF ASSESSMENT

This Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been prepared by Urban Green and provides an assessment of the proposed development at the Woodcock Estate, Farington, South Ribble.

The aim of this document is to identify the key landscape and visual sensitivities of the Assessment Site, and provide recommendations to support the appropriate redevelopment of the Site as a cricket facility

The location of the Site is shown at Fig. 1.1, opposite. This document considers changes to:

- The character of the landscape, vegetation, landscape features and designations within and surrounding the Site; and
- The composition of selected views from identified visual receptors as a result of the proposed development.

The landscape and visual analysis was prepared following Site visits in August 2021. This assessment describes and evaluates the anticipated change to landscape and visual amenity, and the extent to which these changes will affect the perception and views of the landscape.

## KEY

- Site Boundary
- 1km Buffer
- 2km Buffer

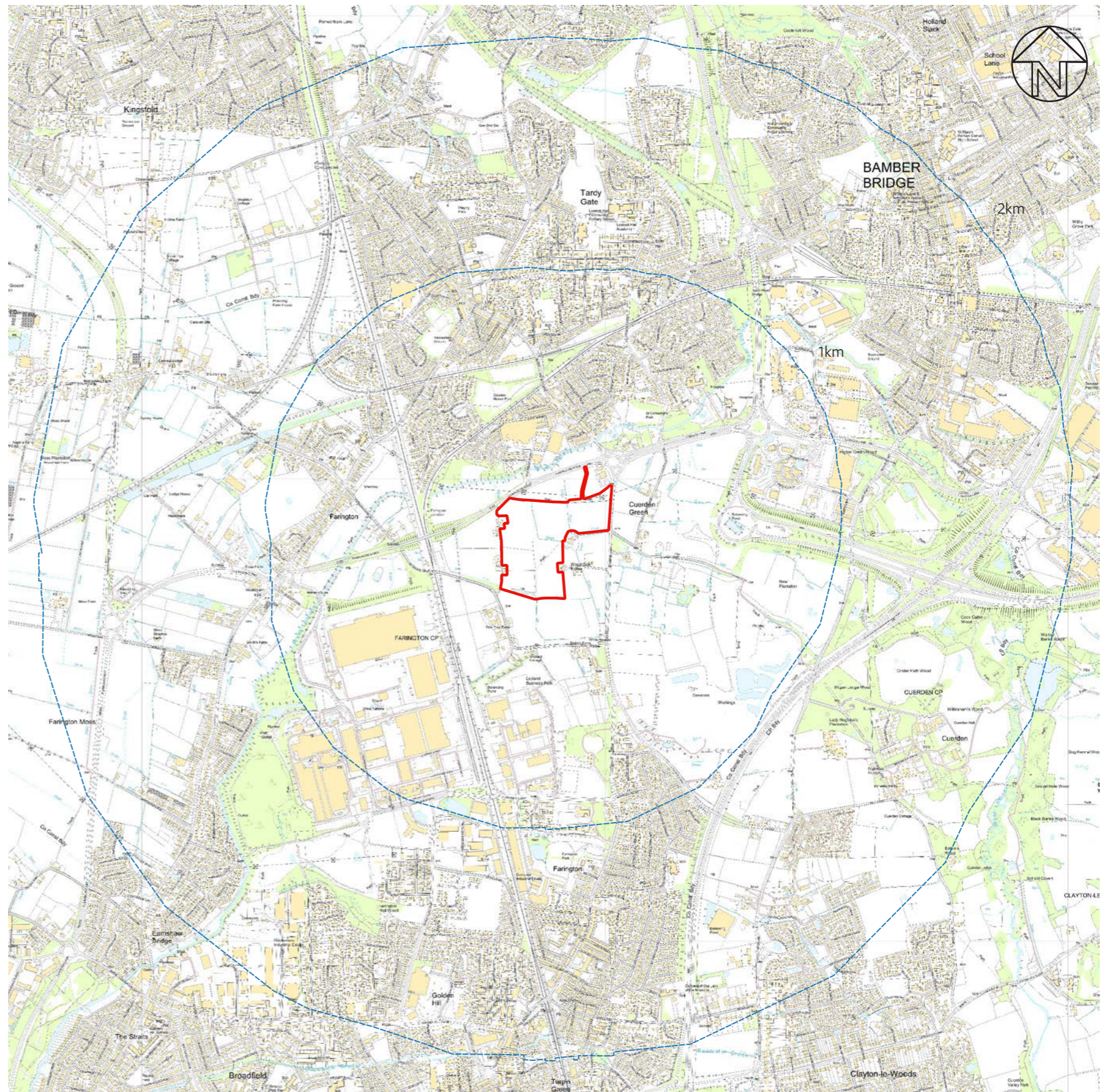


Figure 1.1 - Site Location

# 2.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

## National Planning Policy Framework

The National planning policy for England is defined within the National Planning Policy Framework (herein referred to as the NPPF) that has distilled the content of previous Planning Policy Statements into one comprehensive document. The NPPF is the relevant national planning policy document against which to test the proposals. A revised NPPF was issued by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government on 20 July 2021.

## General Considerations

As a central theme, the NPPF has a presumption in favour of sustainable development (para. 11) for which it defines three mutually interdependent objectives of sustainability (para. 8) to be jointly sought (economic, social and environmental). With relevance to landscape and visual matters the third objective states:

*“an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; (...)”*

The planning system is identified as the vehicle for guiding development to sustainable solutions but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area (para. 9, author’s emphasis).

## Strategic Policies

Paragraph 20 discusses the role of strategic policies within the plan-making framework. It suggests that sufficient provision should be made for the:

- d. *“conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation.”*

## Section 12 Achieving well-designed places

This section of the NPPF identifies that the creation of high-quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve (para. 126) it states that policy should ensure that developments (para. 130):

- b. *“(…) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*
- c. *are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);*
- d. *establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;*
- e. *optimise the potential of the Site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; (...)”*

In regards to trees in new developments, paragraph 131 states:

*“Trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments, and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that new streets are tree-lined<sup>50</sup>, that opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments (such as parks and community orchards), that appropriate measures are in place to secure the long-term maintenance of newly-planted trees, and that existing trees are retained wherever possible. Applicants and local planning authorities should work with highways officers and tree officers to ensure that the right trees are planted in the right places, and solutions are found that are compatible with highways standards and the needs of different users.”*

## Section 13 Protecting Green Belt Land

This section of the NPPF relates to Green Belt land. Paragraphs 137 and 138 state:

*“The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.*

*Green Belt serves five purposes:*

- a. *to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;*
- b. *to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;*
- c. *to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;*
- d. *to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and*
- e. *to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.”*

In reference to proposals which affect the Green Belt, paragraphs 147 to 149 state:

*“Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.*

*When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. ‘Very special circumstances’ will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.*

*A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this are:*

- a. *buildings for agriculture and forestry;*
- b. *the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;*
- c. *the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;*
- d. *the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;*
- e. *limited infilling in villages;*

# 2.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- f. *limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan (including policies for rural exception sites); and*
- g. *limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would:*
  - *not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or*

*not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority.”*

## Section 15 Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

This section of the NPPF identifies a requirement in favour of (para. 174):

- a. *“protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);*
- b. *recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland (...)”*

As listed in the NPPF, these valued landscapes include:

- National Parks;
- The Broads; and
- Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The Assessment Site is not located within any of the above mentioned valued landscapes, although does lie within land designated as Green Belt.

## Section 16 Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

For proposals affecting heritage assets, the NPPF places a requirement on applicants to (para. 194):

*“describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance”*

Para. 195 also states:

*“Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal.”*

Para. 197 states:

*“In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:*

- a. *the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- b. *the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
- c. *the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.”*

It is also considered that:

*“Not all elements of a Conservation Area or World Heritage Site will necessarily contribute to its significance.”*

## Local Planning Policy

The Application Site and Study Area lie within the jurisdiction of Central Lancashire and South Ribble Borough Council. Key local policies relating to landscape and visual matters are briefly outlined below.

### Adopted Policy

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 places a requirement upon local authorities when determining planning applications to do so in accordance with the adopted development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The current development plan comprises:

- Central Lancashire Core Strategy LDF (Adopted July 2012); and
- South Ribble Borough Council Local Plan (Adopted July 2015).

The relevant policies within the above noted document are as follows:

### Central Lancashire Core Strategy LDF (2012)




#### Policy 16: Heritage Assets

*“Protect and seek opportunities to enhance the historic environment, heritage assets and their settings by:*


- a. *Safeguarding heritage assets from inappropriate development that would cause harm to their significances.*
- b. *Supporting development or other initiatives where they protect and enhance the local character, setting, management and historic significance of heritage assets, with particular support for initiatives that will improve any assets that are recognised as being in poor condition, or at risk.*
- c. *Identifying and adopting a local list of heritage assets for each Authority.”*

# 2.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT



**KEY**

-  Site Boundary
-  1km Buffer
-  2km Buffer

**South Ribble Local Plan Policies**

-  G5 Areas of Separation
-  G6 Central Park
-  G7 Green Infrastructure
-  G12 Green Corridors - Green Wedges
-  G16 Local Nature Reserves

