

# Lechlade Site Assessments

Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability  
Assessment (2021)







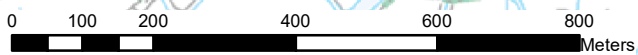
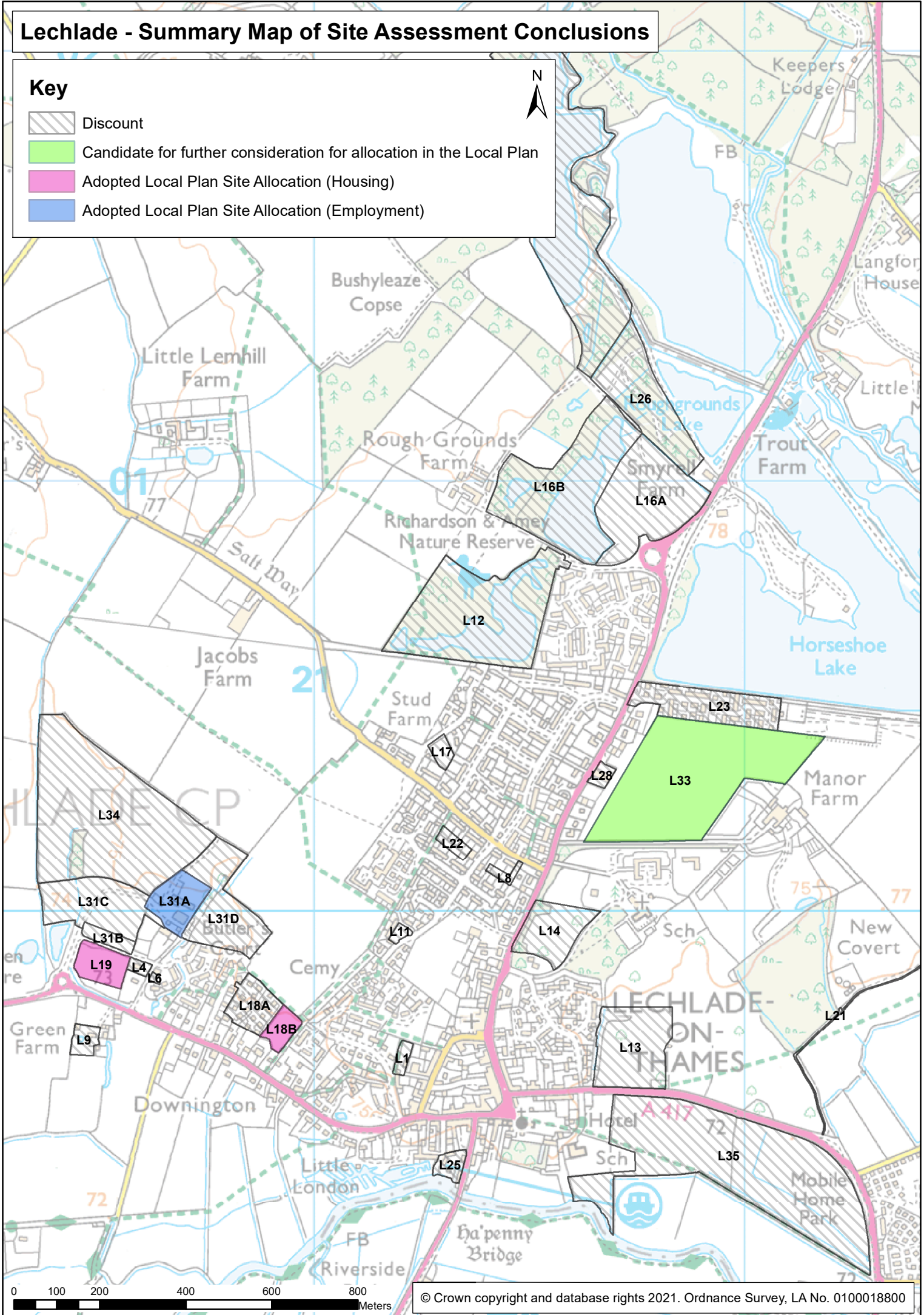
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# Lechlade - Summary Map of Site Assessment Conclusions

## Key

-  Discount
-  Candidate for further consideration for allocation in the Local Plan
-  Adopted Local Plan Site Allocation (Housing)
-  Adopted Local Plan Site Allocation (Employment)



## Site Assessments: Part I

Ref.	Address	Proposal	Assessment	Conclusion
L1	Telephone Exchange	Housing	Development of 5 or more dwellings would also be unsuitable in this location. Former Urban Capacity Study site with no expression of developer interest.	Discount
L2	Land between Greenwood and roundabout	Housing	Duplicate of L19	Discount
L3	Butlers Court & Green Farm	Housing	Duplicate of L18	Discount
L4	Butlers Court adjacent site below	Housing	Development complete	Discount
L5	Butlers Court Barn, Fairford Road	Housing	Duplicate of L6	Discount
L6	Butlers Court Barn, Off Fairford Road (REF revised to 07/03118)	Housing	Development complete	Discount
L7	Coal Depot	Housing	Duplicate of L24	Discount
L8	Land east of Gassons Road	Housing	Below 5 dwelling threshold - 5 or more dwellings in this location would be inappropriate. The site also comprises 7 gardens in multiple ownership with no expression of interest in developing the site.	Discount
L9	Green Farm Barn, Fairford Road	Housing	Not within or adjacent to Lechlade's Development Boundary. The site is also in the setting of a Listed Building.	Discount
L10	Inset Map 7	Housing	Duplicate of L19	Discount
L11	Land adjacent to Gassons Road	Housing	Below 5 dwelling threshold	Discount
L12	Land west of Swansfield Road and south of Rough Grounds Farm	Housing	Unsuitable - Whole site is a Key Wildlife Site and is mainly formed of a lake.	Discount

Ref.	Address	Proposal	Assessment	Conclusion
L13	Land west of Lechlade Cricket Club	Up to 45 homes of a mix of types, sizes and tenures	Unsuitable - the site comprises historic unimproved parkland pasture, which forms part of the setting of Lechlade Manor, a Grade II Listed Building. Development would be detrimental to the setting of the Conservation Area and the setting of the town. Access would require removal of a 2M high dry stone wall, which would also harm the Conservation Area. The site has important biodiversity interest with wet pasture characteristics and is adjacent to a pond and scrub. There are also trees protected by a Tree Preservation Order on southern and western boundaries. Access off St John Street would also lead to removal of tree belt. The site has ridge and furrow characteristics. A planning application for 45 dwellings was refused (Ref: 13/04265/OUT). Refusal reasons included the significant harmful impact on the Conservation Area and the setting of Lechlade Manor. The appeal was subsequently withdrawn.	Discount
L14	Land at Lechlade Manor, adjacent to Oak Street	Housing	Unsuitable - The site should be protected for its historic parkland characteristics and its importance to Lechlade's historic landscape setting. Site also forms part of the Conservation Area and the setting of a Listed Building.	Discount
L15	Land at Station Road	Housing	Duplicate of L28	Discount
L16A	Land north of Lechlade	90 dwellings	Unsuitable - The site is a field used for pastoral farming. It has flat topography and is neighboured by residential uses to the south, a trout fishery to the north and the Edward Richardson and Phyllis Amey Nature Reserve to the west. The site has high ground water flood risk. It is also isolated from the town's services and facilities and its development for residential use would have a negative impact on the surrounding landscape and would not be in keeping with the existing settlement pattern. The need to leave a substantial buffer between any housing and the adjoining nature reserve and the need to retain some areas of grassland, scrub, trees and hedgerows would considerably reduce the number of dwellings or employment uses that could be accommodated. This would also push development to the front of the site, which would lead to an increased landscape impact and a greater feeling of isolation. The site is not suitable for residential uses. The Local Plan site allocations viability assessments (2015) found employment uses on this site to be unviable, although part of the site may be suitable for employment uses if this situation were to change.	Discount
L16B	Land between Rough Grounds Farm and Smyrell Farm	Housing	Unsuitable - Most of the site is a lake with biodiversity value, which should be retained. The remaining area is too remote from the town and pushes the linear strip of new development too far northwards.	Discount
L17	Land north of Hambridge Lane	Housing	Unsuitable - site is part of a Scheduled Ancient Monument, which should not be developed.	Discount

Ref.	Address	Proposal	Assessment	Conclusion
L18A	Land off Moorgate, Downington	Housing	Development complete	Discount
L18B	Land west of Orchard Close, Downington	9 dwellings	Detailed site assessment provided in Part 2	See Part 2
L19, L31A, L31B, L31C, L31D, L34	Land south of Butler's Court	25 dwellings on L19; 120 on L31A-D; 180 homes on L34	L19, L31A, L31B, L31C, L31D and L34 have been assessed together to consider whether any strategic benefits could be gained by allocating one or more of the sites or whether any parts of the sites, which might otherwise be unsuitable for housing or commercial development, could deliver other elements of a scheme. Detailed site assessment provided in Part 2.	See Part 2
L20	Lechlade Wharf	Housing	Duplicate of L25	Discount
L21	Meadow Barn, Paradise Farm	Housing	Development complete	Discount
L22	Land north of Gassons Road	Housing	Unachievable, unsuitable and likely to be unavailable - former Urban Capacity Study site comprising 14 back gardens in multiple ownership. The site is surrounded by housing and access cannot be achieved. There has also been no expression of interest in developing the site.	Discount
L23	Old Station Site	Housing	Development complete	Discount
L24	Old Station Site.2)	Housing	Duplicate of L23	Discount
L25	Riverside Area LEC I	Housing	Development complete	Discount
L26	Land adjacent Bushyleaze Lake and Smyrell Farm	Housing	Not within or adjacent to Lechlade's Development Boundary	Discount
L27	Warrens Cross Barn	Housing	Development complete	Discount
L28	Land at Station Road	Housing	Development complete as petrol filling station	Discount
L29	Land at Bushyleaze Trout Fisheries	Housing and / or employment	Not within or adjacent to Lechlade's Development Boundary	Discount

