
Independent Examination of the Gedling Local Plan Planning Document (Part 2 Local Plan)

Matter 8: Housing Allocations in Key Settlements for Growth?

Issue 8d: Calverton Village (Policy LPD66)

This Position Statement on the MIQs for Issues 8a- 8c should be read in conjunction with the written representations on Calverton and in particular the Main Street site (H15) submitted by GPA Ltd on behalf of Langridge Homes Ltd with respect to the Pre Submission Draft Local Plan.

Regard should also be had to plans and technical reports submitted as part of previous consultations and a Pre Application submission in 2013. These documents have included:

- Archaeological Assessment (2013)
- Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (2013)
- Transport Statement (2013)

These studies also covered adjoining land off Longue Drive.

Langridge Homes Ltd has also submitted comments on the Calverton Neighbourhood Plan which are appended to this Position Statement (appendix A).

Q13 Does the amount of housing proposed in Calverton accord with the ACS? (Policy LPD66)

No.

The ACS requires up to 1,055 homes to be provided in Calverton.

Policy 66 makes provision for 535 dwellings on existing and new allocation sites. In addition there are another 294 committed dwellings (ie completions since 2011 and extant planning permissions), making a total of 829 dwellings to be provided in total at Calverton over the plan period.

This represents a significant reduction of 21% over the ACS up to figure for Calverton. Given Calverton's status as the most sustainable of the Key Settlements in terms of services this reduction is in my opinion not justified, although I accept the argument of providing more housing on sites adjoining the urban area, but on land to the north of Hucknall.

Q14 Is there a need to provide additional homes in Calverton? Are sufficient sites allocated for housing in the settlement?

Yes, there is a need to provide additional houses in Calverton.

Firstly the overall provision in Calverton should be nearer to the ACS 'up to' figure of 1,055 dwellings.

Secondly there is risk and uncertainty regarding the delivery of the Park Road site due to land instability and land ownership concerns. Assuming that the site is developed, there is the very real likelihood that the overall number of homes to be built on this site may not achieve the allocation requirement set down in Policy 66 of 390 dwellings. Indeed, there is a record of large sites in Gedling

underperforming or having their housing allocations reduced (eg Stockings Farm achieved 280 homes against an allocation of 390 homes, and the Top Wighay site has been reduced from 1,000 to 845 dwellings).

Thirdly there is also the likelihood of extant permissions lapsing.

Assuming a 10% reduction in dwelling yield from the allocated sites and a 10% lapse rate, then the overall total delivery from sites in Calverton could easily fall by some 80+ dwellings to around 750, which would be 30% below the ACS up to figure.

I do not consider this to be an acceptable outcome, given concerns about risks and uncertainties associated with other allocation sites, particularly the large site allocations, in the ACS and LPD Part 2.

Thus it is necessary to identify sites for additional homes in Calverton.

Q15 Why has Calverton received the largest reduction from the figures in the ACS despite it being identified as the most sustainable of the Key Settlements?

Probably due to local pressures.

Q16 Has sufficient assessment of the impact of the proposed development sites on the three SAMs in Calverton been carried out?

The allocated sites do not appear to have any impact on the SAMs.

Q17 Having regard to the emerging Neighbourhood Plan for Calverton, should allocations to the south of the settlement be removed and a single strategic site allocated in the north west of Calverton?

No.

As noted in my answer to Q14 there is a need to allocate more homes in Calverton.

As noted in Gedling's initial response dated 09 December 2016 to the Inspector's questions the Council consider that reliance on a single allocation to provide new housing for Calverton is considered to be a riskier approach in terms of housing delivery for the settlement and would also be less likely to deliver new homes within the first five years. I agree with this statement.

The Neighbourhood Plan has not been tested at a Public Examination, and in particular the Southern Ridge Policy has not been tested – I have submitted substantial comments as to why this designation should not be applied to the land to the south and west of Calverton between Main Street and George's Lane (refer Appendix A to these comments), and why land between the edge of the existing built up area and the Ramsgale Golf Course is suitable for development.

In preparing their Neighbourhood Plan, it was agreed that housing allocations were a function of the Borough Council, and therefore the NP would not be making any allocations (or presumably commenting on proposed allocations/inserting policies to restrict development in some areas).

