

LAND ADJACENT TO HIGHWORTH ROAD • FARINGDON

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LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT APPENDICES

4D Landscape Design
on behalf of The Vale of the White Horse District Council



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4D Landscape Design

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APPENDIX 1: Methodology

1. Assessment Methodology and Criteria Approach

The LVIA methodology follows guidelines contained in the 3rd Edition of the "Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment" (Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment).

The assessment describes and considers the impacts of the proposed development on both the landscape resource and visual amenity of the area. Current guidelines suggest the assessment of an impact on visual amenity resulting from a particular development should take full account of the landscape (character) impacts as well as the potential visual impacts. Although they are separate, it is usually difficult to isolate each category and so both landscape and visual impacts are considered as part of the assessment process.

In order to establish the degree of impact, the assessment has initially considered the existing baseline conditions through a process of detailed desk study and site survey work, and then subsequently considers the potential impacts of the scheme at completion, and again after 15 years of establishment.

The study area is based on a 5 km radius from the site.

In accordance with the guidance in the GLVIA3 the terms 'impact' and 'effect', which are sometimes used interchangeably as if they have the same meaning, have been given the following definitions and used in this LVIA accordingly;

Definitions:

- An Impact is what will occur as a result of the proposals: i.e. vegetation will be removed.
- An Effect is the result of the impact i.e. the views will open up, or hedgerow patterns will be altered.

2. Desk Study

A desk study was undertaken involving a review of available online texts and maps.

- Analysis of this information contributes to an understanding of the area in terms of general landscape character and wider landscape

context, special values and interests, local value, landform, location of public rights of way and the extent and type of vegetation and land use. This analysis also enables the identification of potentially important and sensitive receptors such as designated landscapes, users of public rights of way and residential properties.

Documentation used in the desk study included (but is not limited to):

- Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website;
- Local plans for the two relevant planning authorities (VoWHDC and OCC), including notes from the inspector's report dated February 2006;
- VoWHDC and OCC local designations;
- Faringdon Town Council policies and recommendations;
- 1:50 000 Scale Ordnance Survey Maps;
- Aerial Photography;
- British Listed Buildings web site;
- National Character Area Profiles, Natural England;
- VoWHDC Landscape Assessment, December 2008

3. Site Visits

A photographic site survey has been undertaken to identify key issues and constraints of the proposed development, it's potential effects on the landscape the relationship between the proposals and the surrounding landscape to:

- Confirm the results of the desk study;

- Gain an understanding of the existing landscape character;
- Identify key visual receptors;
- Provide a representative photographic record from typical viewpoints; and
- Record an assessment of the landscape on both an objective and subjective basis from each of those viewpoints.

4. Analysis

Based on the findings of the desk studies, and site visits, an analysis of the impact of the proposed development of the landscape and its surroundings has been formulated, which is then further tested against the landscape receptors for the proposed scheme.

Important receptors are identified and the anticipated impacts quantified in terms of landscape character and visual perception.

5. Effects on the landscape

A description of the baseline physical and perceptual landscape of both the proposed development site and the broader study area, includes a review of the proposed site's recognised value. The anticipated impacts on the landscape resulting from residential development are then identified and the resulting effects noted. This includes direct effects on physical elements within the landscape and indirect effects on landscape character and distinctiveness.

6. Visual effects

In assessing visual effects, this report identifies and examines the nature of the public and private views from the surrounding area which could be affected by proposed development and predicts the magnitude of the 'degree of change' in view and – taking account of the sensitivity of the visual receptor – evaluates the significance of the anticipated visual impact resulting from the proposed development. Changes are generally quantified as **low**, **medium** or **high**¹.

¹ A series of tables are included as a guide to these judgements, although GLVIA3 suggests a more descriptive approach is preferred in describing landscape and visual impacts and effects.

7. Observations

- General observations are made regarding each receptor.
- Photographs and diagrams are used to illustrate viewpoints, and to identify key aspects of physical and human effects across the study area.
- The diagrams are contained in the Appendices to this document.

8. Development effects and conclusion

Mitigation is considered only generically as there are no detailed proposals. However, the landscape effects and impacts are considered in the long term, and conclusions are drawn on the ability of the site and the landscape to accept or accommodate the proposed changes that will result from development.

9. Criteria of impacts

Table 1 Criteria for magnitude of change for landscape elements

Negligible	No loss or very minor alteration to part of an existing landscape element
Low	Minor loss or alteration to part of an existing landscape element
Medium	Some loss or alteration to part of an existing landscape element
High	Total or major loss of an existing landscape element

Table 2 Criteria for magnitude of change for landscape character

Negligible	No notable introduction of new elements into the landscape or change to the scale, landform, land cover or pattern of landscape
Low	Introduction of minor new elements into the landscape or some minor change to the scale, landform, land cover or pattern of landscape
Medium	Introduction of some notable elements into the landscape or some notable change to the scale, landform, land cover or pattern of landscape
High	Introduction of major elements into the landscape or some major change to the scale, landform, land cover or pattern of landscape

Table 3 Criteria for magnitude of change for visual receptors

Negligible	No notable change in the view
Low	Some change in the view that is not prominent / few visual receptors affected
Medium	Some change in the view that is clearly visible and forms an important but not defining element in the view
High	Major change in the view that has a defining influence on the overall view / many visual receptors affected

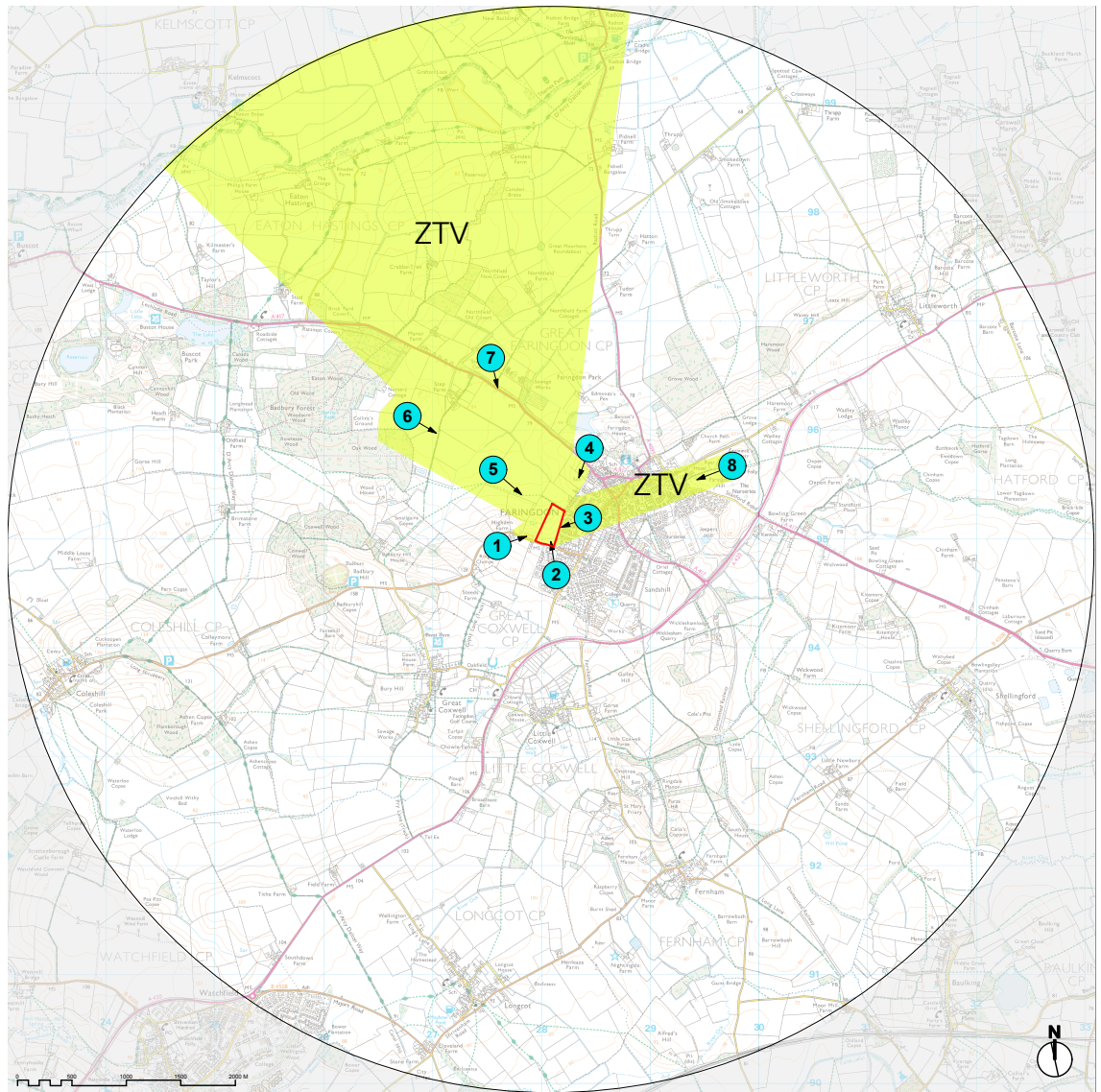
Table 4 Scale of Effect thresholds for landscape character, landscape elements and visual receptors

		Magnitude of change			
		High	Medium	Low	Negligible
Landscape and Visual Sensitivity	High	Substantial	Major	Moderate	Minor
	Medium	Major	Moderate	Minor	Slight
	Low	Moderate	Minor	Slight	Insignificant

APPENDIX 2: Visual Receptors

Section 4 of the LVIA examines the visual effects of the proposal from key receptors in the study area.