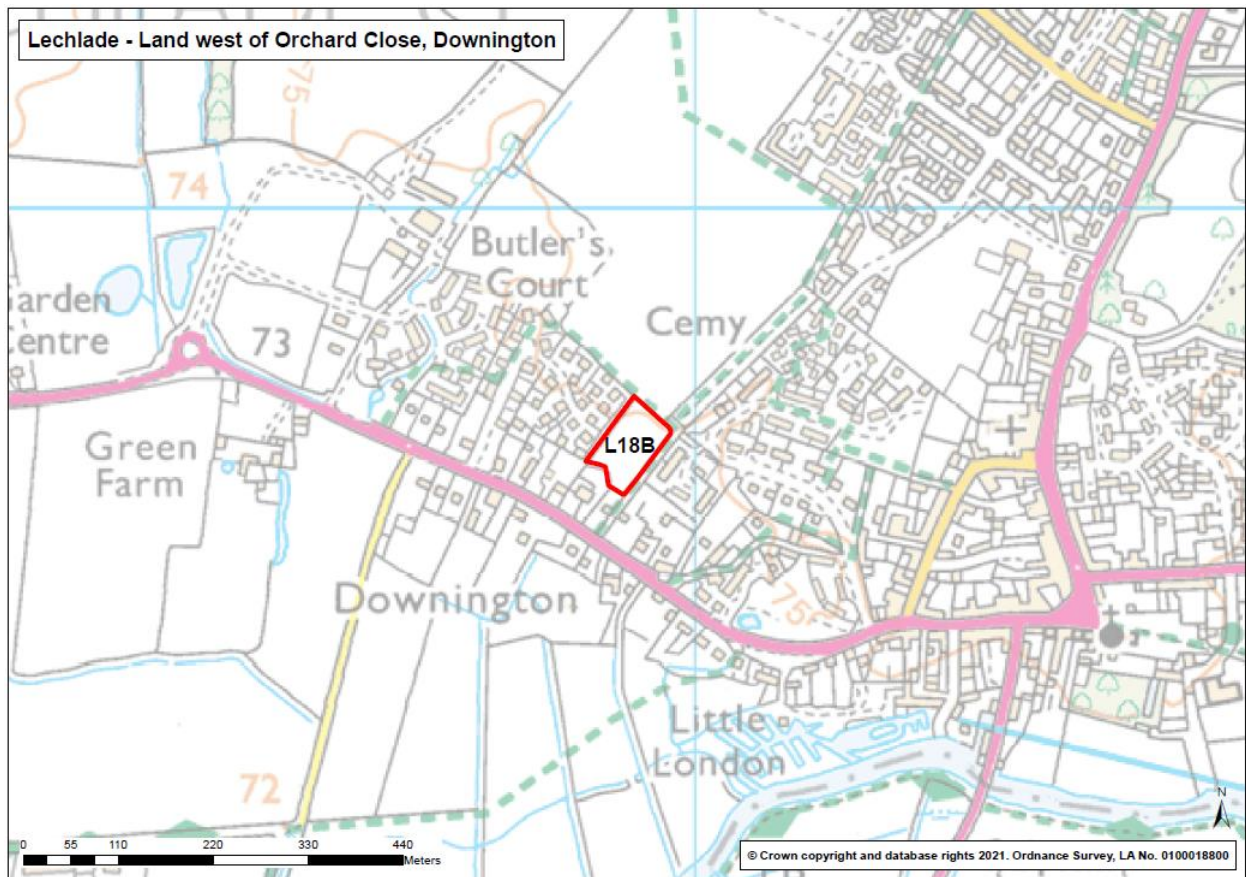
Ref.	Address	Proposal	Assessment	Conclusion
L30		Options for mixed uses, including housing, care home, retail, hotel and / or car park to serve Lechlade	Not within or adjacent to Lechlade's Development Boundary. The development of this site would be a significant eastwards extension of the town, which does not follow the pattern of development. In addition, a large part of the east of the site has high flood risk. The site is also very sensitive in terms of its contribution to the setting of the Conservation Area and historic / Listed Buildings – the south-western corner actually forms part of the Conservation Area. The eastern part of the site is within the setting of a Scheduled Monument. The site is at the eastern gateway into Lechlade and is visible from the adjacent footpath and the Thames Path. There are also very open views from main road and across site to village, which need to be retained as they are important to the setting of the Conservation Area and settlement. Other constraints include: Water Treatment Facilities 800m buffer; possible ridge and furrow; and unimproved grassland (Priority Habitat – coastal and floodplane grazing marsh).	Discount
L31A	Butler's Court Farm Building	See L19	See L19	See L19
L31B	Strip of land adjoining the northern site of the Wern	See L31A	See L19	See L19
L31C	Land to the west of Butler's Court Farm Buildings	See L31A	See L19	See L19
L31D	Land to the north and east of Butler's Court Farm Buildings	See L31A	See L19	See L19
L32	Lechlade Garden Centre	Housing	Not within or adjacent to Lechlade's Development Boundary. The site's isolation from the rest of the town would be an unacceptable westward expansion and would erode the gap between Lechlade and Fairford. The site is also in active use as a garden centre and its redevelopment for residential use would lose local employment opportunities and the garden centre facility. The site's development would also set a precedent for Lechlade's westerly expansion.	Discount
L33	Land south of Ferrers Park	190 homes	Detailed site assessment provided in Part 2	See Part 2
L34	Land north west of Butlers Court	See L19	See L19	See L19

Ref.	Address	Proposal	Assessment	Conclusion
L35	Land south of A417, east of Lechlade	Housing	<p>Unsuitable – the site is not within or adjacent to Lechlade’s development boundary. Furthermore, the majority of the site is within Flood Zone 3b. Even more land is in Flood Zone 3a and further land still in Flood Zone 2. Only a relatively small area in the north-west corner of the site is in Flood Zone 1. The entire site is modelled to have high ground water flood risk (&gt;75% risk).</p> <p>Any development on this site would be a significant eastwards extension of Lechlade, which would not be in keeping with the settlement pattern. The site experiences many of the same issues as L13 - it forms part of the rural setting of Lechlade Conservation Area and several listed buildings, as well as the rural approach to the town. The south-western part of the site is within the Lechlade Conservation Area. A large proportion of the site is Priority Habitat (coastal and floodplain grazing marsh). The north-western part of the site also has ridge and furrow characteristics.</p> <p>A planning application for 45 dwellings was refused on land to the north (ref: 13/04265/OUT). Refusal reasons included the significant harmful impact on the Conservation Area and the setting of Lechlade Manor. The appeal was subsequently withdrawn. This site would likely experience the same issues. An application was also returned for 20 dwellings and various other community uses on the western part of this site (ref: 14/01752/OUT).</p>	??



## Site Assessments: Part 2

### Land west of Orchard Close, Downington (ref: L18B)



**Proposal:** Housing

**Assessment date:** April 2021

**Site area:** 0.54ha

**Land ownership:** Single ownership

#### Site description

The site is located on flat ground to the west of Lechlade, north of the A417. It is currently used as a horse paddock. The site is surrounded by housing to the south, east and west. There is a cemetery and pastoral farmland to the north. A public bridleway runs along the eastern boundary, which links the A417 to the cemetery.

#### Planning history

*This is a summary of the key planning applications and is not a comprehensive list*

The site is allocated for residential development in the adopted Local Plan. It is also located inside the Lechlade development boundary, as defined by the Local Plan policies map. The principle of the site's development is supported by the Lechlade Neighbourhood Plan (adopted July 2016). There has been no further recent relevant planning history.

#### Adjoining land - Land off Moorgate

13/02642/OUT - Outline application for the erection of 19 houses with all matters reserved except access and layout (resubmission). Permitted

14/05501/REM - Details of the External Appearance, Scale and Landscaping for the erection of 19 dwellings (pursuant to Outline permission granted under ref. 13/02642/OUT). Permitted

## Landscape

*These comments are made on the basis of a survey conducted by a qualified Landscape Officer. A full landscape and visual impact assessment would be required of any development proposal (desktop and site assessments) undertaken by an appropriately qualified and experienced landscape professional.*

The parcel was previously assessed as part of the 'Study of land surrounding Key Settlements in Cotswold District Update' (Cotswold District Council and White Consultants, October 2014) report. The description provided for this parcel is reproduced below and is still considered to be an appropriate description:

*'The site is an improved pasture field on low lying flat land with mature trees and high hedges on its eastern and northern boundaries which generally screen or filter views of the site. Its western boundary is an outgrown hedge and its southern boundary is the rear of properties on the A417 High Street. The dwellings include two listed buildings with large gardens with mature vegetation to the front and rear, and one bungalow. One of the listed properties overlooks the site. A small cemetery lies to the north east with its entrance adjacent to the site and a large grassed field lies to the north. This is used by dog walkers and has open views out to the very gently rolling landscape to the north with its cut hedges and few trees. There is a large Scheduled Monument, a multi-period settlement, to the north in a series of regular fields but this is not apparent on the ground.'*

### Landscape Context

National Character Area 108: Upper Thames Clay Vales

Landscape Character Type: River Basin Lowland

Landscape Character Area TVIC: Fairford and Lechlade

### Constraints/Designations

Landscape: Not within the Cotswolds AONB or a Special Landscape Area.