**Chorley Local Plan Policies**

-  HW3 Valley Parks
-  Green Belt

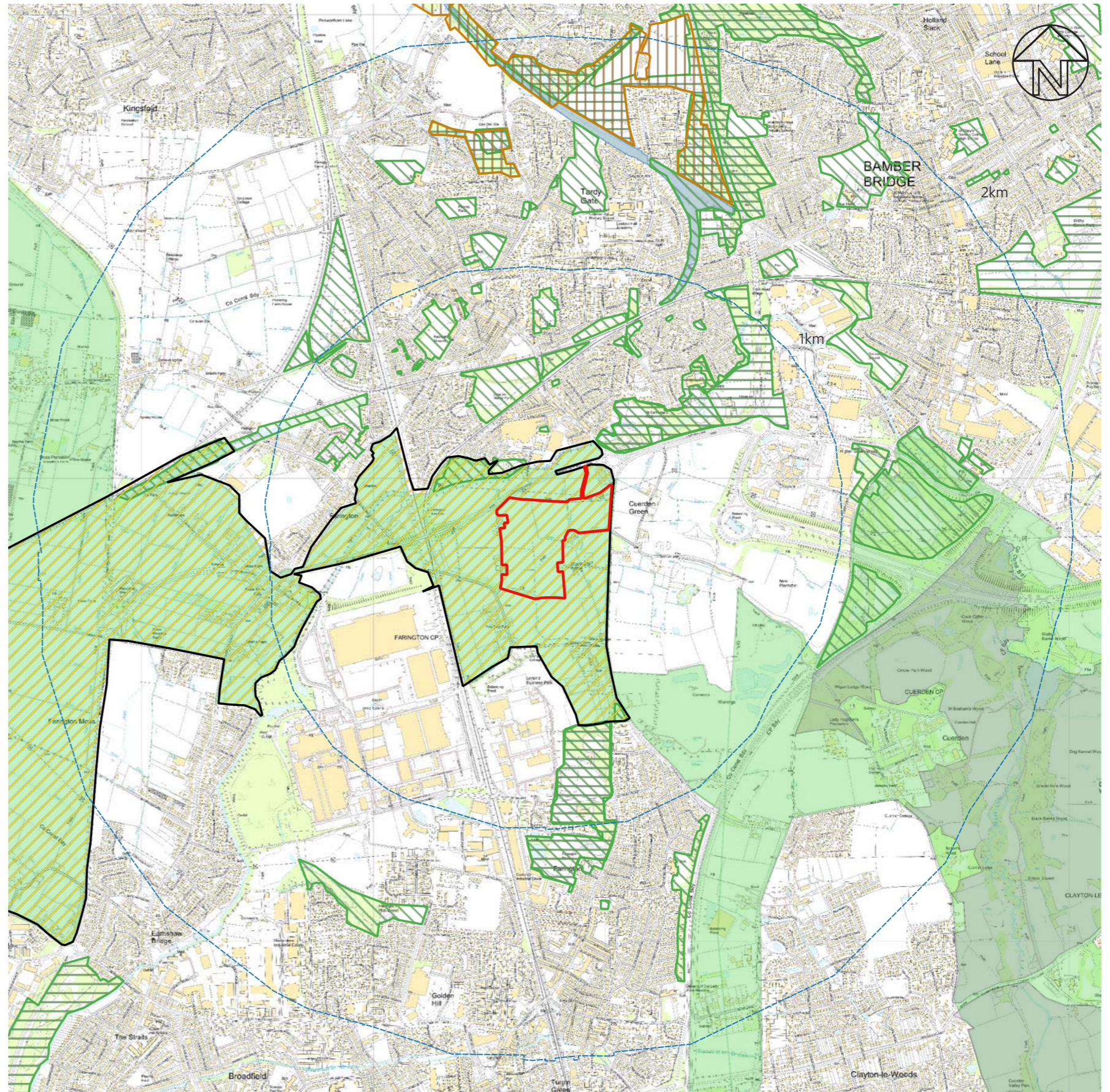


Figure 2.1 - Local Planning Policy

# 2.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

## Policy 17 Design of New Buildings

“The design of new buildings will be expected to take account of the character and appearance of the local area, including the following:

- a. siting, layout, massing, scale, design, materials, building to plot ratio and landscaping.
- b. safeguarding and enhancing the built and historic environment.
- c. being sympathetic to surrounding land uses and occupiers, and avoiding demonstrable harm to the amenities of the local area.
- d. ensuring that the amenities of occupiers of the new development will not be adversely affected by neighbouring uses and vice versa.
- e. linking in with surrounding movement patterns and not prejudicing the development of neighbouring land, including the creation of landlocked sites.
- f. minimising opportunity for crime, and maximising natural surveillance.
- g. providing landscaping as an integral part of the development, protecting existing landscape features and natural assets, habitat creation, providing open space, and enhancing the public realm.
- h. including public art in appropriate circumstances.
- i. demonstrating, through the Design and Access Statement, the appropriateness of the proposal.
- j. making provision for the needs of special groups in the community such as the elderly and those with disabilities.
- k. promoting designs that will be adaptable to climate change, and adopting principles of sustainable construction including Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS);
- l. achieving Building for Life rating of ‘Silver’ or ‘Gold’ for new residential developments; and

- m. ensuring that contaminated land, land stability and other risks associated with coal mining are considered and, where necessary, addressed through appropriate remediation and mitigation measures.”

## Policy 18 Green Infrastructure

“Manage and improve environmental resources through a Green Infrastructure approach to:

- a. protect and enhance the natural environment where it already provides economic, social and environmental benefits;
- b. invest in and improve the natural environment, particularly;
  - i. the river valley networks including:
    - the River Ribble at Penwortham and south to Lostock Hall and Bamber Bridge, to create a ‘central park’ area incorporating footpaths, cycleways and a Local Nature Reserve;
    - Savick Brook upstream of Preston;
    - the River Darwen between Roach Bridge and Walton-le-Dale; and
    - the Yarrow and Cuerden Valley Parks.
  - ii. the canal networks including:
    - the Lancaster Canal into Preston; and
    - the Leeds and Liverpool Canal through Chorley and Adlington.
  - iii. where it contributes to the creation of green wedges and the utilisation of other green open spaces that can provide natural extensions into the countryside.
- c. secure mitigation and/or compensatory measures where development would lead to the loss of, or damage to, part of the Green Infrastructure network.”

## Policy 19 Areas of Separation and Major Open Space

“Protect the identity, local distinctiveness and green infrastructure of certain settlements and neighbourhoods by the designation of Areas of Separation and Major Open Space, to ensure that those places at greatest risk of merging are protected and environmental/ open space resources are safeguarded.

Areas of Separation will be designated around the following northern settlements:

- a. Broughton;
- b. Goosnargh/Whittingham; and
- c. Grimsargh;

and between the following central and southern settlements:

- d. Bamber Bridge and Lostock Hall;
- e. Walton-le-Dale and Penwortham;
- f. Farington, Lostock Hall and Penwortham;
- g. Chorley and Whittle-le-Woods; and
- h. Chorley and Euxton.

Areas of Major Open Space will be designated within the Preston urban boundary, in particular areas between:

- a. Ingol/Tanterton and Greyfriars/Cadley;
- b. Sharoe Green and Fulwood.”

## Policy 21 Landscape Character Areas

“New Development will be required to be well integrated into existing settlement patterns, appropriate to the landscape character type and designation within which it is situated and contribute positively to its conservation, enhancement or restoration or the creation of appropriate new features.”



# 2.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

**KEY**

- Site Boundary
- 1km Buffer
- 2km Buffer

**South Ribble Local Plan Policies**

- G16 Wildlife Corridors
- G16 Biological Heritage Sites
- G16 Local Nature Reserves

