

# LANDSCAPE TECHNICAL NOTE

## Land to the north of Lower Quinton

Prepared on behalf of

Rosconn Strategic Land Limited

December 2020  
184A LSC TECH NOTE 031220

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. THE PROJECT

- 1.1.1. This Landscape Technical Note has been prepared for a site on the northern edge of Lower Quinton to support the site's potential allocation in the Stratford-on-Avon Site Allocation Plan (SAP).

### 1.2. THE SITE

- 1.2.1. The site (refer to **Figure 1**) is located on the northern edge of the village of Lower Quinton, approximately 8 kilometres south of Stratford-upon-Avon. It covers an area of approximately 11.85 hectares and comprises of both pasture and arable agricultural land sub-divided into fields by hedgerows.
- 1.2.2. The northern and eastern edges of the application site are defined by field hedgerow. The southern boundary is, for the main part, defined by the rear gardens of residential properties on Magdalen Close, Millfield Close, Aylstone Close and St Swithin's Drive and by the grounds of Quinton House. The western edge is defined by the alignment of an underground high-pressure gas line. A public footpath, which also forms part of two strategic recreational routes (Heart of England Way and Monarchs Way), cuts across the eastern end of the site.
- 1.2.3. To the north of the site there is open countryside and to the east there are playing fields associated with Lower Quinton Village Hall. Further north, beyond Campden Road, a new garden village of around 3,500 homes and associated uses has started construction at the former Long Marston Airfield. To the south is the existing settlement of Lower Quinton, which is generally characterised by estate housing from various periods of the 20th century. The historic core of the village lies at the eastern end of the settlement, where the spire of St Swithin Church is a local landmark.
- 1.2.4. Quinton House; a large stone building set within wooded grounds, and currently in use as a nursing home, sits on the south western edge of the site while Quinton Primary School is located amongst the residential properties to the south east. Beyond the village to the south is Meon Hill, a prominent topographical landmark that also marks the northern edge of The Cotswolds AONB. To the west is further pasture surrounding Vicarage Farm and the B4632 Campden Road (running north-south).

### 1.3. THE PROPOSALS

- 1.3.1. Potential development on the site is anticipated to comprise of around 100 dwellings. The scheme will include substantial community benefits in the form of expansion land for the adjoining primary school, new sports pitches and community woodland. A masterplan for the site is shown at **Figure 2**.
- 1.3.2. Existing hedgerows and associated trees will be retained and reinforced wherever possible.. Further strategic landscaping will be provided along the northern fringes of the site and within the proposed public open spaces. At the eastern end of the site, a landscape buffer will be provided alongside an existing public right of way, incorporating an additional sports pitch and a safeguarded expansion area for the neighbouring school.
- 1.3.3. Vehicular access into the site will be at the western end via an earlier phase of development. There will be no vehicular access from the adjacent residential development. The existing public right of way will provide direct pedestrian links to facilities within the village centre.

## 2. LANDSCAPE RESOURCE

- 2.1.1. The site is comprised of two ridge and furrow fields on the northern edge of the village. The majority of field boundaries are defined by hedgerows, some of which are interspersed with trees.
- 2.1.2. The eastern field has streams or ditches along its boundaries, and there is a small pond to the north-eastern corner. The northern boundary comprises a well-trimmed hawthorn hedge located on the northern ditch bank, while on the eastern boundary, a mixed species hedge runs along the eastern bank of the ditch. Along the southern boundary there are a number of attractive trees along the northern boundary of the school playing field.
- 2.1.3. The western boundary of the site is currently undefined by any existing landscape features, although it forms the eastern end of a larger field that is partially enclosed by a hedgerow alongside Campden Road. This field also contains a number of distinctive mature trees, including a veteran oak, giving a parkland feel.
- 2.1.4. A hedge divides the two fields, which is well trimmed and is predominantly hawthorn. It includes a couple of willow pollards.
- 2.1.5. A tree survey for the site, undertaken in January 2018, identified the majority of existing vegetation on the site as being of low quality.
- 2.1.6. An aerial photograph of the site and immediate surrounds (with significant vegetation highlighted) is shown in **Figure 3**.