The following photographs show the typical views from these points, and illustrate the approximate extent of outline of the proposed site.



D-09 Visual Receptors & Zones of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)

1. View 1: B4019 Highworth Road Lay-by



The site as seen from the B4019 Highworth Road lay-by. Folly Hill is prominent in the distance behind Faringdon.

From this receptor any development will be highly visible and dominate the foreground. Visual mitigation will not be possible to any effective degree, and screening will not be possible without destroying the view towards the Folly. A landscape change as minimal as a change of agricultural use from pasture to arable would affect the receptor and change the nature of the scene.

2. View 2: Public Right of Way within proposed site



View from the south east within the site (from the existing Public Right of Way - the path to the right of the photograph), looking northwest over the Thames Clay Vale and Historic Wooded Ridge.

The path to the left has been created by casual use (mostly dog walkers) over a considerable period of time and forms a peri-track around the site.

3. View 3: Site seen from adjacent housing estate



View from the east on Orchard Hill. Residents are pruning the hedgerow to maintain the views to the west and north from the existing housing estate.

Views of the site are available from a number of locations within the housing area, both privately and publicly. The elevated location above the site affords distant views to the west and north. Development of two storey houses would inevitably alter this, as would any mitigation or screen planting implemented in order to protect views into the site from the west.

4. View 4: Site seen from Allotments and School area to north



View to the south from the higher area of the National Trust owned allotments, close to the school. The total number of allotments on the site is 213, with 42 owned by the Town Council.

Although not publicly accessible, the allotments are a valuable leisure resource for a significant number of users, including families, and are well-used throughout the year.

5. View 5: Local view from surrounding footpath network

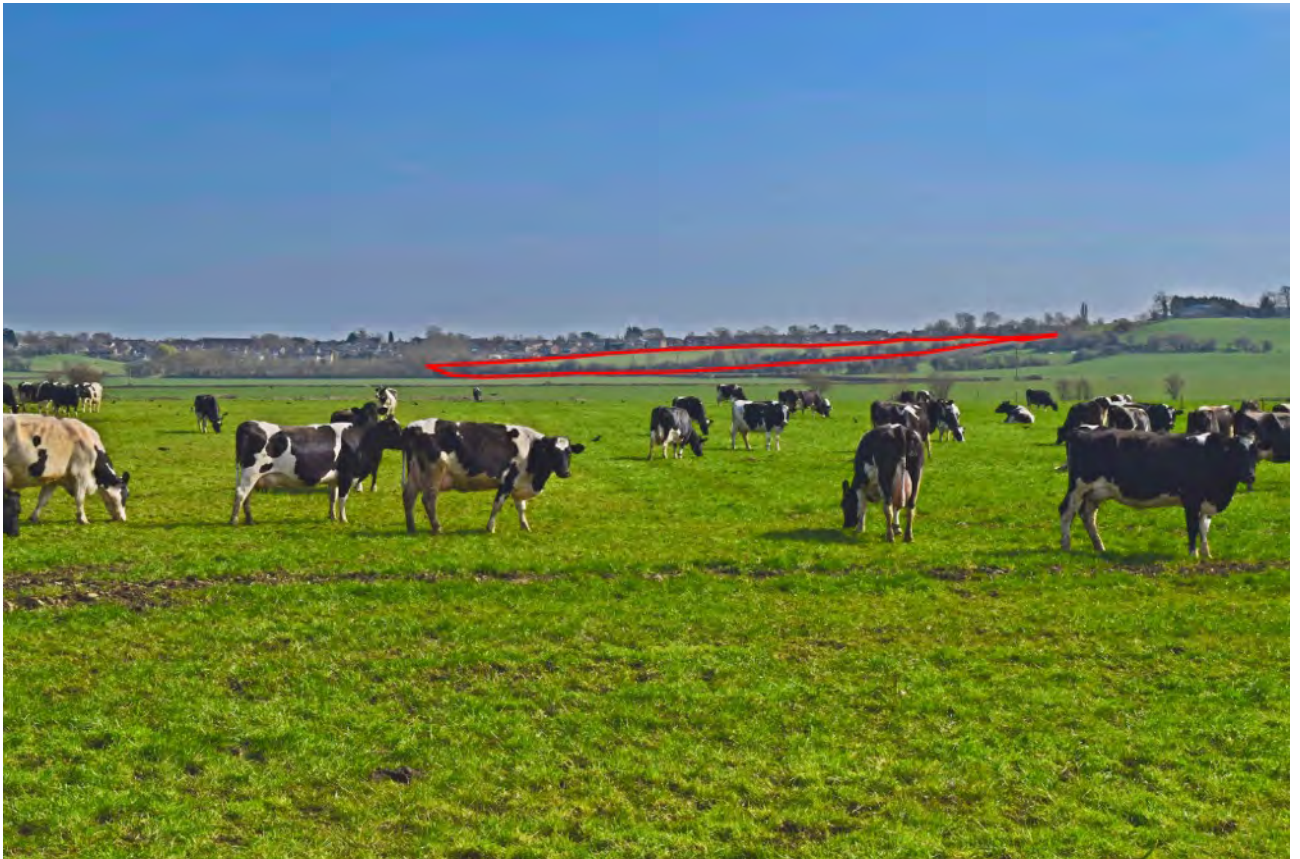


View from the west towards the site.

The rising land is evident, with the existing housing visible behind the easternmost field boundary (of the site).

The photograph location is on a National Trust owned field. The footpath runs from the viewpoint to the trees on the left of the image, where it then connects with the site footpath and the unmade track to Canada Lane.

6. View 6: Views from Bridleway between Smallgains Copse and Step Farm



View from the bridleway looking east towards Faringdon and the site. Currently the town is contained by the eastern field boundary which limits the impact of the existing buildings on the higher edges of the site. At lower levels the town nestles into the landform behind the existing vegetation.

7. View 7: The perception from the A417



View from the A417 approaching Faringdon from the west.

Currently the view is almost entirely rural, with housing only visible on the vegetated ridge line to the south east. Development on the site would be an obvious intrusion into the open countryside, and would be clearly visible on the sloping land to the south.