Historic: No listed buildings within the parcel, although some are present to the south and south west. The parcel is not within the Lechlade Conservation Area but the Conservation Area abuts the south-western boundary.

Other: No PRow within the parcel. Lechlade Footpath 11 is present along the north eastern boundary. Lechlade Footpath 10 is present along the south eastern boundary. Further PRow are present within the local area.

### Landscape sensitivity

Evaluation: **Medium**

The landscape sensitivity given to the parcel as part of its inclusion within the 'Study of land surrounding Key Settlements in Cotswold District Update' (Cotswold District Council and White Consultants, October 2014) report was **Medium**. The justification provided for this rating is reproduced below and is still considered to be an appropriate justification for the parcel's landscape sensitivity:

*'The site is susceptible to change inasmuch as it is a small pasture field with a character that complements the adjacent loose settlement edge and public footpaths run down its boundaries which are well used. Its value is as a positive context to the adjacent to listed properties and the associated Conservation Area. However, the hedges and trees on the boundaries are mature and assist in screening the site from the wider landscape. Therefore low density development that retains the boundary vegetation and respects the listed buildings may be acceptable.'*

## Biodiversity

*These comments are made on the basis of a desktop and site survey conducted by a Principal Planning Policy Officer in winter. Further specialist survey work may be required before the site can be allocated in the Local Plan.*

The site is within the Cotswold Water Park Nature Improvement Area and the Cotswold Water Park Nature Recovery Plan Area. It is also within a Site of Special Scientific Impact Risk Zone, where developments of 10 or more houses requires further specialist assessment to understand the impact and necessary mitigation measures.

There are areas Priority Habitat approximately 100m to the south-west of the site ('coastal and floodplain grazing marsh' and 'no main habitat but additional habitats present'). The site is also modelled to be within a Great Crested Newt red zone.

An Ecological Appraisal was undertaken on the land to the west to support the 19 dwelling development. (AD Ecology, 28 February 2013). This identified habitats and potential importance for bats, birds and reptiles. This is indicative of the types of habitat and species likely to be present on L18B.

The site appears to be improved pasture that has been allowed to go fallow, although a survey is required to confirm this. There are mature hedgerows and trees around the periphery of the site, which are of ecological interest, although these can be retained within the development. A preliminary ecological assessment is needed to further understand the species and habitats present. However, it appears likely that the site can be developed providing appropriate mitigation and enhancement is provided.

Alongside the more standard ecological enhancements that would be required within any development, given that the site is within a Great Crested Newt Red zone, there is a particular opportunity to provide a pond.

## Trees

*These comments are made on the basis of a desktop and site survey conducted by a Principal Planning Policy Officer in winter. An Arboricultural Report that accords with BS 5837:2012 would be required of any development proposal.*



The site also has existing hedges and trees along the boundaries that are of importance. Hedges should be retained and open space provided on site.

## Historic Environment (excluding archaeology)

*These comments are made on the basis of a desktop and site survey conducted by a Principal Planning Policy Officer. A full historic environment or heritage assessment would be required of any development proposal.*

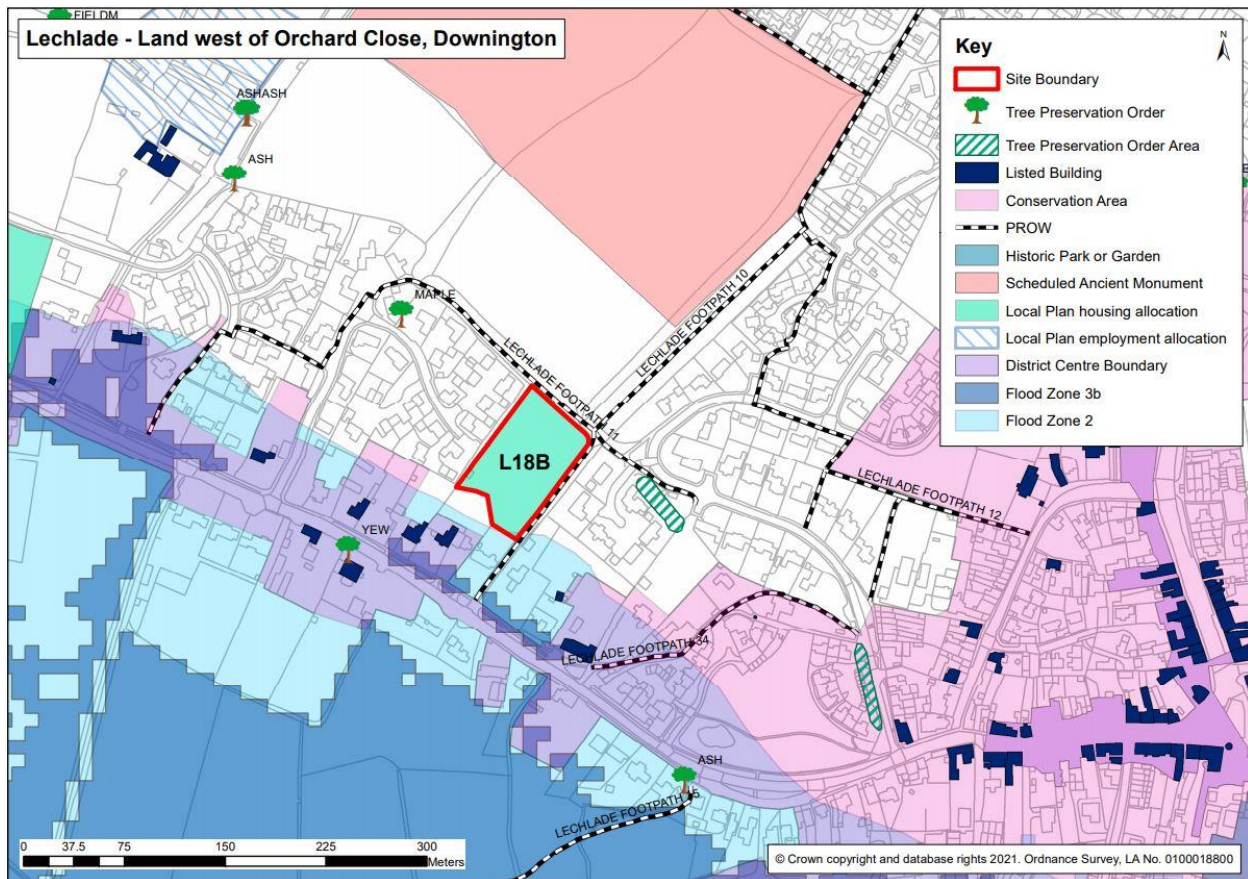
### Historic Environment Context/Constraints and Opportunities

**Context:** The site is seen in the context of a modern but traditionally designed housing development to the west (Stephen's Close), which is recently completed. There are large detached late 20<sup>th</sup> century houses to the east on Orchard Close, which are Cotswold Stone. There are large detached houses to the south, some of which are 19<sup>th</sup> century built. It is also located adjacent to a graveyard to the north-east. The shape of the site respects the historic field pattern.

**Designated heritage assets:** The site forms part of the setting of the Lechlade Conservation Area, which is located directly to the south. It also forms part of the setting of several Grade II listed buildings, particularly Downington Grange and Tollgate, which are both located to the south. The site is also located 100m to the south of a Scheduled Monument (multi-period settlement, cemetery, and ceremonial complex), although the field that separates the Scheduled Monument from L18B and the tall hedge mean that the development of L18B would have a mitigated impact on the Scheduled Monument.

**Non-Designated heritage assets:** None known.

**Heritage at risk issues:** None known.



### Other issues / constraints

- Access – access via Moorgate / Stephen's Close can be achieved. There is reportedly a covenant on the end house (10 Stephen's Close). Where the road currently narrows, the front garden would make way for a road into L18B. However, this reportedly has a ransom strip.

The owner of L18B also owns a property between L18B and Fairford Road (A417), which could potentially make way to provide an alternative access. However, this building is Grade II listed and its demolition is unlikely to be suitable. Furthermore, accessing the site from the south would require the access to cross land in Flood Zone 2. Such an access arrangement would require a flood risk sequential test.

An access via Orchard Field / Lodersfield would not be achievable on highway safety grounds – there would be too many junctions within close proximity of each other.

- Flooding - a small area of land within the south of the site is located inside Flood Zone 3a. No housing development is proposed on this land.
- The site is also modelled to be within an area with high ground water flood risk zone (greater than 75% risk). Further investigation of this issue is required, although the Environment Agency did not object to the recent development of adjacent land (ref: 13/02642/OUT) and they did not object to the allocation of L18B in the Local Plan.
- Archaeological investigations on the adjoining development to the west found some archaeological features, including prehistoric and medieval remains. An archaeological mitigation strategy was agreed for that development. The development of L18B is likely to face similar issues.
- Within Brize Norton and Fairford air safeguarding areas.
- Within Cotswold Water Park.