## 3. LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

### 3.1. NATIONAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER CONTEXT

- 3.1.1. At the national level, the site and study area are located at the most eastern end of Natural England's National Character Area (NCA) 106 'Severn and Avon Vales' where it "flows more subtly" into the adjacent 'Dunsmore and Feldon' NCA (96) to the east. It is also located close to the 'Cotswolds' NCA (107) to the south, part of which is also designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- 3.1.2. The most current profile for NCA 106 was updated and published in July 2012. It contains four supporting Statements of Environment Opportunity (SEO's) which set out key features that should be protected, managed and enhanced. Of particular relevance to the proposed development on the site is SEO3 which states;

*"SEO3: Reinforce the existing landscape structure as part of any identified growth of urban areas, hard infrastructure and other settlements ensuring quality green infrastructure is incorporated enhancing health, access, recreation, landscape, biodiversity and geodiversity."*

- 3.1.3. This may include ensuring new development provides biodiversity enhancements, the provision of access to quality greenspace through well designed green infrastructure and the use of sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS). These types of features have been incorporated within the masterplan proposal for the site.

### 3.2. COUNTY LANDSCAPE CHARACTER CONTEXT

- 3.2.1. At county level, the Warwickshire Landscape Guidelines (WLG) provides the most current county level landscape character assessment information for the site and surrounding area. The site is located within the 'Avon Valley' Regional Character Area. The general strategy for the RCA is to;

*"Enhance regional character by reinforcing the identity and unity of the historic settlement pattern."*

- 3.2.2. General guidelines for the Avon Valley have an emphasis on the conservation and enhancement of the local vernacular character of villages. It suggests that new development should reflect the existing settlement character and include the use of local building materials, while sufficient open space should be incorporated within the design to break up hard edges and allow the landscaped settlement edge to link into the surrounding farmland.
- 3.2.3. Within the 'Avon Valley' RCA, the site is located within the more detailed 'Vale Farmlands' Landscape Character Type (LCT). It emphasises the importance of hedgerow boundaries within the landscape, particularly as tree cover is generally sparse, and suggests that it could be greatly enhanced in many places. It also suggests that tree cover could be strengthened in most areas – particularly around settlements and on other non-agricultural land. New woodland planting should complement and strengthen the small-scale geometric pattern of hedged fields, with field corner spinneys or larger coverts being particularly appropriate. Larger woodlands, up to field size, should be broadleaved in character and shaped to match the existing field pattern. However, they should not block off views through the landscape.
- 3.2.4. The guidelines for the RCA and LCA have helped to shape the masterplan proposals for the site. Substantial areas of open space and tree planting have been provided along the northern edge of the site to help integrate the proposed development into the surrounding landscape, but retain key views of the church spire from the nearby public footpath route.

### 3.3. DISTRICT LANDSCAPE CHARACTER CONTEXT

- 3.3.1. The most relevant district landscape character context is set out within the Stratford-on-Avon District Landscape Sensitivity Study for Local Service Villages (June 2012). It identifies where development may be acceptable around settlements, with a focus on land directly adjacent to, and within, villages.
- 3.3.2. For Lower Quinton the site forms part of a larger Land Cover Parcel (LCP) - Q03. This is located to the north of the village and has been appraised as being of "High to Medium" sensitivity to housing development. The majority of land surrounding the village has also been assessed as being "High to Medium" except a tract of land to the south west of the village between Lower Quinton and Upper Quinton which has been assessed as being of "Medium" sensitivity to housing development. No land was assessed as being "Medium/Low" or "Low". This is shown on **Figure 4**.
- 3.3.3. Within the description and assessment of Q03, it describes the existing settlement edge as a *"somewhat linear and harsh edge including a 3-storey block of flats"* and identifies the main sensitivities of the zone as;
- It's function as a gap between the old and new parts of the settlement opposite The Pound;
  - It's role as part of the wider countryside hinterland to the settlement separating it from Long Marston;
  - The presence of the long-distance footpath/s; and
  - The beneficial uses of the playing fields and allotments.
- 3.3.4. The site is located immediately adjacent to the northern edge of the existing settlement and would constitute modest encroachment on the wider countryside hinterland. Any expansion to the west, towards Long Marston, would be limited by constraints associated with the high-pressure gas line that runs through the adjacent countryside. A long-distance footpath crosses the eastern end of the site, but it does not include playing fields or allotments (although some new provision of playing fields is proposed within the development proposals) and does not impinge on the gap between the old and new parts of the settlement.