Issue 8e: Main Street (H15) (Policy LPD66)**Q18 Is the proposed allocation justified and appropriate in terms of the likely impacts of development?**

Yes.

The pre application inquiry technical reports and comments from stakeholders with respect to the Pre application inquiry did not identify any likely impacts arising from this development.

Q19 Is the proposed allocation deliverable? In particular, is it:**a) Confirmed by the landowner involved as being available for the use proposed?**

Yes.

The land is under the control of Langridge Homes Ltd which has a long standing and proud record of house-building in Calverton.

b) Supported by evidence to demonstrate that safe and appropriate access for vehicles can be provided?

Yes.

This has been addressed to the satisfaction of the Highway Authority at the pre application stage.

c) Deliverable, having regard to the provision of the necessary infrastructure and services, and any environmental or other constraints?

The site can be connected to the services infrastructure along Main Street, and also the adjoining residential area. There are no environmental or other constraints to the development of this site.

Q20 Should this be extended to include the strip of land between the edge of the allocation site and Ramsdale Golf Course, with the capacity increased from 75 to 90 homes?

Yes.

The Boundary with the Ramsgale Golf Course which comprises a strong hedgerow boundary will provide a more defensible long term boundary than the existing field boundary, comprising hedges and hedgerow trees.

The remaining strip of land which is about 40 m wide will become over overgrown and have an unkempt appearance as it will have no long term economic function.

The public footpath (FP21) which runs along the boundary with the Ramsgale Golf Course within the site will be retained and could be enhanced as part of the housing scheme

The additional 15 houses will make a small but useful contribution to the identified housing shortfall in Calverton and within the Borough.

A landscape assessment of the proposal to extend the boundary to the Golf Course is attached at Appendix B.

Q21 Does the allocation of this site accord with the objectives of the emerging Neighbourhood Plan for Calverton?

The NP sets out four main objectives:

- Promote high quality and sustainable growth
- Protect and enhance Calverton's natural and historic environment, countryside and Green Belt setting
- Protect and enhance Calverton's historic built environment
- Improve the Provision of Sustainable Transport throughout the Village

I consider that all these objectives are met through H15 Main Street.

Specifically:

- The site can be easily assimilated into the built form – it is adjoined by housing on two sides and would appear as a natural, small scale, sustainable infill scheme on the edge of the village, unlike the Park Road allocation which is effectively detached from the village to the north and would appear as a separate housing estate.
- The scheme would not impact on Calverton's historic environment – it is not within the Conservation area and would not impact on the setting of the three SAM's; other key historic features are observed further to the south of the village between George's Lane and Bonner Hill. With regard to the natural environment the site is low lying and as such its impact on the Green Belt setting of Calverton and surrounding countryside which rises up to the south and west would not be significant.
- The site is close to bus stops along Main Street and so new residents will be able to benefit from the Calverton Connection with regular 10-15 minute interval services to Nottingham

Q22 What are the exceptional circumstances which justify the removal of the site from the Green Belt?

The Inspector to the ACS public examination confirmed that the test of exceptional circumstances to require Green Belt changes had been met in order to meet the housing requirements of Gedling and also the other ACS authorities.

The Inspector also confirmed that a proportion of Gedling's housing requirement should be met in the Key Settlements for Growth which include Calverton.

The more detailed work on identifying housing land allocations sites in this Part 2 Local Plan has reaffirmed that there is insufficient land within the built up areas outside the Green Belt to meet the objectively assessed housing needs.

Q23 Will this site deliver the allocated number of homes during the Plan period?

Yes.

Langridge Homes Ltd has already undertaken the necessary technical studies (transport, landscape and visual, archaeological, ecology and flood risk and drainage) and prepared an indicative layout to enable a planning application to be submitted as soon as the LPD Part 2 is adopted. The site is also under its control. Thus, subject to planning, agreeing a S106 agreement, and discharging conditions the scheme could start on site within two – three years. At 30 house per annum, the site could be built out over a three year period.

Q24 Has full consideration been given to the lack of support for development to the south of the settlement when allocating this site for housing development?

This land had previously been identified at the ACS stage – refer Appendix A of the ACS – Calverton Village Indicative Plan, and has therefore been in the public domain as a potential area for development at Calverton for a long period of time. Indeed apart from land to the north of Calverton (Park Road allocation and proposed area of safeguarding land) this area represents the only other potential location for development on the edge of Calverton.