## **Recommendation**

The site is allocated in the Local Plan. It is likely that an access can be achieved. A low density development would be acceptable, provided that it retains the boundary vegetation, respects the listed buildings and provides necessary ecological enhancements. The site continues to have a reasonable prospect of being fully completed by 2031.

### Indicative capacity

9 dwellings (based on a reduced density multiplier assumption to reflect the required low density development)

### Proposed site design brief if the site was allocated in the Local Plan

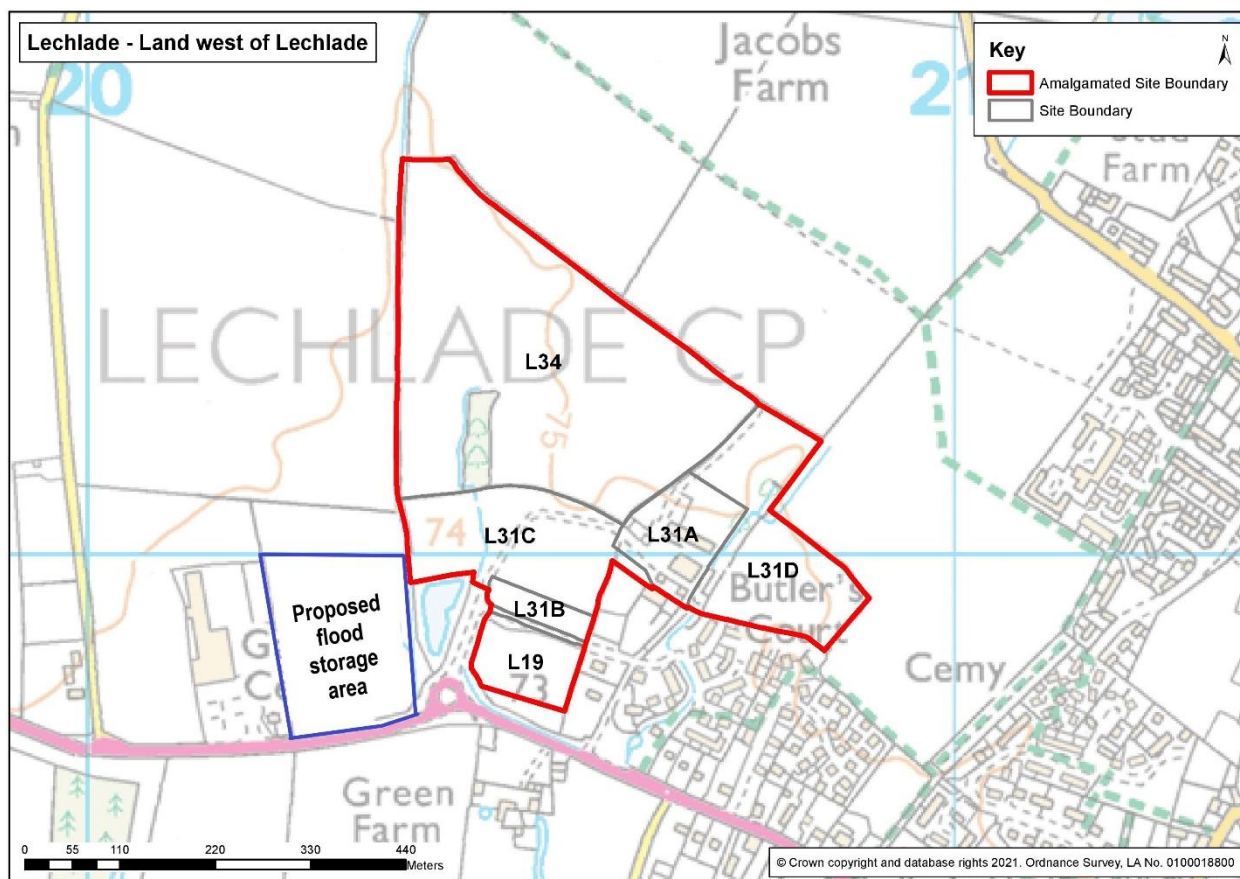
*The following is not an exhaustive list and further guidance on design requirements will be provided through the pre-application process. Developments will be expected to comply with the requirements of the Cotswold Design Code and to deliver high quality built and green infrastructure design.*

- A lower density development would help to ensure the development successfully integrates with the immediate built environment.

## **Key actions required**

- Confirm preferred access route and solution.
- Further investigation of groundwater flood risk issue.
- Archaeological investigation.

## Land west of Lechlade (refs: L19, L31A, L31B, L31C, L31D, L34)



**Proposal:** Up to 25 dwellings on L19; C. 120 dwellings on L31A-D; and C.180 dwellings on L34 (C.325 dwellings in total). Provision of a flood bund on adjoining land.

**Site area:** Combined = 18.60ha (L19 = 0.95ha; L31A = 1.27ha; L31B = 0.39ha; L31C = 2.67ha; L31D = 2.92ha; L34 = 10.40ha)

**Assessment date:** April 2021

**Land ownership:** L31A-D and L34 are in the same ownership. L19 is in a separate ownership

### Site description

The sites have a prominent location on the western approach into Lechlade on land with flat topography.

L19 and L31B-C are unmanaged grassland. L31A contains the disused Butler's Court Farm buildings and their associated hardstanding. L31D is a small pastoral field. L34 is mostly an arable field, although there is a substantial belt of trees and a spring within the site. The spring feeds a stream, which runs southwards along a drainage ditch to the west of the sites.

The sites are bound by the A417 to the south with Green Farm beyond. There is further agricultural land to the east, north and west. A garden centre is located further to the west. There are residential uses to the south-east.

L31A-D are part of a single site, which was split in the SHELAA (May 2014) to show parts of the site that may be suitable for development.

Further land between the sites and the garden centre to the west, which is in the same ownership as L31A-D and L34, has been made available for a flood bund scheme. The site submission explains this could potentially serve the proposed development and the wider community by helping to mitigate the impact of flooding and climate change.

## Planning history

*This is a summary of the key planning applications and is not a comprehensive list*

The sites were all agricultural fields until shortly after 2000. At that time, a relief road was planned around the north-western edge of Lechlade. The Wern housing development, which is located to the south-east of the sites, was built and a roundabout was installed on the A417 for the relief road. An access road was also installed from the roundabout to serve The Wern. Two large ponds were also installed adjacent to the south-western boundary of the sites. The relief road scheme was subsequently abandoned. Butler's Court Farm has also since fallen out of use.

### L19

The site is allocated for residential development in the adopted Local Plan and is located inside the Lechlade development boundary, as defined by the Local Plan proposals map. The principle of developing this site is also supported by the Lechlade Neighbourhood Plan (adopted July 2016).

15/00659/FUL – “Erection of 34 dwellings, associated car parking and landscaping together with flood prevention measures”. Withdrawn

### L31A

The site is allocated for B1 Class employment development in the adopted Local Plan (ref: LEC\_E1). It is also located inside Lechlade's development boundary. The principle of developing this site is also supported by the Lechlade Neighbourhood Plan (adopted July 2016).

04/01320/FUL – “Conversion of agricultural buildings and new employment (B1) development”. Disposed

04/01319/LBC – “Alterations to convert agricultural building to a dwelling”. Withdrawn

06/01041/LBC – “Alterations to convert an agricultural building to a dwelling (re-submission)”. Permitted but now lapsed

06/01042/FUL – “Conversion of agricultural buildings and new employment (B1) development (re-submission)”. Permitted but now lapsed

08/02931/FUL – “Conversion of farm buildings for B1 (Business) use. Exclusion of stone garage from buildings to be demolished”. Returned

L31B, L31C, L31D and L34 have no recent relevant planning history.

## Landscape

*These comments are made on the basis of a survey conducted by a qualified Landscape Officer. A full landscape and visual impact assessment would be required of any development proposal (desktop and site assessments) undertaken by an appropriately qualified and experienced landscape professional.*

### Description

The parcels are located to the west of the settlement and to the north of the A417. A mix of land usage is present within the parcels. The parcels are not located within any qualitative landscape designation.

To the north, south and west of the parcels is an agricultural context that is characteristic of the landscape around the settlement. A short distance to the west of the parcels is an isolated commercial plant nursery. To the east of the parcels is a combination of recent and pre 21<sup>st</sup> Century residential development within the Lechlade settlement.

No PRoW are present within or on the boundaries of the parcels; but some are present within the local environment and have views across some of the parcels. Pavements along the roads adjacent to and within the parcels also provide views of the parcels. The Lechlade Conservation Area is present to the south-east, as are a few listed buildings.