3.3.5. The description of Q03 also goes on to state that;

*“Housing development would be unacceptable to the east around the older part of the settlement and is problematic to the north and west as it would clearly extend the settlement form in this relatively open landscape. Access may also be an issue in the field to the north of the settlement between Quinton House and the playing fields which is the only area which might have potential in the longer term if advanced planting was implemented.”*

3.3.6. Considering that;

- the majority of the site is comprised of the ‘field to the north’ referenced within Q03;
- the masterplan proposes a deliverable access through the adjacent scheme to the south west;
- a robust quantum of tree planting is proposed around the northern edges of the site (which on maturity will also help to soften the existing harsh and linear settlement edge); and
- the site is not located to the east around the older part of the settlement,

then it is reasonable to consider that the site would represent the least sensitive area within Q03 to proposed housing development, reducing its landscape sensitivity to Medium.

#### Translation to the SHLAA

3.3.7. The site is included within the recent SHLAA (2020) as QUIN.02. It was scored red for Landscape Sensitivity based on the overall assessment of High-Medium sensitivity for Q03. However, it does not consider the individual nuances of the site set out within the accompanying text for Q03, indicating that there is scope for potential development on the site if appropriate access and advanced planting can be secured. This should have been considered within the SHLAA and reflected in the scoring accordingly.

3.3.8. The accompanying text for Q03 also identified other sites that would be “unacceptable” for housing development because of their proximity to the older parts of the settlement to the east. However, this was not given any additional weighting within the scoring. One of these sites (identified as QUIN.03) has been given a score of amber for overall deliverability within the SHLAA, as it is considered to be:

*“well-related to physical form of the village and development on southern part could be mitigated effectively including through landscaping along northern boundary.”*

3.3.9. However, this is contradictory to the findings of the Landscape Sensitivity Study. Clearly consistency is required in how the Sensitivity Study is used within the SHLAA to ensure that a robust assessment of sites and their development potential is made.

## 4. LANDSCAPE VALUE

4.1.1. The site is not covered by any specific designations that imply a higher landscape value. However, the relative value of the site within its wider context has been considered using guidance contained within the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3) published in 2013 - specifically the range of factors set out in Box 5.1 that can help in the identification of valued landscapes.

4.1.2. There is little existing vegetation within the site, which mainly comprises of well-trimmed hedgerows associated with the boundary ditches. Little of the vegetation surveyed was classified above low quality, although there were some moderate quality trees along the southern boundary and a high-quality veteran oak tree was identified in the field to the

west. Although the site is also not covered by any designations that imply an elevated landscape quality (condition), the northern edge of The Cotswolds AONB is located approximately 1km to the south – marked by the rising ground around Meon Hill. However, the site is separated from the AONB by the existing settlement form and views from the higher ground are often seen in the context of the surrounding built form. Although the site has limited scenic quality due to the strong influence of the adjacent settlement edge, there are immediate views of the site, and across to the church spire in the east of the village, from the public footpath that crosses the eastern end of the site and runs parallel to the northern boundary, while Meon Hill is a distinctive landmark in views south across the site.

