

**WEST OXFORDSHIRE  
LOCAL DEVELOPMENT  
FRAMEWORK**

**CARTERTON LANDSCAPE  
ASSESSMENT 2009**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **INTRODUCTION**

- ES1.** This report has been prepared by Amanda Hopwood Landscape Consultancy (AHLIC), on behalf of West Oxfordshire District Council. Its aim is to update and expand the previous study of land on the fringes of Carterton, the Key Settlement work in the West Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment (WOLA), in order to establish a sound evidence base for the West Oxfordshire Local Development Framework.
- ES2.** The surroundings of the town are divided into areas, A, B and D, based largely on those in the WOLA, but divided on a topographical as well as geographical basis. The study does not update Area C in the WOLA, since this lies south of RAF Brize Norton, and is not part of the settlement edge of Carterton.

### **THE LANDSCAPE SETTING OF CARTERTON**

- ES3.** Carterton is a relatively recently established settlement, laid out around 1900 with the aim of providing houses set in plots of land which could be used as smallholdings.
- ES4.** RAF Brize Norton lies south of the town, and stretches east along Carterton Road towards the village of Brize Norton.
- ES5.** The town lies just above and to the north of the low lying Thames Vale, on the lower slopes of the Cotswolds. The southern boundary of the Cotswolds AONB lies just under 2km to the north. The centre of Carterton lies at just above 90m AOD, but the town has spread north onto higher ground, with the newest development, Shilton Park, lying on part of a ridge rising to just above 100m. The high ridge extends to the east of Monahan Way, with the ground gradually dropping to a minor valley in which the small historic village of Brize Norton lies.
- ES6.** A country park is being developed to the north of Shilton Park. The planting in the park will in time form a strong edge and soften the new development. However, due to its ridge-top location the new housing is at present highly visible from a number of areas of higher ground to the north, especially Burford Road, and in places from the A40.
- ES7.** The new eastern edge of the town is defined by Monahan Way, a new road with relatively generous planting on either side. This planting is gradually softening the eastern edge of the town in views from the east, but the new development is at present often prominent on the skyline.
- ES8.** Houses in the northern part of Brize Norton, along Burford Road, stretch nearly as far as Monahan Way, with an undeveloped gap of just over 200m between Shilton Park and the village.
- ES9.** Carterton Road runs from the eastern end of Carterton to the church area of Brize Norton. Between the settlements there is an undeveloped gap to the north of the road of approx 800m, with agricultural land rising up the ridge to the north, and a new playing field surrounded by young planting at the western end.
- ES10.** RAF Brize Norton lies south of Carterton Road, surrounded by a tall perimeter fence. One small field south of the road separates the eastern perimeter of the airfield from Brize Norton village. A very large hangar lies within the base, which is dominant in near and distant views. The noise of planes is a frequent intrusive element affecting

the tranquillity of the surrounding landscape.

- ES11.** South east of Brize Norton, an outlying area of high ground, Lew Hill, rises out of the low lying vale. The hill is a landmark in the surrounding landscape.
- ES12.** The long established villages of Alvescot and Black Bourton lie south of RAF Brize Norton.
- ES13.** The Shill Brook valley lies immediately to the west of Carterton, with the ground quickly rising to a slightly undulating plateau to the west. There are long open views in particular to the north and south, along the valley, and across towards Carterton. The valley itself is quite well treed, especially at its southern end, softening views of the town.
- ES14.** The B4477 runs south west from Carterton across the valley and then the higher ground. The meadows west of the Shill Brook in this area are managed by Carterton Town Council for public access.
- ES15.** The historic village of Shilton, much of which is within a Conservation Area, lies within and on the slopes of the Shill Brook valley, just to the north west of Carterton. There is a gap of about 400m between the edge of the village and the town, and only about 250m from the southern boundary of the Conservation Area to the town.
- ES16.** The landscape setting of Shilton is well treed, though there are some long views south over the valley and the higher ground to the west from the edge of the village.
- ES17.** A new link road is proposed which will run from the Shilton Park area, across the residential Swinbrook Road and then around the north western edge of the town to Shilton Road.

#### NORTH OF CARTERTON AREA A1: SHILTON PLATEAU

- ES18.** In this assessment, Area A1 covers the high ground north of the north western edge of Carterton.
- ES19.** The topography of the area is a gently south sloping plateau, most of it above 110m AOD. The area is part of the unspoilt open countryside to the north of the town, and reads as part of the lower Cotswold slopes. The western edge of the area is only separated from the boundary of the Shilton Conservation Area by Shilton Road, and the open agricultural landscape is part of the setting of the village.
- ES20.** Area A1 has a generally weak landscape structure and high intervisibility in all directions, and forms an important part of the gap between Carterton and Shilton.
- ES21.** Although this type of landscape can sometimes be capable of absorbing development within a strong new landscape structure, in this case development would effectively remove the settlement gap between Carterton and Shilton. The open agricultural fields are part of the setting of Shilton; there are strong historic links between rural villages and their agricultural hinterland, and the possible replacement of those fields even with a planted buffer would remove that visual and physical linkage. The area's importance as a buffer between the two settlements was recognised in the WOLA, and remains unchanged. The County Council's minerals buffer zone is also a significant constraint.
- ES22.** The area has high local and medium district landscape/visual importance; and high landscape/visual sensitivity.

**NORTH OF CARTERTON AREA A2: MINOR VALLEY**

- ES23.** In this assessment, Area A2 covers the minor valley to the east of Area A1.
- ES24.** The topography of the area is a gently sloping minor valley running south, becoming steeper and deeper at its southern end as it turns south east. The majority of the area lies below 110m. The area is part of the unspoilt open countryside to the north of the town. It reads as part of the lower Cotswold slopes, and has landscape and visual links with the landscape to the north and east, but is less visually exposed than Area A1 to the west. The western edge of the area is approx 850m from the boundary of the Shilton Conservation Area.
- ES25.** Area A2 is relatively contained from the wider landscape, and could accommodate housing development within a strong landscape structure. However, this would extend the town beyond the new strong landscape edge being created by the country park. The area also lies within a minerals buffer zone.
- ES26.** The area has high local and low-medium district landscape/visual importance; and medium landscape/visual sensitivity.

**NORTH OF CARTERTON AREA A3: RURAL FRINGE**

- ES27.** In this assessment, Area A3 is a small part of the plateau area described in A1, but differentiated from it by its rural fringe uses.
- ES28.** The topography of the area is part of the gently sloping plateau described in Area A1, overlain by the small scale small holding pattern typical of Carterton. The area is part of the rural fringe of Carterton, providing a soft edge to the north western part of the town, important in views from Shilton Road.
- ES29.** The proposed road link to the south in its landscape belt will create a new strong edge to the town, and any development to the north of that could open up views to the rural landscape to the north, which is part of the undeveloped gap between Carterton and Shilton.
- ES30.** The area has high local landscape/visual importance and sensitivity.

**EAST OF CARTERTON AREA B1: BRIZE NORTON PLATEAU**

- ES31.** In this assessment, Area B1 covers the majority of the eastern end of the WOLA Area B, east of Monahan Way. The western end is now part of the new Shilton Park development.
- ES32.** The topography of the area is a plateau sloping north, south east and south, the eastern end of the ridge north of the original Carterton settlement, with a pronounced bulge of land which is above 90m AOD. The shape of the sloping ridge means that the ground is highly visible from the north, south east and south. The area is a large scale, open, agricultural landscape.
- ES33.** The area constitutes the gap between busy and expanding Carterton and the relatively tranquil long established settlement of Brize Norton, and is part of the agricultural setting of the village.