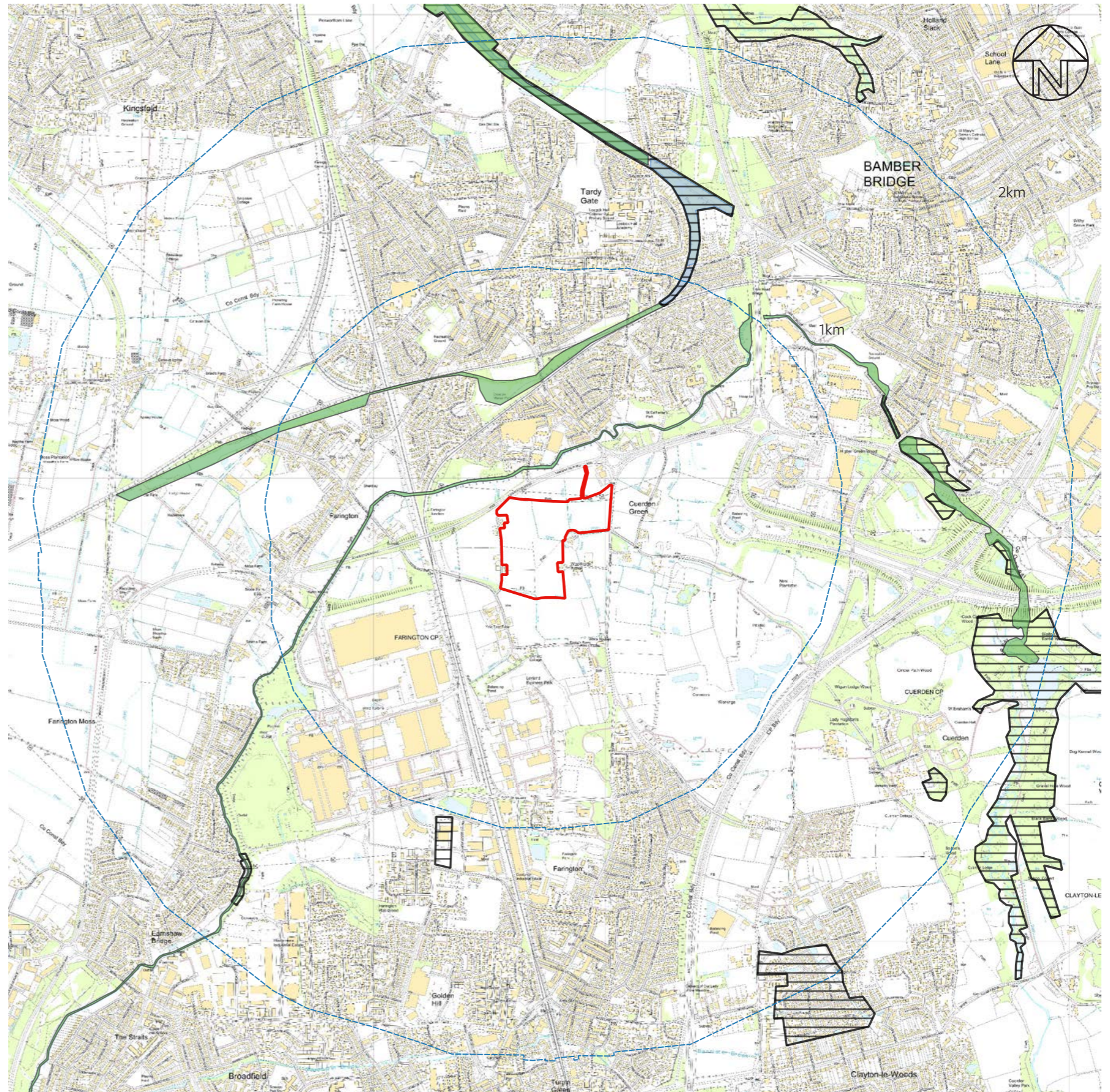


Figure 2.2 - Local Planning Policy - Ecological Designations

# 2.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

## Policy 22 Biodiversity and Geodiversity

“Conserve, protect and seek opportunities to enhance and manage the biological and geological assets of the area, through the following measures:

- a. Promoting the conservation and enhancement of biological diversity, having particular regard to the favourable condition, restoration and re-establishment of priority habitats and species populations;
- b. Seeking opportunities to conserve, enhance and expand ecological networks;
- c. Safeguarding geological assets that are of strategic and local importance.”

## South Ribble Borough Council Local Plan (2015)

### Policy G1 Green Belt

“The area covered by Green Belt is shown on the Policies Map. As set out in the NPPF, planning permission will not be given for the construction of new buildings unless there are very special circumstances. Exceptions to this are:

- a. buildings for agriculture and forestry;
- b. provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation and for cemeteries, as long as it preserves the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;
- c. the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;
- d. the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;
- e. limited infilling in villages, and limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in this Local Plan; or
- f. limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites (brownfield land), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it

than the existing development.

There are a number of major developed employment sites within the Green Belt. These sites can be developed within their curtilage.

These major developed employment sites should continue to secure jobs and prosperity without further prejudicing the Green Belt. Such development is considered appropriate in the terms of the NPPF.”

### Policy G5 Areas of Separation

“The three Areas of Separation are shown on the Policies Map as between:

AS1 Bamber Bridge and Lostock Hall;

AS2 Walton-le-Dale and Penwortham – including part of Central Park, see Policy G6;

AS3 Between Farington, Lostock Hall and Penwortham.

The Council will protect this land from inappropriate development in line with Policy G1 and the NPPF.

The Core Strategy identifies a proposed Central Park for South Ribble, between Bamber Bridge and Lostock Hall and Walton-le-Dale and Penwortham. The Central Park boundary is incorporated within the boundaries of the areas of separation between Bamber Bridge and Lostock Hall; and Walton-le-Dale and Penwortham (the area of Central Park is allocated on the Policies Map and detailed in Policy G6).”

### Policy G7 Green Infrastructure - Existing Provision

“Green Infrastructure is defined in the introduction to this chapter. Development proposals should seek to protect and enhance the existing Green Infrastructure. Development which would involve the loss of Green Infrastructure (as identified on the Policies Map) will not be permitted unless:

- a. Alternative provision of similar and/or better facilities for the community will be implemented on another site or within the locality; or
- b. It can be demonstrated that the retention of the site is not required to

satisfy a recreational need in the local area; and

- c. The development would not detrimentally affect the amenity value and the nature conservation value of the site.”

### Policy G8 Green Infrastructure and Networks Future Provision

“All developments should provide:

- a. Appropriate landscape enhancements;
- b. Conservation of important environmental assets, natural resources, biodiversity and geodiversity;
- c. For the long-term use and management of these areas; and
- d. Access to well-designed cycleways, bridleways and footways (both off and on road), to help link local services and facilities.”

### Policy G13 Trees, Woodland and Development

- a. “Planning permission will not be permitted where the proposal adversely affects trees, woodlands and hedgerows which are:
  - i. Protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO);
  - ii. Ancient Woodlands including individual ancient and veteran trees and those defined in Natural England’s inventory of ancient woodlands;
  - iii. In a Conservation Area; or
  - iv. Within a recognised Nature Conservation Site.
- b. There will be a presumption in favour of the retention and enhancement of existing tree, woodland and hedgerow cover on site;
- c. Where there is an unavoidable loss of trees on site, replacement trees will be required to be planted on site where appropriate at a rate of two new trees for each tree lost;
- d. Tree survey information should be submitted with all planning applications,

# 2.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

## KEY

— Site Boundary

□ 1km Buffer

□ 2km Buffer

## Heritage

— Conservation Areas

● Listed Buildings

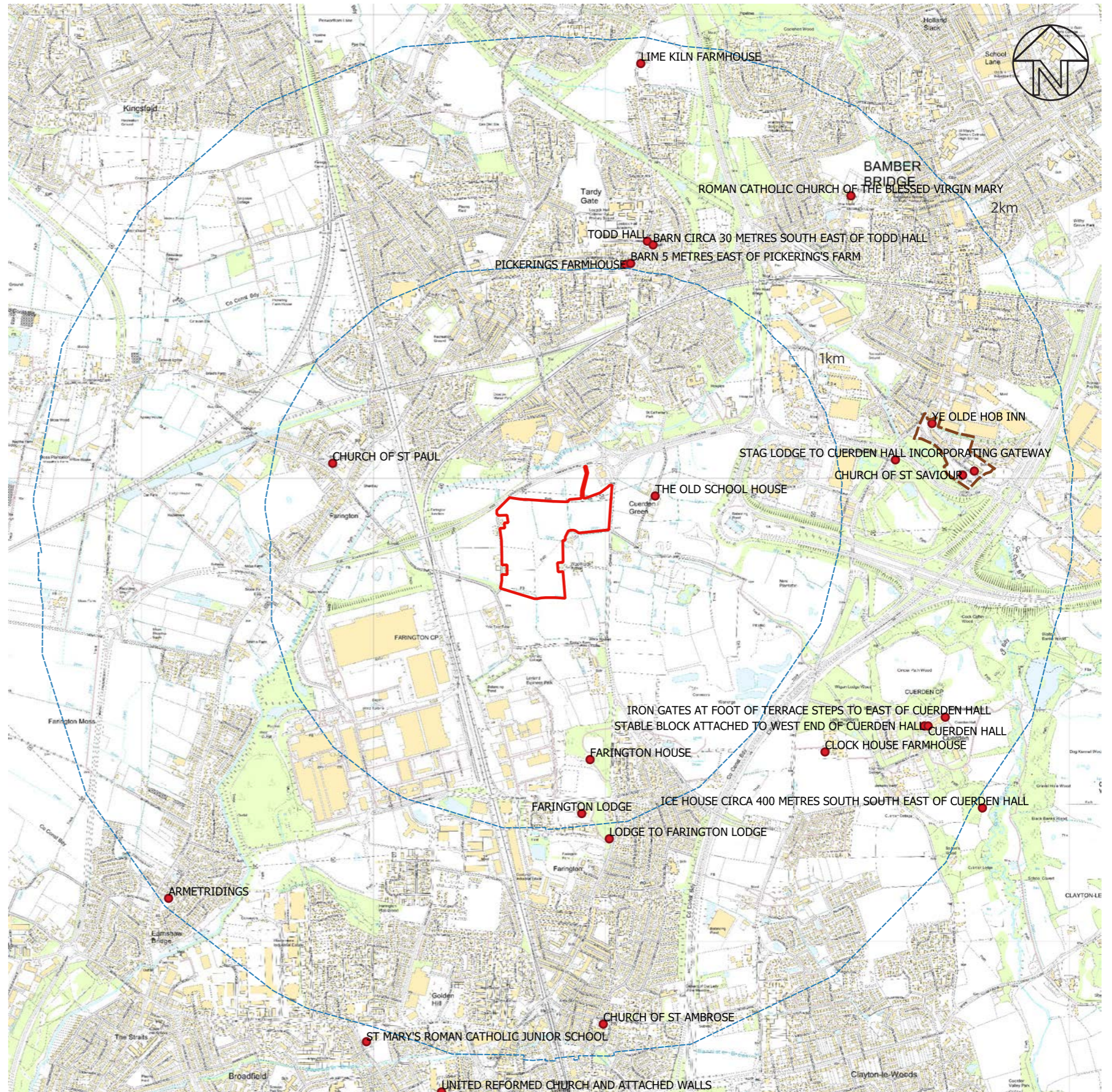


Figure 2.3 - Local Planning Policy - Heritage Assets

# 2.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

where trees are present on site. The tree survey information should include protection, mitigation and management measures;

- e. *Appropriate management measures will be required to be implemented to protect newly planted and existing trees, woodlands and/or hedgerows.”*

## Policy G16 Biodiversity and Nature Conservation

*“The borough’s Biodiversity and Ecological Network resources will be protected, conserved and enhanced. The level of protection will be commensurate with the site’s status and proposals will be assessed having regard to the site’s importance and the contribution it makes to wider ecological networks:*