### Parcel specific features

#### **L19**

The parcel was previously assessed as part of the ‘Study of land surrounding Key Settlements in Cotswold District Update’ (Cotswold District Council and White Consultants, October 2014) report. The description of the parcel from this report is reproduced below:

*The site is a plot of flat grassland on the A417 western approaches to the settlement abutted by a large relatively recently constructed roundabout. A road spur runs from this roundabout and abuts the site the north and west running to The Wern. This new infrastructure has apparently removed any field boundaries and most vegetation. The site is therefore open. A small watercourse runs around the site. There are hedges and trees to the south of the*

*A417 and to the west. There are also outgrown hedges to the north beyond the adjacent grassed plot. A commercial nursery to the west assists in screening views of the site from this direction. A listed building lies to the east within trees in the Lechlade Conservation Area and Green Farm to the south, beyond trees, is also listed. The site has the character of a site awaiting development. It is open and provides the end of a vista for users of the A417 approaching from the west'*

### **L31A L31B L31C L31D**

These parcels were previously assessed as part of the 'Study of land surrounding Key Settlements in Cotswold District Update: Additional Sites 2015' (Cotswold District Council and White Consultants, November 2015) report. They were previously identified as one parcel known as L31. The description of the parcel from this report is reproduced below:

*'The site lies on the western edge of the settlement and comprises of a number of fields and elements with varied character. To the west there is a small overgrown field with a balancing pond with established vegetation to the south, overgrown hedges on other sides and trees to the west, and a tree belt outside the site to the north. A further fallow field with scrub is located east of this field, crossed by a farm access. This has similar character to site L19 to the south in that it appears to have been prepared for development, and is visible from the A417. Butlers Court Farm to the east is a small farm complex of small steel roofed sheds and dilapidated brick sheds with partially removed roofs and a garden enclosure to the west. There is a listed farmhouse directly to the south with mature garden trees and vegetation. To the north and west of this are two apparently unimproved semi-regular pasture fields with outgrown hedges and separated by a belt of deciduous trees. Outside the site to the north and east there are large regular arable and grassland fields with low cut hedges and very few trees. A large scheduled monument lies in this area but it not apparent on the ground. This landscape to the north is relatively open and very gently rolling farmland with few features but one or two public footpaths are apparently popular for informal walking and dog walking. A cemetery lies to the east across a field. To the south east there is relatively recent housing which is recessive when viewed from the north die to the intervening field and hedgerows'*

Several TPO are present within and on the boundary of the parcel.

### **L34**

This parcel is comprised of a single irregularly shaped arable field that is located to the north of the other parcels. Its location away from the settlement edge sites it within the rural agricultural context that surrounds the Lechlade settlement. Hedgerow of varying quality bounds the field and some trees are present; a number of these are the subject of TPO. In addition to the arable land there is also a small copse/woodland within the parcel. This is also subject to TPO. Views from Lechlade Footpath 6 and others to the north look straight across the parcel.

#### Landscape Context

National Character Area 108: Upper Thames Clay Vales

Landscape Character Type: River Basin Lowland

Landscape Character Area TVIC: Fairford and Lechlade

#### Constraints/Designations

Landscape: Not within the Cotswolds AONB or a Special Landscape Area.

Historic: Listed buildings within parcel L31A (Butlers Court), other listed structures within the local area but not the parcels. The Lechlade Conservation Area abuts the boundary of parcel L19. Parcels L31D and L34 abut a scheduled ancient monument.

Other: No PRoW within or on the boundaries of the parcels. TPOs present within the parcels. Flood Zones present within some of the parcels and the local area.

#### Landscape sensitivity

### **L19**

Evaluation: **Medium/Low**

Justification: The landscape sensitivity given to the parcel as part of its inclusion within the 'Study of land surrounding Key Settlements in Cotswold District Update' (Cotswold District Council and White Consultants, October 2014) report was **Medium/Low**. The justification provided for this rating is reproduced below and is still considered to be an appropriate justification for the parcels landscape sensitivity:



*'The site has been prepared for development and therefore any intrinsic value or character has been removed. It is susceptible to housing development in as much as it is on the western edge of the settlement and would be the first settlement built from visible from this direction. It is therefore essential that any development reflects this gateway role addressing the A417 appropriately with mitigation to soften its appearance. It is noted that the Conservation Area to the east is characterised by loose well-spaced dwellings in large gardens with mature trees and shrubs. Therefore at least the proposed frontage along the A417 should reflect this as far as possible'*

### **L31A L31B L31C L31D**

Evaluation: **Medium and High/Medium**

Justification: The landscape sensitivity given to the parcels as part of their inclusion within the 'Study of land surrounding Key Settlements in Cotswold District Update: Additional Sites 2015' (Cotswold District Council and White Consultants, November 2015) report varied between the parcels. **L31B** and **L31C** were assessed as **Medium**. While parcels **L31A** and **L31D** were assessed as **High/Medium**. The justification for this is reproduced below and is still considered to be an appropriate landscape assessment:

*'The sensitivity of the site varies. The two fields to the west extend the settlement but are relatively well screened from the east by a combination of trees and hedges on site as well as the nursery further east still, and the tree belt to the north. There is some visibility from the north which raises sensitivity. The most westerly field should form the final edge to the settlement in this direction. These enclosures are considered to be of **medium** sensitivity.*

*The pasture fields to the east are susceptible to change as they are open to view to the north from public footpaths and the scheduled monument. They would tend to enclose the open space on this side of the settlement being more apparent in views from the public footpaths. The farm complex and enclosure west of the farm are susceptible as housing would completely change the character of the farm complex and surround the listed buildings adjacent to the south. These elements of the site have **high/medium** sensitivity with the most sensitive being the farm complex and the northern pasture which is most exposed to view from the wider landscape, SAM and PROW'*

### **L34**

Evaluation: **High**

Justification: The parcel has susceptibility to change through housing development due to its position within open countryside. Development would represent encroachment into the characteristically rural landscape around the Lechlade settlement and form a prominent addition to views. Development of the parcel would appear as a protrusion from the edge of the settlement. The hedgerows and woodland/copse within the parcel are important landscape features that tie the parcel to the surrounding context through the wider hedgerow provision in the area. The hedgerows around the parcel do provide some filtering of views from the public footpaths to the north although this is limited due to the size of the hedgerows. Development here would create a prominent and uncharacteristic addition to the local landscape. The parcel is considered to have **High** landscape sensitivity due to the above factors.

### **Biodiversity**

*These comments are made on the basis of a desktop and site survey conducted by a Principal Planning Policy Officer in winter. Further specialist survey work may be required before the site can be allocated in the Local Plan.*

The sites are all located in a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Impact Risk Zone, where development of 10 or more dwellings outside settlement boundaries require further assessment to understand whether the impact of their development would be acceptable or any required mitigation. The sites are also all located within the Cotswold Water Park Nature Recovery Plan Area.

The majority of the sites are modelled to be within a Crested Newt amber zone, although the eastern half of L19 and L31B are modelled to be within a Great Crested Newt red zone. Two ecology surveys have not identified the presence of GCNs on L19 (ACD Ecology, June 2014) or L31A-D (Bioscan, May 2014).

A B-line is also located 130m to the west of the sites.

L19 - An Ecological Assessment was undertaken on this site in support of the withdrawn planning application on this site (ACD Ecology, June 2014). This found the site to contain semi-improved grassland with varying sward heights with damper areas. There were areas of scrub within the site and a ditch along the southern boundary.

L31B and L31C are very similar in character to L19. However, these sites contain hedgerows at their eastern, western and northern boundaries.

L31A contains disused buildings. The technical submission provided with this site confirms that bat and Barn Owl roosts were present at the farm buildings.

L31D is mostly grazed pasture, which is unlikely to contain significant biodiversity, although a survey would be required to confirm this. The site is surrounded by mature hedgerows.

L34 is mostly an arable field, which also is unlikely to contain significant biodiversity but also would require a survey to confirm this. This site, however, contains a large belt of damp woodland and a stream, which are of ecological interest. The site is also bound by a hedgerow on all sides.

Two large ponds are located adjacent to the south-west of the sites. There is also a drainage ditch adjacent to the south-western boundary of the sites.

The surveys undertaken on L19 and L31A-D identified opportunities on site for reptiles, breeding birds, water vole, barn owl foraging / roosting and bat foraging / roosting within and around the sites. The surveys are now six years old and would require refreshing. However, they are indicative of the types of species that may be present.

The development of any of the sites is likely to negatively impact wildlife in this location with increased disturbance, noise and light pollution. Any development proposals would require mitigation measures to minimise their impact on wildlife. Possible ways to deliver Biodiversity Net Gain on these sites might include a substantial wildlife buffer along the western part of the sites. There is also an opportunity to support the nearby B-line with native planting suitable for pollinators within landscaped areas. The proposed flood relief bund could also be constructed to maximise opportunities for wildlife.

## Trees

*These comments are made on the basis of a desktop and site survey conducted by a Principal Planning Policy Officer in winter. An Arboricultural Report that accords with BS 5837:2012 would be required of any development proposal.*



The hedgerow boundary between L31C and L34 contains eight trees protected by a Tree Preservation Order, which are a mixture of Field Maple and Oak. Three further TPOs are located on the western boundary of L31C, which are Ash and Field Maples. There are also three TPO Ash trees in the south-west corner of L31D.

The belt of trees in the southern part of L34 is protected by an area wide Tree Preservation Order – this contains mostly Willow.

Some of the hedgerows running alongside the sites appear on the 1884 Ordnance survey and are therefore likely to be pre-enclosure hedges and would be considered to be important under the Hedgerows Regulations 1997.

The trees and hedges are focused around the edges of the sites. The main parts of the sites are clear of trees. Trees and hedgerows are unlikely to prevent these sites from being developed and could be retained within the scheme design. Any trees or hedges that are removed would require replacement planting.

There may be opportunities for further tree planting if any of these sites were developed. This would be particularly important for integrating the development into the surrounding landscape.