- ES34.** Area B1 is the eastern end of a pronounced ridge with a generally weak landscape structure and high intervisibility; it is an important gap between Carterton and Brize Norton and a visual contrast to the large scale airfield development. Although this type of landscape, with a weak landscape structure, can sometimes be capable of absorbing development within a strong new landscape framework, in this case due to the sloping topography it would be difficult to screen any development effectively in views from higher ground.
- ES35.** More importantly, the settlement gap would be lost. The open agricultural fields are part of the setting of Brize Norton; there are strong historic links between rural villages and their agricultural hinterland, and the possible replacement of the fields within Area B1 even with a planted buffer would remove that visual and physical linkage. The area's importance as a gap between the two settlements was recognised in the WOLA, and remains unchanged.
- ES36.** The area has high local and medium district landscape/visual importance; and high landscape/visual sensitivity.

#### EAST OF CARTERTON AREA B2: BRIZE NORTON MINOR VALLEY

- ES37.** In this assessment, Area B2 covers a small part of the north east of WOLA Area B, the remainder lies to the east of WOLA Area B.
- ES38.** The topography of the area is a minor valley, becoming shallower and wider as it runs south east. It is an integral part of the landscape setting of Brize Norton, with glimpsed views to Area B1 and nearby development.
- ES39.** Area B2 forms an important part of the landscape setting of the historic village of Brize Norton, a setting already affected by the neighbouring airfield; further development affecting the village and its rural agricultural setting would be inappropriate.
- ES40.** The area has high local and medium district landscape/visual importance; and high landscape/visual sensitivity.

#### WEST OF CARTERTON AREA D1: ALVESCOT DOWNS

- ES41.** In this assessment, Area D1 covers the high ground in the western part of the WOLA Area D.
- ES42.** The topography of the area is a gently south/east sloping slightly undulating plateau, rising from around 90m AOD in the south to just above 110m AOD in the north. It is part of the rural landscape west and north of Carterton, with no landscape and little visual relationship with the town. It is part of the rural, agricultural landscape setting of Shilton, with its Conservation Area, and the Shill Brook valley. The valley forms a strong western edge to the town at present.
- ES43.** Area D1 has a generally weak landscape structure and high intervisibility. While this large scale landscape could in theory accommodate housing development, it would need to be set within a new very generous landscape structure to minimise landscape/visual impacts. New development would extend the town into the open countryside to the west, into what is at present a completely rural area. The integrity of the agricultural setting of Shilton village would need to be maintained, with no development (including planted buffer) on the north facing slope south of Shilton, to maintain the open fields around the village.

- ES44.** The area has high local and medium district landscape/visual importance; and high landscape/visual sensitivity.

WEST OF CARTERTON AREA D2: UPPER SHILL BROOK VALLEY

- ES45.** In this assessment, Area D2 covers the eastern part of the WOLA Area D, north of the B4477.

- ES46.** The topography of the area is a narrow, deep valley, containing the Shill Brook, widening as it runs south. Area D2 is part of the soft western edge of Carterton, providing a strong contrast between the built up area to the east and the open countryside to the west. The northern part of the valley is an essential part of the landscape setting of Shilton. Development here would be inappropriate.

- ES47.** The area has high local and medium district landscape/visual importance; and high landscape/visual sensitivity.

WEST OF CARTERTON AREA D3: LOWER SHILL BROOK VALLEY

- ES48.** In this assessment, Area D3 covers the Shill Brook valley south of the B4477.

- ES49.** The topography of the area is a minor wide shallow valley. It is part of the soft western edge of Carterton, providing a strong contrast between the built up area to the east and the open countryside to the west. The low key management of the area is appropriate to its rural setting.

- ES50.** Area D3 is an enclosed valley landscape with excellent public access close to the town with good path links but visually well screened. Development here would be inappropriate.

- ES51.** The area has high landscape/visual importance and sensitivity.

CONCLUSIONS

- ES52.** Overall, the majority of the landscape around the west, north and east of Carterton is of high sensitivity, a mix of open high ground and smaller scale valley.

- ES53.** There is generally high intervisibility between the areas of high ground and the open countryside around the town.

- ES54.** A major constraint, in landscape and visual terms, is the need to maintain a physical and visual gap between Carterton and the long established small neighbouring settlements of Shilton and Brize Norton.

- ES55.** The open agricultural fields are part of the settings of the two villages; there are strong historic links between rural villages and their agricultural hinterland, and the possible replacement of those fields even with planted buffers would remove that visual and physical linkage. The importance of Areas A1 and B1/B2 as gaps between Carterton and Shilton and Brize Norton respectively was recognised in the WOLA, and remains unchanged.

- ES56.** These constraints mean that there are very few areas which could accommodate large scale development without substantial adverse landscape and/or visual impact, and without affecting the gap between settlements and their rural agricultural setting.

- ES57.** Development on the open higher ground north or east of Carterton (Areas A1 and B1), would destroy the undeveloped gaps between Shilton and Brize Norton respectively, and their rural agricultural settings, and therefore cannot be recommended from a landscape/visual point of view.
- ES58.** The small area of enclosed higher ground to the north, Area A3, is part of the soft edge of Carterton, which it is important to maintain both generally on landscape/visual grounds, and also as part of the buffer between Carterton and Shilton. The proposed link road in its structural landscape belt will also form a strong new northern edge to the town which it would be preferable not to breach.
- ES59.** The Shill Brook valley west of Carterton (Areas D2 and D3) forms a soft western edge to the town, generally effective in screening the built up area from the open countryside to the west. Area B2, the minor valley within Brize Norton, is an integral part of the setting of the village. None of these areas is suitable for development, in landscape/visual terms.
- ES60.** Area A2, the shallow minor valley north of Kilkenny Lane, is the only area looked at in this study which is both relatively well screened from the wider countryside and not part of a settlement gap/setting. Some development here could be acceptable, within a strong landscape setting, with appropriate buffers and screening for the existing properties within and looking over the area. However, the area is separated from the rest of the town by the country park, which will in time form a strong edge to the settlement, softening views of the Shilton Park development in sensitive views from the north. The land also lies within a minerals consultation zone, and the majority of it is within the required 350m buffer distance between minerals working and a town.
- ES61.** Area D1, to the west of the town, is a large scale open landscape with little internal structure. While the north of the area is part of the landscape setting of Shilton, the southern part is less important to the village's setting.
- ES62.** There are long views to the north and south at present from the area, and across the Shill Brook valley to the soft edge of Carterton; but it would be possible to create a strong new landscape structure within which development could be acceptable, and largely screened in important views. However, this would take development well into the open countryside west of the town, beyond the natural boundary of the Shill Brook, and extreme care would need to be taken to avoid any development which would be visible on the skyline when looking from Shilton. The integrity of the agricultural setting of Shilton village would need to be maintained, with no development (including planted buffer) on the north facing slope south of Shilton, to maintain the open fields around the village.

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This report has been prepared by Amanda Hopwood Landscape Consultancy (AHLIC), on behalf of West Oxfordshire District Council. The study brief requires the consultant to:

*assess the sensitivity of the landscape as a whole and in sub-areas on the fringe of the built-up area... of Carterton... in relation to accommodating a potential mixed use urban extension. This study will form part of the published evidence base for the West Oxfordshire Local Development Framework (LDF).*

- 1.2 The key background documents for the present study, relating specifically to landscape matters, are:

- West Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment (May 1998)
- Oxfordshire Wildlife & Landscape Study (OWLS) and Oxfordshire Conservation Target Areas.