8. View 8: The view from Folly Hill

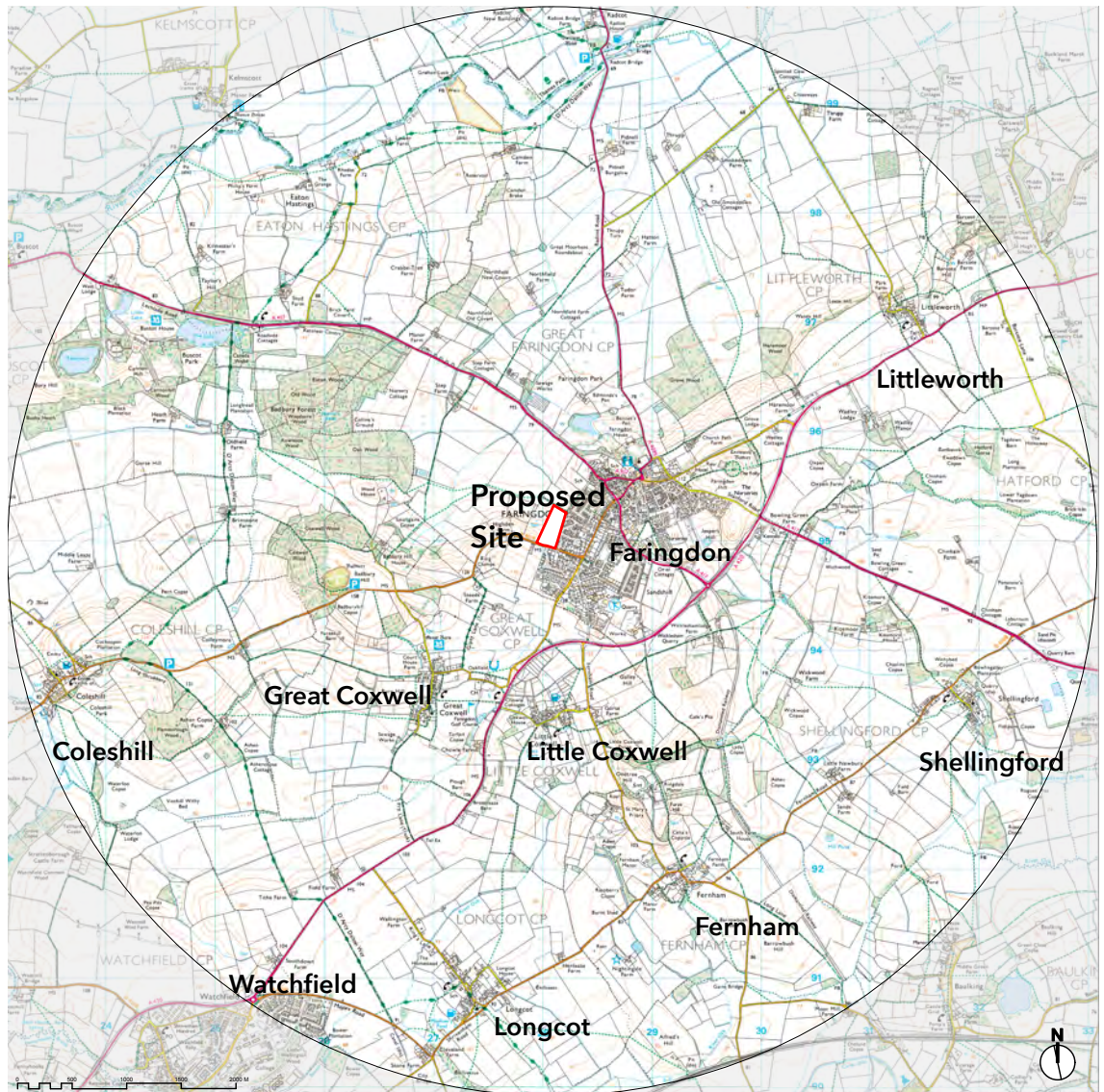


View from Folly Hill.

The higher land to the west is visible beyond the site, which is partially obscured by the existing settlement. The views from this receptor (Folly Hill) of the largely rural and wooded landscapes, in the distance to the west, would be unaffected by the proposal. In this context, development of the site would not have a significant impact on this receptor.

APPENDIX 3: Study Area Character Assessment Diagrams

1. Location

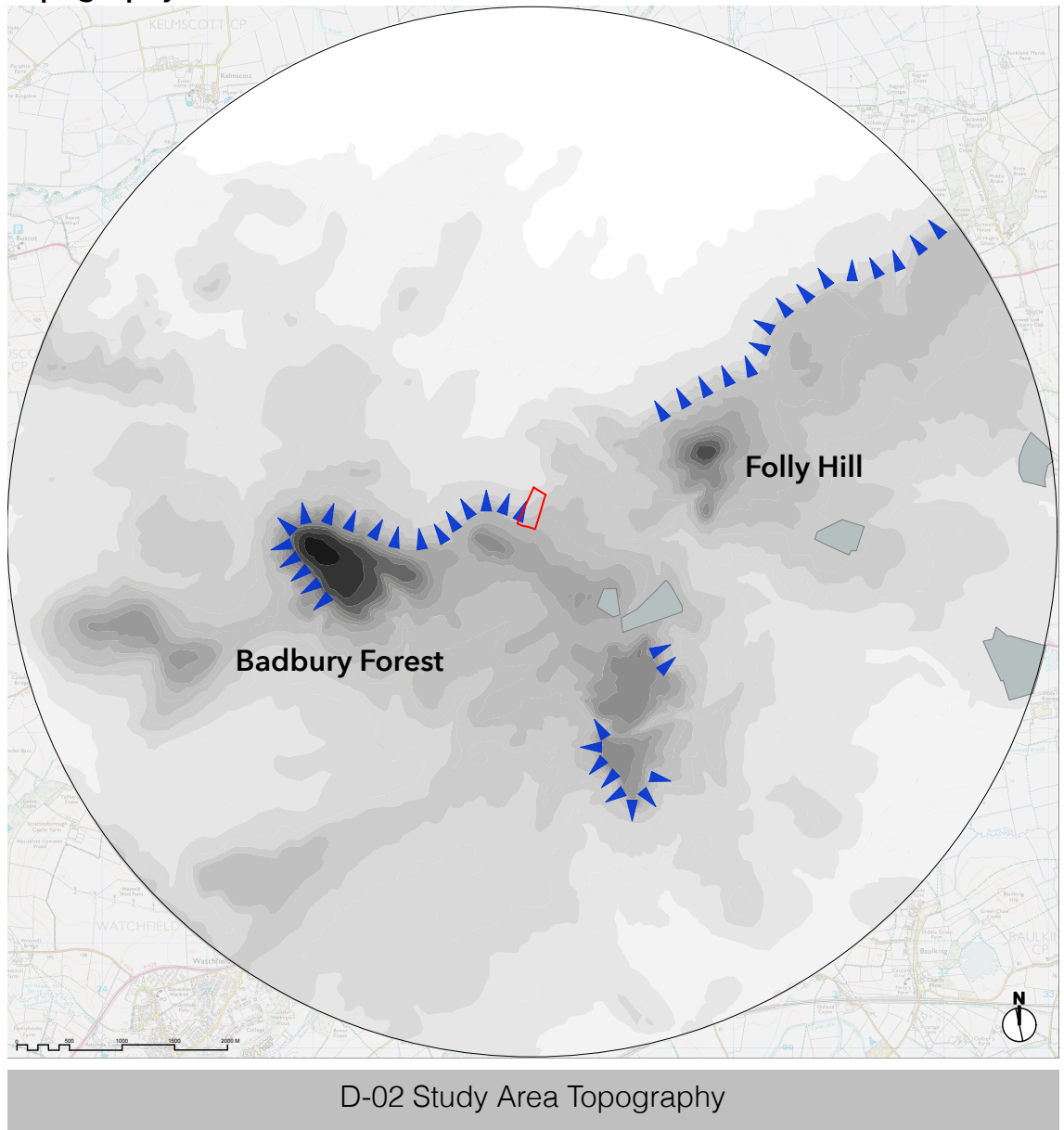


D-01 Site Location

The site is located to the western edge of Faringdon.

The study area indicated has a radius of 5km from the site centre to provide context for landform, infrastructure and nearby settlements.

2. Topography

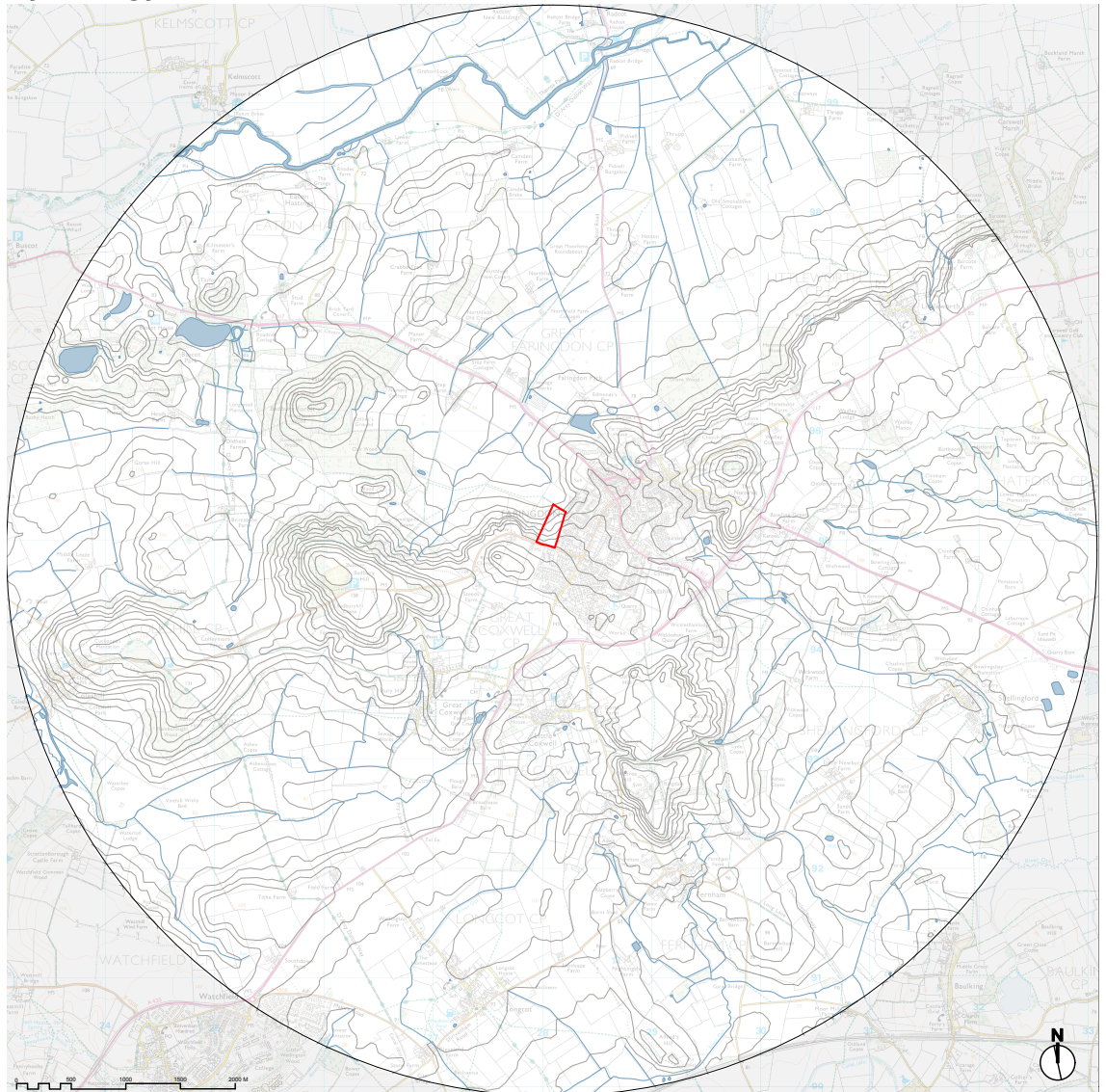


The Midvale Ridge is clearly evident, with its mostly north-facing scarp faces. The high ground of Badbury Forest dominates the landform to the west, while Folly Hill is evident to the east.