### **Historic Environment (excluding archaeology)**

*These comments are made on the basis of a desktop and site survey conducted by a qualified Town Planner. A full historic environment or heritage assessment would be required of any development proposal.*

**Context:** The sites occupy a prominent position at the western entrance into Lechlade. The A417 roundabout and the spur road into the sites are features more commonly found in urban locations. However, the sites retain a very rural context.

Although there is relatively modern development further to the east, this is screened by a hedgerow and vegetation which create a good existing gateway into the town. The sites are seen more in the context of the surrounding agricultural landscape than neighbouring housing development. Furthermore, although they are disused, the farm buildings of Butler's Court retain an agricultural character.

**Designated heritage assets:** Butler's Court is a Grade II listed building. Part of the listed building is located within L31A and its curtilage also extends into the site – they may be curtilage listed. The sites surrounding this building form part of the rural setting of Butler's Court. A 120 dwelling housing development would harm the rural setting of this building. The previous planning permission on L31A retained and refurbished the existing farm complex and this type of development on this site is still supported.

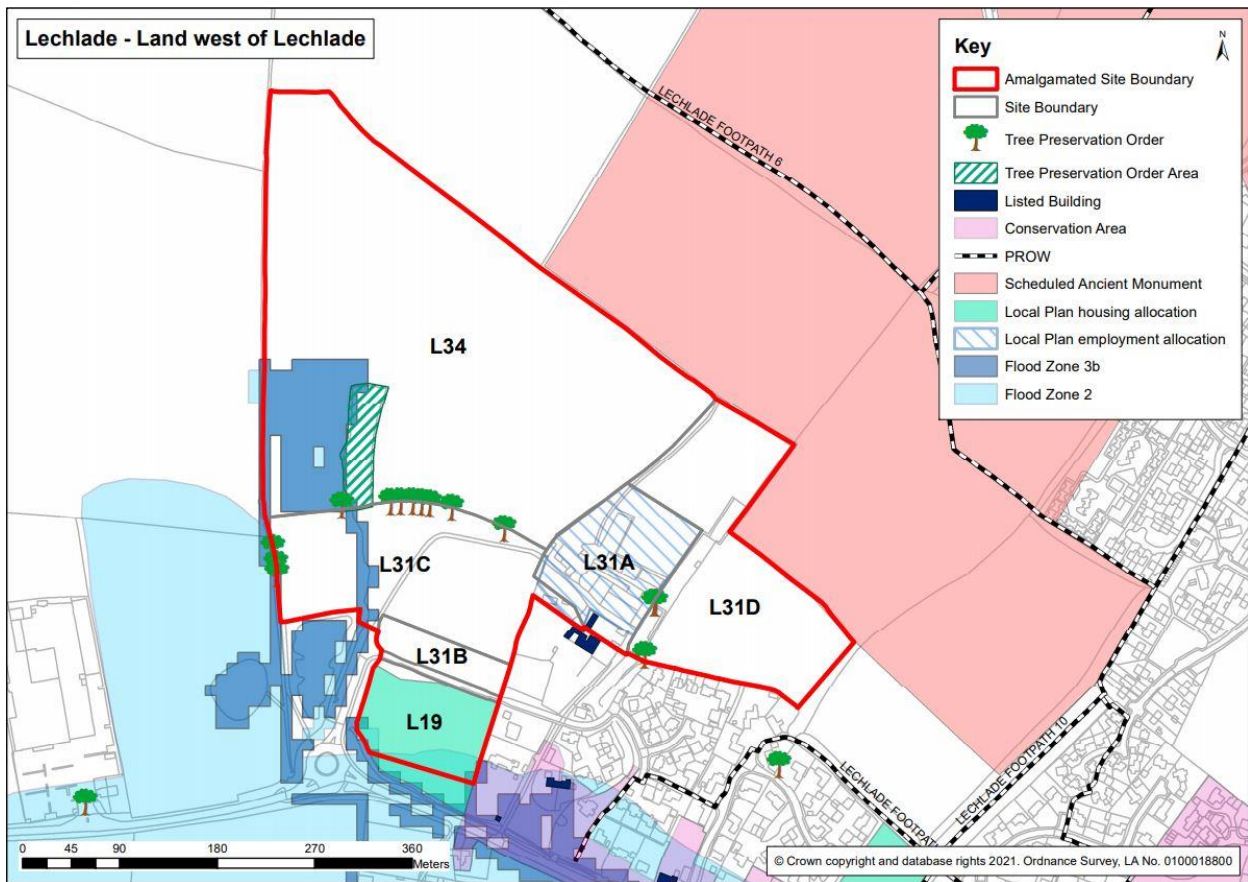
A Scheduled Monument is located adjacent to the north-eastern boundary of L31D and L34. This is a multi-period settlement, cemetery and ceremonial complex west of Lechlade. The sites form part of the rural setting of the Scheduled Monument. Any development proposals would need to have particular regard to the protection and enhancement of this setting. This may include a substantial open space buffer.

The Lechlade Conservation Area is located adjacent to the eastern boundary of L19, L19, L31B and L31C in particular form part of the rural setting of the Conservation Area. The Conservation Area is screened from the other sites by existing development. This does not preclude development but would require high quality design that protects and enhances the setting of the Conservation Area.

**Non-Designated heritage assets:** The farm buildings in L31A may be classified as NDHAs.

**Heritage at risk issues:** Butler's Court Farm Buildings, which are in a state of disrepair. These buildings may be curtilage listed.

**Opportunities:** Restoration of the farm buildings of Butler's Court. Historic mapping also shows that L34 was once subdivided into two fields – there is an opportunity to restore the historic field pattern with new hedgerow planting. The roundabout and spur road created through the abandoned link road scheme are now incongruous features at the entrance to the town. There is an opportunity to incorporate these features within a new high quality gateway into Lechlade.



### Other issues / constraints

- Flooding - The southern part of L19, the south-western part of L34 and a corridor through L31C are located within Flood Zones 3b and 2. However, residential uses are not proposed on these areas.
- The sites are all located within an area with high risk of Ground Water Flooding. In particular, L19, L31B and the southern parts of L31A, L31C and L31D are modelled to have very high risk (greater than 75%) with the remaining parts of the sites having high risk (between 50% and 75%). There is also a spring located within L34, which flows southwards towards the road, which is indicative of the height of the water table in the location. A flood risk assessment is required to understand this constraint further.
- Regarding the proposed flood bund on adjoining land, there have been several severe storm events since two phases of flood prevention works were completed at least six years ago without any significant flooding being experienced in the immediate area. Those events, although severe, were not on a par with July 2007. The proposed bund plan would increase the flood resilience in the area including for the main and secondary public roads. It would also benefit biodiversity.

Notwithstanding this, the proposed bund is considered to be 'a nice to have' and would help to mitigate the impacts of climate change. However, there are many locations in the District that do not have protection from a 1 in 100 year flood event and there is limited need for the proposed flood bund.

- The developments would be a significant westwards extension of the settlement, which would effectively stretch the ribbon of development further along the A417. The development of L34 in particular would be at odds with the settlement pattern, extending the urban area into open countryside.
- Archaeology – Gloucestershire County Council has confirmed that L19 has already undergone archaeological evaluation in the past (circa 1999). Significant archaeological remains were revealed and have confirmed the presence of remains dating to the prehistoric and medieval periods. Regarding L31A-D, a desk top heritage appraisal has been undertaken by Orion Heritage, in consultation with Gloucestershire County Council. This concludes that pre-determination archaeological evaluation would be able to address on site archaeology.

- L31A - the Council is unaware of any marketing campaign for employment uses on this site since it was allocated in the Local Plan. In accordance with Local Plan Policy EC2, only if there is no reasonable prospect of the site being used for employment purposes will alternative uses be considered.
- Consequently, any planning application on L19 would need to be supported by a desk-based assessment summarising the archaeological background and confirming the extent of the area where mitigation works are proposed. Further archaeological investigation may be required on the other sites.
- The withdrawn planning application on L19 agreed that archaeological recording and mitigation should be undertaken.
- The eastern half of L31D is inside the Cotswold Water Park boundary.
- A detailed agricultural land survey has been conducted on parts of all the sites. This found the sites to be mostly Grade 1 best and most versatile land and a L31D and L34 was Grade 2. The development of L31D and L34 would lose agricultural land. With the exception of L31A, the other parts of the site could also be brought back into agricultural use and so are equally affected by this constraint.
- Oxford / Kidlington, Brize Norton and Fairford air safeguarding area

### **Recommendation**

L19 – The site continues to have a reasonable prospect of being fully completed by 2031.

L31A – The Council is unaware of any marketing campaign for employment uses on this site since it was allocated in the Local Plan. Only if there is no reasonable prospect of the site being used for employment purposes will alternative uses be considered. The site should remain allocated for employment use.

L31B-D and L34 – these sites are currently unsuitable for development. Amongst other issues, their development would harm the setting of a Scheduled Monument, a Listed Building and the rural approach to Lechlade. The limited benefits of the proposed flood bund do not outweigh the harm that would be caused by building 120 dwellings across these sites.

### Indicative capacity

L19 – 25 dwellings is unlikely to be suitable but 9 dwellings (net), as indicated by Policy S7 of the adopted Local Plan, would be suitable.