- 1.3 Other background documents are:

- West Oxfordshire Local Plan (adopted June 2006).
- LDF Core Strategy So Far – Interim Position Statement (February 2009).
- West Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Land Assessment (SHLAA) for Carterton.

- 1.4 The West Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment (WOLA) was carried out in 1998. Besides covering the whole District, the WOLA also looked in more detail at the surroundings of 'Key Settlements', including Carterton. Since that time the major development area at Shilton Park has been built, along with infrastructure such as the new Monahan Way which runs up the eastern side of the development. It is the Carterton Key Settlement work that this report seeks particularly to update, since this is now more than ten years old. This study also aims to provide the same approach to assessing the landscape as used for the surrounds of Witney (2007 study), for the sake of clarity, simplicity and consistency; and to provide more detail than was possible in what was essentially a District-wide landscape assessment.

- 1.5 This report, then, seeks mainly to update the work of the WOLA, taking into consideration changes that have taken place since the original assessment. The surroundings of the town are therefore divided into areas based largely on those in the WOLA, but divided on a topographical as well as geographical basis.

- 1.6 The settlement edge areas are described in Sections 3 to 10. Tables summarising the updating of the WOLA Key Settlement (Carterton) work are contained at Appendix A at the end of this report.

- 1.7 Worksheets summarising the characteristics of each settlement edge area are contained at Appendix B at the end of this report. These worksheets also include, for reference, the ecological bioband score for the landscape type within which settlement edge area falls; this work was part of the County Council's Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study, a web-based study carried out in 2004<sup>1</sup>. Where

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<sup>1</sup> [Oxfordshire Wildlife & Landscape Study - Home](#)

the area lies within one of the County's Conservation Target Areas<sup>2</sup>, this is also stated.

- 1.8 Plans showing the overall landscape context and the settlement edge areas, and sheets of photographs from selected viewpoints, are contained in Appendix C at the end of this report. It should be noted that the photographs are intended as an aide-memoire and as illustrative of the views; they are not a substitute for the actual visual experience to be gained by visiting the viewpoints.
- 1.9 The methodology for this study is provided in Appendix D at the end of this report.

## **2 THE LANDSCAPE SETTING OF CARTERTON**

- 2.1 Unusually for the West Oxfordshire area, Carterton is a relatively recently established settlement, laid out by William Carter around 1900 with the aim of providing houses set in plots of land which could be used as smallholdings. Some of this low density character remains today, though many of the plots have been developed.
- 2.2 The other major influence on the development of Carterton has been the establishment of RAF Brize Norton (previously an American airbase), which despite its name is more closely related to Carterton. The main access to the base is located on the eastern edge of the town, and there are large areas of military housing within the town.
- 2.3 The town lies just above and to the north of the low lying Thames Vale, on the lower slopes of the Cotswolds. The southern boundary of the Cotswolds AONB lies just under 2km to the north (see Fig 0917.CA.1 for the boundary, and highlighted contours).
- 2.4 The centre of Carterton lies at just above 90m AOD, but the town has spread north onto higher ground, with the newest development, Shilton Park, lying on part of a ridge rising to just above 100m. North of this, the ground continues to rise to a high point of around 130m some 1.6km away near Asthall barrow, near the A40, before dropping down into the Windrush valley. North of the valley the ground rises again to the high land of the Wychwood Uplands.
- 2.5 A well planted country park is being developed to the north of Shilton Park, on the north facing side of a minor valley. This planting will in time form a strong edge and soften the new development. However, due to its ridge-top location the new housing is at present highly visible from a number of areas of higher ground to the north, especially Burford Road, and in places from the A40.
- 2.6 The land between Carterton and the A40 is rural and agricultural, with just a few scattered houses/farms. There are a few public rights of way running across the area, long established routes running north-south. The landscape pattern is essentially that of a large-scale parliamentary enclosure landscape, with few woods except in the south of the area nearer Carterton.
- 2.7 The new eastern edge of the town is defined by Monahan Way, a new road with relatively generous planting on either side. This planting is gradually softening

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<sup>2</sup> Oxfordshire Conservation Target Areas Mapping Project Report, TVERC, July 2006

the eastern edge of the town in views from the east, but the ridge-top location of Shilton Park means that the housing is at present prominent on the skyline in some views, and large scale warehouse/office buildings in the south of the area are also dominant.

- 2.8 The high ridge extends to the east of Monahan Way, with the ground gradually dropping to a minor valley. The small village of Brize Norton, a historic settlement mentioned in Domesday Book, lies on the north/eastern side of the minor valley. Brize Norton is a long village, with a linear element along Burford Road to the north, two clusters to the east, including around the church, and then a generally more modern linear extension stretching south. The village became established near the junction of two very old long distance routes, east-west and north-south, which have diminished in importance over the centuries.
- 2.9 Houses in the northern part of Brize Norton, along Burford Road, stretch nearly as far as Monahan Way, which then curves round to the north of the village. There is an undeveloped gap of just over 200m between the north eastern corner of Shilton Park and the Burford Road houses, mostly filled with young woodland. A public footpath runs south west/south across the ridge from Burford Road to Carterton Road.
- 2.10 Carterton Road runs from the eastern end of Carterton to the church area of Brize Norton. Between the settlements there is an undeveloped gap to the north of the road of approx 800m, with agricultural land rising up the ridge to the north, and a new playing field surrounded by young planting at the western end.
- 2.11 RAF Brize Norton lies south of Carterton Road, surrounded by a tall perimeter fence. One small field south of the road separates the eastern perimeter of the airfield from Brize Norton village. Obviously, security is of paramount importance for the base, and there are quantities of barbed wire, and generally clear views through any tree planting. A very large (in both footprint and height) hangar lies just to the south. It is dominant in near views, especially from Carterton Road, as well as being highly visible from higher ground in more distant views from all directions. There are also a number of other buildings on the base, and the noise of planes is a frequent intrusive element affecting the tranquillity of the surrounding landscape.
- 2.12 The establishment of the base has disrupted the links between the neighbouring historic villages (Brize Norton to the east, Alvescot and Black Bourton to the south, and Shilton to the west), and between the villages and their rich agricultural landscapes.
- 2.13 South east of Brize Norton, an outlying area of high ground, Lew Hill, rises out of the low lying vale. The hill is a landmark in the surrounding landscape, and there are long views to the north and west from the public footpath which crosses it, and from the A4095 Witney to Bampton road as it crosses the high ground.
- 2.14 The long established villages of Alvescot and Black Bourton lie south of RAF Brize Norton. This area was included in the WOLA Key Settlements study, but has not been updated here, since it is clearly separated from Carterton by the airfield.
- 2.15 The Shill Brook valley lies immediately to the west of Carterton, with the ground quickly rising to a slightly undulating plateau to the west. There are few woods

on this higher ground, and there are long open views in particular to the north and south, along the valley, and across towards Carterton. Like the area north of the town, this is a large scale parliamentary enclosure landscape. The valley itself is quite well treed, especially at its southern end, softening views of the town. A long established footpath runs north-south across the high ground west of the valley, with a minor road running north-south a little further to the west.