The quarries to the south and east of Faringdon are marked for context.

River Thames

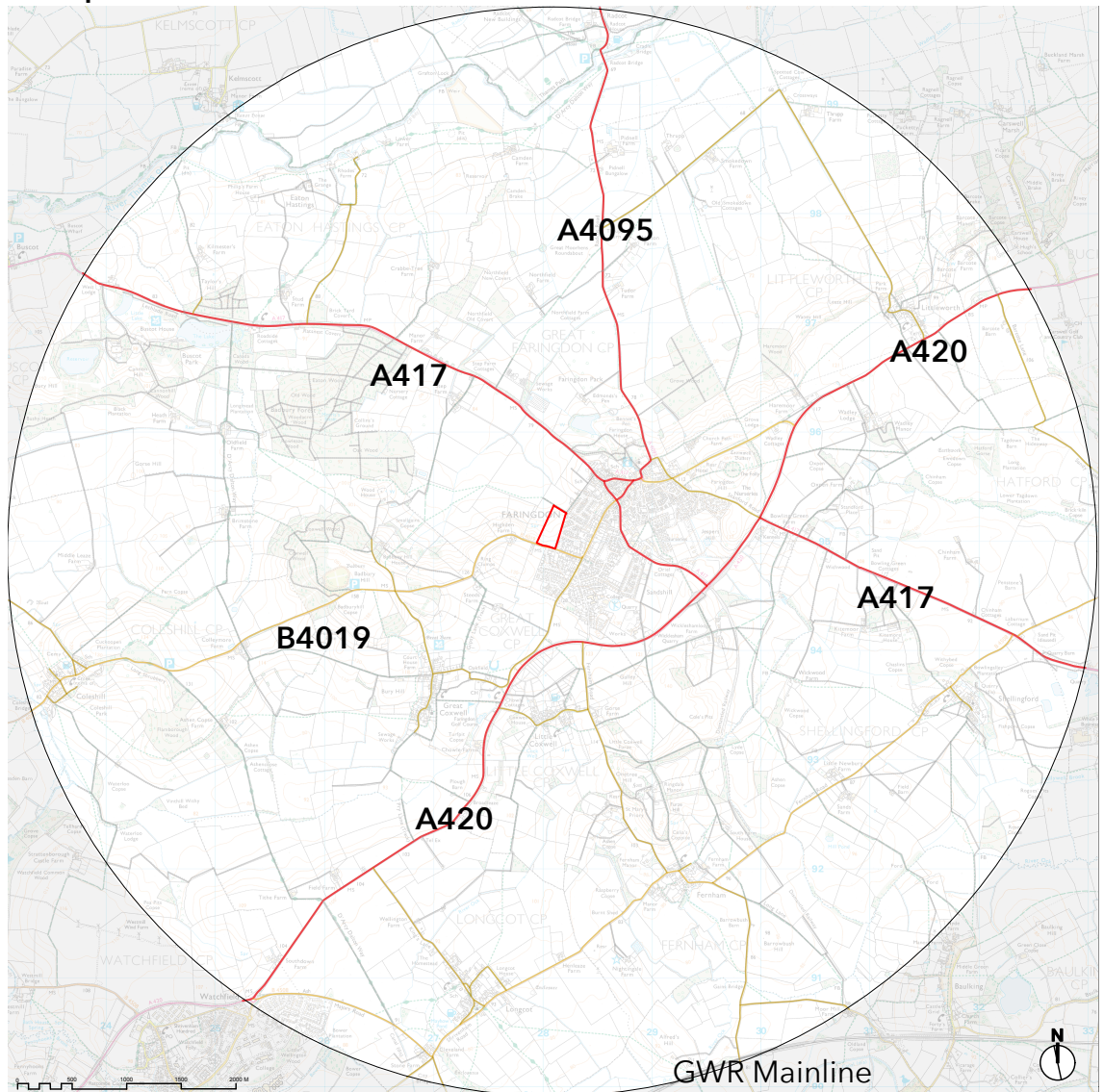
3. Hydrology



D-03 Study Area Hydrology

The Midvale Ridge is the origin of a number of water sources in the area, amongst which is the proposed site, which drains towards the River Thames to the north

4. Transport

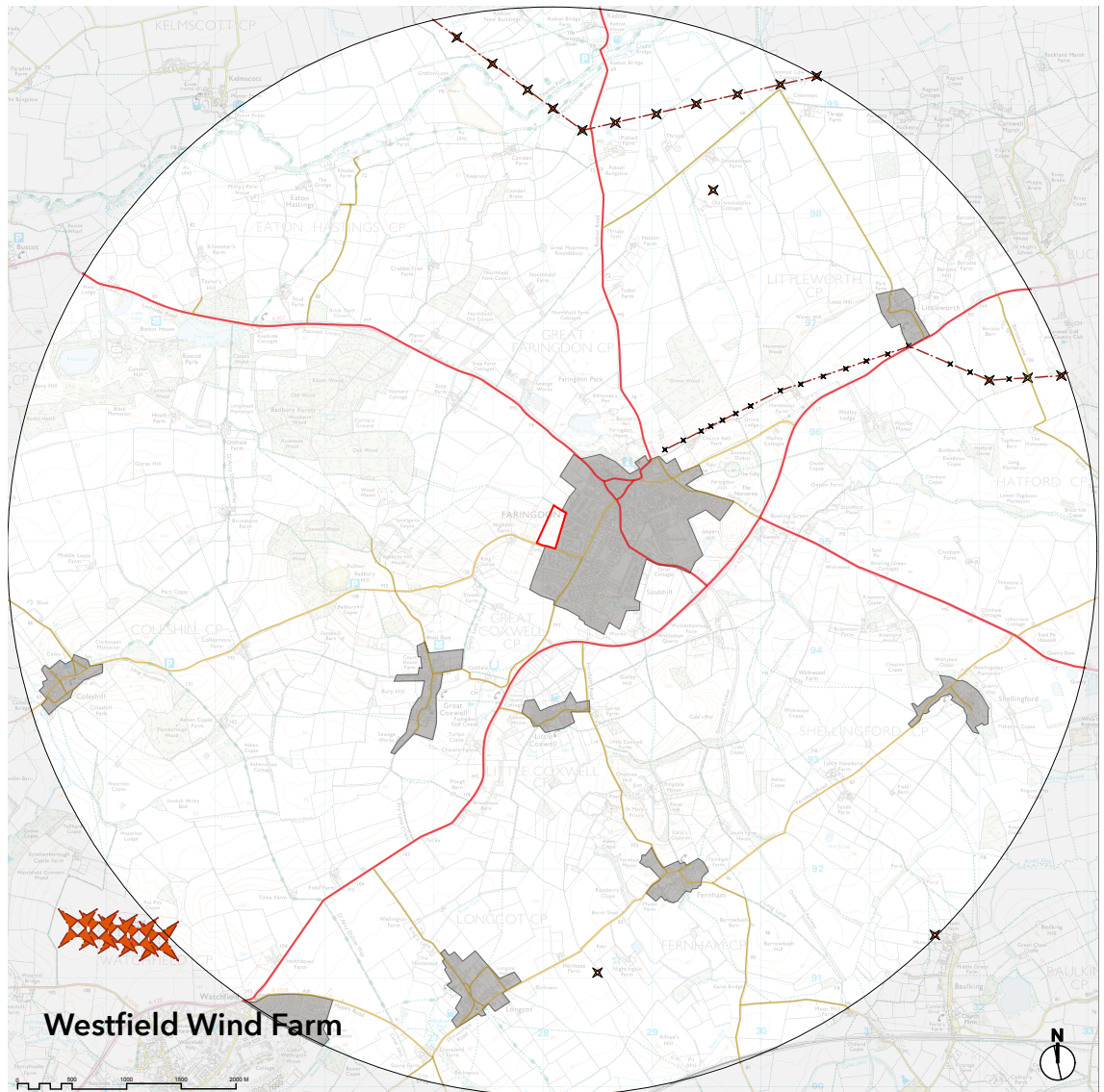


D-04 Study Area Transport Infrastructure

The main road network focuses on the A420 from Swindon to Oxford, which by-passes Faringdon to the south.

The key roads with views of the site are the A417 to the north, and the B4019 which passes the site to the south.