- 4.1.3. The open fields and hedgerows are not considered to be particularly rare within the wider landscape context, nor is it considered to be strongly representative of the key positive landscape attributes identified locally, mainly due to its proximity to the existing settlement edge.
- 4.1.4. There is ridge and furrow present across most of the site, which is a common feature within the locality, but it is not covered by any specific conservation designations and there are no other known features of wildlife, earth science or archaeological or historical and cultural interest within the site that would further elevate its value. A public footpath cuts across the eastern end of the site and forms part of two strategic footpath routes - Monarchs Way and Heart of England Way. This implies an elevated recreational value within this part of the site, albeit in an established edge of settlement location.
- 4.1.5. The site is not considered to be wild nor tranquil but is closely related to the existing settlement edge. There is a perception of the nearby Cotswolds due to the prominence of Meon Hill, although this applies to most of the surrounding area. There is little intervisibility with the proposed garden village at Long Marston Airfield and there are no known associations specific to the site, in terms of particular people or events in history or in any recorded reference to it in literature, that contribute to perceptions of natural beauty in the area.
- 4.1.6. Overall the site is therefore not considered to be a valued landscape, although it does contain features, including ridge and furrow and part of two strategic footpath routes, that have an intrinsic local value.

## 5. VISUAL AMENITY

- 5.1.1. Views of the site are mainly from the north, and particularly from the public footpath route that crosses the eastern end of the site and runs parallel to the northern boundary through the adjacent countryside. There are also glimpsed views from Campden Road to the north west and from Back Lane on the approach to the village from the north east. In the majority of these views the site is seen in the context of the existing settlement edge, in particular the neighbouring housing edge and the extension to Quinton House. From some locations there are also occasional glimpses of the church spire at the eastern end of the settlement through gaps in the surrounding vegetation. Although the vale landscape within this area is relatively flat, longer distance views are effectively filtered by the intervening hedgerow vegetation. Meon Hill is a prominent landmark within the wider landscape, rising up above the village to the south,
- 5.1.2. To the south the site is effectively screened from view by the surrounding settlement, although there are some views from the rising ground around Meon Hill, which also lies on the edge of The Cotswolds AONB.
- 5.1.3. The proposed development would extend the perceived settlement edge further to the north but it would be viewed in the context of the existing housing edge and over time the new tree and woodland planting around the northern fringes of the site will help to assimilate both the proposed and the existing housing development into the landscape. Views from the nearby strategic footpath route would be immediate where it runs through the site but would be experienced in the context of the existing settlement edge. A landscape buffer, comprising of open space, strategic tree planting and a proposed extension to the school grounds, has also been incorporated within the

proposed masterplan to help soften the impact of the development in views from the public footpath.

- 5.1.4. A selection of key views is set out in **Figure 5**.

## 6. MITIGATION

- 6.1.1. The site is located immediately adjacent to the existing settlement edge and would constitute expansion of the settlement into open countryside to the north. The treatment of the development edges, the retention of existing trees and hedgerows and the planting of new trees and woodland along the site boundaries will be important in helping to assimilate the proposed development into the existing landscape. This includes the setting of the strategic footpath corridor, which crosses the eastern end of the site. The scale and layout of buildings and choice of building materials are also an important consideration to ensure that the new buildings blend appropriately into their surroundings, and the masterplan suggests that low density housing (including bungalows) will be provided within the western parcels to help minimise the visual impact on the surrounding landscape and the adjacent nursing home.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1.1. Although the site contains ridge and furrow, and a public footpath crosses its eastern end (and also forms part of two strategic recreational routes), it does not contain any other landscape features of particular landscape interest or value. Any existing trees of interest are located off-site or along the boundaries. The existing ditch and field boundaries crossing the western end of the site have been incorporated within the layout.
- 7.1.2. The flat, vale landscape allows some views of the site from the surrounding roads and footpaths to the north. However, within these views the site is often seen in the context of, and is closely related to, the existing settlement edge - and in particular the adjacent housing edge and extension to Quinton House. This is emphasised within the Stratford-on-Avon District Landscape Sensitivity Study for Local Service Villages (June 2012), where despite being included within an area assessed as being of High-Medium sensitivity to housing development overall (Q03) the site itself has been highlighted (within Q03) as being "*the only area which might have potential in the longer term if advanced planting was implemented.*" However, this wasn't reflected in the recent SHLAA assessment.
- 7.1.3. In views from the higher ground around Meon Hill (and on the edge of the Cotswolds AONB) the site is generally screened from view by, and seen in the context of, the existing settlement form.
- 7.1.4. It is therefore considered that the type and scale of housing development proposed on the site would be suitable within its landscape and visual context. The mitigation features included within the proposed masterplan, in particular the provision of woodland planting around the northern fringes of the site, would ensure that the new development is appropriately integrated into its surrounding landscape context alongside the existing settlement edge.