*Regard will be had to:*

- *Protecting and safeguarding all designated sites of international, national, regional, county and local level importance including all Ramsar, Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation, national nature reserves, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Biological Heritage Sites, Geological Heritage Sites, Local Nature Reserves, wildlife corridors together with any ecological network approved by the Council;*
- *Protecting, safeguarding and enhancing habitats for European, nationally and locally important species;*
- *When considering applications for planning permission, protecting, conserving and enhancing the borough’s ecological network and providing links to the network from and/or through a proposed development site.*

*In addition development should have regard to the provisions set out below:*

- a. *The need to minimise impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible by designing in wildlife and by ensuring that significant harm is avoided or, if unavoidable, is reduced or appropriately mitigated and/or, as a last resort, compensated;*
- b. *The need to promote the preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species populations;*
- c. *Where there is reason to suspect that there may be protected habitats/*

*species on or close to a proposed development site, planning applications must be accompanied by a survey undertaken by an appropriate qualified professional;*

- d. *Where the benefits for development in social or economic terms are considered to outweigh the impact on the natural environment, appropriate and proportionate mitigation measures and/or compensatory habitat creation of an equal or greater area will be required through planning conditions and/or planning obligations.”*

## Policy G17 Design Criteria for New Development

*“Planning permission will be granted for new development, including extensions and free standing structures, provided that, where relevant to the development:*

- a. *The proposal does not have a detrimental impact on the existing building, neighbouring buildings or on the street scene by virtue of its design, height, scale, orientation, plot density, massing, proximity, or use of materials. Furthermore, the development should not cause harm to neighbouring property by leading to undue overlooking, overshadowing or have an overbearing effect;*
- b. *The layout, design and landscaping of all elements of the proposal, including any internal roads, car parking, footpaths and open spaces, are of a high quality and will provide an interesting visual environment which respects the character of the site and local area (...);*
- d. *The proposal would sustain, conserve and where appropriate enhance the significance, appearance, character and setting of a heritage asset itself and the surrounding historic environment. Where a proposed development would lead to substantial harm or loss of significance of a designated heritage asset, planning permission will only be granted where it can be demonstrated that the substantial public benefits of the proposal outweigh the harm or loss to the asset; and*
- e. *The proposal would not have a detrimental impact on landscape features such as mature trees, hedgerows, ponds and watercourses. In some circumstances where, on balance, it is considered acceptable to remove one or more of these features, then mitigation measures to replace the feature/s will be required either on or off-site.”*

# 3.0 LANDSCAPE BASELINE

## Landscape Baseline – Landscape Character

The assessment of landscape character is a method of understanding the particular attributes or factors that have influenced the historic development, current and future features of an area, and what makes that area distinctive from other areas. Natural England describes landscape character assessment as a:

*“...systematic way of analysing and describing landscape identifying areas of distinctive character, classifying and mapping them. The process involves identifying the patterns, elements and features that give landscapes homogeneity and make them different from each other.”*

Landscape characterisation is a process which has been developed by local authorities to assist them in the planning process. Published studies of landscape character provide a source of information to enable the fuller understanding of landscape character – whether at a regional scale or at a local district scale; it is of course possible to carry through the process of analysis to individual sites or parts of sites. Typically, the published assessments provide character descriptions of specific areas and consider factors likely to influence future character and / or set out prescriptions for change.

There is a range of published assessments at national, regional, and local levels relevant to the Assessment Site. Each is considered below. That at a national level pre-dated the guidance set out in the ‘Landscape Character Assessment; Guidance for England and Scotland (2002)’ – widely regarded as the definitive guidance on the subject. That said, it is important to recognise that these assessments are purely assessments of landscape character; they are not, and are not intended to be, the development plan, and thus what the documents may say about the potential effects of development in any location cannot of itself be considered determinative as a matter of policy.

### National Landscape Character Assessment

At a National level the Assessment Site lies within National Character Area (NCA) 32: Lancashire and Amounderness Plain. The key characteristics pertinent to the study area and Site are described as:

- *“A rich patchwork of pasture, arable fields and drainage ditches, on a relatively flat to gently undulating coastal landscape;*

- *Extensive views across the plain, within which small to medium-sized blocks of mixed woodland (wind-sculpted near the coast) provide punctuation and vertical accents (...);*
- *Medium-sized to large fields form an open, large-scale agricultural landscape. Pasture is more dominant north of the Ribble Estuary, with arable to the south. There is a high density of relict pastoral field ponds on the eastern side of the NCA(...);*
- *A complex network of wide meandering rivers, raised drainage ditches and dykes divide and drain the landscape. Along with fragmented relicts of reedbeds and mosses, and historic place names, these provide a reminder of the area’s heritage of wetland reclamation (...);*
- *Urban settlement is concentrated in the planned Victorian coastal resorts (including Blackpool) and inland towns (the largest of which is Preston);*
- *The Ribble Link, Lancaster Canal, and Leeds and Liverpool Canal all cross the NCA;*
- *Designed landscapes associated with large houses are locally common in the south, where they provide enclosure in an otherwise open landscape;*
- *A rectilinear network of lanes and tracks – usually without fences or hedges – subdivides the landscape, and isolated brick farmsteads occur in rural areas (...);*
- *Several long-distance paths cross the NCA, including the Lancashire Coastal Way, the Ribble Way and the Wyre Way, as well as canal towpaths.”*

### County Landscape Character Assessment

At a County level the Site lies within LCT 5: Undulating Lowland Farmland, and within this LCA 5k: Cuerden-Euxton, within the document ‘A Landscape Strategy for Lancashire: Landscape Character Assessment’. The key characteristics of LCA 5 which are pertinent to the study area and Site are described below:

*“Generally below 150m, the Undulating Lowland Farmland lies between the major valleys and the moorland fringes. The underlying geology is largely masked by heavy boulder clays and hedgerows predominate over stone walls. This lowland landscape is traversed by deeply incised, wooded cloughs and*

*gorges. There are also many mixed farm woodlands, copses and hedgerow trees, creating an impression of a well wooded landscape from ground level and a patchwork of wood and pasture from raised viewpoints on the fells. Some of the most picturesque stone villages of the county occur within this well settled landscape type. The towns of Longridge and Clitheroe also occur within this type, but are not typical of the settlement pattern. The area also has many country houses whose boundary walls and designed landscapes add to the species diversity and visual appeal. There is a high density of farms and scattered cottages outside the clustered settlements, linked by a network of minor roads.”*

In regards to LCA 5k: Cuerden-Euxton, a summary is provided below:

*“The rural character of this landscape is largely obscured by built development which has taken place since the late 1970s. Motorways and motorway junctions dominate the northern sector. The principal landscape feature is Cuerden Valley Park, based upon the woodland and valley of the river Lostock. The park is managed for nature conservation and recreational use and is an important local resource. Pockets of farmland and vernacular buildings survive as a reminder of earlier land use and settlement pattern.”*

### Landscape Designations

At a local level, the Assessment Site falls within land designated as Green Belt. Although not strictly a landscape designation, it is considered a pertinent consideration of the proposed development given its spatial, visual and volumetric dimensions.

Green Belt policy at the Local and National level is presented at Section 2.0 Planning Policy Context, and the potential impacts of the proposals on the Green Belt are considered at Section 6.0 Landscape Effects.

# 3.0 LANDSCAPE BASELINE

- KEY**
- Site Boundary
  - 1km Buffer
  - 2km Buffer
  - National Character Areas
- Lancashire LCT
- Coastal Plain
  - Historic Core
  - Industrial Age
  - Mosslands
  - Suburban
  - Undulating Lowland Farmland