5. Infrastructure



D-05 Study Area Infrastructure

Power and communications infrastructures overlay the study area in addition to the transport network. Settlements also feature in the visible built environment.

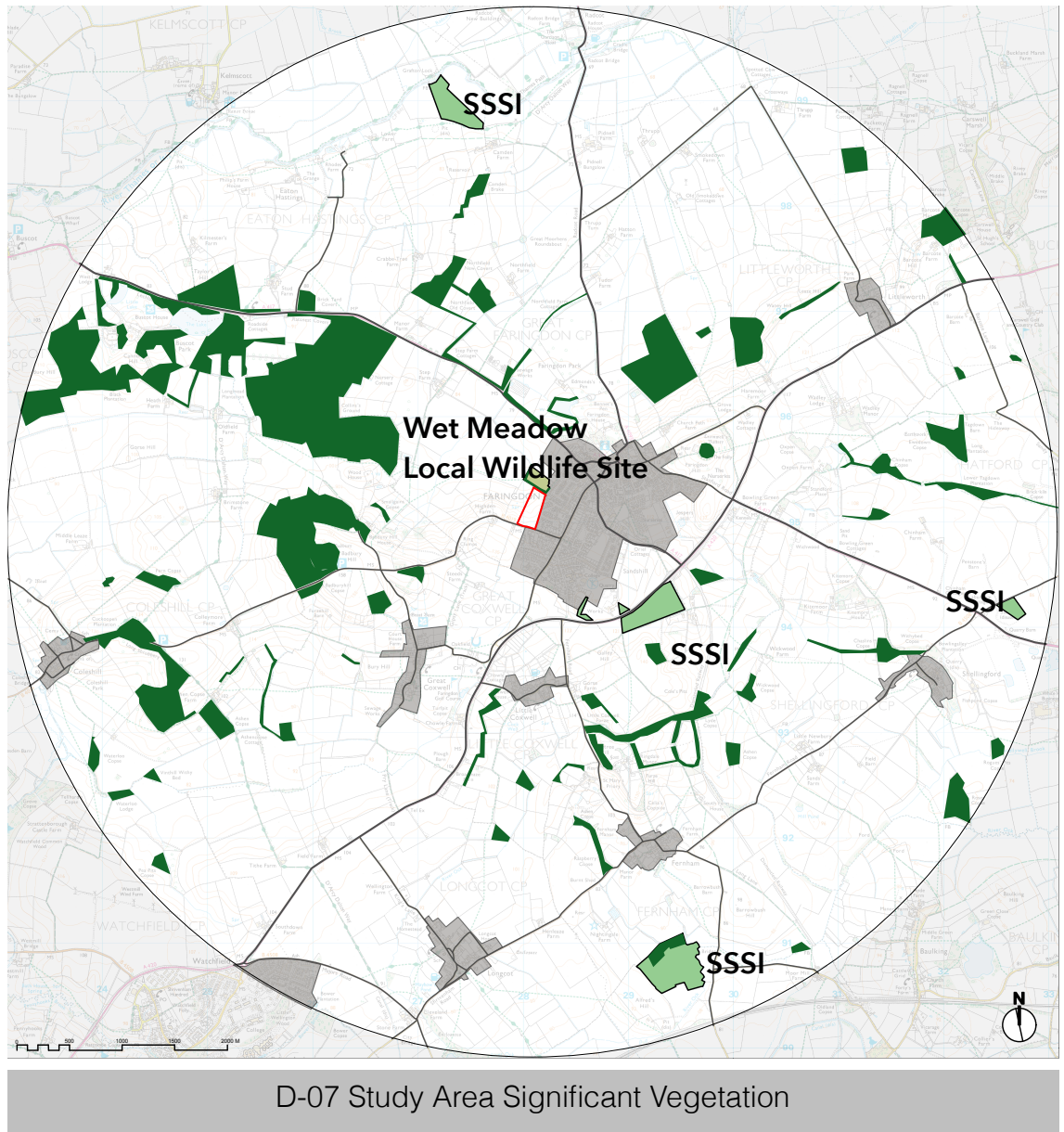
Although just outside the study area the Westfield (Watchfield) wind farm is indicated on the plan above.

6. Public Access



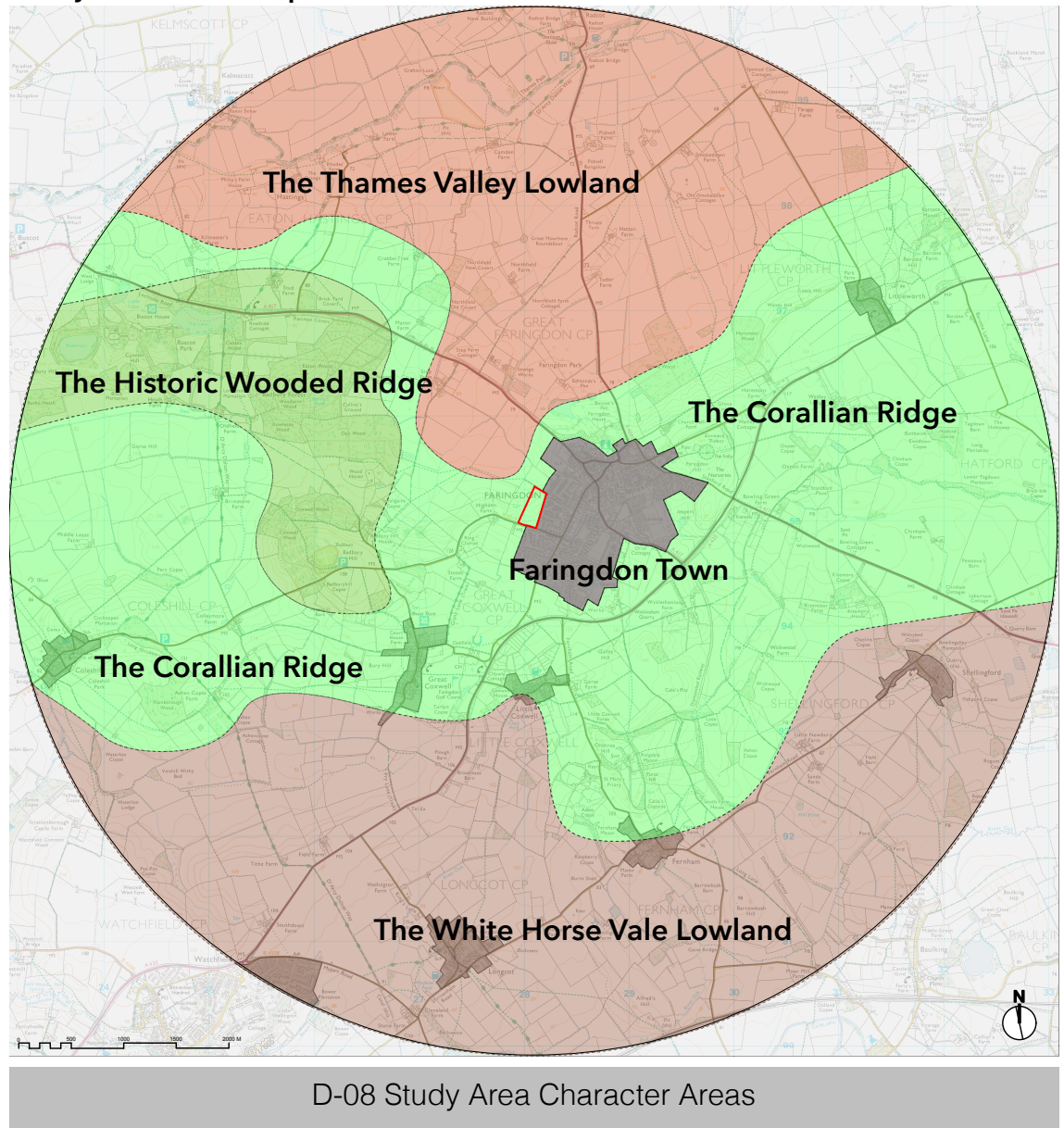
The area network of roads, bridleways and footpaths illustrates the extent of public access in the area and around the site.