**LEGEND**

- Site Boundary
- Phase 1 Boundary

Rev  
**FIGURE 1** Drg No  
 Rosconn Strategic Land Client  
 Land North of Lower Quinton Project  
 SITE LOCATION Title  
 1:25,000 @ A3 Scale



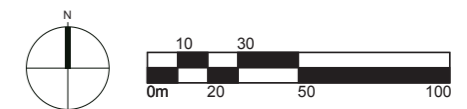


LEGEND

- Site boundary
- Residential block
- Residential block - low density inc bungalows
- School extension
- Open space/parkland
- Natural open space
- Playing fields
- Potential nursing home amenity space
- SuDS
- Retained waterbody
- Retained trees
- Retained hedgerow
- Woodland
- Trees
- Children's play area (LEAP)
- Primary street
- Secondary street
- Lane/mews/shared private drive
- Strategic public footpath
- Pedestrian link
- View corridor

LEGEND

- 1** Proposed Site access.
- 2** Extended landscape edge with parkland trees to tie into existing landscape character to the west.
- 3** Woodland blocks help soften views of the housing edge from the strategic footpath and frame views towards the church spire.
- 4** Low density housing including bungalows to the west to minimise the visual impact on the surrounding landscape and Nursing Home to the south.
- 5** Expansion space for school adjacent to existing site.
- 6** Multi-functional open space incorporating children's play, parkland, natural open space and SuDS.
- 7** Playing fields adjacent to existing facilities, capable of accommodating an adult football pitch.
- 8** Perimeter blocks arranged with shorter development runs along the outer edges where possible, to minimise the visual impact on the surrounding landscape.
- 9** Dwellings back onto existing development to the south, securing exposed rear gardens and completing the perimeter blocks.
- 10** Focal green based on historic village centre.







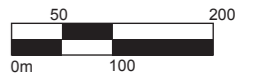
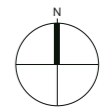
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**FIGURE 2** Drg No  
 Rosconn Strategic Land Client  
 Land North of Lower Quinton Project  
 ILLUSTRATIVE MASTERPLAN Title  
 1:2,500 @ A3 Scale