Issue 8f: Park Road (H16) (Policy LPD 66)

Q25 Is the proposed allocation justified and appropriate in terms of the likely impacts of development?

Refer earlier comments.

Q26 Is the proposed allocation deliverable? In particular, is it:

a) Confirmed by the landowner involved as being available for the use proposed?

Refer earlier comments.

b) Supported by evidence to demonstrate that safe and appropriate access for vehicles can be provided?

No comment.

c) Deliverable, having regard to the provision of the necessary infrastructure and services, and any environmental or other constraints?

No comment.

Q27 Has full consideration been given to potential mining subsidence when allocating this site for housing development?

Refer earlier comments.

Q28 Would the scale of development be appropriate?

Refer earlier comments.

Q29 Would this site deliver the allocated number of homes during the plan period, particularly given the multiple landowners involved?

No – see earlier comments.

Q30 Should this site be extended to the north to include around 650 homes in preference to the development to the south of Main Street (H15)?

No – This would be a high risk strategy, and it would not be in accordance with the objectives of the NP.

Q31 Are there any constraints to the development of this site?

No comment.

Q32 The Housing Implementation Strategy (LPD/HOU/01) indicates that the Council will invite the developer/owner of this site to participate in a partnership approach to facilitate partnership working to help deliver this site. Why is this necessary? What is the timetable for this work?

No comment.

APPENDIX A

Calverton Neighbourhood Plan (Draft, July 2016)

Representations submitted on behalf of Langridge Homes Ltd

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Background

These representations on the Calverton Neighbourhood Plan (Draft, July 2016) have been prepared by Geoffrey Prince Associates Ltd on behalf of Langridge Homes Ltd. Langridge Homes Ltd is a local house-building company which has a long-standing track record of building new homes in Calverton, many of which have been purchased by local people.

It welcomes the decision by Calverton to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan which sets out the aspirations and views of the local community together with local planning policies to guide new development in Calverton. It will be a useful reference document for the development industry.

We note that the Plan is intended to be consistent with the NPPF and also the strategic policies of the Gedling Aligned Core Strategy (ACS) document, and that the Plan acknowledges the status of Calverton as a Key Settlement identified for growth in the Gedling ACS. We also note the decision of the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) Steering Group not to identify specific sites for new housing and employment development in the NP, but to leave these decisions to the Gedling Local Plan Part 2 which sets out proposed allocations for housing and employment uses. With limited previously developed land (pdl) within the settlement boundary the draft NP recognises that this will involve amendments to the Green Belt which encircles Calverton and that any amendments to the Green Belt boundary to facilitate new development is the responsibility of the Local Planning Authority. We further note that the Gedling LPD Part 2 (Publication Draft, May 2016) has proposed the following site allocations for residential development and which will involve amendments to the Green Belt boundary:

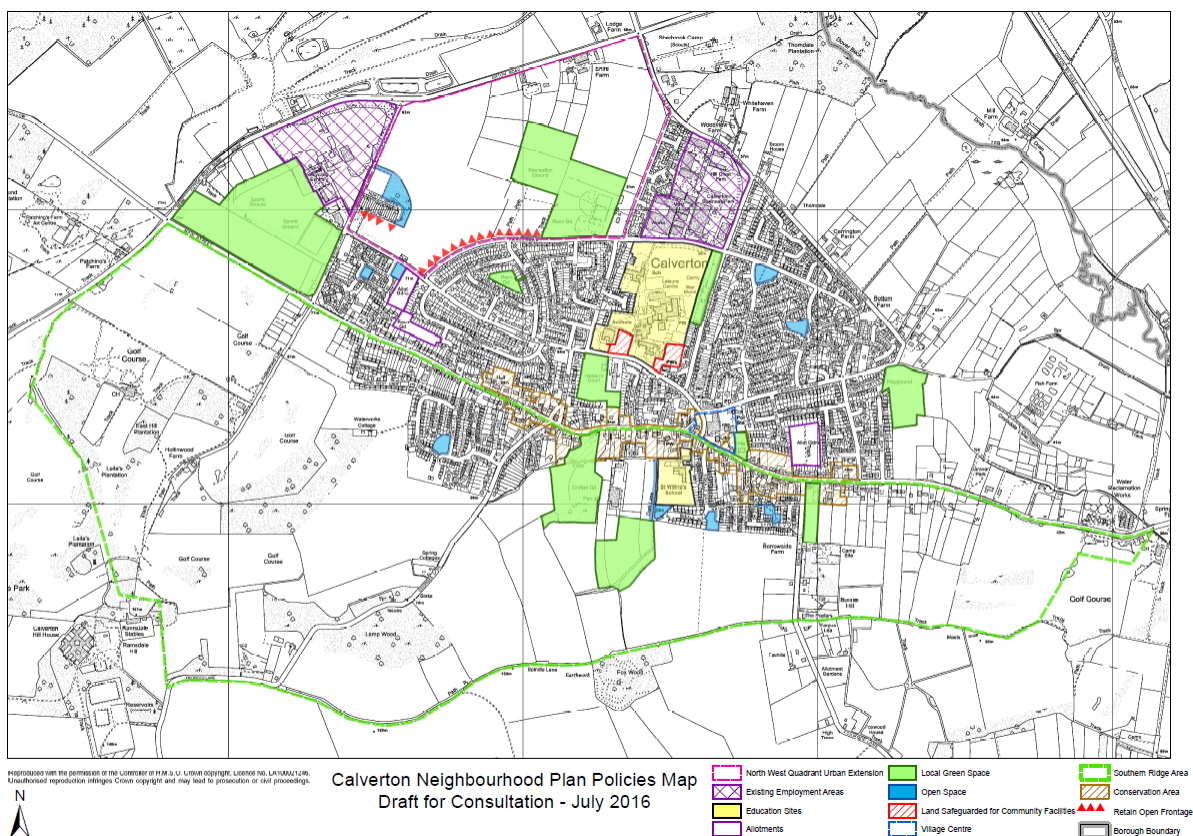
- H14 Dark Lane – 70 homes (carry forward from adopted Local Plan and now with planning permission and under construction);
- H15 Main Street – 75 homes;

- H16 Park Road – 390 homes.

In addition the LPD Part 2 makes provision for Safeguarded Land at Oxton Road/Flatts Lane, Calverton (30.7 ha).

Overall we find that the Draft Neighbourhood Plan is broadly consistent with the NPPF and the Gedling Local Plan.

However, we take exception to Policy NE4 Setting of Calverton, including the designation of the Southern Ridge Area on the Policies Map (see below), which we do not consider to be consistent with the NPPF and the Gedling Local Plan.



Policy NE4 Setting of Calverton: Basis of Objection

Identified on the Policies Map as the Southern Ridge Area, Policy NE4 is essentially a blanket protectionist policy to prevent development to the south of Calverton. The Southern Ridge Area includes all land to the south of Main Street including the existing built up area within the settlement boundary together with the adjoining countryside up to the ridge line comprising open fields, woodland areas and the Ramsdale Golf Club.

In setting out its rationale for this policy the Neighbourhood Plan states that development on the south side of the village is considered unsuitable on a range of criteria including landscape character, visual amenity including views within, through and out from this area, potential impact on the setting of heritage assets (including settings of the Scheduled Ancient Monuments at Fox Wood and Cockpit Hill and the sites of ancient hill forts), and village centre conservation area, significant lack of

support from the local community, perceived high environmental value of the land (including three SINCs), topography, location relative to transport infrastructure, the difficulty of access onto George's Lane and surface water flood risk.

It adds that although the flatter land to the south between the base of these hills and the southern edge of the village lacks topographical features, the Parish Council consider that this area is not suitable to be developed on the basis of the other constraints outlined above.

Langridge Homes Ltd recognises the strong views of the local community to protect and enhance the locally valued landscape to the south. However, local neighbourhood plan policies to protect such areas from development need to be supported by a robust, proportionate evidence base of all the elements. Langridge Homes considers that the Neighbourhood Plan does not contain this robust and proportionate evidence to support such a policy which extends over such a large area. Specifically it considers that there is no justification for including land between George's Lane and Main Street in the Southern Ridge Area, which in our opinion is of significantly lower environmental value than the area between George's Lane and extending eastwards to the Springwater Golf Club, and bounded by Spindle Lane which runs along the ridge line.