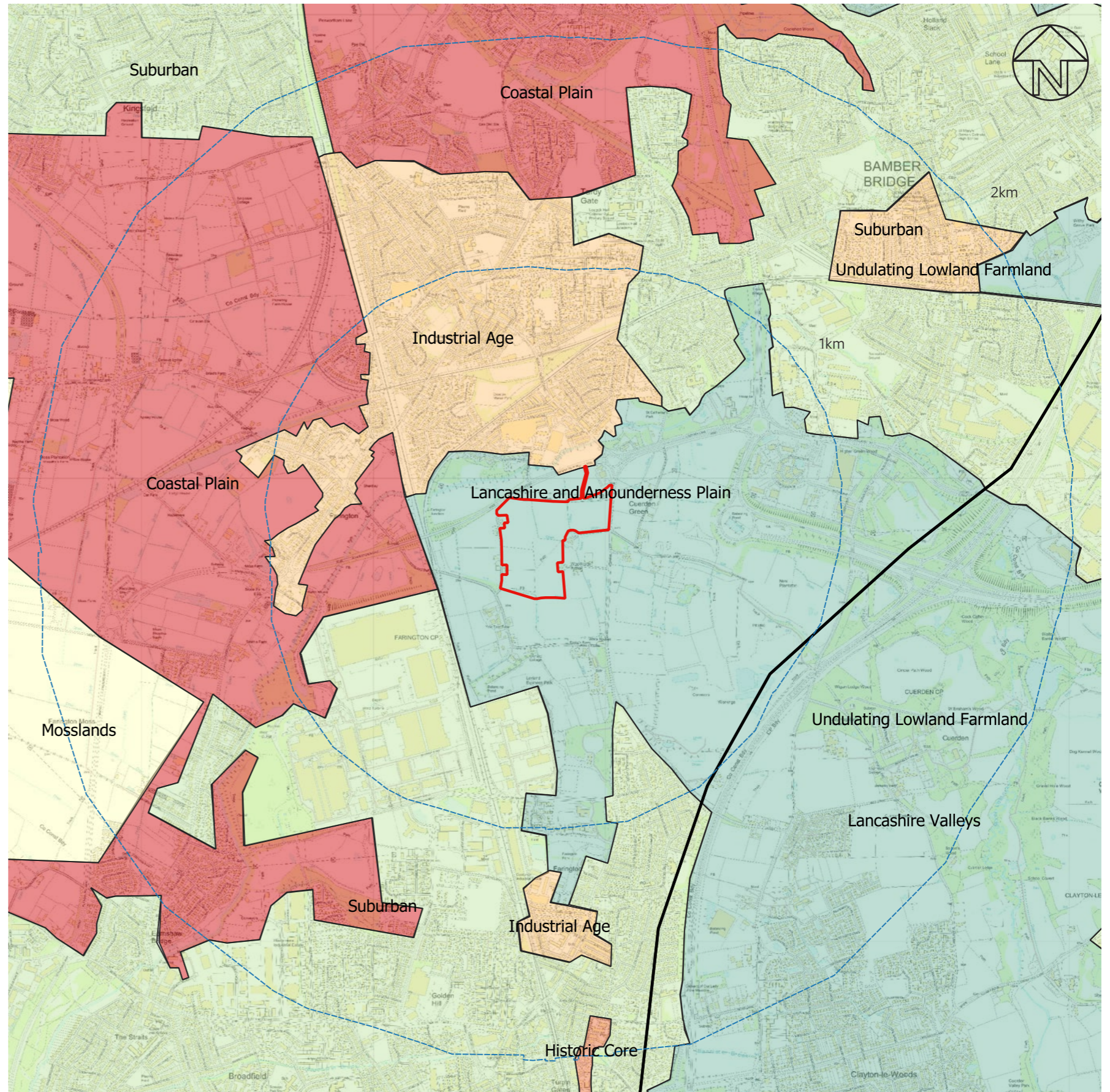


Figure 3.1 - Landscape Character

# 3.0 LANDSCAPE BASELINE

## Characteristics of the Assessment Site

### Land Use

The Site is currently utilised as pastoral farmland, comprising 6 no. rectilinear fields separated by field boundaries comprising a combination of hedgerows, hedgerow trees and post-and-rail fencing.

### Topography

Topography across the Site is gently undulating, with a gentle fall from south east to north west. The highest point on Site is +39.36m AOD to the south eastern boundary, and the lowest is +31.89m +AOD, located to the north western Site boundary.

### Vegetation

Vegetation across the Site comprises principally pastoral grassland, with field boundaries comprising a combination of hedgerows and hedgerow trees.

### Water Features

There are numerous drainage ditches located across the Site which typically follow field boundaries and flow towards the River Lostock to the north of the Site.

### Built Elements

Built elements across the Site are restricted to field boundaries, comprising post-and-rail fencing.

### Public Rights of Way

There are 2 PROW which traverse the Site. Footpath 7, 4, 5 runs from the south western corner of the Site, and Footpath 9, 12, 2 runs west from the eastern Site boundary. These Footpaths converge at the farm buildings located to the eastern boundary.

Footpath 7, 4, 6 and Footpath 9, 12, 1 run along the northern Site boundary, connecting Farington Road to the west and Stanfield Lane to the east. There are numerous other PROW located within the Study Area.

### Heritage

There are no heritage assets located within the Site or in immediate proximity to the Site boundaries. The closest heritage asset is the Grade II Listed The Old School House, located approximately 190m to the east of the Site. There are 3 additional listed buildings located within 1km of the Site boundary, however these are not considered to share any physical or perceptual relationship with the Site owing to intervening built form and vegetation.

### Ecology

The site is approximately 14ha and comprises improved grassland, hedgerow, scattered tree, ditch and standing water.

The site is bound and divided by a series of species poor hedgerows (UK Priority Habitat), the dominant species within the hedgerows is hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*). The hedgerows are generally intact and contain mature scattered trees. The hedgerows are generally managed with an average height of ≈1.5-2.5m, although there are a small number of hedgerows which are not managed, which exceed 3m high.

Himalayan Balsam was recorded in two different locations within the site, the first in the dry ditch next to the hedgerow to the north west of the site and the second in the ditches to the south of the site.

### Green Belt Designation

Although not strictly a landscape designation, the Site is located within an area designated as Green Belt. As stated within Policy G1 Green Belt:

*“The area covered by Green Belt is shown on the Policies Map. As set out in the NPPF, planning permission will not be given for the construction of new buildings unless there are very special circumstances. Exceptions to this are:...*

*b. provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation and for cemeteries, as long as it preserves the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;...”*

### Green Belt Openness

A key consideration of the Green Belt designation is to preserve the ‘openness’ of the landscape.

Although not defined within the NPPF, recent case law provides some clarity on the term ‘openness’ (Turner v Secretary of State for Communities and Local

Government & Anor [2016] EWCA Civ 466 (18 May 2016)):

*“[14] ... The word “openness” is open-textured and a number of factors are capable of being relevant when it comes to applying it to the particular facts of a specific case. Prominent among these will be factors relevant to how built up the Green Belt is now and how built up it would be if redevelopment occurs (in the context of which, volumetric matters may be a material concern, but are by no means the only one) and factors relevant to the visual impact on the aspect of openness which the Green Belt presents”.*

*“[16] ... The visual dimension of the openness of the Green Belt does not exhaust all relevant planning factors relating to visual impact when a proposal for development in the Green Belt comes up for consideration. For example, there may be harm to visual amenity for neighbouring properties arising from the proposed development which needs to be taken into account as well. But it does not follow from the fact that there may be other harms with a visual dimension apart from harm to the openness of the Green Belt that the concept of openness of the Green Belt has no visual dimension itself” .*

It is therefore considered that, in terms of the above, ‘openness’ comprises both a volumetric and a visual aspect. The development on Site is considered in light of these factors in the following Visual Effects Section.

# 3.0 LANDSCAPE BASELINE

## Landscape Baseline – Landscape Resource

Landscape character areas differ in their range of Landscape features and the patterns these create, and consequently in their ability to accommodate different types of development. Some areas may be particularly sensitive and others more resilient.

In terms of the existing landscape condition of the Site - i.e. the physical state of the landscape - the Site is considered to be in Good condition. This rating considers the recognisable landscape structure, and some features worthy of retention, including mature boundary vegetation.

In terms of landscape value - i.e. how the landscape is valued by society - the Site is considered to be of Good value. This rating considers that the Site is not subject to any specific landscape designations, although lies within land designated as Green Belt, and also has numerous PROW which run through the Site and along its boundaries.

## Landscape Baseline – Landscape Receptors

From the above analysis of the Landscape Baseline, it is concluded that the Landscape Receptors relevant to the assessment site that need to be assessed in the following section on Landscape Effects are:

- Landscape Character;
- Landscape features and vegetation;
- Public Rights of Way which traverse the Site; and
- The Site's Green Belt designation.



# 3.0 LANDSCAPE BASELINE

- KEY**
- Site Boundary
  - 1km Buffer
  - Public Rights of Way
  - Bridleway
  - Footpath

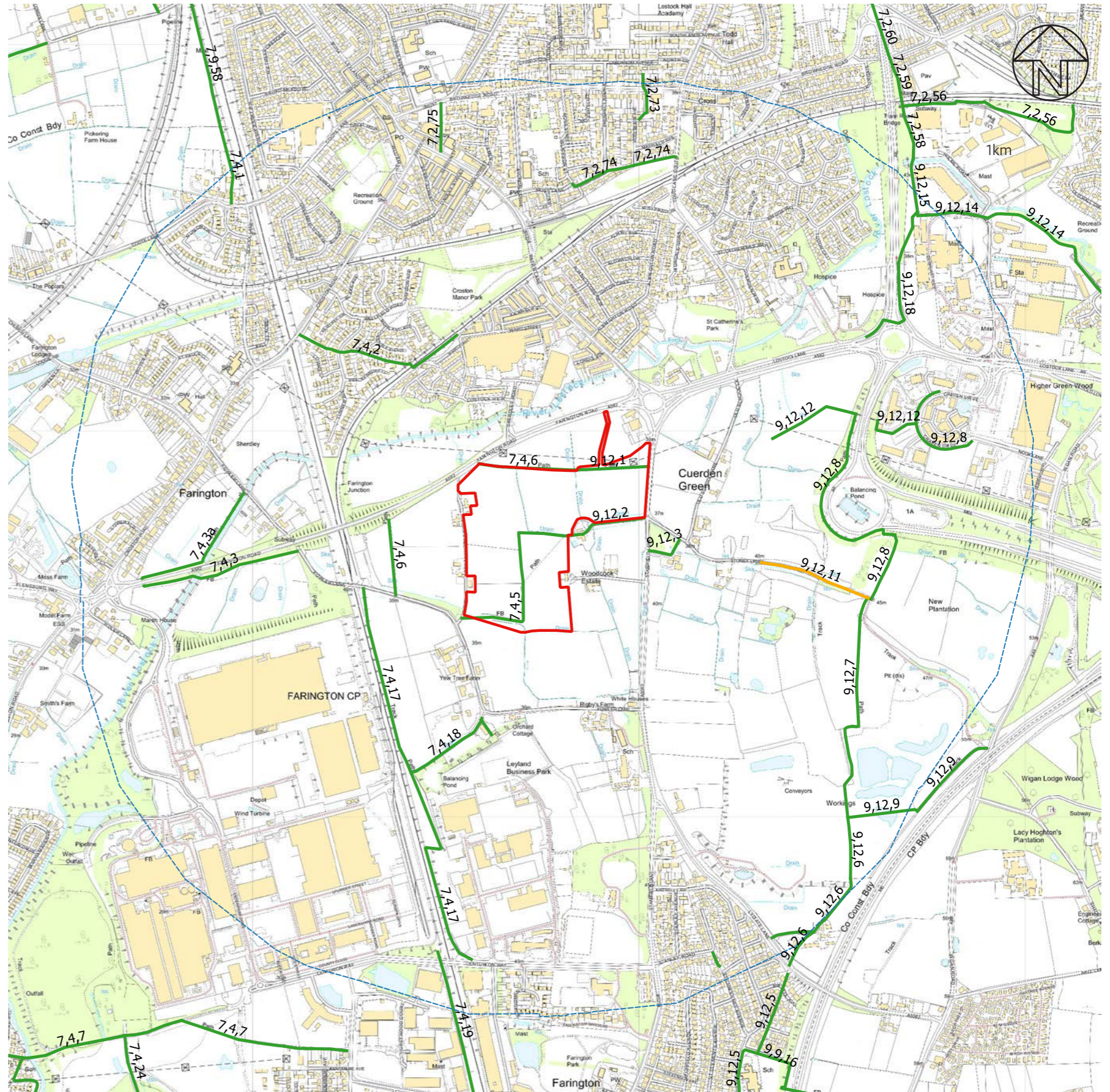


Figure 3.2 - Public Rights of Way 1km

# 3.0 LANDSCAPE BASELINE

**KEY**

- Site Boundary
- National Character Areas
- South Ribble Local Plan Policies**
- G5 Areas of Separation
- G7 Green Infrastructure
- G12 Green Corridors - Green Wedges
- G16 Wildlife Corridors
- Green Belt