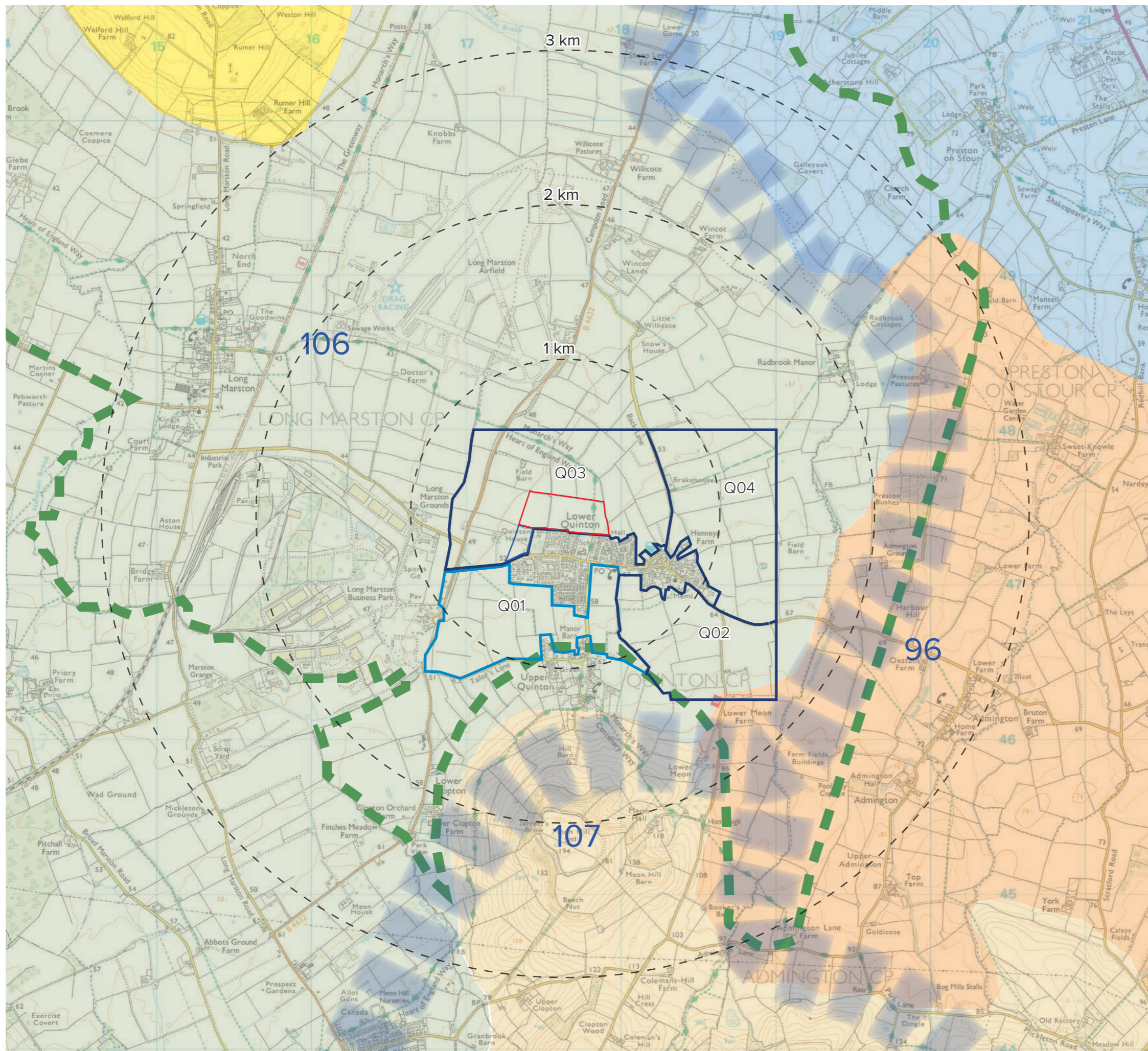
LEGEND

-  Site Boundary
-  Phase 1 Boundary
-  Vegetation
-  Water Course





Rev  
**FIGURE 3** Drg No  
Rosconn Strategic Land Client  
Land North of Lower Quinton Project  
LANDSCAPE FEATURES Title  
1:7,500 @ A3 Scale









**LEGEND**

-  Site Boundary
-  Committed Phase I Scheme


**National Character Areas**

-  NCA Boundary
- 96 - Dunsmore and Feldon
- 106 - Severn and Avon Vales
- 107 - Cotswolds

**Warwickshire Landscape Guidelines (1993)**

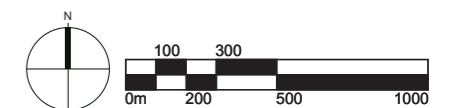
-  Avon Valley RCA - Vale Farmlands (LCT)
-  Cotswolds RCA - The Wold (LCT)
-  Feldon RCA - Vale Farmlands (LCT)
-  Feldon RCA - Feldon Parklands (LCT)

**Stratford on Avon District Design Guide (2001) and Character Map**

-  Avon & Stour Valleys Character Area - Avon Vale Sub Area

**Stratford on Avon District Landscape Sensitivity Study for Local Service Villages (June 2012)**

-  LCP/ Zone



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 FIGURE 4 Drg No  
 Rosconn Strategic Land Client  
 Land North of Lower Quinton Project  
 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER Title  
 1:25,000 @ A3 Scale