- 2.16 The B4477 runs south west from Carterton across the valley and then the higher ground. South of this road, the valley becomes wider and shallower. The meadows west of the Shill Brook in this area are managed by Carterton Town Council for public access.
- 2.17 The historic village of Shilton, the majority of which is within a Conservation Area, lies within and on the slopes of the Shill Brook valley, just to the north west of Carterton. The north western edge of the town has gradually spread along the Shilton Road, so that there is now only a gap of about 400m between the edge of the village and the town, and only about 250m from the southern boundary of the Conservation Area to the town. Part of the gap on the western side of Shilton Road is occupied by an isolated house.
- 2.18 The landscape setting of Shilton is well treed, though there are some long views south over the valley and the higher ground to the west from the edge of the village.
- 2.19 A new link road is proposed which will run from the Shilton Park area, across the residential Swinbrook Road and then around the north western edge of the town to Shilton Road.

**3 NORTH OF CARTERTON AREA A1: SHILTON PLATEAU** (See Table A, Appendix A; Table 1, Appendix B; Views 1-3, Appendix C)

CONTEXT

- 3.1 In this assessment, Area A1 covers the high ground north of the north western edge of Carterton. The minor valley to the east is covered under Area A2, and the small area of rural fringe south of A1 under A3.
- 3.2 Area A1 is bounded to the south by the proposed line of the new link road, which will run quite close to the current edge of the town; to the west by the Shilton Road; to the north by a minor road which runs north east to meet the Burford Road, open fields, and part of an active stone quarry (Burford Quarry); and to the east by a bridleway which marks the western boundary of Area A2 (North Carterton: Minor Valley). However, the landscape characteristics described stretch north beyond the mapping of this study.
- 3.3 The area is agricultural, apart from the sliver of stone quarry, and contains no buildings.
- 3.4 The Shill Brook valley lies immediately to the west of the Shilton Road, and the Conservation Area of the village of Shilton abuts the western side of the road. The built up areas of the village lie a little further west, within and on both sides of the valley.

- 3.5 The north western edge of Carterton is clearly visible to the south of the area, and also the lighting around the football pitch, within Area A3 (North Carterton: Rural Fringe).

#### PLANNING STATUS

- 3.6 In the current Local Plan the area is included under Policy NE2, *Policy Area to Prevent Urban Sprawl and to Protect Existing Character*.
- 3.7 The southern boundary of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) lies about 2km north of Area A1.
- 3.8 In the Local Plan, the proposed link road south of Area A1 is shown as running within a strong belt of woodland/structural landscape.
- 3.9 The area lies within a mineral consultation area around Burford Quarry defined by Oxfordshire County Council. The County Council's buffer area policy requires a minimum distance of 350m between mineral workings and a town.

#### LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL ASSESSMENT

- 3.10 The topography of the area is a gently south sloping plateau, most of it above 110m AOD.
- 3.11 Field sizes are large with little internal subdivision, with a regular post parliamentary enclosure field pattern. The area is generally open with long views in all directions, particularly north west/west/south west across the Shill Brook valley and north east across the minor valley (Area A2) to the high ground beyond.
- 3.12 Looking west, Shilton village is in a treed setting, so few of the houses are visible (View 1). The open fields of Area A1 are part of the rural agricultural setting of the village.
- 3.13 Looking north, views across the higher ground are contained by hedges, though there are long views to the north west along the rural Shill Brook valley; a number of public rights of way run across this area (View 1).
- 3.14 Looking north east and east, there are long views across the neighbouring minor valley to the ridge where the A40 runs, and even occasional views of Leaffield spire, in the Wychwood Uplands north of the Windrush valley, within the Cotswolds AONB. A few scattered houses along Burford Road look across the area (View 2).
- 3.15 To the south east, the football club buildings and tall lighting columns are intrusive in the otherwise soft rural fringe edge of Carterton (Area A3) (View 2).
- 3.16 To the south, houses on the edge of Carterton look out across the area with relatively little screening (View 3). The proposed road is intended to run through a woodland/structural landscape strip, so this view will in time be softened. The road will form a new strong edge to the settlement.
- 3.17 There are long views to the south west across the Shill Brook valley (Area D2) to the open higher ground to the west (Area D1) and away to the distant downland

(View 3).

- 3.18 A bridleway runs east-west across the area, part of a long established route linking Shilton and Brize Norton.
- 3.19 Tranquillity in the area is marred by noise from the Shilton Road, occasional noise from RAF Brize Norton, and (at night) the lighting around the football pitch. Despite these, however, there is little sense of the large settlement to the south, and the area feels part of the countryside rather than rural fringe.
- 3.20 Overall, this area is part of the unspoilt open countryside to the north of the town. It reads as part of the lower Cotswold slopes, and has strong landscape and visual links with the landscape to the north, west and south west. The western edge of the area is only separated from the boundary of the Shilton Conservation Area by Shilton Road, and the open agricultural landscape is part of the setting of the village.

#### SUMMARY OF KEY FEATURES

- 3.21 Table A in Appendix A summarises the findings of the WOLA, and updates the assessment. In this more detailed assessment, Area A is divided into three areas.
- 3.22 The updated Key Sensitivities and Considerations relevant to Area A1 are:
- landscape edge relatively robust, opportunity to improve in west with construction of new link road;
  - need to improve overall landscape quality and ensure that new development on allocated land strengthens the landscape edge and maintains buffer between Carterton and Shilton.
- 3.23 In summary, Area A1 is a plateau with a generally weak landscape structure and high intervisibility in all directions, and forms an important part of the gap between Carterton and Shilton. Although this type of landscape can sometimes be capable of absorbing development within a strong new landscape structure, in this case development would effectively remove the settlement gap between Carterton and Shilton. The open agricultural fields are part of the setting of Shilton; there are strong historic links between rural villages and their agricultural hinterland, and the possible replacement of those fields even with a planted buffer would remove that visual and physical linkage. The area's importance as a buffer between the two settlements was recognised in the WOLA, and remains unchanged. The County Council's minerals buffer zone is also a significant constraint.
- 3.24 The area has high local and medium district landscape/visual importance; and high landscape/visual sensitivity.

**4 NORTH OF CARTERTON AREA A2: MINOR VALLEY** (See Table A, Appendix A; Table 2, Appendix B; Views 4-7, Appendix C)

CONTEXT

- 4.1 In this assessment, Area A2 covers the minor valley to the east of Area A1.
- 4.2 The area is agricultural, with a few scattered farms and houses, mainly focussing on Burford Road.
- 4.3 Area A1 lies to the west of Area A2, much of the boundary abutting the stone quarry; a bridleway runs from Burford Road in the north alongside the quarry and then across open fields to Kilkenny Lane. The north eastern boundary is taken as Burford Road, though the valley characteristics extend north of the southern end of the road. The southern boundary is the top of the valley side, which runs through the Kilkenny Lane country park.
- 4.4 The minor Kilkenny Lane, now closed to through traffic, runs east-west along the bottom of the valley from Burford Road, continuing towards Shilton as the bridleway described in Area A1.

PLANNING STATUS

- 4.5 In the current Local Plan the area is included under Policy NE2, *Policy Area to Prevent Urban Sprawl and to Protect Existing Character*.
- 4.6 The southern boundary of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) lies about 2km north of Area A1.
- 4.7 The area lies within a mineral consultation area around Burford Quarry defined by Oxfordshire County Council. The County Council's buffer area policy requires a minimum distance of 350m between mineral workings and a town.