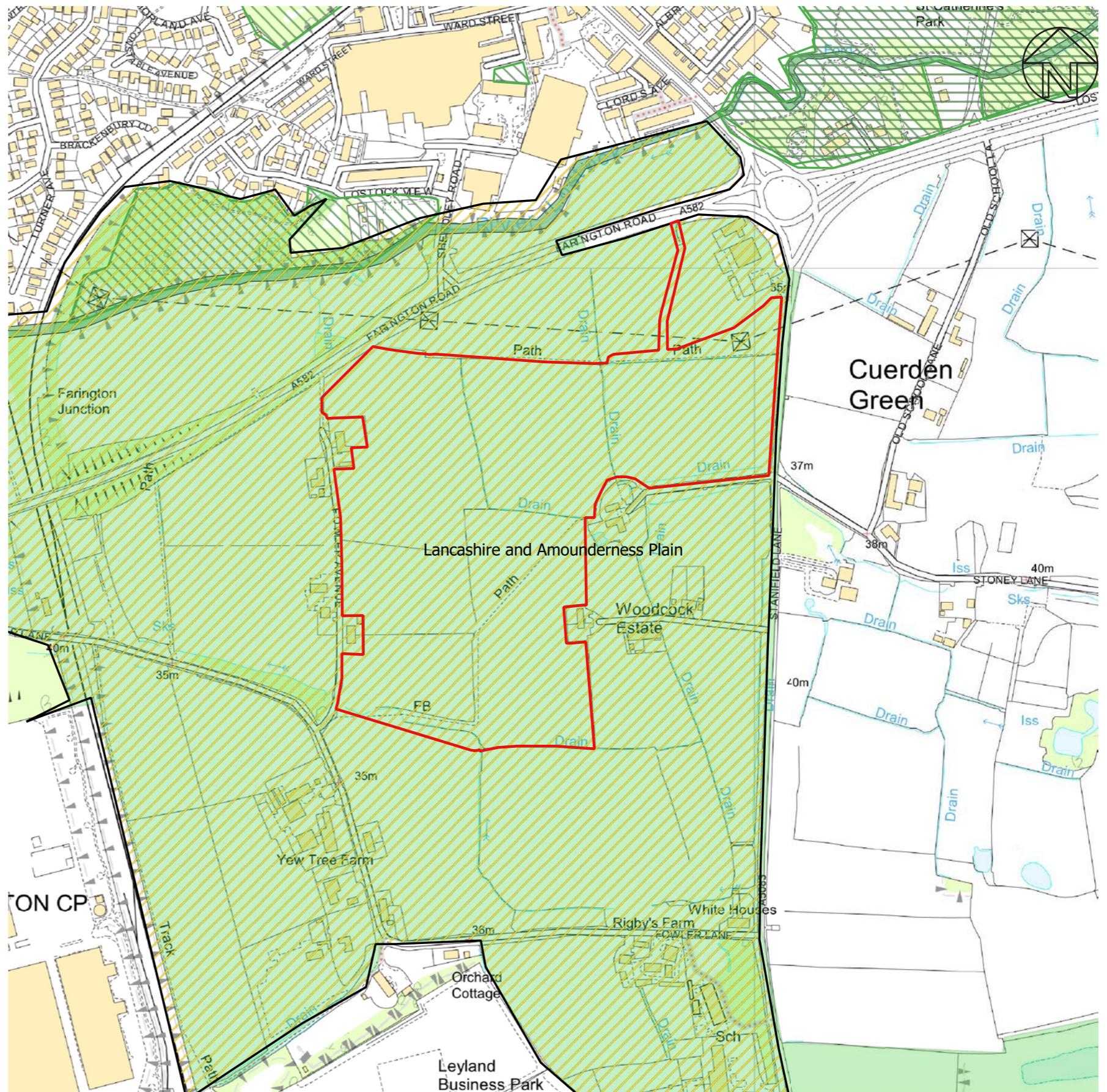
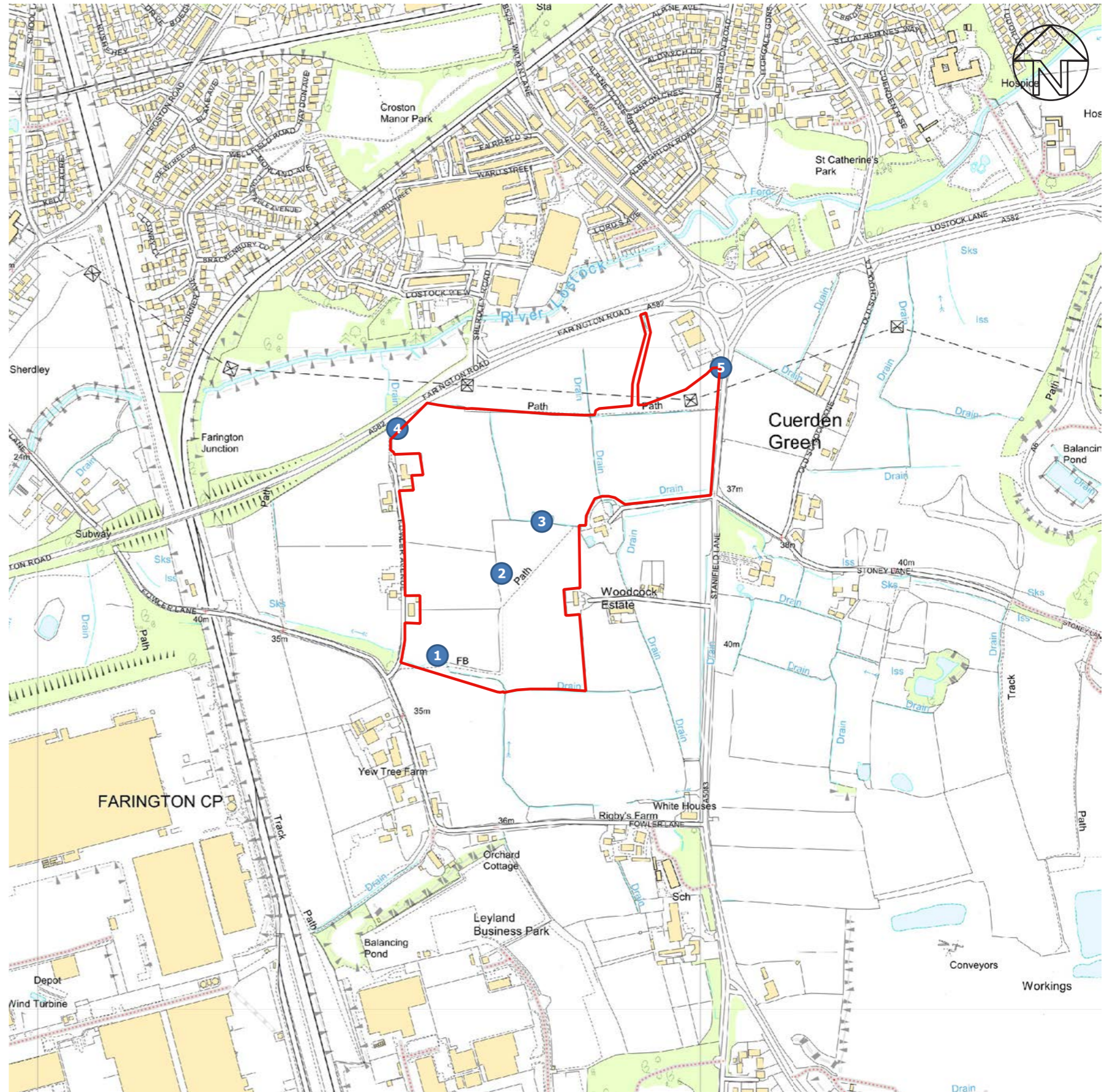


Figure 3.3 - Designations - Site Level

# 3.0 LANDSCAPE BASELINE

A visual inspection of the Assessment Site was conducted in August 2021.



- KEY**
- Site Boundary
  - Site Context Viewpoints

Figure 3.4 - Internal Site Context Photographs

# 3.0 LANDSCAPE BASELINE

Residential property east of Fowler Avenue

Electricity pylons

Woodland blocks



**Internal Site Context Viewpoint 1** - View looking east across the Assessment Site from the western Site boundary to Fowler Avenue. This view comprises the semi-improved pastoral grassland and field boundaries comprising hedgerows, hedgerow trees and occasional blocks of woodland. This view also takes in various built elements within the landscape, including residential properties, telegraph poles and electricity pylons.