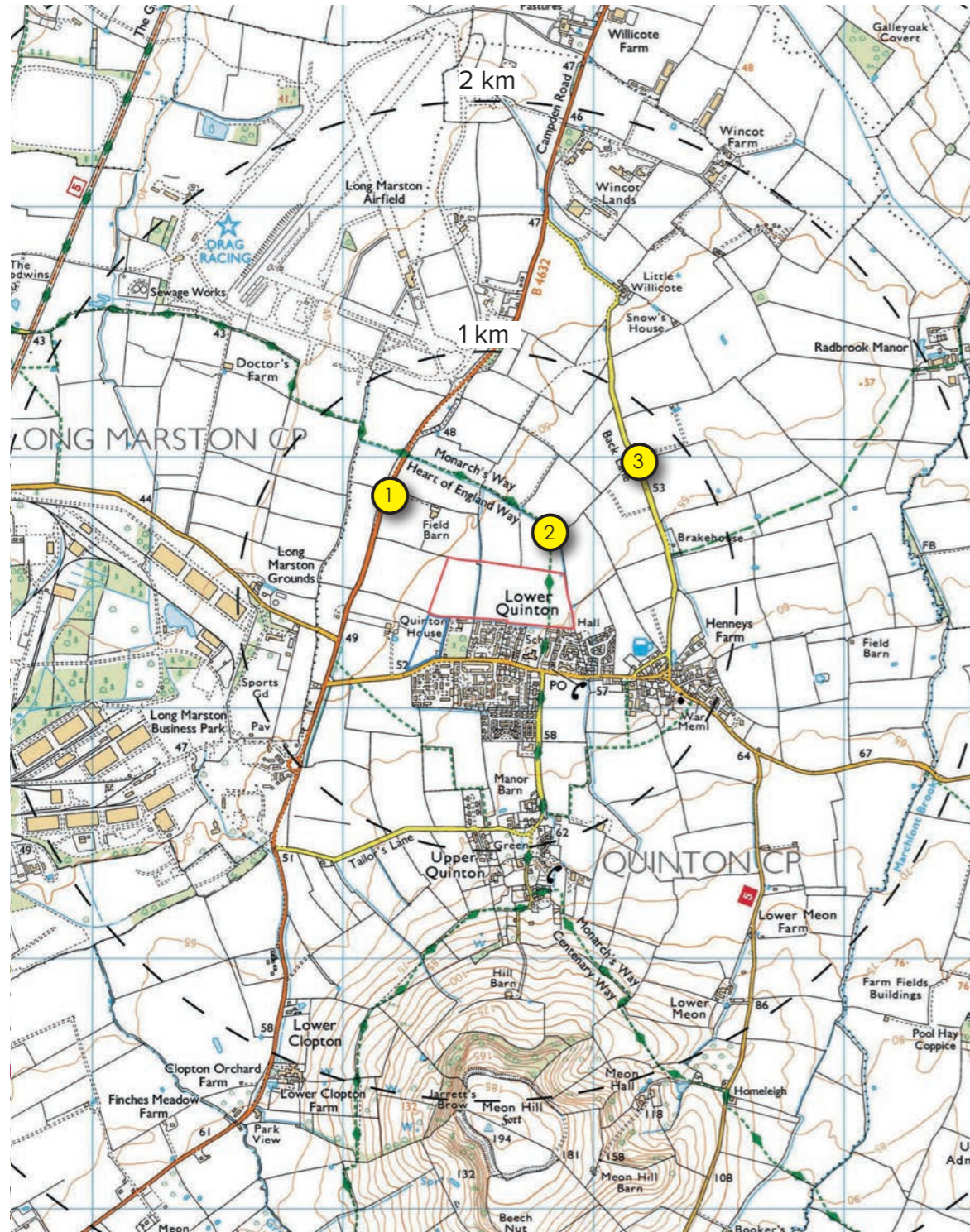


PHOTO LOCATION PLAN 1:25,000



PHOTO 1: View from the entrance to Field Barn on Campden Road (B4632), looking south west towards the site



PHOTO 2: View from Monarchs Way/Heart of England Way looking south towards Lower Quinton and the site



PHOTO 3: View from Back Lane looking south towards Lower Quinton and the site

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FIGURE 5A	Drg No
Rosconn Strategic Land	Client
Land North of Lower Quinton	Project
SELECTED VIEWS (Page 1 of 2)	Title
As Shown	Scale