This area comprises the flatter land to the west of George's Lane and extending around to Main Street and Hollinwood Lane to the north and west and adjoining the Ramsgale Golf Course to the south and west and should not be subject to Policy NE4 Setting of Calverton. Specifically:

- The land is low-lying - the site levels vary between +75m and +80m AOD, which is well below Ramsdale Hill to the south which rises to a height of +155m AOD;
- This land does not include any heritage assets or impact on the setting of any heritage assets. Three Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAM) at Cockpit Hill, Hillfort Earthworks at Fox Wood and Roman Camps are all located at some distance from this lower lying land and is not visible to/from this land;
- It does not include any nature conservation designations;
- Views within, through and out of this flatter, low lying area are constrained by topography and existing development and woodlands. Views are not possible to or from the conservation area to the study area. The proposed development of the study area would have a negligible effect on the setting of the conservation area;
- There are no specific footpaths through this land, although there are a number of nearby paths including: FP21 which follows Hollinwood Lane towards Cockpit Hill SAM; FP22 which follows the eastern field boundary with George's Lane; and a well used bridleway which continues from the top of George's Lane towards the Hill Fort earthworks at Fox Wood SAM;
- A landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA) of this area was commissioned by Langridge Homes Ltd to promote this land for development. The LVIA took into account the Nottinghamshire Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) undertaken by Nottinghamshire County Council (June 2009). On landscape condition the LCA noted that the area falls within the transition zone between the Sherwood and Mid Notts Farmland LCA – and specifically

within the Mid Notts Farmland Zone PZ17 Calverton North Village Farmlands. The LCA describes this area as having an incoherent pattern of elements with a variety of land uses including arable production, recreational land uses and small scale industrial areas. There are many detracting features which include busy roads. Many internal field boundaries have been removed due to agricultural intensification. Overall this gives a visually significantly interrupted area. In this zone the LCA defines the Landscape Condition as poor. With regards to landscape sensitivity the components of the landscape are not especially characteristic of the Sherwood LCA and the area is indistinct. The time depth of many of the features is recent in that many features have been created in the last 50 years giving a very weak sense of place overall. The undulating landform is apparent and intermittent areas of the woodland and hedgerows give a moderate visibility of features within the PZ. The LCA concludes that this zone has a moderate sense of place and a low visibility leads to a very low landscape sensitivity.

It is not surprising therefore that this low lying area was identified as part of a strategic location for new development in the Gedling Aligned Core Strategy (refer plan extract below), although only the Main Street allocation has been included in the LPD Publication Draft for 75 homes.

This lower lying land is also accessible to public transport with bus stops located nearby along main Street, the land is within flood zone 1 (no risk from surface water flooding) and can be easily drained using SUDS features without causing any downstream impacts on local properties, and it can be easily accessed from Main Street and also from connections to existing residential roads.

APPENDIX B

Landscape Assessment of southern boundary

Main Street/Hollinwood Lane housing site allocation

Gedling Borough Council site ref: 6/544



Landscape Assessment of southern boundary

Introduction

The aim of this landscape assessment paper is to demonstrate why the proposed boundary represents a better long term defensible boundary with the Green Belt/Golf Course than the boundary proposed by Gedling BC in its Allocation Plan.

Brief Site Analysis

The site is located on Calverton's south west edge, on gently undulating topography at the base of steeply rolling hills to the south of the village. Levels rise from approx +74.0 OD along its eastern boundary to +81.0 OD at its SW corner

The site is enclosed by soft boundaries of existing mature hedges which contain hedgerow trees. The tall well-maintained hedges on the boundaries with Hollinwood Lane and Main Street help to screen the site when viewed in approach to Calverton on Main Street from the west. Two intermediate hedgerows split the site into smaller parcels. The boundary of the golf course comprises unmaintained hedgerow, a narrow woodland belt and post and rail fencing in part (refer images A & D, figures 1 & 2). All the boundaries represent wildlife corridors that connect with adjacent field boundaries and the adjacent area of woodland.