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL ASSESSMENT

- 4.8 The topography of the area is a gently sloping minor valley running south, becoming steeper and deeper at its southern end as it turns south east. The majority of the area lies below 110m.
- 4.9 Field sizes are generally large with little internal subdivision, with a regular post parliamentary enclosure field pattern, overlain by smaller paddocks to the south east. A small woodland (Lodge Plantation) abuts Burford Road, and this together with other copses and lines of trees in the south of the area, gives the impression of a relatively wooded landscape.
- 4.10 There are several scattered properties in the area, including Kilkenny Farm, and a few properties north east of Burford Road overlook the area.
- 4.11 While there are some long views from the higher parts of the area, generally views are contained by the topography. It should be noted that all views are taken from the higher ground to the west and east, rather than the centre of the valley where there is no public access.
- 4.12 To the south, the highest parts of the Shilton Park development, on the crest of

the ridge, are clearly visible at present from higher parts of the area (View 4) and from Burford Road (View 5), between existing woods and copses, though it will gradually be softened by the country park planting. The majority of the development, on the south east facing slope, is not visible. The football pitch lighting columns are prominent on the horizon, but the northern edge of the established areas of Carterton is hidden by vegetation.

- 4.13 Looking west, the treed setting of Shilton is visible across the open fields (View 6). Distant views south west are less open than on the higher ground to the west (Area A1), often being blocked/filtered by vegetation (Views 5 and 6).
- 4.14 To the north and north east, Barrow Plantation on the A40 is visible on the horizon, but other parts of the A40 ridge are hidden. To the east, scattered houses along Burford Road can be seen looking out over the area (View 7).
- 4.15 Tranquillity in the area is marred by views of the Shilton Park development, occasional noise from RAF Brize Norton, and (at night) the lighting around the football pitch. Despite these elements, however, the area feels part of the countryside rather than rural fringe.
- 4.16 Overall, this area is part of the unspoilt open countryside to the north of the town. It reads as part of the lower Cotswold slopes, and has landscape and visual links with the landscape to the north and east, but is less visually exposed than Area A1 to the west. The western edge of the area is approx 850m from the boundary of the Shilton Conservation Area.

#### SUMMARY OF KEY FEATURES

- 4.17 Table A in Appendix A summarises the findings of the WOLA, and updates the assessment. In this more detailed assessment, Area A is divided into three areas.
- 4.18 Under 'Landscape Characteristics' the WOLA states that Area A (divided into A1, A2 and A3 in this assessment) *'forms an important buffer between Carterton and Shilton'*. The updated assessment considers that the plateau land in the west of the area, ie A1, is an important part of the gap, but that Area A2 plays little role in this. The area is not within Shilton parish, and the fields in Area A2 have no historic linkage with the village.
- 4.19 The updated Key Sensitivities and Considerations relevant to Area A2 are:
- country park planting will soften Shilton Park development in time, but it is important to complete planting in the west of the park.
  - need to improve overall landscape quality.
- 4.20 In summary, Area A2 is a shallow valley relatively contained from the wider landscape, which could accommodate housing development within a strong new landscape structure. However, this would extend the town beyond the new strong landscape edge being created by the country park. The County Council's minerals buffer zone is also a significant constraint.
- 4.21 The area has high local and low-medium district landscape/visual importance; and medium landscape/visual sensitivity.

**5 NORTH OF CARTERTON AREA A3: RURAL FRINGE** (See Table A, Appendix A; Table 3, Appendix B; View 2, Appendix C)

CONTEXT

- 5.1 In this assessment, Area A3 is a small part of the plateau area described in A1, but differentiated from it by its rural fringe uses.
- 5.2 Area A3 is bounded by Area A1 to the west and north west; Area A2 to the north east; the new country park to the east; and the proposed line of the new link road to the south.
- 5.3 Land uses include Carterton Football Club, with its lit pitch; well used allotments; a few scattered houses in large gardens; and grass paddocks, generally used for horse grazing.
- 5.4 The boundary of the Shilton Conservation Area lies approx 400m to the west.

PLANNING STATUS

- 5.5 In the current Local Plan the area is included under Policy NE2, *Policy Area to Prevent Urban Sprawl and to Protect Existing Character*.
- 5.6 In the Local Plan, the proposed link road south of Area A3 is shown as running within a strong belt of woodland/structural landscape, though the belt is wider to the west where it runs over the open ground south of Area A1. South of the link road a housing area allocated under Proposal 15 is proposed.

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL ASSESSMENT

- 5.7 The topography of the area is part of the gently sloping plateau described in Area A1, overlain by the small scale small holding pattern typical of Carterton.
- 5.8 The small scale fields and other land uses are generally surrounded by hedges and trees, with some areas of scrub, so the area is mostly well enclosed, though there are some inappropriate conifers (View 2). There are therefore few views in or out at present, though a gap at the western end of Kilkenny Lane offers a view out over Area A2.
- 5.9 With the closure of Kilkenny Lane to through traffic, the area is now relatively quiet, with plenty of pedestrian use, and good access to the country park. This will change somewhat with the construction of the new link road and housing proposal 15, but given a strong landscape structure for the road, Area A3 should still remain small scale and enclosed, providing a soft landscape edge to the town.
- 5.10 The main element detracting from tranquillity in this area is the tall lighting round the football pitch, which affects night-time tranquillity in particular (View 2); but with the amount of vegetation in the area the lighting has less impact than in the open areas to the north, and the west.
- 5.11 Overall, this area as a whole is part of the rural fringe of Carterton, providing a soft edge to the north western part of the town, important in views from Shilton

Road.

#### SUMMARY OF KEY FEATURES

- 5.12 Table A in Appendix A summarises the findings of the WOLA, and updates the assessment. In this more detailed assessment, Area A is divided into three areas. Area A3 is the land described in the WOLA as a *'small area of rural fringe including 'horsiculture'*.
- 5.13 Under 'Landscape Characteristics' the WOLA states that Area A (divided into A1, A2 and A3 in this assessment) *'forms an important buffer between Carterton and Shilton'*. The updated assessment considers that the plateau land in the west of the area, ie A1, is an important part of the gap. Area A3 plays an important role in softening views of the town from the north west, including Shilton.
- 5.14 The WOLA finds the *'urban/rural edge untidy and 'straggly''*. However, the present assessment considers that the small scale small holding landscape is typical of Carterton. The WOLA also notes *'intrusive features such as floodlighting'*; this is unchanged.
- 5.15 The updated Key Sensitivities and Considerations relevant to Area A3 are:
- landscape edge relatively robust, opportunity to improve in west with construction of new link road;
  - need to improve overall landscape quality and ensure that new development on allocated land strengthens the landscape edge and maintains buffer between Carterton and Shilton.
- 5.16 In summary, Area A3 is a small scale rural fringe landscape overlying the plateau landscape of A1, well contained by trees. The proposed road link in its landscape belt will create a new strong edge to the town, and any development to the north of that could open up views to the rural landscape to north, which is part of the undeveloped gap between Carterton and Shilton.
- 5.17 The area has high local landscape/visual importance and sensitivity.

## **6 EAST OF CARTERTON AREA B1: BRIZE NORTON PLATEAU** (See Table B, Appendix A; Table 4, Appendix B; Views 8-15, Appendix C)

#### CONTEXT

- 6.1 In this assessment, Area B1 covers the majority of the eastern end of the WOLA Area B. The western end is now part of the new Shilton Park development.
- 6.2 Area B1 is bounded to the west by the new Monahan Way (known as Norton Way in the south). The northern and eastern boundaries abut Area B2, a minor valley which is the continuation of Area A2.
- 6.3 The southern boundary is Carterton Road, running between Carterton and Brize Norton. There is an undeveloped gap (not including the new playing fields) between the settlements along this road of approx 800m. RAF Brize Norton lies to the south.