7. Green Infrastructure

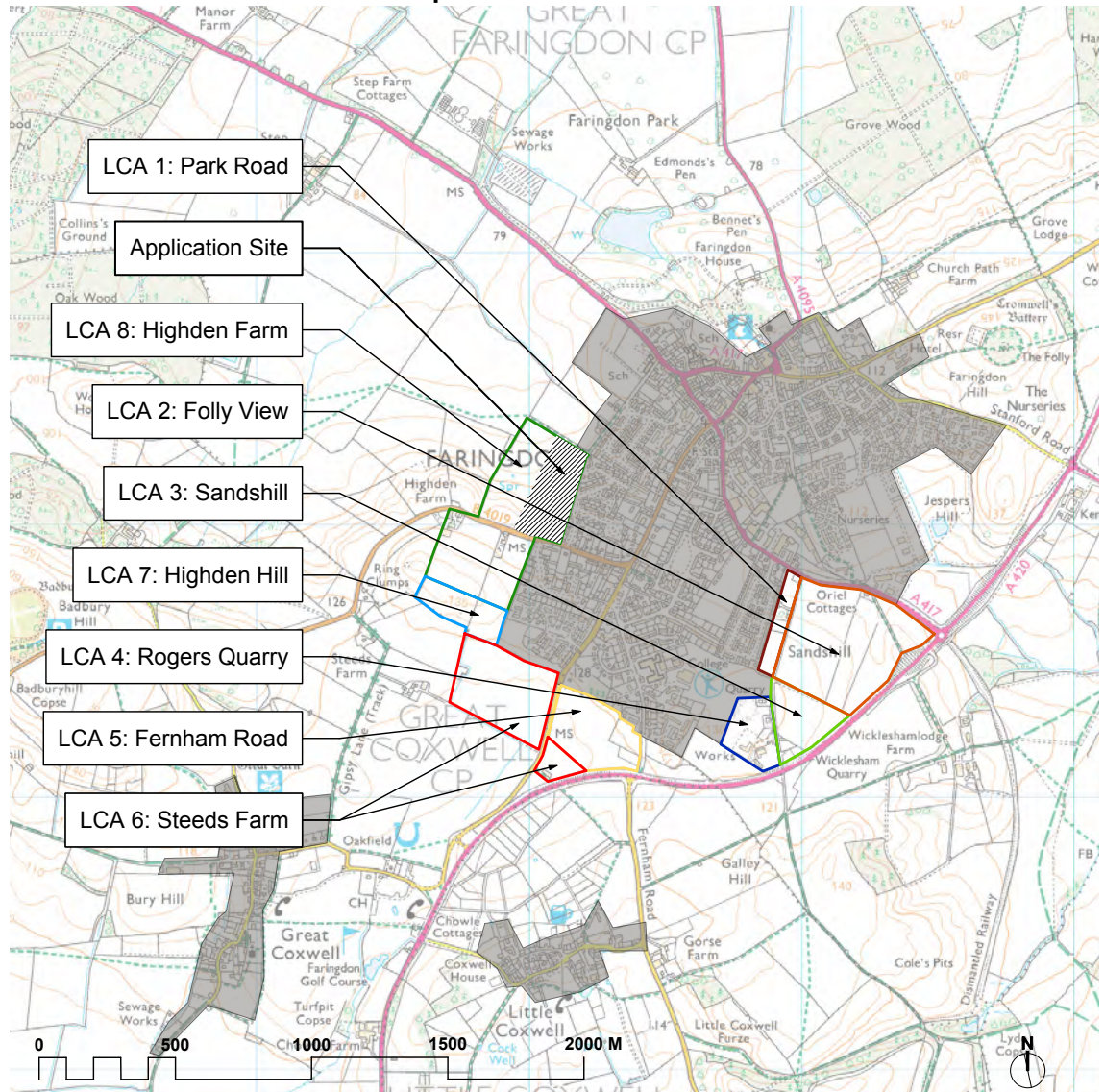


The western ridge area is dominated by areas of woodland and plantation, while the lowland vales are characteristically devoid of major vegetation.

8. Study Area Landscape Character Areas

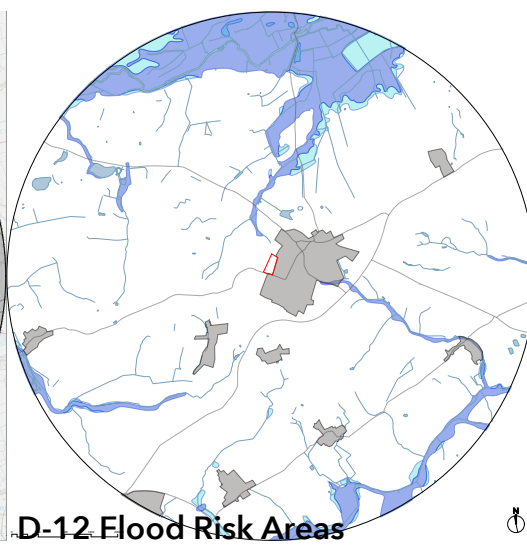
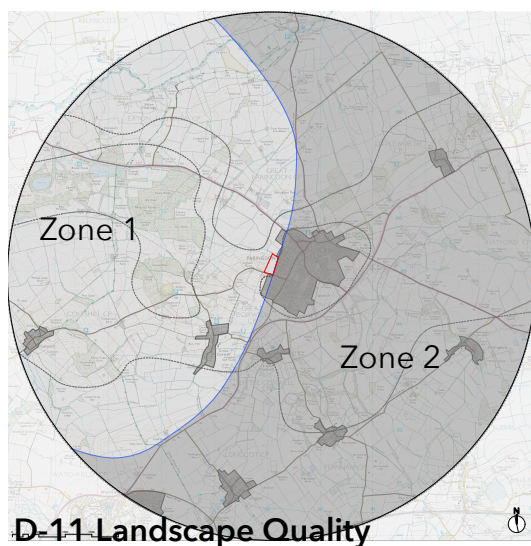
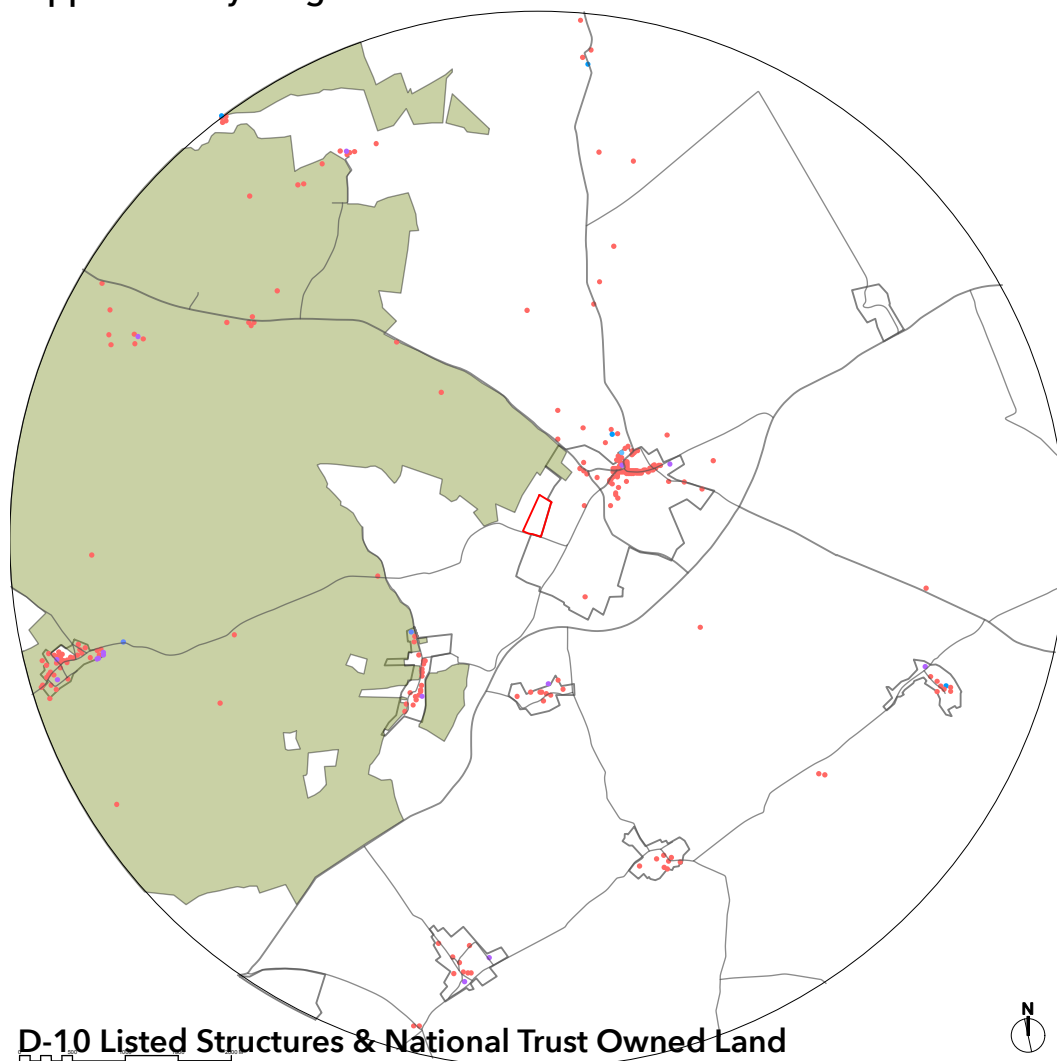