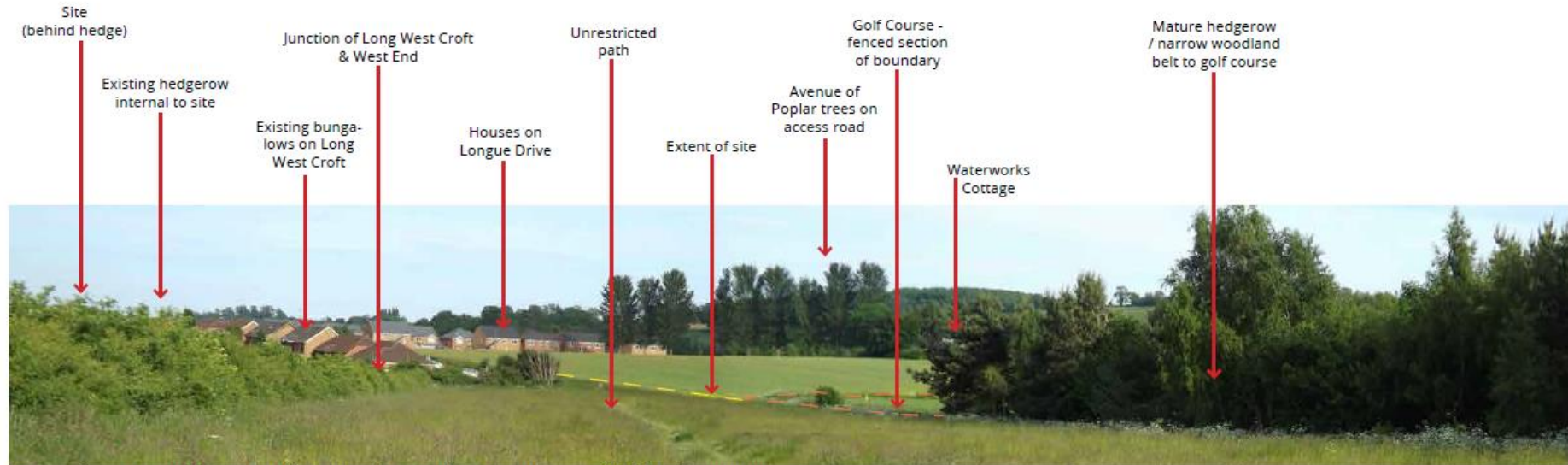
Designated footpath route FP21 climbs the hill from site, following Hollinwood Lane towards Cockpit Hill, schedule ancient monument. A 2m wide permissible footpath runs parallel to the golf course boundary within the site, connecting Hollinwood Lane with the Millennium Wood and Waterworks Cottage. Two mature hedgerows serve to frame medium-distant views of Calverton's urban edge (image A, figure 1). The strip of land between the two hedges is 40m wide and is designated as agricultural land. It contains hedgerow vegetation and is used for pasture. Arable crops are not viable due to its narrow width.

Higher up on Cockpit Hill, elevated views are afforded from footpath route PF22 as it turns the corner at Oakdene (image C, figure 2). The site is visible in the valley floor, partly screened by existing hedgerows. The developing woodland planting (Millennium Wood) is highly visible in the foreground.

GBC Local Planning Document Appendix H: Appraisal of Site Allocations for Housing and Employment, dated May 2016 recommends that development proposals of this site should: *'retain hedgerows and trees and incorporate green corridors throughout the site which link to the surrounding countryside to create an enhanced green infrastructure network and enhance biodiversity'*

Proposal

1. The proposal recognises that the hedges on Calverton's rural edge are viewed together, layered horizontally, and the combined effect of the hedges helps to visually soften the fringes of the village. The hedges are a key landscape element to the successful integration of new development with the surrounding rural context.
2. The existing strong hedgerow boundary to the golf course is proposed to be retained by the development and the proposal includes for its extension and bolstering to create a continuous boundary that helps to filter views of new development.
3. The existing field hedgerow will be replaced with a new hedge on the rear boundary of the new development. The combined effect of the two boundaries will increase their visual effectiveness in softening the urban form.
4. A landscape structure and a network of open spaces will be designed to create subdivision of the development, including small copses of trees to reflect surrounding field patterns.
5. The existing permissible footpath route that connects Hollinwood Lane with the Millennium Wood and Waterworks Cottage will be integrated into the proposed network of public routes and open spaces.
6. Open mesh fencing will define rear garden boundaries, rather than close-boarded wooden fencing, to maintain a green, open, rural edge on site boundaries.
7. A long term strategy for management and maintenance of the hedgerows/trees will be included.
8. The current development proposal is an efficient layout that clearly delineates land use.



A: Looking East from Hollinwood Lane between parallel hedgerows



B: Looking west towards Hollinwood Lane between parallel hedgerows