- 6.4 The area is agricultural, in arable use, apart from the playing fields, with a pavilion, in the south western corner. One public footpath runs across the area, from Burford Road in the north to Carterton Road.

#### PLANNING STATUS

- 6.5 In the current Local Plan the area is included under Policy NE2, *Policy Area to Prevent Urban Sprawl and to Protect Existing Character*.

#### LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL ASSESSMENT

- 6.6 The topography of the area is a plateau sloping north, south east and south, the eastern end of the ridge north of the original Carterton settlement. There is a pronounced bulge of land in Area B1 which is above 90m AOD. This ridge helps to screen views of RAF Brize Norton from the Burford Road area of Brize Norton (View 8); however, the shape of the sloping ridge means that the ground is highly visible from the north, south east and south.
- 6.7 The field sizes are large, defined by hedges with a few hedgerow trees.
- 6.8 Looking north east from the footpath on the higher ground back towards Burford Road, the houses in Brize Norton are visible, partly screened by trees in the valley (Views 9 and 12).
- 6.9 Looking south from the higher ground, the airbase is dominant in the view, in particular the very large hangar (View 10). Two old hangars/sheds outside the perimeter fence of the base, within Area B2, are also visible to the south east, partly screened by trees. On the lower ground nearer Carterton Road, the hangar is again dominant, while to the east/south east the edge of Brize Norton village starts to come into view, and Lew Hill is visible on the horizon (View 11).
- 6.10 Looking west/north west, while the young planting along Monahan Way is starting to have some impact, the eastern edge of the Shilton Park housing on the high ground is prominent on the skyline, as are buildings in the business park on the lower ground to the west (View 12). The tops of houses on Burford Road in Brize Norton are also visible.
- 6.11 Looking back towards Area B2 from the Lew Hill area, while the large hangar and the airbase are dominant in the view (View 13), the Shilton Park housing is also clearly visible, as is the southern end of Brize Norton village. Area B1 is visible as the strip of undeveloped fields between the two.
- 6.12 Driving east along Carterton Road, urban elements dominate, with the airbase and its perimeter fencing to the right (View 14), and the old hangars to the left. The edge of Brize Norton, in its leafy valley setting, is just visible. Driving west, the airbase is again dominant, and the Shilton Park housing is visible on the skyline (View 15). The undeveloped land in Area B1 is a welcome relief in the view, and forms the gap between Brize Norton and Carterton. The fields are part of the agricultural setting of the village.
- 6.13 Area B1 is not tranquil, due to the neighbouring airbase, the busy Carterton Road, and the visibility of the Shilton Park development. However, this does not diminish its importance as the open agricultural gap between Brize Norton village and Carterton.

- 6.14 Overall, Area B1 is a large scale, open, agricultural landscape, part of the prominent ridge north of Carterton, with high intervisibility. The area constitutes the gap between busy and expanding Carterton and the relatively tranquil long established settlement of Brize Norton (see Area B2 for further consideration of this), and is part of the agricultural setting of the village.

#### SUMMARY OF KEY FEATURES

- 6.15 Table B in Appendix A summarises the findings of the WOLA, and updates the assessment. Much of the area considered by the WOLA has now been developed, and this assessment stretches further east, in Area B2, than the WOLA.
- 6.16 The WOLA described the *'perimeter buildings, structure and boundary treatment of Brize Norton Airfield [which] adversely affect the landscape gap separating Carterton and Brize Norton village'*, and the *'urban character of approach road from the east, numerous intrusive urban elements'*. These descriptions still apply, and this assessment also notes the strong contrast between the character of Carterton Road and the vernacular character of Brize Norton village.
- 6.17 The updated Key Sensitivities and Considerations are:
- need to substantially raise environmental quality throughout the whole area and ensure that new development strengthens landscape edges: this still applies, though planting around the new development is strengthening the landscape edge to the town, and planting around the playing fields improves the eastern approach to Carterton;
  - need to soften existing harsh urban edges and to improve the landscape quality of the main approach into Carterton from the east: this still applies, though as above, planting around the new development is strengthening the landscape edge to the town, and planting around the playing fields improves the eastern approach to Carterton; however, the airfield is still an intrusive presence;
  - need to strengthen landscape structure of farmland, more hedgerows/stone walls and more hedgerow trees: this still applies, though the planting alongside the new road around edge of Shilton Park, and the country park planting, are providing a new landscape structure;
  - need to maintain strategic gap between Carterton and Brize Norton village.
- 6.18 In summary, Area B1 is the eastern end of a pronounced ridge with a generally weak landscape structure and high intervisibility; it is an important gap between Carterton and Brize Norton and a visual contrast to the large scale airfield development. Although this type of landscape, with a weak landscape structure, can sometimes be capable of absorbing development within a strong new landscape framework, in this case due to the sloping topography it would be difficult to screen any development effectively in views from higher ground. More importantly, the settlement gap would be lost. The open agricultural fields are part of the setting of Brize Norton; there are strong historic links between rural villages and their agricultural hinterland, and the possible replacement of the fields within Area B1 even with a planted buffer would remove that visual and physical linkage. The area's importance as a gap between the two settlements was recognised in the WOLA, and remains unchanged.

- 6.19 The area has high local and medium district landscape/visual importance; and high landscape/visual sensitivity.

**7 EAST OF CARTERTON AREA B2: BRIZE NORTON MINOR VALLEY** (See Table B, Appendix A; Table 5, Appendix B; Views 16-20, Appendix C)

CONTEXT

- 7.1 In this assessment, Area B2 covers a small part of the north east of WOLA Area B, the remainder lies to the east of WOLA Area B.
- 7.2 Area B2 is bounded to the west by Area B1; to the north east by Burford Road within Brize Norton village; to the east by Manor Road within the village; and to the south by Carterton Road, again largely within the village. The area is a continuation of the minor valley of Area A2, with several other minor valleys running into it from the north.
- 7.3 The area consists mainly of small fields, with a cluster of houses round the Manor Road/Carterton Road junction, and a few other scattered properties. There are also two old hangars associated with RAF Brize Norton.

PLANNING STATUS

- 7.4 In the current Local Plan the area is included under Policy NE2, *Policy Area to Prevent Urban Sprawl and to Protect Existing Character*.

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL ASSESSMENT

- 7.5 The topography of the area is a minor valley, becoming shallower and wider as it runs south east.
- 7.6 Apart from two arable fields in the north, one of which is part of a large field within Area B1, the small fields are mostly down to grass. The small stream is lined with trees, and there are also trees around the hangars, adding to the small scale character and enclosure of the valley. A new area of woodland is also establishing at the western end of Burford Road.
- 7.7 The area is the focus of the village, which as described in Section 2 is a long non-nucleated settlement, and many of the village properties look out over it (View 16).
- 7.8 While views are generally contained, mainly by trees, there are occasional views from within the village to Area B1, and the Shilton Park development beyond, as well as to the old hangars and the large hangar within the base (Views 17, 18 and 19). As previously described, there is an undeveloped gap of approx 800m between Carterton and Brize Norton along the Carterton Road, and only approx 200m between Shilton Park and the Burford Road area of Brize Norton.
- 7.9 Along the Carterton Road, there is a strong contrast between the character of the road in the gap between the settlements (View 15) and within Brize Norton (View 20). The locations of the photographs are only a few metres apart. Brize Norton retains its rural vernacular character, despite the presence of RAF Brize Norton and the proximity of Carterton.