9. Vale of White Horse Landscape Assessment (2008)



D-20 Landscape Assessment Sites 2008

10. Supplementary Diagrams

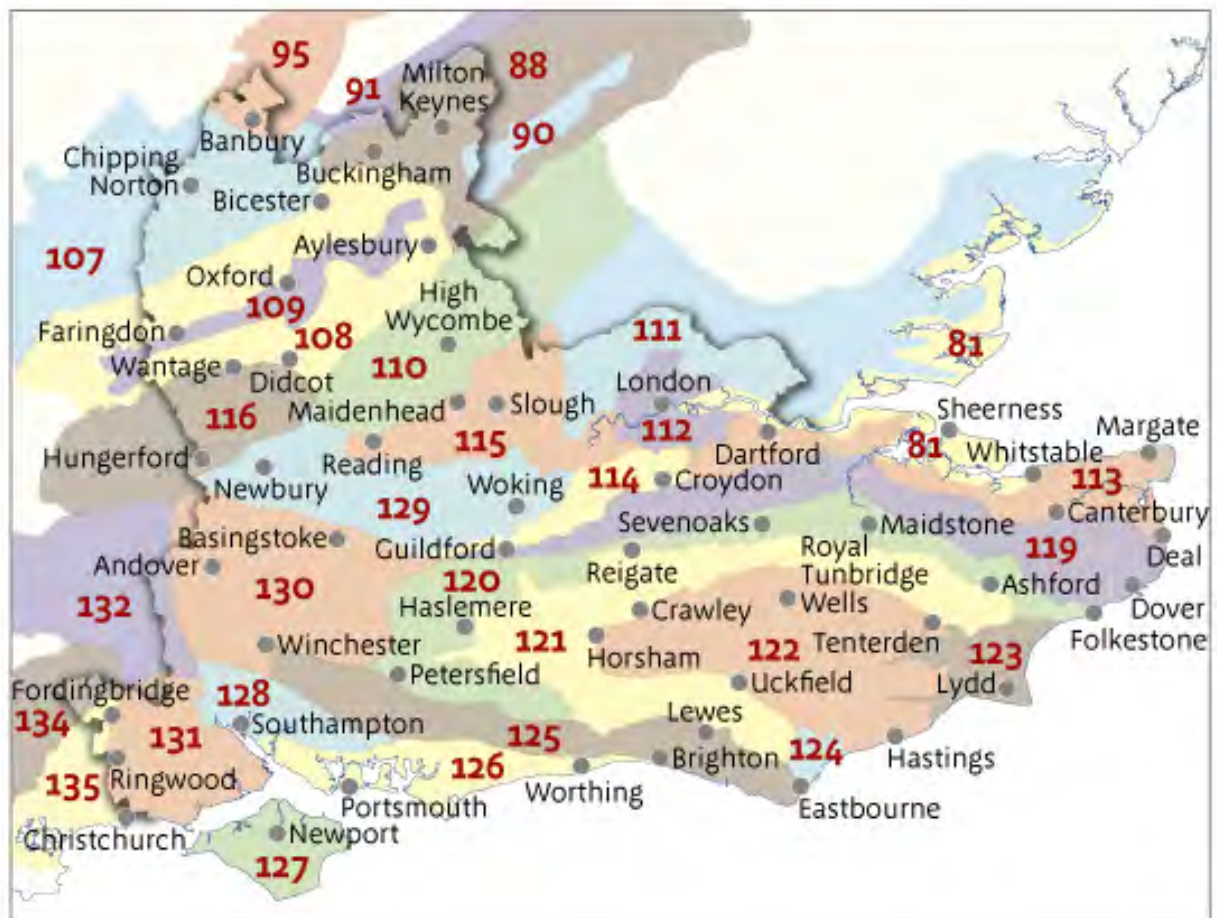


APPENDIX 4: National Landscape Character Assessment

1. Introduction

Natural England has assessed the various broad-scale landscape characters throughout England and sub-divided the resulting data into distinct National Character Area Profiles (NCAs).

South East and London National Character Area map

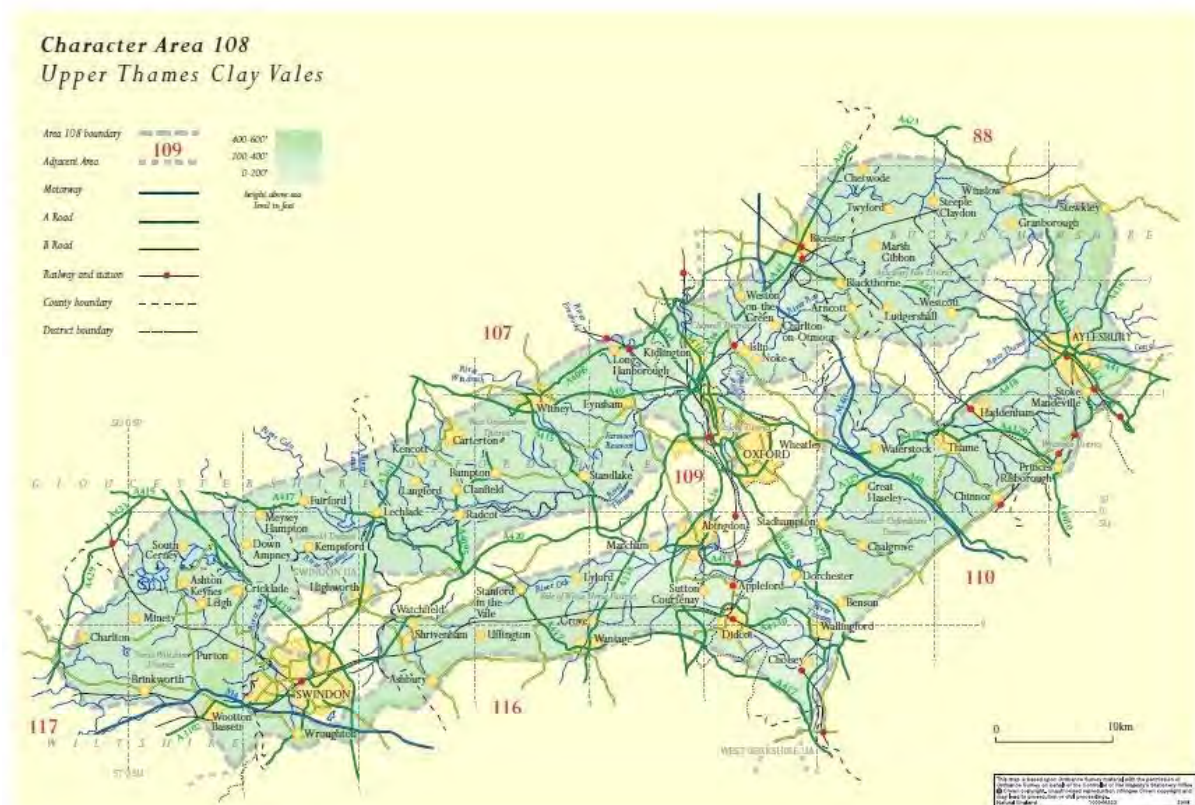


These NCAs provide a background and context to the landscape character of the site and its immediate study area. The NCA designation is inherited from the former JCA designations, only some of which have been updated.

Two NCA definitions are relevant to the site (108 and 109), and their key characteristics are summarised as follows:

2. NCA 108: Upper Thames Clay Vale National Character Area

The site lies within the Upper Thames Clay Vale National Character Area (NCA 108). This document has yet to be updated, so reference is made here to the legacy Joint Character Area (JCA) 108 publication.



The key characteristics of this character area are described as:

- *“Broad belt of open, gently undulating lowland farmland on Upper Jurassic clays containing a variety of contrasting landscapes. Includes the enclosed pastures of the claylands and the wet valley bottoms and the more settled open arable lands of the gravel.*
- *The valley bottoms, with open floodplain landscapes displaying gravel workings and flooded pits, a regular and well-ordered field pattern, willow pollards and reedbeds along the water courses.*
- *The Vales in Oxfordshire are dominated by 18th century enclosure landscapes of small woods and hawthorn/blackthorn hedges. Former and current gravel workings along the Thames floodplain also include open water features. The distinctive character of Otmoor with its patchwork pattern of small fields defined by healthy hedgerows of elm add interest and variety to this area.*