L31A – 1.25ha of B1 Class employment land

### Proposed site design brief if the site was allocated in the Local Plan

*The following is not an exhaustive list and further guidance on design requirements will be provided through the pre-application process. Developments will be expected to comply with the requirements of the Cotswold Design Code and to deliver high quality built and green infrastructure design.*

If L19 were to be developed:

- The majority of this site must be left open and undeveloped so that the site retains a green and rural character.
- All built development must be contained within Flood Zone 1.

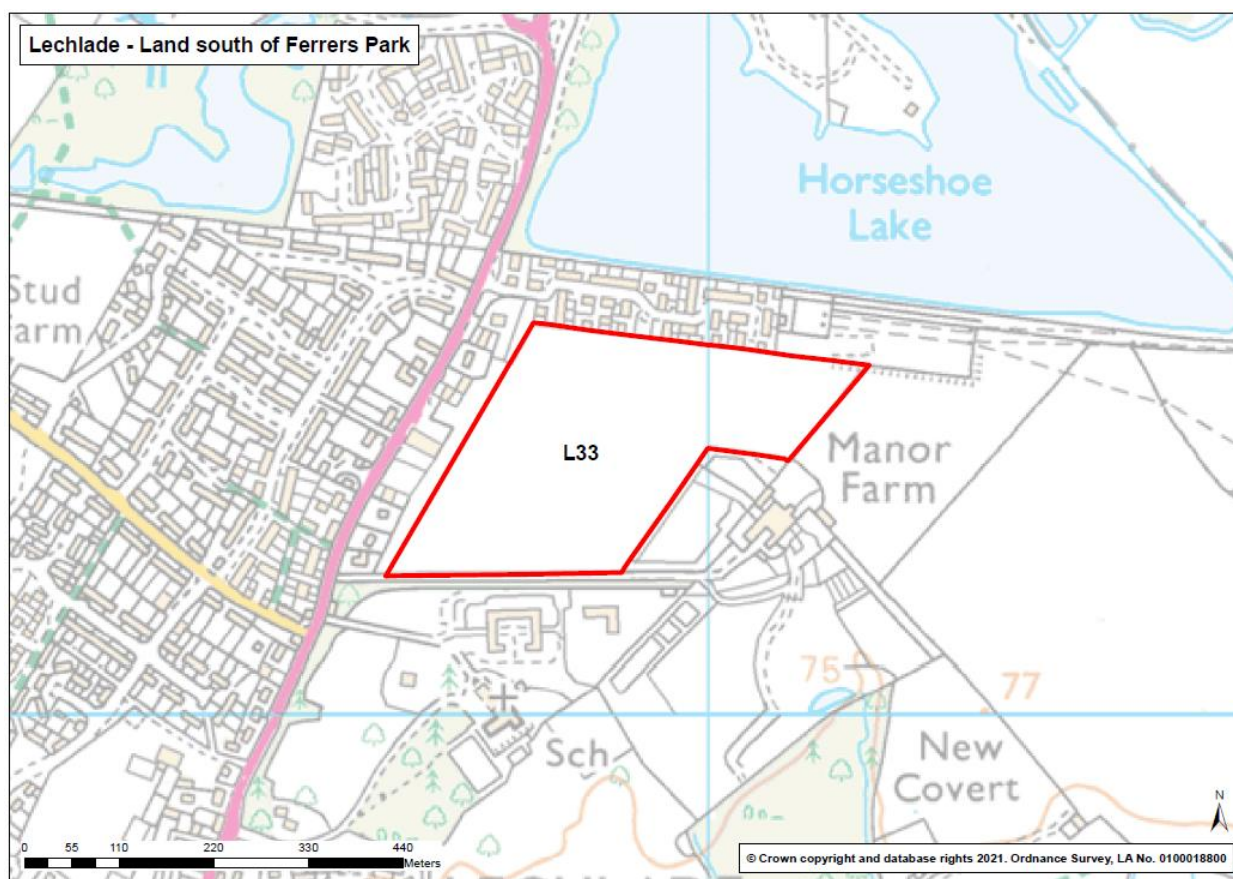
If L31A were to be developed:

- Development proposals must comprise a sensitive conversion of the existing farm buildings within the farmyard. The addition of a very limited number of suitably designed low density buildings would also be acceptable.

### **Key actions required**

- A flood risk assessment to understand the risk of groundwater flooding.
- Evidence that there is no reasonable prospect of L31A being used for employment purposes.

## Land south of Ferrers Park (ref: L33)



**Proposal:** 100 homes

**Assessment date:** April 2021

**Site area:** 9.09ha

**Land ownership:** Single ownership

### Site description

The site is a large arable field with flat topography on the north-eastern edge of Lechlade. It is surrounded by residential uses to the north and west. Manor Farm is located to the south-east, which incorporates several further dwellings, a nursery and holiday cottages. Open countryside extends further to the east. There is parkland associated with the Convent of St Clotilde to the south.

### Planning history

*This is a summary of the key planning applications and is not a comprehensive list*

The site is located outside Lechlade's development boundary, as identified by the proposals map of the adopted local Plan. It has no recent relevant planning history.

#### Land to the north - Old Station Site

12/00528/OUT – Outline application for residential development of up to 61 dwellings and other associated works including removal of existing bridge (all matters reserved except access). Permitted

14/04198/REM – Reserved matters application pursuant to Outline Planning Application 12/00528/OUT for the layout, appearance, scale and landscaping of 61 residential dwellings together with associated infrastructure, including revised levels to A361. Permitted

## Landscape

*These comments are made on the basis of a survey conducted by a qualified Landscape Officer. A full landscape and visual impact assessment would be required of any development proposal (desktop and site assessments) undertaken by an appropriately qualified and experienced landscape professional.*

### Description

The parcel is located to the east of the Lechlade settlement and is bordered to the north and west by the Lechlade development boundary. The parcel is characterised as an agricultural field within arable cultivation. It forms part of a wider field network that is present around the settlement. Beyond the northern and western boundaries is existing built form within the settlement. There is little vegetation on these edges to filter and soften the appearance of the built form. This gives the settlement edge in this location a fairly stark appearance. Hedgerow and a private farm access road are present to the south with designed gardens and the Lechlade Conservation Area beyond. Some development is present within this land and is characterised as large country houses. The eastern boundary is partially open to the neighbouring field network. The rest of the eastern boundary is comprised of Manor Farm and its curtilage. This farm complex has been diversified to offer a range of alternative domestic and commercial uses.

There are no PRoW within or on the boundaries of the parcel. There are limited public vantage points in the local landscape from where the site can be viewed. This will limit the visual envelope of the parcel. The most prevalent public views are from the residential development to the north and between the development to the west. The lane to the south of the parcel is private.

### Landscape Context

National Character Area 108: Upper Thames Clay Vales

Landscape Character Type: River Basin Lowland

Landscape Character Area TVIC: Fairford and Lechlade

### Constraints/Designations

Landscape: Not within the Cotswolds AONB or a Special Landscape Area.

Historic: No Listed Buildings within the parcel. Some listed buildings present to the southerly orientations of the parcel.

Other: No PRoW within or on the boundaries of the parcels. No TPOs present within the parcel.

### Landscape sensitivity

Evaluation: **Medium**

Justification: The parcel has susceptibility to change through housing development due to its position on the edge of the settlement. Domestic built form is present beyond the northern and western boundaries, it is also present to the south at a very low density. Development of the parcel would increase this residential context and expand the settlement edge. Due to its location and surrounding context this expansion is unlikely to appear as a protrusion into the wider open and rural landscape. There are limited public vantage points that the parcel can be viewed from; new residential development is unlikely to appear as incongruent in this location due to the surrounding context. The parcel is considered to have **Medium** landscape sensitivity due to the above factors. There is an opportunity to create and enhance robust Green Infrastructure corridors within and around the parcel. This would also help to soften the edges of any development which could be an improvement on the existing exposed settlement edge.

## Biodiversity

*These comments are made on the basis of a desktop and site survey conducted by a Principal Planning Policy Officer in winter. Further specialist survey work may be required before the site can be allocated in the Local Plan.*

The site is within the Cotswold Water Park Nature Improvement Area and the Cotswold Water Park Nature Recovery Plan Area. It is also within a Site of Special Scientific Interest Impact Risk Zone, where any residential development outside development boundaries requires further specialist assessment to understand the impact and necessary mitigation measures.

A Site of Special Scientific Interest has been notified on land located 70m to the north of the site. There are also areas of Priority Habitat (deciduous woodland) located to the north and south.

The site is a large arable field, which in isolation is unlikely to have significant ecological value, although further assessment would be required to confirm this.

There is an area of unmanaged grassland to the west of the site, which currently provides a wildlife corridor. The outgrown hedgerow to the south of the site also provides a wildlife corridor. These features could be retained within a well-designed development. Notwithstanding this, if the site were to be developed, there is an opportunity to bolster these features with additional native species planting. There is also an opportunity to provide a substantial green infrastructure link through the site to help connect the areas of Priority Habitat woodland to the north and south.

## Trees

*These comments are made on the basis of a desktop and site survey conducted by a Principal Planning Policy Officer in winter. An Arboricultural Report that accords with BS 5837:2012 would be required of any development proposal.*



The site does not contain any trees protected by a Tree preservation Order. It is primarily open agricultural land. The development of this site would unlikely require the removal of any trees or hedgerows. If the site were developed there would be an opportunity to provide a substantial amount of additional tree planting, particularly in the eastern part of the site.