- 7.10 Overall, Area B2 is a small scale valley which is an integral part of the landscape setting of Brize Norton, with glimpsed views to Area B1 and nearby development.

#### SUMMARY OF KEY FEATURES

- 7.11 Table B in Appendix A summarises the findings of the WOLA, and updates the assessment for Area B as a whole. The majority of Area B2 lies outside the area covered by the WOLA, but there are issues relating to the eastern approach to Carterton and the gap between settlements which are relevant to Area B2.

- 7.12 The updated Key Sensitivities and Considerations relevant to Area B2 are:

- need to soften existing harsh urban edges and to improve the landscape quality of the main approach into Carterton from the east: this still applies, though planting around the new development is strengthening the landscape edge to the town, and planting around the playing fields improves the eastern approach to Carterton; however, the airfield is still an intrusive presence;
- need to maintain strategic gap between Carterton and Brize Norton village.

- 7.13 In summary, Area B2 is a small scale valley forming an important part of the landscape setting of the historic village of Brize Norton, a setting already affected by the neighbouring airfield; further development affecting the village and its rural agricultural setting would be inappropriate.

- 7.14 The area has high local and medium district landscape/visual importance; and high landscape/visual sensitivity.

## **8 WEST OF CARTERTON AREA D1: ALVESCOT DOWNS** (See Table D, Appendix A; Table 6, Appendix B; Views 21-24, Appendix C)

#### CONTEXT

- 8.1 In this assessment, Area D1 covers the high ground in the western part of the WOLA Area D.

- 8.2 Area D1 is bounded to the west by the minor Shilton to Alvescot road; to the north by the western part of Shilton village; and to the east by Areas D2 and D3, the Shill Brook valley. The southern boundary is taken as just below the 90m contour line, and is a continuation of the line of the boundary fence of RAF Brize Norton. The B4477 Alvescot road runs south west across the southern part of the area.

- 8.3 The area is agricultural, with one isolated farm and associated cottages, and a few isolated barns south of the B4477. A long established public footpath between Shilton and Alvescot runs north-south across the area.

#### PLANNING STATUS

- 8.4 In the current Local Plan much of the area is included under Policy NE2, *Policy Area to Prevent Urban Sprawl and to Protect Existing Character*. The western

part of the area lies beyond the scope of the Carterton Inset Map.

- 8.5 The northern boundary of Area D1 abuts part of Shilton Conservation Area.

#### LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL ASSESSMENT

- 8.6 The topography of the area is a gently south/east sloping slightly undulating plateau, rising from around 90m AOD in the south to just above 110m AOD in the north.
- 8.7 The fields are large and regular, with little internal subdivision, apart from a few smaller paddocks in the south. The area is large scale, open and exposed.
- 8.8 There are extensive views from this area. Looking east, the western edge of Carterton is generally soft, especially in the Upavon Way area (View 21), though there are more open views to the north western edge of the town (View 22). Lighting columns around the Carterton Community College playing fields are visible, though less prominent than those around the Carterton Football Club pitch, in Area A3, which are also visible. There are also views to and from the high ground in Area A1.
- 8.9 There are long and uninterrupted views to the south, to Faringdon Folly and beyond (View 21), and some views of Broadwell church spire.
- 8.10 The high plateau continues to the west of Area D1, and views are often blocked by small copses and hedges.
- 8.11 There are views to and from Shilton, especially from the north of the area (Views 22 and 23), and the area forms the skyline or an intermediate skyline in some views from Shilton and Shilton Road (View 24).
- 8.12 Overall, Area D1 is part of the rural landscape west and north of Carterton, with no landscape and little visual relationship with the town. It is part of the rural, agricultural landscape setting of Shilton, with its Conservation Area, and the Shill Brook valley. The valley forms a strong western edge to the town at present.

#### SUMMARY OF KEY FEATURES

- 8.13 Table D in Appendix A summarises the findings of the WOLA, and updates the assessment.
- 8.14 The area is described in the WOLA as containing *open, elevated, large scale rectilinear fields* and a *rural character largely unaffected by urban influences, with generally high intervisibility*. These descriptions are unchanged.
- 8.15 The main updated Key Sensitivities and Considerations relevant to Area D1 are:
- western edge of Carterton sensitive to change - particularly sensitive skyline, though generally well screened at present;
  - need to maintain landscape strength along western fringe.
- 8.16 In addition, this assessment notes that Area D1 is part of the landscape setting of Shilton.

- 8.17 In summary, Area D1 is a plateau with a generally weak landscape structure and high intervisibility, and no direct connection with Carterton; it is part of the setting of Shilton. While this large scale landscape could in theory accommodate housing development, it would need to be set within a new very generous landscape structure to minimise landscape/visual impacts. New development would extend the town into the open countryside to the west, into what is at present a completely rural area. The integrity of the agricultural setting of Shilton village would need to be maintained, with no development (including planted buffer) on the north facing slope south of Shilton, to maintain the open fields around the village.
- 8.18 The area has high local and medium district landscape/visual importance; and high landscape/visual sensitivity.

**9 WEST OF CARTERTON AREA D2: UPPER SHILL BROOK VALLEY** (See Table D, Appendix A; Table 7, Appendix B; Views 21, 22, 25, Appendix C)

CONTEXT

- 9.1 In this assessment, Area D2 covers the eastern part of the WOLA Area D, north of the B4477.
- 9.2 Area D2 is bounded to the west by the high ground of Area D1. To the north the area extends into Shilton's Conservation Area, to the edge of the village. The eastern boundary is Shilton Road in the north, and then the edge of the built up area of Carterton, and Upavon Way in the south, while the southern boundary is the B4477.
- 9.3 The area is agricultural, containing few buildings apart from those on the southern edge of Shilton and in the small gap between the village and Carterton; a couple of outlying properties west of Upavon Way; and properties around Kenn's Farm in the south. There is no public access within the valley.

PLANNING STATUS

- 9.4 In the current Local Plan Area D2 is included under Policy NE2, *Policy Area to Prevent Urban Sprawl and to Protect Existing Character*.
- 9.5 The northern part of the area lies within Shilton's Conservation Area.
- 9.6 The area lies within Oxfordshire County Council's South Cotswold Valleys Conservation Target Area, and a Local (previously known as County) Wildlife Site lies to the east of the Brook.

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL ASSESSMENT

- 9.7 The topography of the area is a narrow, deep valley, containing the Shill Brook, widening as it runs south.
- 9.8 The area is mainly grassland, with school playing fields east of the Brook in the centre. Much of the south of the area is covered in woodland/scrub, to the west of Upavon Way. It is more open in the north, though the Brook is marked by a strong tree line.

- 9.9 The Brook creates a meandering pattern, flanked by generally medium scale fields, and regular paddocks in the south.
- 9.10 There is strong enclosure within the area from both topography and vegetation, but long views from the open higher ground to the west (Area D1) (Views 21 and 22) and the north (Area A1 and Shilton Road) (View 24), and from Shilton itself (View 25) into and across the valley.
- 9.11 Trees and scrub on the eastern valley side provide a soft edge to Carterton, especially alongside Upavon Way.
- 9.12 The valley is generally tranquil apart from noise from RAF Brize Norton, and forms part of the tranquil landscape setting of Shilton.
- 9.13 Overall, Area D2 is part of the soft western edge of Carterton, providing a strong contrast between the built up area to the east and the open countryside to the west. The northern part of the valley is an essential part of the landscape setting of Shilton.