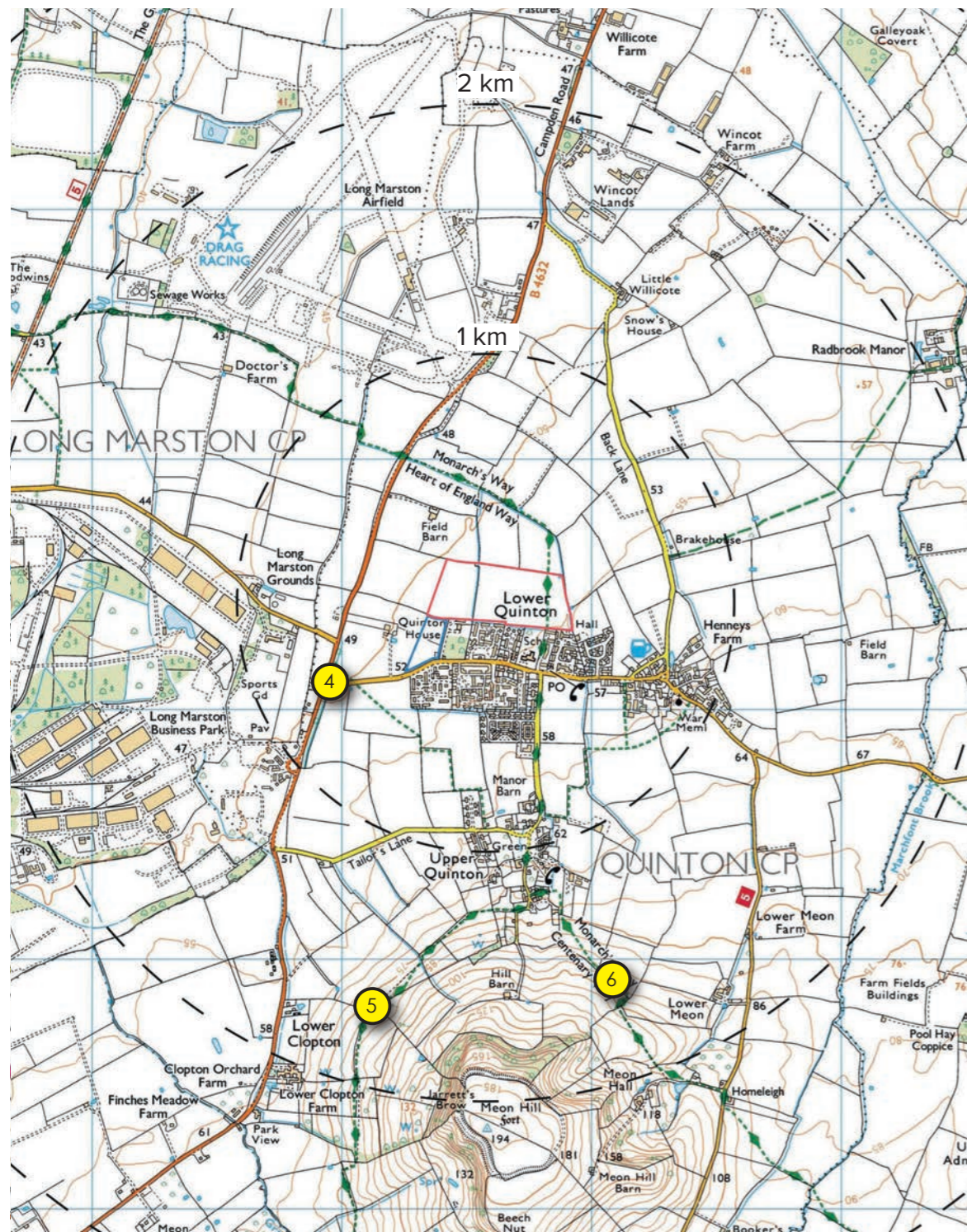


PHOTO LOCATION PLAN 1:25,000



PHOTO 4: View from the junction of Main Road off Campden Road (B4632), looking east towards Lower Quinton



PHOTO 5: View from Heart of England Way on the edge of Meon Hill looking north towards Long Marston and Lower Quinton



PHOTO 6: View from Monarchs Way/Heart of England Way on the edge of Meon Hill looking north towards Lower Quinton