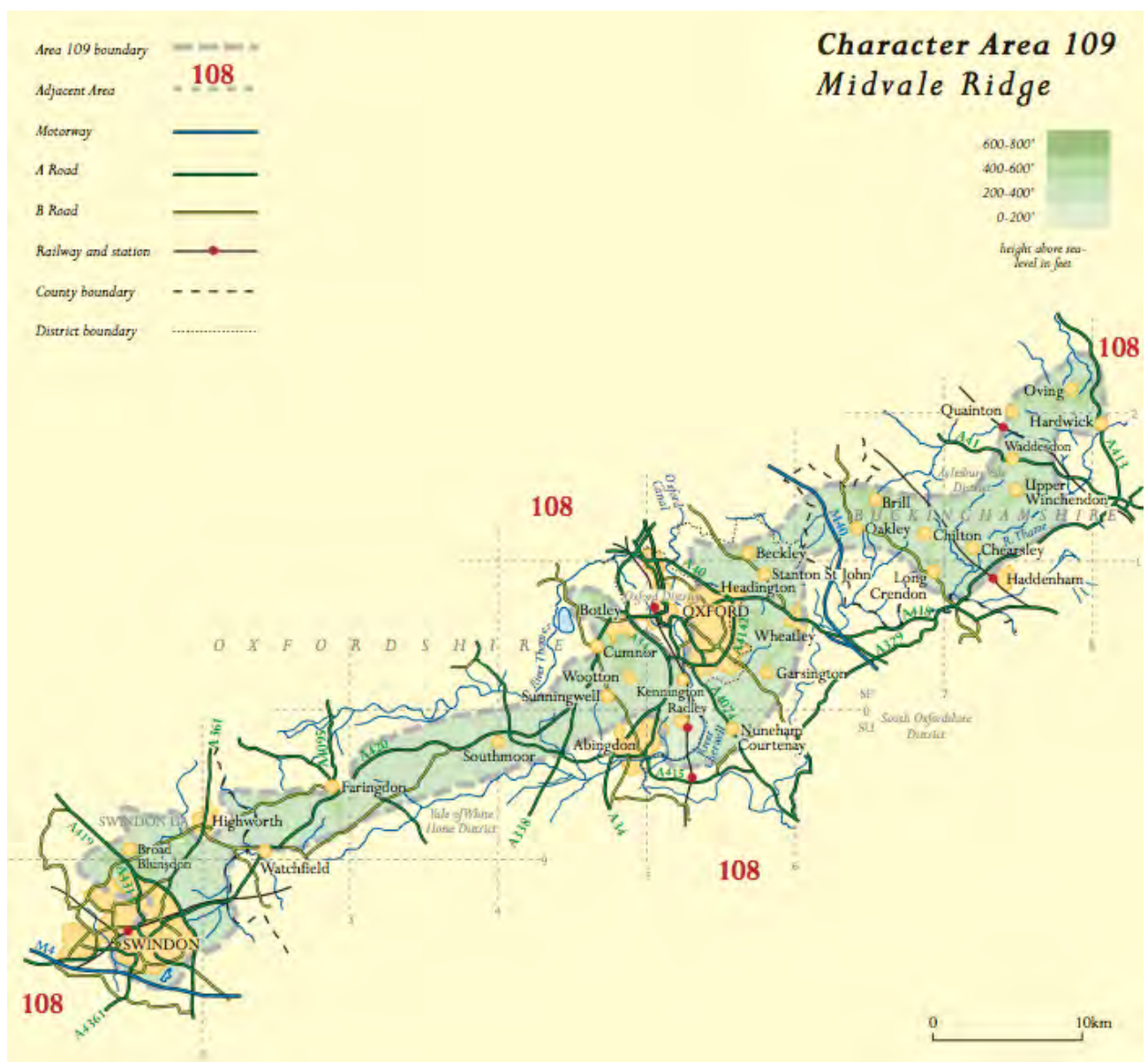
- *In Buckinghamshire, the Vale is a predominantly pastoral landscape including regular fields within a well-defined network of trimmed hedgerows often with oak/ash hedgerow trees and some small blocks of woodland.*
- *Brick-built buildings within the Vales reflect the widespread use of the local clay as a building material."*

NCA 108 is sub-divided into two character areas (Wiltshire, Oxfordshire and Buckingham Vales, and the Vales of the White Horse and Aylesbury). The site lies within the latter sub-character area.

3. NCA 109: Midvale Ridge National Character Area

However, as the site is on the boundary of this Character area, it can also be described as more appropriately encompassing elements of the adjacent Character Area, NCA 109 Midvale Ridge. This is an area of land which sits entirely within JCA 108, but has a separate landscape character, and that comprises the elevated land on which Faringdon is located.

The broad characteristics of this landscape typology are described in NCA 109 as follows:



"The Midvale Ridge National Character Area (NCA) is a band of low-lying limestone hills stretching east-west from the Vale of Aylesbury in Buckinghamshire to Swindon. It is surrounded by the flat lands of the Oxfordshire clay vales, giving extensive views across the surrounding countryside. It is a predominantly agricultural area with a mixed arable/pastoral farming landscape, cereals being the most important arable crop. The main towns are Swindon, at the western end, and Oxford, which lies across the centre of the area, but otherwise the settlement pattern is characterised by small nucleated villages along the top of the ridge and along the springline. The soils types are a mix of heavy rendzinas, stagnogleys and lighter sandy brown earths with small patches of sandy soils.

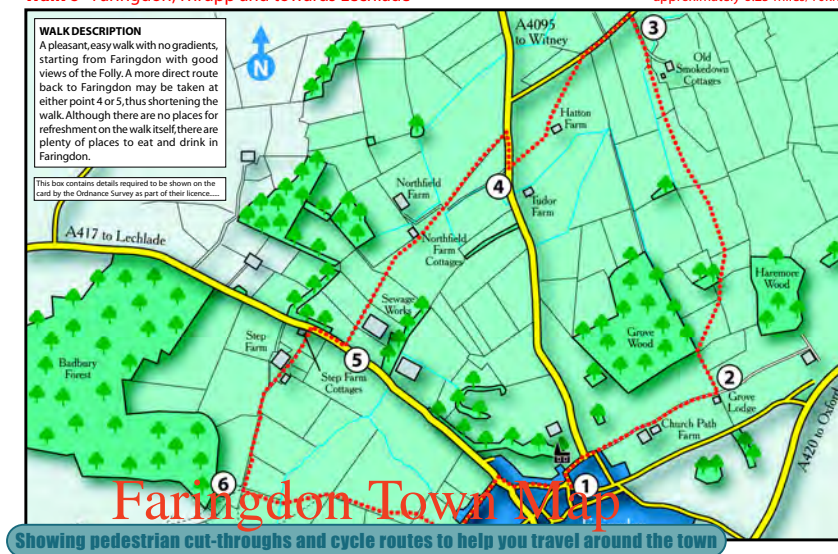
The area is significant for its geological sites and has been a focus for study since the 19th century. It has yielded fossils of international importance, including the holotypes for several ammonite species and several species of prehistoric sponges known only from the Faringdon area."

APPENDIX 5: Faringdon Leisure Maps

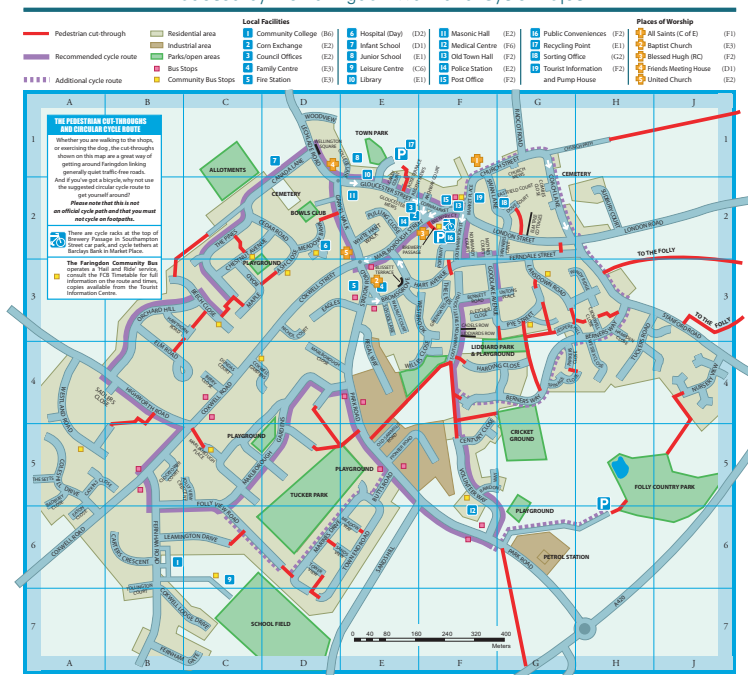
FARINGDON WALKCARDS

Walk 6 Faringdon, Thrupp and towards Lechlade

approximately 6.25 miles/10km



Produced by the Faringdon Walk and Cycle Project



Out and about around **Faringdon**

Faringdon is ideal as a centre for visiting Oxford, The Cotswolds, Upper Thames and Vale of White Horse, each with its own distinct character and rich history. This map has been jointly prepared and financed by Vale of White Horse District Council Faringdon Joint Environmental Trust



Map kindly supplied by Faringdon Walkers and Cyclists.
Map designed and produced by David Henderson, © 2006
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Visit www.faringdon.org, Faringdon's community website, for a wealth
of information about local clubs, what's on, places to visit around the
area and the history of Faringdon and surrounding villages.

The town has a long and varied history, with evidence of habitation by Prehistoric Man, Romans, Saxons, Normans and Vikings.

It suffered considerable damage between 1643-1646, during the Civil War. Consequently most of the buildings are of later date, but have remained barely unchanged for the past two centuries.

Faringdon offers some of the finest views across the Vale and Thames Valley, architecture of distinction and a rich history that is unparalleled.

Information about places to visit, accommodation and transport is available from the:

Faringdon Community and Tourist Information Centre
Sited in the Pump House, 5 Market Place, Faringdon
Summer Opening hours (1st April - 31st October) 9.30 - 4.30
Winter Opening hours (1st November - 31st March) 9.30 - 1.30
Telephone: 01367 242191
Email: tic@faringdowntowncouncil.org.uk

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