#### SUMMARY OF KEY FEATURES

- 9.14 Table D in Appendix A summarises the findings of the WOLA, and updates the assessment.
- 9.15 The area is described in the WOLA as an '*attractive, steep, well-vegetated minor valley immediately to the west of Carterton*', which '*provides a very strong landscape edge*', and with a '*rural character largely unaffected by urban influences*'. These descriptions are unchanged.
- 9.16 The updated Key Sensitivities and Considerations relevant to Area D2 are:
- minor valley is an important landscape resource and sensitive to change;
  - western edge of Carterton is sensitive to change - particularly sensitive skyline, though it is generally well screened at present;
  - need to maintain landscape strength along the western fringe and particularly within the minor valley.
- 9.17 In summary, Area D2 is a medium scale valley forming an important part of the landscape setting of the historic village of Shilton and the soft western edge of Carterton, separating town from countryside. Development here would be inappropriate.
- 9.18 The area has high local and medium district landscape/visual importance; and high landscape/visual sensitivity.

### **10 WEST OF CARTERTON AREA D3: LOWER SHILL BROOK VALLEY** (See Table D, Appendix A; Table 8, Appendix B; Views 27-28, Appendix C)

#### CONTEXT

- 10.1 In this assessment, Area D3 covers the Shill Brook valley south of the B4477.

- 10.2 The northern boundary is the B4477; the eastern boundary the built up edge of Carterton; the southern boundary is the perimeter fence of RAF Brize Norton; and the western boundary is the higher ground of Area D1.
- 10.3 West of the Brook, the area is meadow land, managed for public access by Carterton Town Council (Willow Meadows). To the east are small scale meadows and large gardens.

#### PLANNING STATUS

- 10.4 In the current Local Plan the area is included under Policy NE2, *Policy Area to Prevent Urban Sprawl and to Protect Existing Character*.
- 10.5 The area lies within Oxfordshire County Council's South Cotswold Valleys Conservation Target Area, and the majority of Willow Meadows is a Local (previously known as County) Wildlife Site.

#### LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL ASSESSMENT

- 10.6 The topography of the area is a minor wide shallow valley.
- 10.7 Willow Meadows consists of damp meadow, with an area of reeds in the centre. The Brook is marked by a strong line of trees, while the small scale fields/gardens to the east are divided by strong hedges with trees. This creates a very soft edge to the town, and there is little perception of the large built up area to the east.
- 10.8 While there are long views along the valley (View 26), there are very few views out, except for the extreme south where there are views onto the airfield through the perimeter fence.
- 10.9 There are few urban elements, except for the airfield fence, and the tarmac paths through Willow Meadows and skirting the airfield to the south. Both these are public rights of way, and very well used.
- 10.10 The area is extremely tranquil, considering it is so close to the town and so well used, apart from noise from RAF Brize Norton; planes take off and land very close to the south of the area (View 27).
- 10.11 Overall, Area D3 is part of the soft western edge of Carterton, providing a strong contrast between the built up area to the east and the open countryside to the west. The low key management of the area is appropriate to its rural setting.

#### SUMMARY OF KEY FEATURES

- 10.12 Table D in Appendix A summarises the findings of the WOLA, and updates the assessment.
- 10.13 The area is described in the WOLA as an '*attractive, steep, well-vegetated minor valley immediately to the west of Carterton*', which '*provides a very strong landscape edge*', and with a '*rural character largely unaffected by urban influences*'. These descriptions are unchanged, though the valley south of the B4477 is wider and shallower than that to the north (Area D2).

- 10.14 The updated Key Sensitivities and Considerations relevant to Area D3 are:
- minor valley is an important landscape resource and sensitive to change;
  - western edge of Carterton is sensitive to change - particularly sensitive skyline, though it is generally well screened at present;
  - need to maintain landscape strength along the western fringe and particularly within the minor valley.
- 10.15 In summary, Area D3 is an enclosed valley landscape with excellent public access close to the town with good path links but visually well screened. Development here would be inappropriate.
- 10.16 The area has high landscape/visual importance and sensitivity.

## **11 CONCLUSIONS**

- 11.1 Overall, the majority of the landscape around the west, north and east of Carterton is of high sensitivity, a mix of open high ground and smaller scale valley.
- 11.2 There is generally high intervisibility between the areas of high ground and the open countryside around the town.
- 11.3 A major constraint, in landscape and visual terms, is the need to maintain a physical and visual gap between Carterton and the long established small neighbouring settlements of Shilton and Brize Norton.
- 11.4 The open agricultural fields are part of the settings of the two villages; there are strong historic links between rural villages and their agricultural hinterland, and the possible replacement of those fields even with planted buffers would remove that visual and physical linkage. The importance of Areas A1 and B1/B2 as gaps between Carterton and Shilton and Brize Norton respectively was recognised in the WOLA, and remains unchanged.
- 11.5 These constraints mean that there are very few areas which could accommodate large scale development without substantial adverse landscape and/or visual impact, and without affecting the gap between settlements and their rural agricultural setting.
- 11.6 Development on the open higher ground north or east of Carterton (Areas A1 and B1) would destroy the undeveloped gaps between Shilton and Brize Norton respectively, and their rural agricultural settings, and therefore cannot be recommended from a landscape/visual point of view.
- 11.7 The small area of enclosed higher ground to the north, Area A3, is part of the soft edge of Carterton, which it is important to maintain both generally on landscape/visual grounds, and also as part of the buffer between Carterton and Shilton. The proposed link road in its structural landscape belt will also form a strong new northern edge to the town which it would be preferable not to breach.
- 11.8 The Shill Brook valley west of Carterton (Areas D2 and D3) forms a soft western edge to the town, generally effective in screening the built up area from the open countryside to the west. Area B2, the minor valley within Brize Norton, is an

integral part of the setting of the village. None of these areas is suitable for development, in landscape/visual terms.

- 11.9 Area A2, the shallow minor valley north of Kilkenny Lane, is the only area looked at in this study which is both relatively well screened from the wider countryside and not part of a settlement gap/setting. Some development here could be acceptable, within a strong landscape setting, with appropriate buffers and screening for the existing properties within and looking over the area. However, the area is separated from the rest of the town by the country park, which will in time form a strong edge to the settlement, softening views of the Shilton Park development in sensitive views from the north. The land also lies within a minerals consultation zone, and the majority of it is within the required 350m buffer distance between minerals working and a town.
- 11.10 Area D1, to the west of the town, is a large scale open landscape with little internal structure. While the north of the area is part of the landscape setting of Shilton, the southern part is less important to the village's setting.
- 11.11 There are long views to the north and south at present from the area, and across the Shill Brook valley to the soft edge of Carterton; but it would be possible to create a strong new landscape structure within which development could be acceptable, and largely screened in important views. However, this would take development well into the open countryside west of the town, beyond the natural boundary of the Shill Brook, and extreme care would need to be taken to avoid any development which would be visible on the skyline when looking from Shilton. The integrity of the agricultural setting of Shilton village would need to be maintained, with no development (including planted buffer) on the north facing slope south of Shilton, to maintain the open fields around the village.