## Historic Environment (excluding archaeology)

*These comments are made on the basis of a desktop and site survey conducted by a Principal Planning Policy Officer. A full historic environment or heritage assessment would be required of any development proposal.*

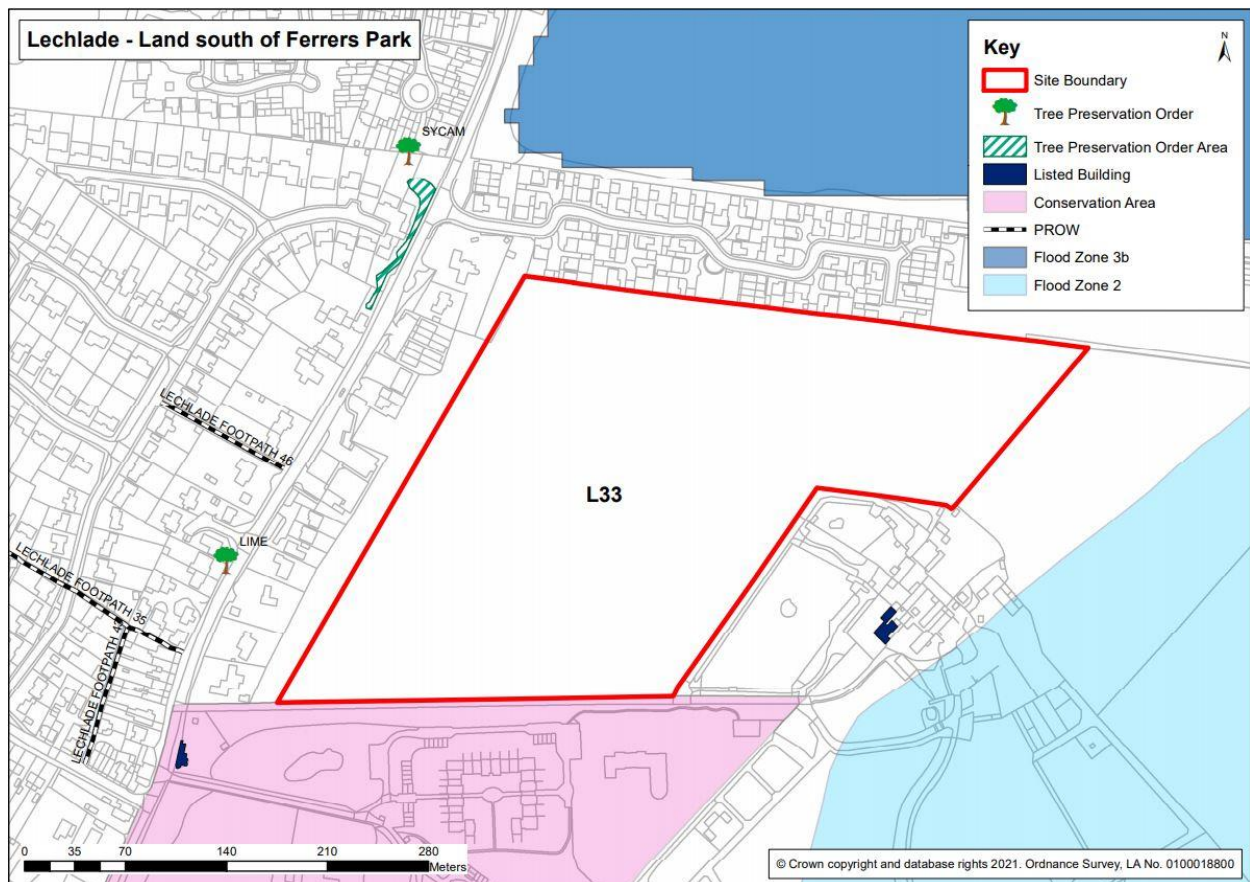
**Context:** The site was historically two fields, which were divided on the east / west axis extending from the north-eastern corner of the Manor Farm complex at the south east of the site. The site retains a predominantly rural context, although this has been degraded to some degree by the new housing development to the north on the old station site.

Open countryside extends beyond the eastern boundary and the Manor Farm complex. To the south, the site is bound by an outgrown hedgerow and a single lane track, which serves Manor Farm. The parkland associated with the Convent of St Clotilde is located further to the south.

The site overlooks the rear sides of large detached mid-late 20<sup>th</sup> century houses and a recently completed petrol filling station to the west. These are set back from the site by a substantial margin of unmanaged grassland.



A modern but traditionally designed housing development was recently completed to the north, which is built on the site of the former Lechlade railway station. This is now very prominent on the skyline to the north of the site.



**Designated heritage assets:** Lechlade Conservation Area is adjacent to the southern boundary of the site. The site forms part of the rural setting of the Conservation Area. The site also forms part of the rural setting of two Grade II listed buildings: Manor Lodge, which is located to the south-west of the site off Station Road; and Manor Farmhouse, which is located to the south-east of the site.

The northern part of the Conservation Area includes the parkland of the Convent of St Clotilde and the former convent stables, which have been converted to housing. These are separated from the site by a narrow track and an outgrown hedgerow, which are in the Conservation Area but visual screening between the site and the parkland further to the south. Although the development of L33 would undoubtedly alter the rural setting of the Conservation Area, and likely in a detrimental way, to some degree this impact is mitigated by the screening along the southern boundary.

Manor Lodge is also separated from the site by the narrow track and the outgrown hedgerow. However, there are additional trees within the grounds of Manor Lodge which, when combined with the position of this building in relation to L33, provide a substantial visual screen. The development of L33 would likely have minimal impact on the setting of this building.

Conversely, Manor Farmhouse clearly visible from the site and L33 forms part of the rural setting of the farmhouse. Furthermore, the site is an intrinsic part of the agricultural surroundings of the farmhouse. The development of L33 would therefore have a harmful impact on the setting of Manor Farmhouse. It would be difficult to mitigate the impact of this harm - landscape screening would still detrimentally alter the agricultural context of the farmhouse. A better solution might be to plant a parkland approach along the south and east rather to filter views and retain the rural edge of settlement character.

Notwithstanding this, the rural context of the farmhouse has been degraded by the new housing development on the former railway station site, which is a prominent feature on the horizon. A development on the northern part of the site, perhaps within the extent of the old field boundary and which has a much softer edge, could benefit the rural setting of the farmhouse. This could have similar benefits to the rural setting of the Conservation Area.

**Non-Designated heritage assets:** None known.

**Heritage at risk issues:** None known.

**Historic Environment Context/Constraints and Opportunities:** Restore the historic field pattern and reinstate the lost hedgerow network.

### Other issues / constraints

- Access – The proposed access would be via the north-west corner by way of an extension onto Old Railway Close. Old Railway Close currently serves a recently completed 61-dwelling development (refs: 12/00528/OUT / 14/04198/REM) and would need to accommodate traffic for the proposed c.100 additional dwellings. The submission provides supporting evidence that the proposed route of the access is achievable and the land ownership is within their control. The submission also says that, in the professional opinion of their highways consultant, the existing A361 Station Road / Old Railway Close junction should not require upgrading to serve the proposed development. However, the submission acknowledges that this is subject to confirmation of additional highway capacity testing.

Note – a vehicular access cannot be achieved from the lane to the south due to conservation impacts. However, if the site were to come forward, it would be preferable if a pedestrian and cycle route were provided via the south-west corner in order to provide a direct and convenient route into the town centre.

- Loss of agricultural land – a broad area survey indicates that the land is Grade 3 best and most versatile land, although a detailed survey is required to confirm this.
- Viability of existing farm – the loss of such a large field would make the existing farm operation less viable. Further detail is required to understand whether the development of this site would jeopardise an existing business.
- The site is modelled to have high ground water flood risk (greater than 75% risk) – further investigation would be required;
- Archaeological investigations would likely be required;
- Within Brize Norton, Fairford and Oxford Kidlington air safeguarding areas; and
- Within Cotswold Water Park.

### Recommendation

L33 is a candidate for further consideration for allocation within the Local Plan.

#### Indicative capacity

86 dwellings (based on a density multiplier assumption for half the site area)

#### Proposed site design brief if the site was allocated in the Local Plan

*The following is not an exhaustive list and further guidance on design requirements will be provided through the pre-application process. Developments will be expected to comply with the requirements of the Cotswold Design Code and to deliver high quality built and green infrastructure design.*

If L33 were to be allocated in the Local Plan, the following would be required of any development proposal:

- Any development must provide a soft edge to the settlement, which enhances the rural setting of the Conservation Area and nearby listed buildings.
- A substantial green infrastructure corridor must be provided through the site, which should be designed to bring about a significant improvement in wildlife connectivity between the areas of Priority Habitat to the north and south.
- The houses must be focussed around the north and western part of the site and must not extend beyond the eastern extent of the Old Station site housing development to the north.
- The development must restore the historic field pattern and hedgerow network.

**Key actions required**

- Confirmation from the County Highways Authority that the proposed access arrangement is suitable for the level of development proposed.
- Further investigation of ground water flood risk issue.
- Further assessment of impact on Site of Special Scientific Interest to the north.
- Agricultural soil survey to establish whether the site is best and most versatile agricultural land.
- Further detail to understand whether the development of this site would jeopardise an existing business.