Electricity pylons

Residential property

Field boundaries comprising hedgerows and hedgerow trees



**Internal Site Context Viewpoint 2** - View looking north east across the Assessment Site from Footpath 7, 4, 5 which traverses the southern and central parts of the Site. This view comprises semi-improved pastoral grassland and an area of marshland in the foreground, with field boundaries comprising hedgerows, hedgerow trees and occasional blocks of woodland in the middle distance. This view also takes in various built elements within the landscape, including residential properties, telegraph poles and electricity pylons.

# 3.0 LANDSCAPE BASELINE



**Internal Site Context Viewpoint 3** - View looking south from close to the centre of the Assessment Site. This view comprises semi-improved pastoral grassland in the foreground, with field boundaries comprising hedgerows, hedgerow trees and occasional blocks of woodland in the middle distance. This view also takes in numerous residential properties and their associated curtilages and boundary treatments.



**Internal Site Context Viewpoint 4** - View looking south east across the Site from the north western Site boundary at the junction of Farington Road and Fowler Avenue. This view comprises partially restricted and channelled views, comprising an area of scrubby pastoral grassland and a combination of post-and-wire and post-and-rail fencing in the foreground, the curtilage of a nearby residential property in the near-middle distance, and longer views across the wider Site. These longer views comprise hedgerows, hedgerow trees and occasional blocks of woodland, as well as built elements including residential properties and electricity pylons.

## 3.0 LANDSCAPE BASELINE

Stanfield Lane

Electricity Pylon

Mature vegetation to field boundaries



**Internal Site Context Viewpoint 5** - View looking south from close to the northern boundary of the Assessment Site. This view comprises semi-improved pastoral grassland in the foreground, with field boundaries comprising hedgerows, hedgerow trees and occasional blocks of woodland in the middle distance. This view also takes in the large electricity pylon located immediately north of the Site boundary.

# 4.0 VISUAL BASELINE

This LVIA considers a study area of 2km radius from the Site boundary, in order to establish the spatial parameters of the Site and identify the potential landscape and visual effects of the proposed development. Given the relatively flat topography and well-vegetated nature of the surrounding landscape, it is considered that views from receptors beyond 1km will be either entirely screened, or will be at such distances that the proposals would form only a very minor proportion of the wider view and would be barely perceptible to the casual observer.

A field survey was undertaken in August 2021 which identified a range of views offering a wide coverage of the Site from a number of representative viewing locations, ranging from within the Assessment Site and its immediate proximity, to longer distance views. A summary of key visual receptors is provided below, and a selection of representative viewpoints is presented at Table 4.1.

## Residents of Dwellings

Principal views available to residents in the study area are from those dwellings located in immediate proximity to the Assessment Site, particularly along its boundaries. These include dwellings to the immediate eastern Site boundary, those at Woodcock Estate, along Old School Lane, Stoney Lane, Fowler Lane, Fowler Avenue and Lostock Lane.

Some limited, filtered views are also potentially available towards the Site from those properties along South View and Lostock Lane, located approximately 250m and 220m from the Site boundary, respectively. Views towards the Site from other residential properties in the study area are considered to be entirely screened owing to the relatively flat topography and well-vegetated nature of the surrounding landscape.

## Road Users

Views available to road users within the Study area are limited to those routes in immediate proximity to the Site, namely along Farington Road, Lostock Lane, Stanifield Lane, Old School Lane, Stoney Lane, Fowler Lane and Fowler Avenue.

These views are generally close-range yet oblique and transitory. Views from other routes within the study area are considered to be entirely screened owing to the relatively flat topography and well-vegetated nature of the surrounding landscape.

## Public Rights of Way

There are numerous PROW which traverse the Site and run along its boundaries, which include footpath 7, 4, 5, footpath 7, 4, 6, footpath 9, 12, 1, and footpath 9, 12, 2. Views from these footpaths are generally close-range and relatively open and uninterrupted, given their proximity.

There are numerous additional PROW located within a 1km radius of the Site, although only a limited number currently experience potential views towards the Site. These include footpath 9, 12, 3, footpath 7, 4, 6, footpath 7, 4, 17, footpath 7, 4, 3a and 9, 12, 17. Any potential visual impacts on these PROW are explored in Section 8 - Assessment of Visual Effects.

## Heritage Assets

There are four listed buildings located in 1km of the Site, however only The Old School House is considered to have the potential to experience views towards the proposed development. This grade II listed building is located approximately 190m to the east of the Site. Views from all other heritage assets are entirely screened by a combination of relatively flat topography and well-vegetated nature of the study area.

# 4.0 VISUAL BASELINE

## KEY

- Site Boundary
- 1km Buffer
- Assessment Viewpoints

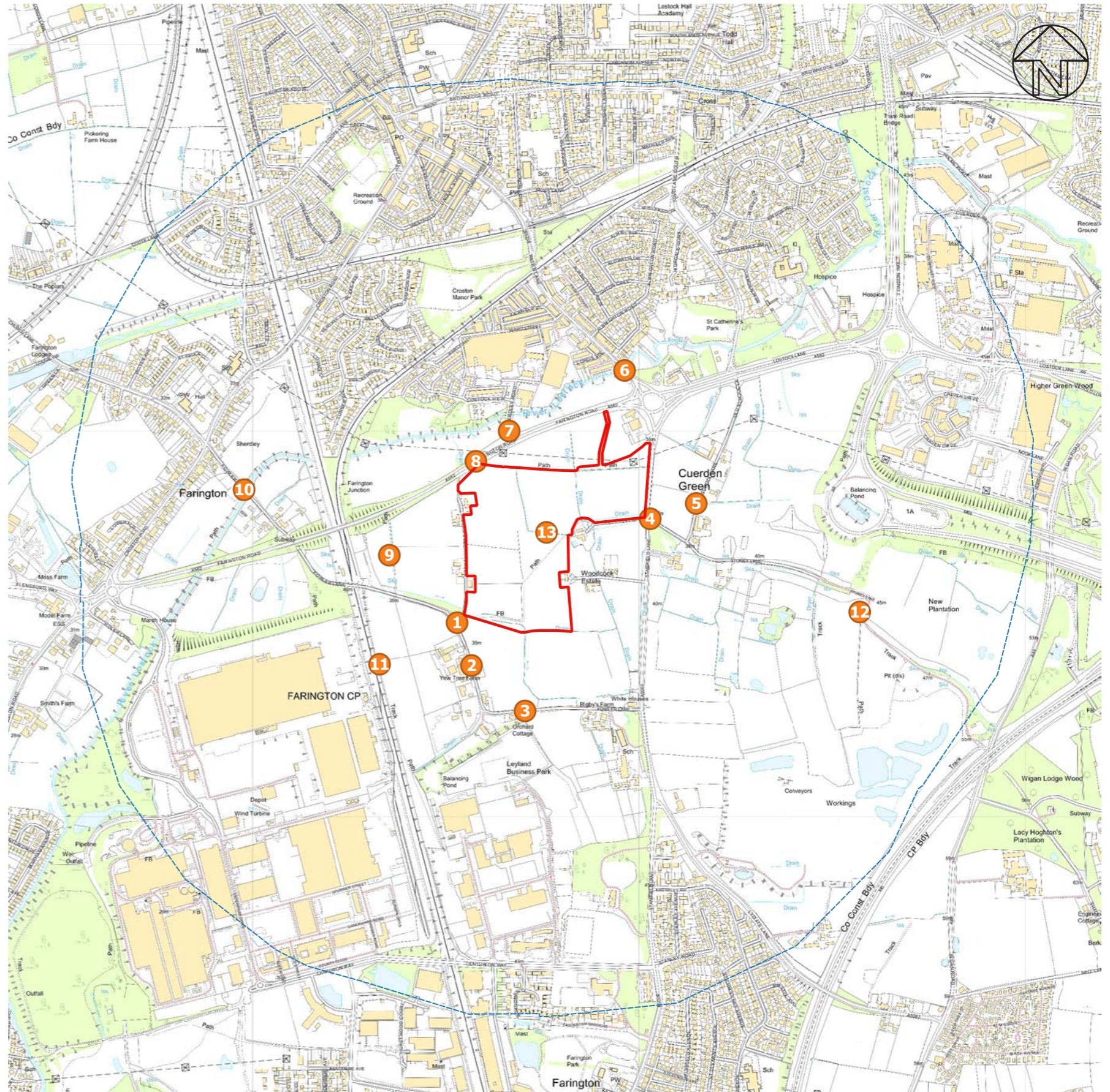


Figure 4.1 - Viewpoints - Close Range



# 4.0 VISUAL BASELINE

Table 4.1 - Visual Receptors					
Viewpoint No.	Location	Viewing Direction	Visual Receptor(s)	Approx. Distance to Development	Visibility of Site
1	Junction of Fowler Avenue and Fowler Lane	North east	Road users, users of footpath	40m	<b>Visible</b> - Some limited close-range, oblique, and channelled views are available into a small proportion of the central area of the Site, although views into the wider Site are entirely screened by intervening vegetation along Fowler Lane.
2	Close to Yew Tree Farm on Fowler Lane	North east	Road users, residents of properties	125m	<b>Visible</b> - Views towards the Site are almost entirely screened by intervening vegetation along Fowler Lane and along the southern Site boundary. Some very limited, glimpsed and filtered views are available through a gap in vegetation into a discreet portion of the Site from this location.
3	Close to Orchard Cottage on Fowler Lane	North	Road users, residents of properties	205m	<b>Visible</b> - Some limited, medium-range views are available towards the Site from this location, although views of the ground plane of the Site are almost entirely obscured by vegetation along the southern boundary of the Site.
4	Junction of Stanifield Lane and Stoney Lane	West	Road users	15m	<b>Visible</b> - Close-range, open and largely uninterrupted views are available into the northernmost area of the Site, whereas views into the central and southern areas of the Site are entirely screened by intervening vegetation associated with property curtilages and field boundaries.
5	Old School Lane, close to Grade II listed The Old School House	West	Road users, setting of listed building	165m	<b>Visible</b> - Medium-range, open and largely uninterrupted views are available over the northernmost area of the Site, with intervening vegetation screening the southern extents of the Site.
6	Watkin Lane, close to residential properties	South	Road users, residents of properties	250m	<b>Visible</b> - Medium-range, screened and filtered views are available, channelled along Watkin Lane, over the northernmost area of the Site, with intervening vegetation screening the western and southern extents of the Site.
7	Junction of Sherdley Road and Farington Road	South	Road users	90m	<b>Visible</b> - Some limited, medium-range views are available towards the Site from this location, although views of the ground plane of the Site are almost entirely obscured by vegetation located along field boundaries in proximity. Electricity pylons are a prominent feature in the foreground this view.

# 4.0 VISUAL BASELINE

Viewpoint No.	Location	Viewing Direction	Visual Receptor(s)	Approx. Distance to Development	Visibility of Site
8	Farington Road	South east	Road users	At Site boundary	<b>Visible</b> - Close-range, open and uninterrupted views are available across the southern and central areas of the Site from this location. Views into the northern portion of the Site are screened and filtered by vegetation located along field boundaries and associated with property curtilages.
9	Footpath 7, 4, 6	East	Users of footpath	195m	<b>No visibility</b> - Some very limited, glimpsed and transitory views are available through a gap in vegetation from this location, although views into the Site itself are entirely obscured by intervening vegetation associated with field boundaries in proximity.
10	Junction of Fowler Lane and footpath 7, 4, 3a	East	Road users, users of footpath	555m	<b>No visibility</b> - Views towards the Site from this location are entirely obscured by intervening vegetation and built form. Electricity pylons are a prominent feature in the middle distance of this view.
11	Footpath 7, 4, 17	North east	Users of footpath	265m	<b>No visibility</b> - Views towards the Site from this location are entirely obscured by intervening vegetation and landform. The Wigan to Preston railway line forms a recognisable urban component within this view.
12	Footpath 9, 12, 7	North west	Users of footpath	700m	<b>No visibility</b> - Views towards the Site from this location are entirely obscured by intervening vegetation.

# 4.0 VISUAL BASELINE



**Viewpoint 1 (visible)** - View looking north east towards the Site from Fowler Lane, located approximately 40m from the Site boundary. Some limited close-range, oblique, and channelled views are available into a small portion of the central area of the Site from this location, although views into the wider Site are entirely screened by dense intervening vegetation located along Fowler Lane and the junction to Fowler Avenue. Some views are available over the southern area of the Site, although views of the ground plane are almost entirely obscured by intervening vegetation.

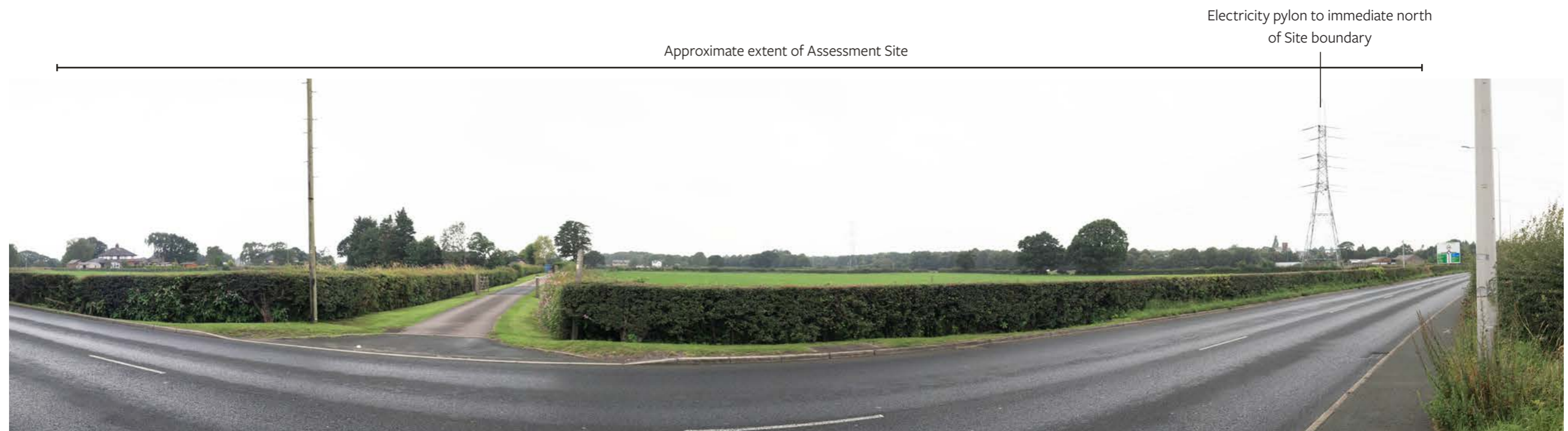


**Viewpoint 2 (visible)** - View looking north east towards the Site from Fowler Lane, close to Yew Tree Farm, located approximately 125m from the Site boundary. Views towards the Site from this location are almost entirely screened by intervening vegetation along Fowler Lane and along the southern Site boundary. Some limited, close-range, glimpsed and filtered views are available towards and over the southern area of the Site, although views into the Site itself are negligible.

# 4.0 VISUAL BASELINE



**Viewpoint 3 (visible)** - View looking north towards the Site from Fowler Lane, located approximately 200m from the Site boundary. From this location, medium-range, open and largely uninterrupted views are available into and over the southernmost area of the Site, whereas views into the central and northern areas of the Site are entirely screened by intervening vegetation associated with property curtilages and field boundaries.



**Viewpoint 4 (visible)** - View looking west towards the Site from Stanifield Lane, located approximately 15m from the Site boundary. From this location, close-range, open and largely uninterrupted views are available into and over the northernmost area of the Site, whereas views into the central and southern areas of the Site are entirely screened by intervening vegetation associated with property curtilages and field boundaries.

# 4.0 VISUAL BASELINE

Approximate extent of Assessment Site



**Viewpoint 5 (visible)** - View looking west towards the Site from Old School Lane, located approximately 135m from the Site boundary. From this location, medium-range, open and largely uninterrupted views are available over the northernmost area of the Site, whereas views into the central and southern areas of the Site are entirely screened by intervening vegetation associated with property curtilages and field boundaries.

A582 roundabout

Electricity pylon to northern boundary

Approximate extent of Assessment Site



**Viewpoint 6 (visible)**- View looking south, southwest towards the Site from Watkin Lane, located approximately 255m from the Site boundary. From this location, medium-range, truncated, filtered and glimpsed views are available over the northernmost area of the Site, whereas views into the central and southern areas of the Site are entirely screened by intervening vegetation associated with property curtilages and field boundaries. It is noted that while the trees are in leaf in the viewpoint photo presented above, further views of the Site are anticipated during winter months where the trees are bare of leaves.

# 4.0 VISUAL BASELINE

Approximate extent of Assessment Site



**Viewpoint 7 (visible)** - View looking south towards the Site from the junction of Sherdley Road and Farington Road. Some limited, medium-range and partially screened and filtered views are available towards and over the northern portion of the Site from this location. Views of the ground plane on Site are obscured by hedgerows located along field boundaries, and views towards the southern area of the Site are limited owing to the distance of these views and screening and filtering provided by intervening vegetation. The electricity pylons visible in the foreground of the view are considered to have an urbanising influence on this view.

Approximate extent of Assessment Site



**Viewpoint 8 (visible)** - View looking south across the Site from footpath 7, 4, 5 located at the southern Site boundary. Close-range, open and uninterrupted views are available across the southern and central areas of the Site from this location. Views into the northern portion of the Site are screened and filtered by vegetation located along field boundaries and associated with property curtilages.

# 4.0 VISUAL BASELINE

Approximate extent of Assessment Site



**Viewpoint 9 (visible)** - View looking east towards the Site from footpath 7, 4, 6 located approximately 195m from the Site boundary. Views along this route are generally entirely screened by dense, outgrown hedgerows along field boundaries. However, a discreet gap in vegetation allows for some restricted, glimpsed, and transitory views towards a limited proportion of the northern area of the Site. These views are filtered and views of the ground plane are entirely obscured by intervening vegetation.

Approximate extent of Assessment Site



**Viewpoint 10 (not visible)** - View looking south east towards the Site from the intersection of Fowler Lane and footpath 7, 4, 3a, located approximately 555m from the Site boundary. Views towards the Site from this location are entirely obscured by intervening vegetation and built form. Electricity pylons in the middle distance form a recognisable urbanising component within the skyline of this view.

# 4.0 VISUAL BASELINE



**Viewpoint 11 (not visible)** - View looking north east towards the Site from footpath 7, 4, 17 located approximately 255m from the Site boundary. Views towards the Site from this location are entirely obscured by intervening vegetation; namely field boundaries and woodland in proximity to the Site. The Wigan to Preston railway forms a recognisable urbanising component within this view.



**Viewpoint 12 (not visible)** - View looking west towards the Site from footpath 9, 12, 7 located approximately 760m from the Site boundary. Views towards the Site from this location are entirely obscured by intervening vegetation; namely field boundaries and woodland in proximity to the Site. Views of electricity pylons and the M65 motorway form urbanising elements within the landscape.



# 4.0 VISUAL BASELINE

Approximate extent of Assessment Site



**Viewpoint 13 (visible)** - View looking east towards the Site from footpath 9, 12, 2 located within the Site boundary. Views along this route are open looking across the proposed development and represent views for both footpath users and residents along the eastern boundary of the Site.